

Petone to Grenada Link Road

Issue 01
February 2014

We are considering a potential new transport link between Tawa/Porirua and the Hutt Valley to improve travel on two of Wellington's main highways and to resolve some critical issues that affect both day-to-day travel and our ability to manage major events.

The Petone to Grenada Link Road (Link Road) has been talked about for many years. It's been investigated most recently as part of the Ngauranga Triangle Strategy Study and included in the 2011 Hutt Corridor Plan. The diagram on this page shows the existing route travelled and the potential new route options being considered.

Over the past year we have been looking at the benefits of the Link Road more closely. Not only does it have the ability to reduce congestion on State Highway 2 (SH2) and State Highway 1 (SH1), it also has the ability to:

- Make peak morning journeys between the Hutt and Porirua around 10 minutes faster and 7km shorter
- Provide another route to/from the Hutt Valley when SH2 is blocked or Wellington City when SH1 is blocked
- Support better public transport access (particularly for buses) to/from Wellington, Porirua and the Hutt Valley by improving traffic flow and creating the opportunity for new routes
- Support more walking and cycling opportunities, particularly if combined with the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link
- Make travel times on SH1 and SH2 more reliable
- Open up future residential or business growth opportunities by making Porirua, Wellington and the Hutt Valley better connected.

Last year we considered the key issues and talked with our partners at Hutt City Council and Wellington City Council, as well as other key stakeholders, before considering potential route options in more detail. The implications for future land use in the region was noted as



a key consideration. Discussions on land use opportunities will be led by the local authorities.

Work has now reached the point where we want to share our ideas with you and get your views before making any decisions about the options we have developed.

This newsletter explains the key issues, outlines the proposals we have developed so far and asks questions about different aspects of the options we are considering. It also provides some information on how

the Link Road may integrate with the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link proposed along SH2.

Please take some time to read the newsletter and familiarise yourself with the information, then come along to find out more about the Link Road at one of our information days in February. Members of the team will be on hand to discuss our proposals. You'll find details about information day dates and locations on the back page of this newsletter.

The importance of the Link Road

Transport in the Hutt Valley and through the Ngauranga Gorge plays an important role in our everyday lives. These corridors support public transport links, walking and cycling, freight movement and community travel along Wellington's two primary highway routes. The SH2 route in particular is vulnerable as it is affected by daily congestion in peak hours, unreliable journey times, delays and a lengthy detour via State Highway 58 (SH58) if the road is closed or blocked.

For SH1 through Ngauranga Gorge, the Link Road provides a valuable opportunity to reduce congestion and support the efficiency of the Wellington Northern Corridor between Ngauranga and the SH1 connection with Transmission Gully.

Improving travel between Porirua and the Hutt Valley is important because the current issues create personal, business and economic problems for the region. It limits our potential for growth, our ability to get goods and services to market quickly and easily, causes people difficulty when travelling for work, education, health

or family reasons and can isolate parts of Wellington in bad storms, earthquakes and when sea levels rise.

We want to resolve these issues and improve safety and efficiency for people travelling between the Hutt Valley and Porirua. This will ensure there is an alternate route for people to take if the road is blocked or closed, which is important to the transport network's resilience. It's also vital to improve freight connections, which will help support economic growth and productivity in the Wellington region. This is particularly relevant for the Link Road given its support for the industrial areas in Porirua

and Lower Hutt, including the port in Seaview.

Overall, the Link Road represents a substantial investment in the region's transport requirements. It benefits all road users, supports public transport and may provide more walking and cycling opportunities if combined with the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link. The Link Road can also support other projects around the city by maintaining efficient transport links to and from the three Central Business Districts in Lower Hutt, Wellington and Porirua, as well as connections to Upper Hutt and Kapiti.

Help us make the decisions

After considering a number of different options, we need your help to make some key decisions about the Link Road. Your views will be used to:

- refine our proposals
- help us determine a final route
- understand what connections you feel the Link Road needs, and
- consider potential ways to get it built sooner.

You can help us by giving feedback at one of our information days in February, on our website or in writing. Our contact details are on the back page of this newsletter.

If you want any help to understand the issues and what we're trying to achieve, you can talk to us directly by calling our freephone number.

At the end of the month, comments will be summarised into a report that we will make publicly available later this year.

The Link Road proposal

The Link Road will generally be a new four-lane road with two lanes in each direction divided by a barrier down the middle. The road is likely to be six lanes where the road is very steep at Petone so faster moving vehicles are not held up by slow moving trucks. If Option D is preferred, only two lanes would be required between Grenada and the proposed Takapu Interchange on Transmission Gully.

