

A roundabout it will be

IT'S official.

After months of public consultation and deliberation, a roundabout will be built at the Hangatiki (SH37/SH3) intersection.

Following two deaths in 2012 and a 'stop the crashes' campaign generated by this newspaper, Hangatiki's deadly SH3/SH37 intersection will finally be redesigned.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) announced yesterday its preferred roundabout option for the busy Waitomo Caves turnoff.

After working together with Waitomo District Council and police to identify the best way to improve the intersection, NZTA principal safety engineer Michelle Te Wharau says the 'three-legged' roundabout, relocated 100 metres north of the existing intersection, is the "much safer" option.

A roundabout was also local residents' preference after a public open day in August at the Big Apple Cafe where the NZTA presented four redesign options.

CONSTRUCTION DATE

Construction is planned to go ahead next summer where SH37 will be realigned to improve its link to the new SH3 intersection, and there will be a right-turn bay introduced on SH3 for

Mangarino Rd.

"We know the public wanted us to go faster, but it is important to get the best solution and be sure that it will achieve the safety improvements we need at this location," says Mrs Te Wharau.

"But until the upgrade goes ahead, the interim safety improvements made following the second fatality last year will remain in place to manage speeds and help people navigate their way through these intersections."

NZTA statistics show about 6500 vehicles per day pass the turnoff on SH3, 1300 a day use SH37, and 450 vehicles Mangarino Rd.

Mrs Te Wharau says NZTA are committed to reducing the risk of crashes at the Hangatiki turnoff as part of creating a safer transport system through safer roads and roadsides, safer use, safer vehicles and safer speeds.

"We ask that motorists do their bit too, particularly as we approach the busy summer holiday period by ensuring they travel at safe speeds, take extra care when turning and remain alert for any unexpected vehicle movements," she says.

"If we all work together and share the responsibility of reducing harm on our roads, then everyone wins."



SAFER SOLUTION: New Zealand Transport Agency principal safety engineer Michelle Te Wharau says a roundabout will be built just north of Hangatiki's current deadly SH3/SH37 intersection (below).



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