

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	Northland bridges - investigation underway
Date	24 March 2016
OCU number	BRI-0722
Priority	Urgent

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone
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Action taken by Office of Minister of Transport

- Noted**
- Approved**
- Seen by Minister**
- Referred to**
- Needs change**
- Withdrawn**
- Overtaken by events**

24 March 2016

Minister of Transport

Northland bridges – investigations underway

Purpose

1. This provides you with an update on progress for replacing four one-lane bridges in Northland. A draft media release is attached for your review and approval.

Current situation

2. The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), on behalf of the Government, has begun detailed investigations to replace four one-lane bridges in Northland to address capacity, safety and resilience on these routes for local communities, visitors and freight.
3. The four bridges include two at Matakoho (State Highway 12) and two on State Highway 10 at Taipa and Kaeo.
4. These four bridge upgrades are part of the Government's commitment to upgrade Northland's State highways to improve its economic success and connections with the rest of the country.
5. The Matakoho Bridges are located on State Highway 12 on the Twin Coast Discovery Route, near the popular Kauri Museum. This stretch of State highway is the main route to Dargaville and provides access for visitors and businesses. The alignment through this section of the State highway is very poor, with tight corners and two one-lane bridges causing safety risk for users and delays for freight from the west coast.
6. Improvements are likely to include a complete realignment through this section with two new bridges and intersections to provide better access. The indicative option is currently being developed into a final scheme.
7. The Taipa Bridge is located on State Highway 10 and is currently one-lane, which leads to traffic delays during the peak holiday season. Building an additional lane or parallel structure will allow two-way traffic over the bridge and facilitate the tourism growth in the region. It will also improve the resilience of State Highway 10. In the event of State Highway 1 being closed, freight and other traffic is diverted along State Highway 10.
8. Like the Taipa bridge, the one-lane Kaeo bridge is also located on the detour route for State Highway 1. Further to this, the Kaeo bridge is located on a section of State Highway 10 that is prone to flooding during extreme weather events and the bridge itself has some weight restrictions for heavy commercial vehicles. There is also a safety risk at the intersection with Whangaroa Road which needs addressing.
9. Improvements at Kaeo are likely to include a realignment of the existing road to improve safety and avoid flooding, and the construction of a new bridge.

Next steps

- 10. A draft media release has been attached for your comment and approval. You have asked that this release is made prior to geotechnical and environmental investigations commencing as part of the bridges investigations.
- 11. Indicative plans will be shared with the community for feedback mid-2016, with engagement being progressed with Treaty partners, key stakeholders and affected landowners.
- 12. The procurement strategy for the four bridges has now been confirmed to progress detailed design, consenting and construction, with the procurement method a competitive early contractor involvement model. The model maximises the opportunities for acceleration. The tender process will commence with industry in April 2016 with a request for Statement of Intent and Ability. Industry briefings are currently underway.
- 13. Construction costs for the four bridges is in the range of Consider Construction is planned to begin 2017/ 2018 subject to consenting and i

Recommendation

- 14. It is recommended that you review and approve the media release.



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Hon Simon Bridges, Minister of Transport

Approved

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Date

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

Attachment: draft media release for your review and approval

Transport Minister Simon Bridges says a key step forward has been taken for the Government's Northland Economic Action Plan with confirmation that investigations and construction procurement is underway to replace four one-lane bridges in Northland.

The NZ Transport Agency on behalf of the Government has begun detailed investigations and construction procurement for the bridges at Matakoho, Kaeo and Taipa which will improve the Twin Coast Discovery routes for local communities, visitors and freight.

The Matakoho Bridges project includes replacing two one-lane bridges on State Highway 12 near Matakoho, realigning a section of the highway to remove tight corners and creating safer and easier access to the Kauri Museum.

"This stretch of highway is a key route to Dargaville, providing access for businesses and visitors to the region. The layout, tight corners and one-way bridges mean there are some safety risks and delays for freight vehicles, which we are keen to address," says Minister Bridges.

Geotechnical and environmental investigations are also starting this month on State Highway 10 at Kaeo and Taipa.

"Replacing the two one-lane bridges at those locations will improve safety and provide greater resilience during extreme weather events as well as providing better connections along the Twin Coast Discovery route between the Bay of Islands and Doubtless Bay."

"These four bridge upgrades are part of the Government's commitment to invest in upgrades to Northland's State Highway network to stimulate economic growth throughout the region and improve connections with the rest of New Zealand."

Indicative plans will be shared with the Matakoho, Kaeo and Taipa communities for feedback later this year. A detailed design for each bridge will then be undertaken with construction planned for late 2017/ early 2018.

In parallel, the Transport Agency will begin construction procurement in early April to get early contractor involvement in the designs for each of the bridges.