

## MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

<b>Subject</b>	Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements
<b>Date</b>	26 September 2023
<b>Briefing number</b>	BRI-2877

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1 <sup>st</sup> contact
Linda Stewart	Director Regional Relationships, Taranaki/Hawke's Bay/Gisborne/Manawatū		s 9(2)(a)	✓

### Action taken by Office of the Minister

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen by Minister
- ☐ Agreed
- ☐ Feedback provided
- ☐ Forwarded to
- ☐ Needs change [please specify]
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Overtaken by events

26 September 2023

**Hon David Parker – Minister of Transport**

## Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements

### Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with information about Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements, prior to the site visit on Friday, 29 September 2023 from 12.00pm to 1.00pm.

### Project funding and costs

2. The cost for the Princess Street roundabout and pedestrian underpass is \$13.5 million.
3. The total cost for Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements is \$82 million and funded by the Speed and Infrastructure Programme (SIP).
4. The roundabout and stormwater treatment wetland swale have been completely funded through the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

### Project features

5. Key features of Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements include:
  - Construction of four roundabouts at high-risk intersections:
    - Princess Street
    - Waitara Road
    - State Highway 3A/Mountain Road
    - De Havilland Drive
  - Installation of median barrier between the roundabouts.
  - Widening of Mangaoraka Stream Bridge and Waiongana Stream Bridge to allow the safe installation of median barrier.
  - A pedestrian and cyclist underpass at Princess Street.
  - The current intersection of Airport Drive with State Highway 3 will be permanently closed and realigned to form a four-way roundabout with De Havilland Drive.
  - The intersection of Raleigh and Tate roads will be reconfigured, so the main flow of traffic is from the new roundabout onto Raleigh Street towards Waitara.

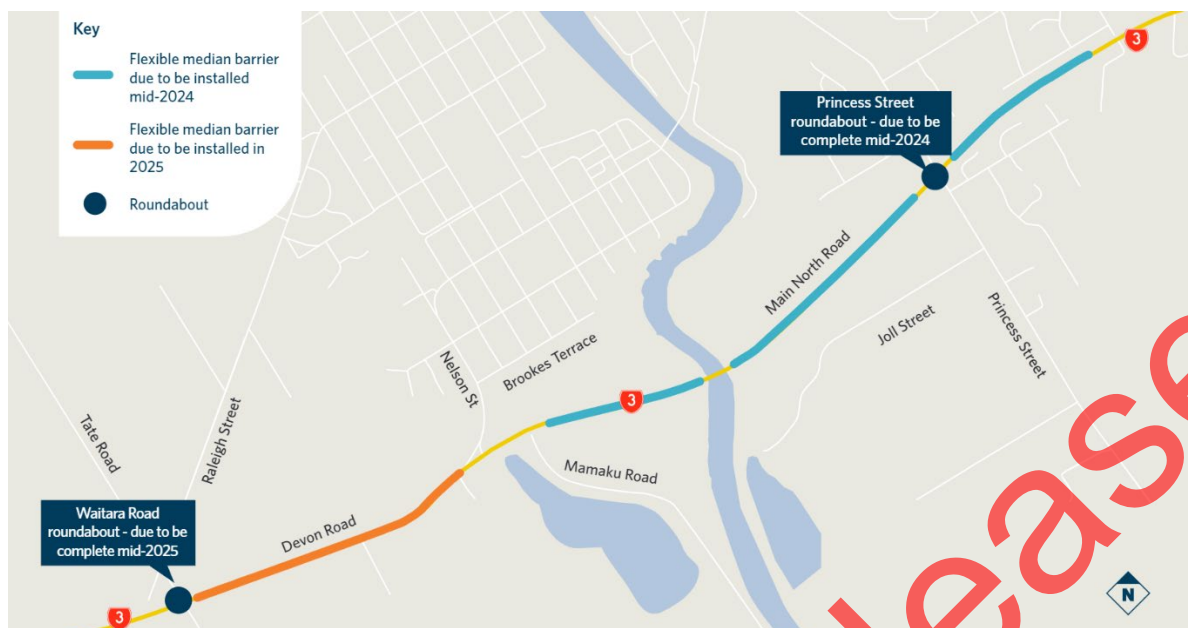
- Project partners include Manukorihi, Ngāti Rahiri, Otaraua, Pukerangiora, Puketapu hapū and Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa and New Plymouth District Council (NPDC).



*Princess Street roundabout design*



*Waitara Road roundabout design*



*Locations for first two stretches of flexible median barrier*

### Project benefits

6. Key benefits of Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements include:
  - Making the route safer by helping to prevent deaths and serious injuries through the safety improvements. This will create safer journeys for local commuters, freight, and visitors to the region.
  - The project will support residential growth north of New Plymouth by providing safer access on and off the highway.