At the eastern end, the road begins at Petone, goes over the hill and connects with SH1 at Tawa, the Link Road's western end. It includes a new interchange at Petone, which will provide significant congestion relief for the problematic SH2/Petone Esplanade merge. It also includes the potential to connect the new Link Road with Transmission Gully as well as SH1 at Tawa. This will provide quicker and more direct northbound travel from the Hutt Valley and northern Wellington suburbs.

Because of the local terrain the new road has to travel over, the incline will be relatively steep (similar to the gradient of Ngauranga Gorge). This requires us to excavate the hill, producing around eight million cubic metres of soil and rock, which is equivalent to almost eight filled Westpac Stadiums. We could use this material for other improvements, like the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link.

The Link Road itself includes two distinct sections:

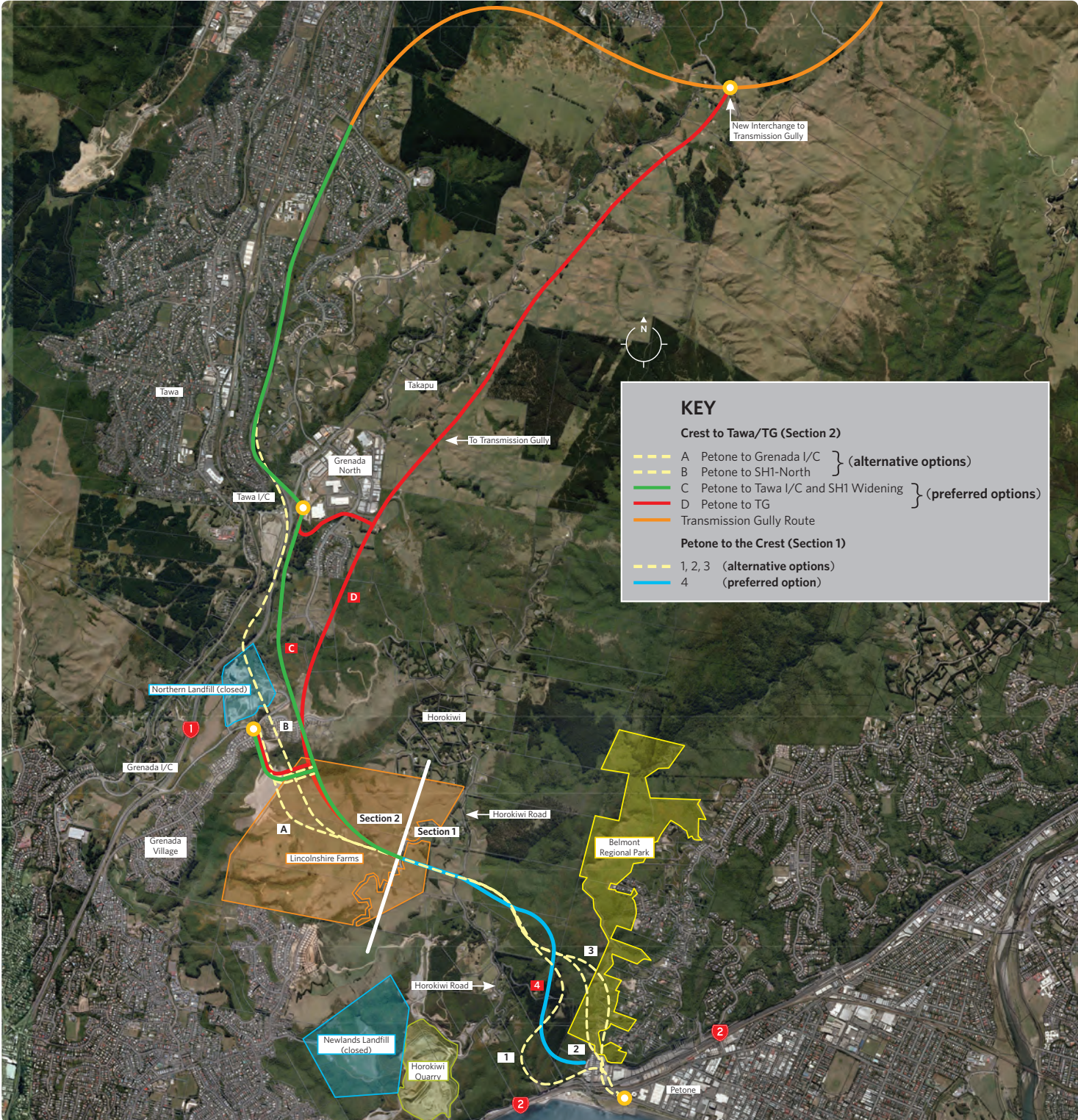
- Petone to the Crest of the Wellington Escarpment, and
- The Crest of the Wellington Escarpment to Tawa or Transmission Gully.

