

29 February 2024



REF: OIA-14575

Dear 

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your letter of 31 January 2024 regarding the Waikanae River Bridge and requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. What level of community engagement/input was undertaken and considered prior to NZTA and the Kapiti Coast District Council making such a disruptive traffic management decision on behalf on the community?*
- 2. The reason for NZTA to change from "a series of short single lane closures on the bridge " to draconian 24/7 traffic enforcement/management required throughout the entire project i.e. six months?*
- 3. Why is 24/7 traffic enforcement/management necessary when little to no work appears to be being carried out during extended hours and also with no work being undertaken during weekends?*
- 4. What is the forecast cost of 24/7 traffic enforcement/management through to completion of the project? From my casual observations, there have been multiple people North and South of the bridge enforcing road management?*
- 5. Was a cost benefit analysis and community risk/impact assessment undertaken based on community input and/or feedback prior to NZTA's December 2023 roading enforcement/management decision?*
- 6. Due to the invasive and disruptive nature of the project on the local community, why is work not being carried out with the utmost urgency?*

I will answer each part of your request in turn.

1. What level of community engagement/input was undertaken and considered prior to NZTA and the Kapiti Coast District Council making such a disruptive traffic management decision on behalf on the community?

The Waikanae River Bridge shared path clip-on is the final part of the MacKay's to Peka Peka Expressway revocation work on the old State Highway 1 corridor, making the road fit for purpose for Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) as a local road. The revocation work has included 15.5 kilometres of traffic calming measures, road safety upgrades, walking, cycling and lighting improvements and numerous footpath installations between south Raumati and Waikanae.

Extensive community engagement and consultation was undertaken to develop the design for the revocation works, including briefings with the Paraparaumu / Raumati and Waikanae community boards, letter drops and emails to businesses and residents, engagement with the Waikanae and Paraparaumu communities and community stakeholder groups including walking and cyclist groups. A clip-on was selected for the bridge following specific feedback from the KCDC and other groups about a previous proposal to add cycle lanes to the existing bridge.

Traffic management plans (TMP) for any construction work must be proposed by the contractor delivering the work, and then approved by traffic controllers for each relevant Road Controlling Authority (RCA). Decisions about traffic management must consider factors including:

- the safety of workers on site and the safety of road users / the public
- maintaining access to homes and businesses
- the effect on journeys across the wider network (e.g., congestion and delays).

Consultation on this decision is between the project team and contractors, and the traffic controllers and staff of the RCAs. In this case those are the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) and KCDC.

We have consulted with many groups on how to best manage the one-way detour and mitigate its effects where possible. We have implemented measures to lessen the impact of the one-way detour based on this consultation including:

- providing residents' exemptions for Waikanae Downs residents and businesses immediately south of the bridge
- providing access for school buses and rail replacement buses in both directions
- working with the school bus operator to add an extra pick-up south of the bridge on the morning run
- measures to inform potential customers about access in the traffic management area
- providing access for emergency services.

2. The reason for NZTA to change from “a series of short single lane closures on the bridge “ to draconian 24/7 traffic enforcement/management required throughout the entire project i.e. six months?

A 24/7 lane closure is required for the duration of the work. While the project site is not active 24/7, there are excavations immediately next to the road lane for bridge foundations to be laid, and the side barrier on the bridge has been removed in preparation for the clip-on to be added. This means it is not safe to open two lanes on the bridge, even outside of working hours.

The need for the southbound one-way detour has been well considered. Options for managing traffic levels were assessed by experienced traffic management experts who know the local environment well.

Use of stop/go traffic signs and/or using only part time detours (e.g., at peak times) were all considered and rejected as they required queuing lengths that exceeded the available road space and would cause a gridlock of traffic at Te Moana Road, over the Elizabeth Street level rail crossing, as well as blocking access to the local shops. As you may be aware, this area is already quite congested at times.

We have considered hybrid options, such as using stop/go traffic management at off-peak times. Such options would only be feasible overnight, due to high daytime traffic volumes, including high volumes between the morning and evening peaks. It would also be necessary to change or remove detour signage each time traffic management switched between a detour and a stop/go operation.

3. Why is 24/7 traffic enforcement/management necessary when little to no work appears to be being carried out during extended hours and also with no work being undertaken during weekends?

There are several reasons for 24/7 traffic management using a single lane closure:

- There are open excavations for the bridge abutment foundations that are very close to the road edge.
- The bridge pedestrian balustrade is removed. A temporary balustrade is in place to protect the construction crew, but this would not enable traffic to use the bridge safely.
- There is currently no safety crash barrier on the bridge.

In relation to your question about work continuing on weekends, I refer you to my response to question 6.

4. What is the forecast cost of 24/7 traffic enforcement/management through to completion of the project? From my casual observations, there have been multiple people North and South of the bridge enforcing road management?

The contract value of \$1.93 million for the clip-on works also includes the cost of traffic management, and it is not possible to separate out the costs. The main contractor engages Higgins as subcontractor for the traffic management and its staff are on shift rotations, so you will see different people on a daily basis.

5. Was a cost benefit analysis and community risk/impact assessment undertaken based on community input and/or feedback prior to NZTA's December 2023 roading enforcement/management decision?

No reports on cost-benefit analysis or community impact were completed, however disruption and delay to travel were specifically considered as part of the decision-making process. The development of the TMP included consideration of safety for workers and the public, access to directly affected properties, and the effect on journeys across the network. Input was sought from KCDC's roading and traffic control teams as well.

6. Due to the invasive and disruptive nature of the project on the local community, why is work not being carried out with the utmost urgency?

We are working with the contractor to explore all possible avenues to accelerate the work. However, the nature and the sequence of work is such that adding more resources or time on the project site (such as weekend work) does not necessarily lessen the time taken, as the room available on site is very constrained. There are mandatory times for certain activities, such as the time needed to cure concrete foundations before other work can proceed.

Night work was considered to transport the bridge trusses to the site and crane them in place, however the nature of the work meant that noise levels will exceed the allowed levels outlined in the KCDC District Plan for construction noise during nighttime.

In line with NZTA policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with NZTA, please contact the Ministerial Services team, by email to official.correspondence@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Kinvig', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Mark Kinvig
National Manager, Infrastructure Delivery