

LEVIN TO WELLINGTON ROAD OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

GENERAL

What is a Road of National Significance?

The Government has identified seven Roads of National Significance (RoNS). The development of these roads will help grow the national economy by improving productivity in New Zealand's largest cities and surrounding regions. Making these key routes more efficient and safer will improve the reliability of journey times, reduce severe congestion and improve key freight and tourism routes.

The seven RoNS are: SH1 Wellington Northern Corridor (Levin to Wellington Airport), SH1 Puhoi to Wellsford, completion of the Auckland western ring route (SH20, 16, 18), SH1 Auckland Victoria Park bottleneck, SH1 Waikato Expressway, SH2 Tauranga Eastern Corridor and Christchurch motorway projects.

Why has the Wellington Northern Corridor been identified as a Road of National Significance?

The SH1 Wellington Northern Corridor (Levin to Wellington Airport) requires significant development to reduce congestion, improve safety and support economic growth.

The route is of strategic importance both nationally and regionally as it serves the country's third largest economic centre and is the primary route into and out of Wellington. The route also provides an important access route to key regional destinations including the hospital, airport and Wellington CBD, and inter-island ferry terminals.

What benefits are anticipated from investment in the Wellington Northern Corridor Road of National Significance?

Investment in the Wellington Northern Corridor will:

- Encourage inter-regional and national economic growth and productivity
- Improve access to Wellington's CBD, key industrial and employment centres, port, airport and hospital
- Reduce severe congestion on the state highway and local road networks
- Improved safety and journey time reliability on SH1.

The current highway is regularly congested, especially at peak travelling times (including holiday periods). This congestion often results in unreliable travel times for people and freight as there is no viable alternative route in and out of Wellington City. The lack of an alternative route for SH1 makes the Wellington region vulnerable to major natural disasters. At the northern end of the corridor, particularly between Paraparaumu and Levin, SH1 serves as the only through route so is increasingly used for local trips within districts. The route also has a poor safety record, with one of the highest number of fatal/serious crashes per kilometre in the country (KiwiRAP 2008).

What economic benefits are anticipated by investing in the Wellington Northern Corridor Road of National Significance?

Construction of the Wellington Road of National Significance (RoNS) will provide a range of benefits from savings in travel times and reductions in vehicle operating costs, through to agglomeration benefits (productivity gains resulting from the clustering of economic activity) and labour market changes. This will assist the economy to function more efficiently and help achieve economic growth and improved productivity. As a result we expect the development of the Wellington Northern Corridor will create a conservative figure of 650 new jobs, over and above the normal increase in employment through economic growth.

How will the Wellington region benefit?

The Road of National Significance (RoNS) is expected to deliver several growth benefits to the region when completed by supporting land-use and economic growth aspirations of the region and improving connectivity between regional economic hubs.

The Wellington Northern Corridor will also significantly improve connectivity between a number of regional economic hubs including Wellington's CBD, Aotea Business Park and Paraparaumu; together with Horowhenua regional centres including Palmerston North and Manawatu.

What projects are included in the Wellington Northern Corridor RoNS?

The Wellington Northern Corridor is made up of eight project elements:

- Airport to Mt Victoria Tunnel (Ruahine Street Improvements and Mt Victoria Tunnel duplication)
- Basin Reserve (Basin Reserve capacity improvements and accommodating the Buckle Street memorial park)
- Terrace Tunnel (tunnel duplication)
- Aotea Quay to Ngauranga (capacity improvements during peak times on the hard shoulder)
- Linden to MacKays Crossing (Transmission Gully)
- Mackays Crossing to Peka Peka (expressway)
- Peka Peka to Otaki (four-laning, intersection improvements and Otaki Bypass)
- Otaki to North of Levin (four-laning and intersection improvements from Otaki to Levin, Levin Bypass, and passing lanes and intersection improvements north of Levin).

In general terms, these elements will enable the provision of a four-lane divided highway from Levin to Grenada to join the existing four lane highway, and increased capacity to four-lanes along the whole route between the Wellington City and the airport.

What is the expected cost of improvements to the Northern Corridor?

At today's prices we expect the cost of developing the Northern Corridor to be between \$2.1 and \$2.4 billion (in 2009 dollars).

What will happen to homeowners affected by these plans?

Any property owners whose properties are fully or partly required as a result of the roading plans for State Highway 1 will be consulted with as these projects develop. Where property must be purchased owners will be fairly compensated as part of the Public Works Act.

Will there be opportunities for the public to provide feedback on the Road of National Significance plans for SH1 in Wellington?