More details on the proposals for these two sections are on pages 4 and 5.

The route options

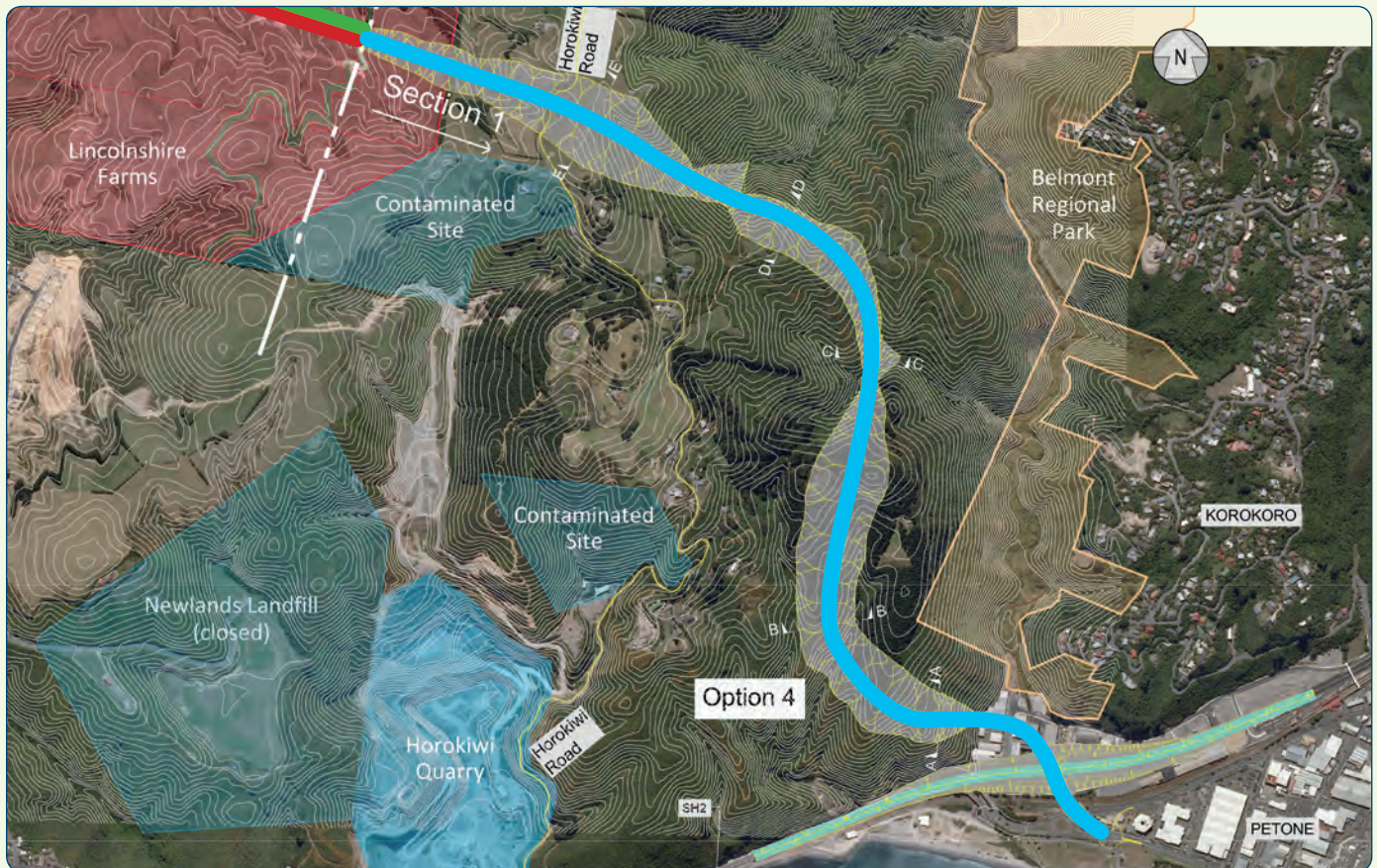
We considered a shortlist of four different options for the Link Road and a further four options for the section that includes the Petone interchange. These options were evaluated to consider criteria such as ecology, archaeology, cost, resilience and landscape/visual/recreational implications. A map of the options is shown below while more information is available on pages 4 and 5.