### Project context

7. Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements project is a key part of the SIP in Taranaki.
8. There have been a very high number of crashes on this route resulting in deaths and serious injuries. There has been significant media coverage about the safety issues on this state highway and the community and key stakeholders have been calling for urgent action to improve the road for several years.
9. Recent residential growth in both Waitara and Bell Block has contributed to increased traffic volumes on this route, which has increased the safety risk on the highway.
10. In 2018, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency engaged with the community, transport representatives, emergency services and local council to investigate safety improvements for State Highway 3 between Waitara and Bell Block. Designs for safety improvements were developed, but we were unable to secure funding to progress the project further at that time. In February 2019, the government committed \$29 million towards the project.



11. Waka Kotahi began a detailed design of the safety improvements with the intention of applying for additional funding required for construction from the NLTP. Some early safety improvements were also made to the route, and following public consultation, the speed limit was made a consistent 80km/h. Investigative and early design works identified some challenges associated with the initial designs for the intersection improvements, including significant stormwater, land, and funding requirements. On discovering it would take several years to progress the original roundabout concept designs to construction, we worked with New Plymouth District Council and iwi to refine the designs.
12. Stormwater infrastructure works to support the new Princess Street Roundabout and address current flooding in residential areas near the intersection were undertaken in 2022.
13. Construction on the Princess Street roundabout, pedestrian and cyclist underpass, and a stormwater treatment wetland swale in Manukorihi Park began in March 2023, following a sod turning event attended by former Associate Minister of Transport, Kiritapu Allan.
14. The stormwater treatment wetland swale has been completed and funded by Waka Kotahi but is located on NPDC land. When completing stormwater work in 2022, NPDC installed a watermain pipe at the same time to avoid an additional disruption to traffic in the future.
15. Construction of the stormwater treatment wetland swale was completed in July 2023. Construction of the Princess Street roundabout and pedestrian and cyclist underpass is due to be complete in mid-2024.
16. In August 2023, the detailed design for the roundabout at the intersection of Waitara Road and State Highway 3 and the locations for the first two stretches of flexible median barrier were announced. Construction on the Waitara Road roundabout is due to begin in early 2024.
17. State Highway 3 New Plymouth to Hāwera (New Plymouth to Egmont Village) is another SIP project underway in Taranaki involving safety improvements between New Plymouth and Egmont Village, including a wire rope median barrier, roundabouts, and safe turning opportunities.

### Key messages

18. Key messages of Te Ara Tūtohu: State Highway 3 Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements include:
  - Together with our project partners we're making improvements to State Highway 3 between Waitara and Bell Block so whānau, friends and visitors to Taranaki can get to where they're going safely.
  - Construction of the roundabout and pedestrian underpass at the intersection of Princess Street and State Highway 3 in Waitara is underway.
  - The Princess Street roundabout is being built first because this intersection has the highest crash rate. There were 17 crashes at this intersection between 2017 and 2021 – more than any of the other intersections along the route. The new roundabout will make this intersection much safer for the Waitara community and everyone using the road.
  - Manukorihi, Ngāti Rahiri, Otaraua, Pukerangiora and Puketapu hapū (ngā hapū) have worked with Tihei Design and Workshop Studio to develop a cultural expression for the walls of the underpass and those leading up to it.

- This work is the first part of a wider cultural narrative being developed for the road between Waitara and Bell Block.
- The variety of cultural expressions for the corridor will give ngā hapū the opportunity to once again have a physical presence on the landscape and depict and share their rich history with the local community.
- Construction of the Princess Street roundabout and underpass is expected to be complete by mid-2024.
- Construction of the roundabout at the intersection of Waitara Road and State Highway 3 is expected to get underway in early 2024.
- The Waitara Road roundabout, as well as safety improvements to the section of Raleigh Street between State Highway 3 and Tate Road, will make it easier for people to get on and off the highway.
- Flexible median barrier will be installed along State Highway 3 between Waitara and Bell Block in sections. The designs for the first two sections of flexible median barrier have now been confirmed.
- These designs were finalised following engagement with landowners and businesses along the route, emergency services, and representatives from the freight industry.
- The plan and timeline for installation of flexible median barrier along the rest of the route is currently being confirmed.
- Te Ara Tūtohu: Waitara to Bell Block safety improvements are delivering to New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy, Road to Zero 2020 – 2030, which aims to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by 40 percent by 2030.

#### Other matters

19. s 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
20. Because the highway cuts through Mahoetahi (a site of the New Zealand Wars), mana whenua want a wall to be built to cover the bank currently behind the weigh station as they view it as a wound. We are currently working through a potential solution for this, which may involve building some kind of feature wall.

#### Ministerial site visit

21. The event will be located at 46 Princess Street, Waitara.
22. Guests will be provided with an update on the project and shown the progress on site at several locations.

#### Media

23. Media will not be invited to this visit.

**It is recommended that you:**

24. Note the contents of this briefing.



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**Linda Stewart**

Director Regional Relationships, Taranaki/Hawke's Bay/Gisborne/Manawatū

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**Hon David Parker, Minister of Transport**

Date: 2023

Proactively Released