Each project that is progressed as part of this announcement will still have to go through the normal processes of investigation and design before progressing to construction. We expect that the public will be consulted as part of the development of these projects as is the norm for any major project the NZ Transport Agency undertakes.

How quickly will the Northern Corridor be improved?

Over the next three years the majority of work on the Wellington Northern Corridor will focus on detailed investigations. This will enable construction phases to be appropriately staged, and ensure most improvements can be completed within 10 years.

At this stage it is estimated that the construction of the improvements will fall into three distinct phases. Note, this order may be subject to changes depending on how the projects progress:

- Phase 1: Construct Aotea Quay to Ngauranga and Basin Reserve within Wellington and progress the Peka Peka to Otaki section, followed by the Mackays to Peka Peka section.
- Phase 2 Linden to Mackays crossing (Transmission Gully).
- Phase 3 Construct the remaining projects as follows:
- Mount Victoria Tunnel duplication and Ruahine St widening;
 - Otaki to Levin; and
 - Terrace Tunnel duplication

Do these timeframes mean that the projects will be “called in” under the RMA?

We will use the new “call-in” provisions in the Resource Management Amendment Act 2009 for the majority of the projects within the Wellington Northern Corridor. There may be some portions that will not require the provisions to be utilised.

How will the RoNS projects be funded? Will there be any tolling?

The Government’s allocation of additional funds to state highway improvements through the Government Policy Statement (GPS) will help to accelerate the development of the Roads of National Significance. In addition, the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is also investigating options for alternative funding to contribute to completing all seven of the Roads of National Significance over the 10-year period of the National Land Transport Programme. This includes considering tolling where appropriate. The NZTA will be investigating tolling for Transmission Gully but no decisions have been made.

**Why is the NZ Transport Agency spending so much money on state highways?
What about other modes?**

In giving effect to the GPS, the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) has recognised that the Government's priority for land transport investment is to support national economic growth and productivity. Investing in high quality infrastructure, particularly the state highway network, will contribute to that outcome by encouraging efficient movement of freight and people.

In the National Land Transport Programme 2009-12, the NZTA is making a record investment of \$8.7 billion in land transport over the next three years. This is the largest land transport investment in New Zealand's history and a 17 percent increase on funding in the past three years. While the Roads of National Significance investment accounts for a significant portion of this allocation, in accordance with the Government's investment priorities, funding has also been increased across a number of other activities including local roads (\$1,919M) and public transport (\$899M).

How will the Wellington to Levin Road of National Significance (RoNS) affect the local transport network? Are any improvements anticipated on the local transport network as a consequence of the RoNS investment?

The route chosen for the Wellington Northern Corridor has been selected because it will deliver the best results alongside continuing investment in local roads and public transport.

Many of the planned improvements were developed in the context of the Western Corridor Plan (April 2006) and the Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan (October 2008). These plans recommended state highway improvements within a broader package of transport solutions. These included improvements to rail, walking and cycling facilities and travel demand measures to encourage more efficient use of car trips and the use of alternative modes. Several of these improvements have already been delivered.

Looking forward, the NZ Transport Agency will be working closely with affected local authorities to ensure the Wellington RoNS is effectively integrated into the local transport networks and the full benefits can be realised.

What provisions will be made for pedestrians and cyclists in these improvements?

Pedestrian and cyclist access will be considered as part of the investigation of the entire Northern Wellington Corridor Road of National Significance project. It will form part of a package of solutions for the state highway and local roading network.

What opportunities will local communities have to influence the Northern Corridor improvement projects?

We are in the early stages of investigation for a number of the sections of the Northern Corridor. We'll be working closely with local communities as we identify and select options and go through resource management processes.

Does this announcement affect the amount of money available to fund projects other than the Roads of National Significance (RoNS)?

No changes are anticipated to the funding allocations for land transport activities (as outlined in the 2009-2012 National Land Transport Programme) as a consequence of the RoNS announcement.

Ngauranga to Linden

Are improvements proposed between Ngauranga and Linden?

At this stage a new east-west link (SH1 to SH2) is not proposed as part of the road of national significance programme. The Ngauranga to Grenada section of SH1 does experience ongoing congestion, and it is proposed that this be addressed by improving the quality of connector routes between the road of national significance and the Hutt Valley. After studying a number of options, the NZTA Board prefers a new Grenada to Petone link rather than upgrading SH58 between Haywards Hill and Pauatahanui. However, discussions with local authorities are required to determine how this can best be implemented and appropriate funding shares. This section has not been costed in the overall Roads of National Significance portfolio cost.

