



Christchurch Motorways

Western Corridor

Information sheet
May 2013



What is the Western Corridor?

The Western Corridor (SH1) connects north and south Canterbury with Christchurch International Airport. It runs between Belfast in the north and the large industrial area at Hornby in the south.

The focus of this project is to four-lane SH1 from The Groynes to the centre of Hornby and to build a bypass to the west of Belfast. As part of this project a number of intersections along SH1 will need to be redesigned to improve safety and efficiency. The Russley Road (SH1)/Memorial Avenue intersection, as the main access to the airport, needs a design that will function efficiently, well into the future.

Is the Western Corridor in the right place?

Most of the traffic on the Western Corridor is heading to destinations between Belfast and Hornby, with less than 15% of the traffic travelling further to the north or south.

This means most people will keep using Russley Road to access the airport, Christchurch or Hornby areas. So, yes we are improving and adding capacity in the right place.

However, investigations have identified opportunities to improve the local road network to the west of (behind) the airport. These improvements would allow people to bypass the Hornby area if they were coming from or heading further south.

Why is the Western Corridor upgrade needed?

Around 42,000 vehicles per day, among the highest for any road in Canterbury, use Main North Road through Belfast to enter and exit Christchurch. This number of vehicles, and in particular the trucks and heavy vehicles using the road, discourage walking and cycling and restrict public transport. As traffic volumes grow, congestion will become worse and safety and public health concerns will increase around the Main North Road/Belfast area.

Further along the corridor, increased commercial and industrial activity, particularly at the airport and in Hornby, is creating more traffic and congestion at peak times. The Canterbury earthquakes have also added to congestion with many businesses moving to the west of Christchurch.

There is insufficient capacity in the existing two-lane road to absorb further traffic growth. To ensure businesses based in and outside Christchurch are able to get their goods to and from the airport, the current road requires upgrading to reduce congestion and improve safety.

The benefits

For traffic travelling on SH1 from the north and south, congestion and travel times will be reduced and journeys will have greater travel time certainty.

For the Belfast and Redwood community, an estimated 17,000 fewer vehicles per day on Main North Road will improve the safety and quality of life for Belfast residents. The decrease in traffic volumes will make walking and cycling much safer and more attractive and provide greater scope for public transport improvements. Improvements to air quality and noise reduction are also expected.

For those travelling between the city and the airport, improvements to the Memorial Avenue/Russley Road intersection will improve safety and reduce delays. The current delays exiting the airport are unacceptable and require a long-term solution.

What will improving the Western Corridor involve?

There are several distinct sections to the upgrading of the Western Corridor. Starting from the north:

- The Western Belfast Bypass is a new four-lane extension of the Northern Motorway bypassing Belfast then joining Johns Road south of the entrance to The Groynes.
- The existing two-lane Johns Road between The Groynes and Harewood Road will be upgraded to a four-lane, median-separated road that retains its 80km/h speed limit. The Sawyers Arms roundabout will be upgraded and a new roundabout will be constructed at the Clearwater intersection. For safety reasons, access will be limited to left turns at Wilkinsons, Greywacke, Gardiners and MacLeans Island roads.
- Russley Road will be a four-lane, median-separated road from Harewood Road to Memorial Avenue. The Harewood roundabout will be enlarged and improved. Plans for a cycle subway under the Harewood roundabout are also being investigated. Access on Wairakei Road will be reduced to left-in left-out on the city side to improve safety (the airport side will close). The 80km/h speed limit on Russley Road will be retained.
- The Russley Road (SH1)/Memorial Avenue intersection will be upgraded to cope with the current high traffic volume and increases expected in the future. This upgrade will be a grade-separated interchange. (Russley Road will go over Memorial Avenue on a bridge and an intersection at ground level will allow access to Russley Road and Memorial Avenue from every direction.) A range of options have been considered for this intersection but only the interchange will provide a long-term solution. Cycle lanes on Memorial Avenue and pedestrian signals will improve accessibility across Russley Road.
- The existing two-lane section of Russley Road between Memorial Avenue and Yaldhurst Road will be upgraded to a four-lane median-separated road. Access to Avonhead Road will be closed due to safety issues and access to and from Ryans Road will be reduced. An additional access to the airport area south of Avonhead Road is planned.
- Masham and Carmen roads from Yaldhurst Road to the Main South Road will be a four-lane, median-separated road operating at 50-60km/h. For safety reasons, access will be reduced at some minor intersections.

What stage is the project at?

Each section of the Western Corridor is at a different phase of development:

- Detailed design for the Western Belfast Bypass is underway, with the project expected to be lodged for designations and consenting in 2013. Construction will take place between 2014 and 2018.
- Johns Road (from The Groynes to Harewood Road) has a confirmed layout, and consent and construction will be carried out between 2013 and 2016.
- Four-laning is all but complete at the southern end of Russley Road. Following consenting and design, construction from Harewood Road to Avonhead Road (including the southern airport access) is planned for 2015-2018.
- In the Carmen and Masham roads section (between Yaldhurst and Waterloo roads) construction has begun and will be completed in mid-2014.



Want to know more?

Information on this road of national significance project is available at the Christchurch Motorways project website: www.nzta.govt.nz/christchurch-motorways/

The NZ Transport Agency produces project update newsletters. If you would like to receive these, fill in the online form on the website.

Contact the Christchurch NZTA office on 03 964 2800.