Once you have reviewed this information, we would like your comments on a number of questions. This will help us refine our proposals and select a preferred route that we will investigate in more detail.



Options between Petone and the Crest of the Wellington Escarpment

We considered four options between Petone and the crest of the Wellington escarpment.



Through our option evaluations we identified Option 4 as our preference because it:

- avoids the Belmont Regional Park, and
- improves our resilience to earthquakes.

Because of the steepness of the route, this section of the road is likely to be six lanes wide, providing two 'crawler lanes' for slow moving vehicles. The road will be in a cutting on the hill.

A key feature is a new Petone interchange. This is likely to be similar in design to the nearby Dowse interchange, an elevated structure with on and off-ramps and SH2 running underneath. This interchange

also marks the start of the new Link Road which will travel up over the western hillside. As well as providing better vehicle travel, the interchange could be used for improving walking and cycling connections between the Petone foreshore and Belmont Regional Park.

An image of a potential Petone interchange is shown on page 5. We still need to do more work to determine how this interchange could look.

We also need to consider how the Horokiwi community will be connected to the new Link Road. One option is to provide a new connection to the Link Road and close the current SH2 connection. Another is to keep the SH2 access and not provide a new connection from Horokiwi.

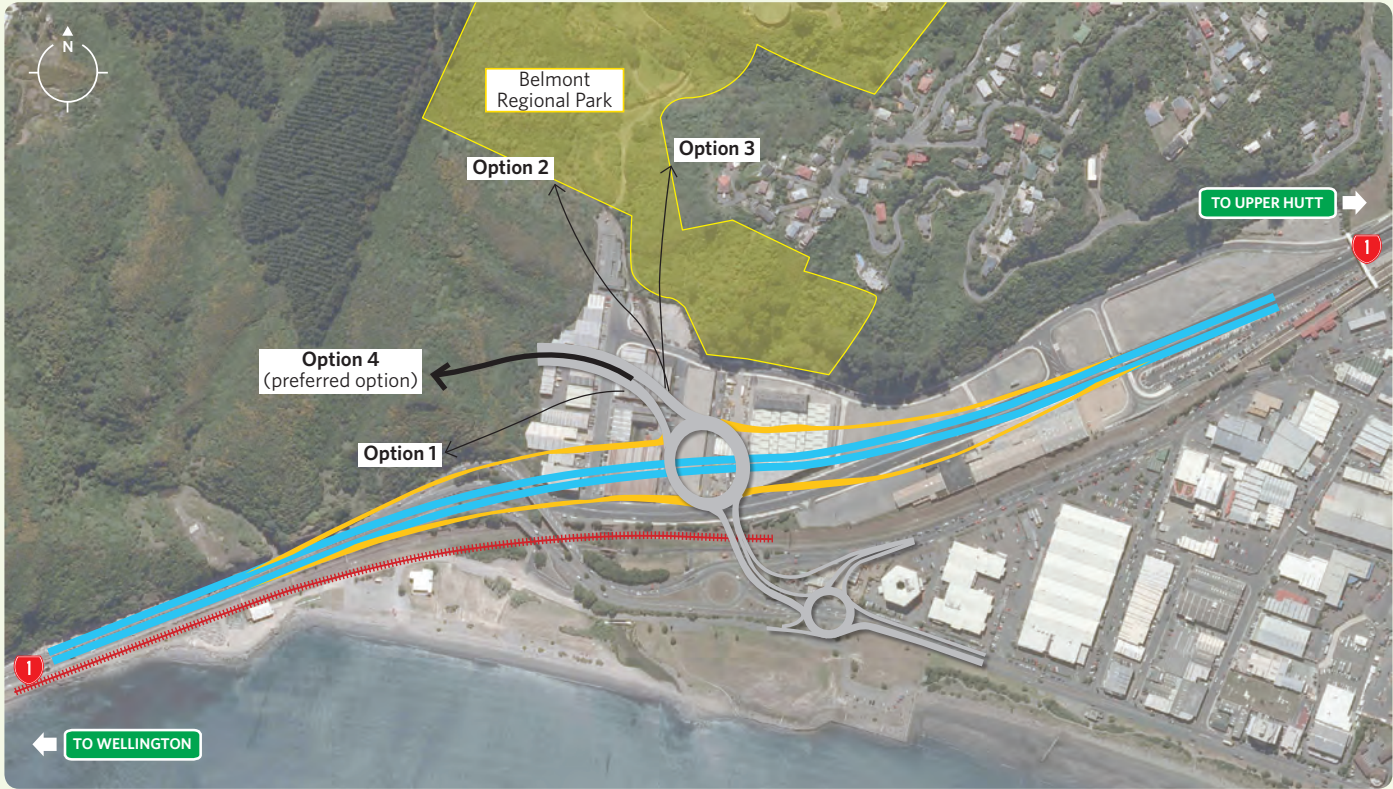
We would like your feedback on these options.