Mackays to Peka Peka

What criteria did the NZ Transport Agency Board use to make its decision?

When evaluating each option, the Board gave careful consideration to the views of the community and the extent to which each option:

- assists economic development
- assists safety and personal security
- improves access and mobility
- protects and promotes public health
- ensures environmental sustainability.

In addition, the Board considered a wide range of factors including costs, effects on property and alignment with a number of national and regional policies and strategies.

What are the benefits of this decision for the local community?

Construction of the Sandhills Expressway:

- affects fewer property owners particularly those with homes that have been recently constructed
- avoids town centres and in particular maintains the integrity of Waikanae township; and
- can be constructed without significantly impacting on the traffic flow.

How many homes will be affected by the Sandhills Expressway?

Depending on the outcome of any future detailed design, at this stage this corridor is likely to directly affect approximately 20-50 privately owned parcels of land. Property owners will be compensated under the provisions of the Public Works Act. Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) provides information on landowner rights with respect to public works: www.linz.govt.nz

How long will it take to build the Sandhills Expressway?

We expect construction of the expressway to be substantially completed within ten years or sooner if earlier progress can be made.

What are the next steps?

The announcement of the Sandhills Expressway as the preferred route has provided the Kapiti community with certainty about which option NZTA will progress.

Next, the NZ Transport Agency needs to undertake further investigation to finalise the alignment of the route inside the preferred corridor, including the location of the interchanges. Further work will also be required to designate a four-lane highway along this corridor as the current Western Link Road is only designated as a two-lane local road. Further community consultation will occur as part of this process. This work is necessary to ensure we choose the best alignment for the road within the preferred corridor based on a number of characteristics including: ground conditions, social impacts, traffic flow and noise impacts. We will also need to apply for consents and a designation for constructing the road. This will take place after the investigation process is complete.

How will this work be done?

We plan to commission consultants to start this work in early 2010.

The NZTA has made a commitment to the Kapiti community to fast track the project to provide certainty about the proposed route. The call for a request for tender to establish a roading Alliance for the Sandhills Expressway further demonstrates NZTA's promise to deliver the project as quickly as possible.

What is a roading Alliance?

A roading Alliance provides an alternative delivery method from the more traditional forms of contracting. An Alliance involves joint ownership of a project and, in the case of the Sandhills Expressway, would comprise NZTA, the consultant and the contractor working together. The alliance approach allows the NZTA to work with the private sector to deliver major projects with greater speed and innovation. The good ideas and innovation that spring from the alliance approach allows us to overlap project phases and get on with delivering important projects much faster.

When will the "Alliance" be established?

The NZTA will undertake the first stage of the tendering process to identify potential Alliance partners in January 2010.

When will NZTA be talking to affected property owners?

Once we have determined the best alignment for the Sandhills Expressway, we will draw up Land Requirement Plans to determine exactly what property will be affected by and/or required for the expressway. This work will occur as part of the detailed design phase. Once Land Requirement Plans are produced we will consult with directly affected landowners.

I live on Main Road South in Raumati. Will I be affected by the southern connection of the expressway to SH1?

Currently, there are two options for the southern connection to the Sandhills expressway, either south of Poplar Avenue or at 200 Main Road. If the 200 Main Road option is chosen, some residents of Main Road will be affected. We have notified property owners who may be affected if the southern connection is built at 200 Main Road. However, we will not know which option will be built until we have completed further investigation and detailed design.

When will construction start on the Sandhills Expressway?

The NZ Transport Agency will be looking for all opportunities to ensure this project progresses as quickly as possible. Establishing a roading Alliance will help us to fast track the Sandhills Expressway. Next year, after the completion of detailed design work, we'll have a better understanding of the possible construction start date. The NZTA will advise the community as soon as the timing is finalised.

When will the local community get a second bridge over the Waikanae River?

We will be in a better position to identify a possible construction start date after we have completed further investigation and detailed design which will commence later this year.

How will traffic congestion and disruption to traffic on SH1 be managed while construction of the Sandhills expressway is in progress?

Because the Sandhills Expressway does not impact on the current State Highway, the disruption to traffic will be minimal.

What will happen to the existing SH1 corridor?

It will revert to a local road once the expressway is completed.

How much will the Sandhills Expressway cost?

At this stage the cost of the Expressway is estimated to be between \$380 million to \$500 million (2009 dollars).

Peka Peka to Otaki

What criteria did the NZ Transport Agency Board use to make its decision?

The Board gave careful consideration to the views of the community and the extent to which the Peka Peka to Otaki Expressway:

- assists economic development
- assists safety and personal security
- improves access and mobility
- protects and promotes public health
- ensures environmental sustainability.

