SUPER CLOSURES CASE STUDY

COORDINATING ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND IN THE CAPITAL

HOW WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL SAVED OVER 55 DAYS OF ROAD DISRUPTION USING THE **FORWARD WORKS VIEWER** AND **NZ UNDERGROUND ASSET REGISTER** TO PLAN 'SUPER CLOSURES'

Wellington City Council manages one of New Zealand's most congested and constrained road corridors.

THE CHALLENGE: Wellington City Council's (WCC) road corridor carries constant, competing demands: resurfacing programmes, water and gas main renewals, telecommunications upgrades, and infrastructure works around a compact, hilly CBD.

As Corridor Manager, Amanda Wolfaardt is responsible for managing that corridor so that works can happen safely and efficiently, while minimising disruption to the transport network, businesses and communities - in line with the National Code of Practice for Utility Operators' Access to Transport Corridors ('the Code').

For years, that job was largely reactive. "*Before these tools, corridor management was largely reactive – responding to whatever came in, within the short statutory notification windows required by the Code*," Amanda explains. Planning ahead was limited, and meeting obligations under the Code relied on an admin-heavy process of manually collecting and re-sharing information.

THE APPROACH: This gap had been addressed using a combination of the National Forward Works Viewer (NFWV) with the NZ Underground Asset Register (NZUAR). These two tools

provide (respectively) a federated view of planned projects from infrastructure organisations (including councils, utility owners, contractors etc), and a federated view of all underground assets across the region. Having instant access to this data enabled WCC to shift to a proactive, planned approach to corridor management - and one of the clearest impacts of this has been the rise of the 'super closure'.

> *"Before the Forward Works Viewer and the Underground Asset Register, I don't think we met all of our obligations under the Code. The Code tells us what we need to do – but the how is quite unclear. With the NZUAR, we've put a process behind it. We've moved away from reactive, and we're firmly going towards the proactive and planned approach."*
>
> **AMANDA WOLFAARDT, CORRIDOR MANAGER, WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL**

What is a super closure?

A super closure brings multiple roadworks projects together in the same place, at the same time, for a shorter-than-usual period with minimal disruption - rather than the same stretch of road being dug up separately, and repeatedly, by different organisations.

Under the traditional approach, every project needs its own road closure, its own traffic management plan (TMP), and its own round of public communications – meaning the same businesses and road users face disruption again and again. Super closures flip that around, enabling a 'dig once' approach and moving WCC from reactive to proactive.

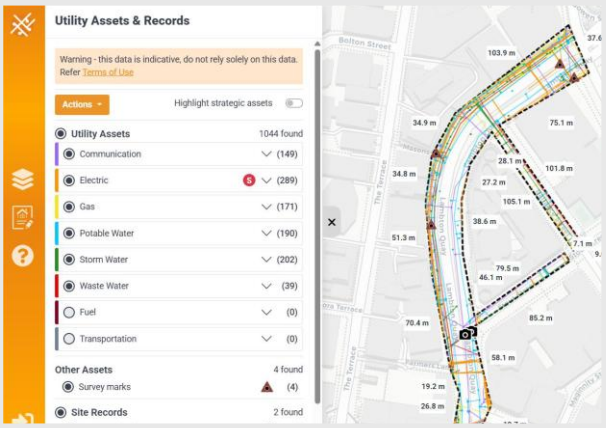
WCC delivered its first super closure on Lambton Quay in January 2025, followed by Ghuznee Street in January 2026, both timed to make use of the traditionally quiet summer school-holiday period. The Lambton Quay closure brought together 12 work sites, and 7 on Ghuznee Street – meaning 19 separate work sites were combined into just two closures.

How WCC plans one

- **Spot the opportunity:** Amanda reviews major works programmes coming up in the Forward Works Viewer to identify candidate projects and locations for a super closure.
- **Check what's underground:** using the NZ Underground Asset Register, she identifies which utilities have assets in that section of corridor.
- **Reach out and coordinate:** each asset owner is contacted directly to find out whether they have maintenance or programmed works of their own coming up in the same area - and are invited to bring it into the same closure window.

- **Deliver together:** participating utilities and contractors combine their worksites into a single, shorter closure instead of multiple separate ones – and can also combine engagement with affected stakeholders (i.e., commuters, residents and businesses).
- **Protect the investment:** because utilities and contractors (identified through the NZUAR and NFWV) have had the chance to complete maintenance and planned works during the super closure, WCC can then carry out any resurfacing with confidence and apply a moratorium of around two years on further excavation in that section. Then any lessons learned are captured to feed into the approach to the next closure.

View of Lambton Quay super closure in the **National Forward Works Viewer** – used to check which organisations have upcoming work in the same area



View of underground utilities present beneath the Lambton Quay project area, identified through the **NZ Underground Asset Register** – used to plan which owners needed to be brought into the closure

Lambton Quay – 34 days of work completed in 4 nights

Tree Trimming

Dig outs, resurfacing & utility maintenance

Investigation works

The January 2025 Lambton Quay closure brought 12 work sites into a single closure window, covering tree trimming, dig-outs, resurfacing, utility maintenance and investigation works. The NZUAR showed more than 1,000 underground utility assets within the closure area – communications, electricity, gas, and three waters – helping WCC identify which asset owners to bring to the table. Work that would traditionally have meant around 34 days of

disruption was delivered in 4 nights and 3 days, with traffic management costs reduced by $57,000.

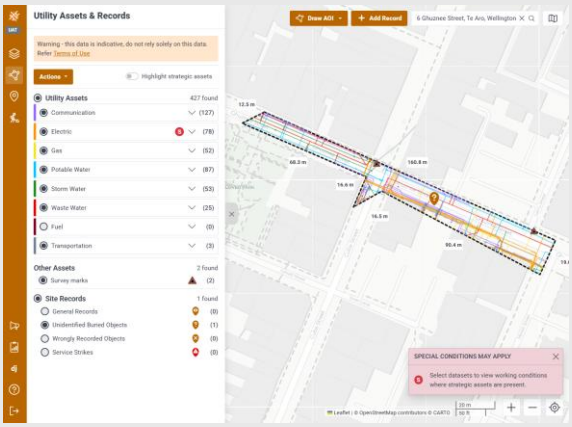
Ghuznee Street – 7 worksites into one

Dig outs & footpath maintenance

Tree pit installation

Signal upgrades & utility maintenance

In January 2026, several utilities and contractors joined WCC's second super closure, bringing 7 work sites into one - including signal upgrades, tree pit installation, footpath and bus stop maintenance, water reinstatements and a piece of earthquake strengthening work. What would have taken 43 days was planned as a 23-day closure – with works delivered four days ahead of schedule despite a wild weather event during the programme. The result of this approach was more streamlined communication between organisations and stakeholders, improved worker safety, and time and cost savings for all involved – plus, positive stakeholder feedback to boot.



Utilities identified beneath the Ghuznee Street super closure area, through the NZUAR.

Combined trenching works for a new signals chamber during the Ghuznee Street super closure.

What are the benefits?

Across both closures, WCC delivered

19

work sites

in just two super closures

This approach saved

55+ days

of road disruption

Traffic management savings at Lambton Quay alone were

$57k

from combining works into one closure

Fewer repeat digs, safer sites

Combining projects into a single closure means fewer separate excavations in the same stretch of road - reducing the opportunities for asset strikes and keeping crews away from live services they didn't know were there. The NZUAR also flags previous strikes, wrongly recorded assets and unidentified buried objects, so contractors know what to expect before they break ground.

Real savings for ratepayers and industry

Shared mobilisation, shared traffic management and shorter overall closures mean lower costs for WCC and for the utilities and contractors involved - as well as fewer weeks of disruption for the businesses and residents along the route.

Better experience and stronger collaboration

Fewer closures mean fewer TMPs and fewer rounds of repeated communications for the businesses, residents and road users along the route. Bringing utilities, contractors and council together around a single plan strengthened collaboration between them, and stakeholder feedback on Ghuznee Street was positive.

Reputational risk reduced

Freshly resurfaced roads being dug up again soon after has long been a reputational headache for councils. By checking planned works in the NFWV before resurfacing and applying a post-works moratorium backed by up-to-date NZUAR records, WCC can avoid that scenario - and make an evidence-based case when directing a utility to redesign or relocate an asset.

Looking ahead, WCC plans to extend this approach in 2027 with three new super closures in different parts of Wellington - with Johnsonville (north), Adelaide Road (south) and Willis Street (CBD) – moving from one-off closures to a regular way of delivering works.

A model for other Road Controlling Authorities

The National Code* expects Road Controlling Authorities (RCA) to coordinate works, share their forward works plans, and consider how technology can help them do both. Super closures show what that can look like in practice.

Meeting those obligations comes down to two things any RCA can put in place: utilities actively publishing their forward works programmes into the NFWV, providing a shared view of what's planned where, and a shared, authoritative view of what's underground through the NZUAR, which shows who needs to be invited to the table.

WCC has formalised both. Its Local Conditions, issued in April 2026 following consultation with all twelve utilities operating in Wellington, establish the NZUAR as the designated platform for meeting underground asset data obligations under the Code, and require utilities to publish forward works programmes into the NFWV to meet coordination and notification obligations. WCC has also recovered the cost of the platform from the utilities and contractors who benefit from it - a 'causer pays' approach to funding shared digital infrastructure.

The consultation, Local Conditions and processes WCC has already worked through are available for other councils to draw on - making the path shorter for those that follow.

If you're from an RCA, and you want to know more about how to apply your powers under the National Code, and the tools that make that easier, you can find our guidance document here: Corridor Management Powers Guide

For more information on how to plan your own super closures, you can get in touch with Amanda Wolfaardt at Wellington City Council:
customer.compliance@wcc.govt.nz

If you'd like to know more about the NZ Forward Works Viewer or NZ Underground Asset Register, email us at **admin@digitalbuiltaotearoa.org.nz**