In addition, the Board considered a wide range of factors including costs, effects on property and alignment with a number of national and regional policies and strategies.

What are the benefits of the Peka Peka to Otaki Expressway?

The improvements to this section of the Northern Corridor will:

- ease congestion
- reduce journey times for local and state highway traffic
- increase the efficient movement of freight and people between Wellington and the north
- assist in lifting economic productivity and growth in the area
- improve safety.

What does the Peka Peka to Otaki Expressway include?

This section of the Wellington Northern Corridor includes two parts. The first part involves four-laning the Te Horo stretch of SH1 and improving associated intersections. The second involves establishing an Otaki Bypass which would be four lanes with associated intersection improvements to connecting roads.

What happens now?

The NZ Transport Agency will need to undertake further investigation to finalise the alignment of the route inside the preferred corridor, including the location of the interchanges. We plan to commission consultants to start this work in early 2010. This work will include the production of Land Requirement Plans which will clearly show which properties will be directly affected by the expressway. Once Land Requirement Plans are produced we will consult with directly affected landowners. We will also need to apply for consents and a designation for constructing the expressway. This will take place after the detailed design process is complete.

How long will it take to build the Peka Peka to Otaki Expressway?

Most improvements to the Wellington Northern Corridor are expected to be completed within 10 years. The improvements to this section will be included in the first phase of this ten-year programme.

How much will this project cost?

At this stage the cost of the Peka Peka to Otaki Expressway is estimated to be between \$215 million to \$355 million (2009 dollars).

Linden to Mackays Crossing (Transmission Gully)

What is the Transmission Gully project?

The 27-kilometre Transmission Gully is a proposed highway that will run from MacKay's Crossing, just north of Paekakariki, crossing State Highway 58 (SH58) to the southern reconnection to State Highway 1 (SH1) near Linden. The project is one component of a package of rail and road options that are intended to address congestion, traffic flow and road safety in the Wellington region.

What are the benefits of this decision?

- Transmission Gully provides better community and environmental outcomes and will provide a safe four-lane route.

- It will provide peak period travel time savings of as much as 15 minutes for people travelling between Kapiti and Lower Hutt and 10 minutes between Kapiti and Wellington.
- Transmission Gully is less expensive than the Coastal Route by 19%.
- It allows the existing state highway corridor to become a safer local road and also provides an alternative route in the event that there are delays or accidents on Transmission Gully.
- Transmission Gully provides improved east/west travel with a more direct connection to State Highway 58 and the Hutt Valley/Wairarapa.
- It will also be specifically engineered to be easily reinstated in the event of an earthquake.
- The Coastal Route would have greater traffic disruption affects during construction.
- While the Coastal Route could be completed within a similar time period to Transmission Gully, it would take several extra years to be "construction ready".

How much will Transmission Gully cost?

At this stage the cost of Transmission Gully is estimated to be \$1.025 billion (2008 dollars).

How will Transmission Gully be funded?

We are investigating options for alternative funding. This includes considering tolling, although no decisions have been made as yet.

What work has been or is being done?

Phase 1 of the project saw investigations started in 2006 to provide a preferred route through Transmission Gully (between Mackays Crossing and Linden) for public consultation in July 2008. The preferred route was overwhelmingly supported in the public consultation undertaken then and the project then proceeded to Phase 2. Phase two is expected to be completed by the end of 2010 and involves the gathering of information in preparation for the possible future lodging of regulatory consents for the project.

How many lanes will Transmission Gully have?

Transmission Gully will be a four-lane route; two lanes in each direction with a central median barrier inbetween. Slow vehicle lanes will be provided on the steepest sections. On sections where there are significant weaving movements e.g. from Mackays Crossing to the northbound connection with Transmission Gully from the coastal highway, or from State Highway 58 to the proposed James Cook Interchange, a total of six lanes are considered necessary for safety reasons.

How will the Wellington region benefit?

From a regional perspective, the Transmission Gully route will:

- provide an alternative strategic link for the Wellington region that improves regional road network security
- assist in remedying the safety concerns and projected capacity problems on the existing State Highway 1 by providing a safe, reliable and more responsive route between Linden and Mackays Crossing in an environmentally sustainable manner

- assist in enabling wider economic development by providing a cost-optimised route that better provides for the through movement of freight and people
- assist in the integration of New Zealand's land transport system by enabling the existing State Highway 1 to be developed into a safe and multi-functional alternative to the proposed new strategic link.

What is likely to happen to affected properties along the route?

The NZ Transport Agency has been working for some time now with all property owners to ensure the best and fairest possible outcomes for all concerned.

How long would it take to build the highway?

It is envisaged that construction of the highway would take around five years.

When is construction expected to be completed?

Most improvements to the Wellington Northern Corridor are expected to be completed within 10 years. The improvements to this section will be included in the second phase of this ten-year programme.

What will happen to the existing SH1 coastal route?

No formal decision about the future status of the existing SH1 has been made but this will be made in consultation with the local communities and Councils.

What does the announcement of Transmission Gully mean for SH1 Mana Esplanade?

This means that once Transmission Gully has been built Mana Esplanade will revert to a local road, owned and operated by Porirua City Council. In the meantime, the NZ Transport Agency is progressing with making formal changes to the current T2 lanes to turn them into clearways as a result of last year's SH1 Paremata to Plimmerton Upgrade Review.

What does the announcement mean for SH58 and SH2 improvements?

Improvements are still being investigated for SH2, with the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) currently in the design phase for improvements at the SH2/58 Haywards Interchange and work under way to consider what improvements could be made for the length of SH2 from Melling to Haywards Hill Road. NZTA will also continue to work with the local authorities on other improvements to these roads as they relate to the areas they represent.

Basin Reserve

Why do we need this project?

The project has been aimed at reducing the current traffic congestion caused when State Highway 1 traffic meets local traffic at the Basin Reserve. The improvements will also allow the better flow of traffic to Wellington City's southern and eastern suburbs, and improve public transport, walking and cycling.

Will the community and stakeholders be consulted?

Yes – two phases of public consultation have been planned. The first will start in February 2010 when the project team will have a number of options ready for public consultation. The second is hoed to be in the latter part of 2010 after a preferred option has been selected. There will be several public open days during each stage. The project team will produce material providing detailed information to the public who will be able to provide feedback through the post or online. The NZ Transport Agency website will also have more information about consultation as soon as details are available.

When will a decision be made on which option to build?

The NZ Transport Agency Board will decide which option should be progressed with before the end of next year (2010).

When will it be built?

As part of the first phase of construction on the full Roads of National Significance package.

How much will it cost?

Detailed costs will be developed for each option as they are designed. At this stage the rough order of cost for the Basin Reserve is approximately \$36 million.

How will it improve passenger transport?

The improvements will form part of a passenger transport spine that will reduce congestion and improve travel times for buses and other travellers to and from the southern and eastern suburbs.

Will important heritage buildings be affected?

A review of the heritage buildings in the area has been completed. Independent archaeologists and heritage specialists are working with the project team to minimise or avoid impacts on these buildings.

How much noise & air pollution will it generate?

Acoustic and air quality specialists are working with the project team to forecast future noise and air quality levels and recommend ways any design can avoid or minimise effects.

Will it impact on the schools?

The project team will be working with nearby schools to develop design solutions that maintain safe access.

How will this affect the Basin Reserve cricket ground?

The project team will be working with independent noise experts and urban designers to minimise and avoid impacts on the Basin Reserve.

Airport to Mt Victoria Tunnel

What is being considered for this section of the highway?

Improvements have been identified to improve connections to Wellington Airport and also the eastern suburbs by creating four lanes of traffic, two in either direction on Ruahine Street and Wellington Road. This would include intersection

improvements, in particular at Goa Street, also and the duplication of the Mt Victoria Tunnel.

Where will the duplicate tunnel be located?

It will be located at the current 'pilot tunnel', at the end of Paterson Street.

What does this mean for people living along Ruahine Street and Wellington Road?

Resident living on Ruahine Street and Wellington Road will be aware there is an existing designation for the highway to be widened. This designation has been in place for nine years and is consistent with the intention to widen the road to four lanes. Further discussions will be required with these residents over the final design of this section of the Road of National Significance.

When would this work be undertaken?

Work is in the early planning stages for this section of the Wellington to Levin Road of National Significance with more work required to consider when construction would happen and how long it would take to construct. It is currently scheduled to be carried out as part of phase 3 of the programme for improvements on the Wellington Northern corridor.

What is the cost of duplicating the Mt Victoria Tunnel?

This will depend on the final design of the project. The Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan, adopted in 2008, gave the indicative cost of duplicating the tunnel as \$175m.

Does the Mt Victoria Tunnel need to be duplicated in tandem with the Basin Reserve Improvements?

The Basin Reserve improvements do not need the Mt Victoria Tunnel duplication to be effective as they are stand-alone improvements to separate the conflict of east/west vs north/south traffic flows.