What do you think the benefits are of our preferred option for this section?

What do you think the benefits are of providing a pedestrian and cycle link between Belmont Regional Park and Petone Foreshore?

Should Horokiwi be connected to the highway network by the current SH2 connection or a new connection with the Link Road?

Is there anything else you want us to know regarding this section?



Potential layout of a new Petone interchange

Options between the Crest of the Wellington Escarpment and Tawa/Transmission Gully

For this section we also considered four options, narrowing these to two preferred options.

Both are feasible and we would like your views on their respective benefits.

We prefer these options because they make us more resilient to earthquakes, are more cost effective than the other options we considered, and connect with the Grenada and Tawa interchanges, which provides people with more travel options. Option D also connects with Transmission Gully, providing people with more travel flexibility.

Option C connects to Grenada and Tawa (as previously proposed) and would include widening SH1 to six lanes between Grenada and Linden, affecting properties alongside the highway.

Option D provides connections to Grenada and Tawa and provides a two lane connection with Transmission Gully, affecting different properties. However,



this option may defer the need to upgrade SH1 between Tawa and Linden. It also keeps the road at a consistent height, which is more efficient for long-distance travel because road users do not have to climb or descend at Grenada.

What do you think the benefits are of Option C relative to Option D?

Is there anything else you want us to consider?

How this fits in the wider network

We completed three transport studies to help inform our decisions on the Link Road. These studies considered the benefits of improvements to the existing highway routes of SH2 and SH58 and the potential of creating a new Seaview Link. A brief summary of these studies is listed below.

SH2 Petone to Ngauranga Six Laning

This study looked at the potential widening of SH2 between Petone and the Ngauranga Interchange, including potentially making the highway six lanes wide (three lanes in either direction). While widening this section of SH2 (via seaward reclamation) is feasible, it would be expensive. A better investment focus for the short to medium-term is a new Petone Interchange, which, when combined with our Ngauranga to Aotea Quay SH1 Improvements, will significantly improve congestion and travel times.

SH58 Efficiency Improvements

This study looked at SH58 efficiency upgrades from the future Pauatahanui Interchange (created by Transmission Gully) to the Haywards intersection with SH2. Efficiency upgrades to SH58 are not a suitable alternative to the new Link Road as they would deliver significantly less transport and economic benefits. With the new Link Road in place there will be no need to consider efficiency improvements to SH58 for quite some time. There is, however, a need to improve the safety of SH58. We are currently investigating safety improvements with a range of possible options being considered, including guardrails, realigning the road, better road marking, median wire rope barriers and widening the road.

Seaview to SH2 Transport Link

In conjunction with the Hutt City Council, we investigated improving the transport link between Seaview and SH2. We looked at a variety of options, including upgrades to the rail network and identified that roading upgrades were feasible, generating positive transport and economic benefits. We also identified that the new Link Road would not trigger the need for any improvements to the road network. The Council is now considering the outcomes of this study and "next steps".

Tolling

An important issue we need to consider for the Link Road is how to fund its construction. At the moment, construction is planned from around 2019, but this would be subject to funding being available at that time.

One option we are considering is tolling the new Link Road. This could enable it to be constructed earlier, realising the transport and wider economic benefits sooner.

Based on some early assessments, we believe this road could be a good tolling prospect because of the significant travel time savings and high traffic volumes expected to use it, particularly at peak times.

Before tolling is considered any further, we need to consult all the affected communities and stakeholders more widely on a detailed proposal that would include:

- The likely operational costs and economic benefits/impacts of tolling,
- Potential impacts that tolling infrastructure (ie location of gantries) would have on the proposed road alignment, connections and interchanges, and
- Possible toll prices.



At this early stage, the key questions we would like your thoughts on about tolling as an option are:

Would you support a toll on the Link Road if it enables building it sooner?

What are your thoughts on the benefits of tolling the Link Road in order to help realise its benefits for the region?

How the Link Road connects with walking and cycling

The Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link

In parallel with our Link Road investigations, we are investigating options to deliver a safe and efficient route for cyclists and pedestrians between Ngauranga and Petone along SH2.

The Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link aims to ‘close the gap’ along the existing cycleway on SH2, improve the current facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage more people to walk, run or cycle between the Hutt Valley and Wellington.

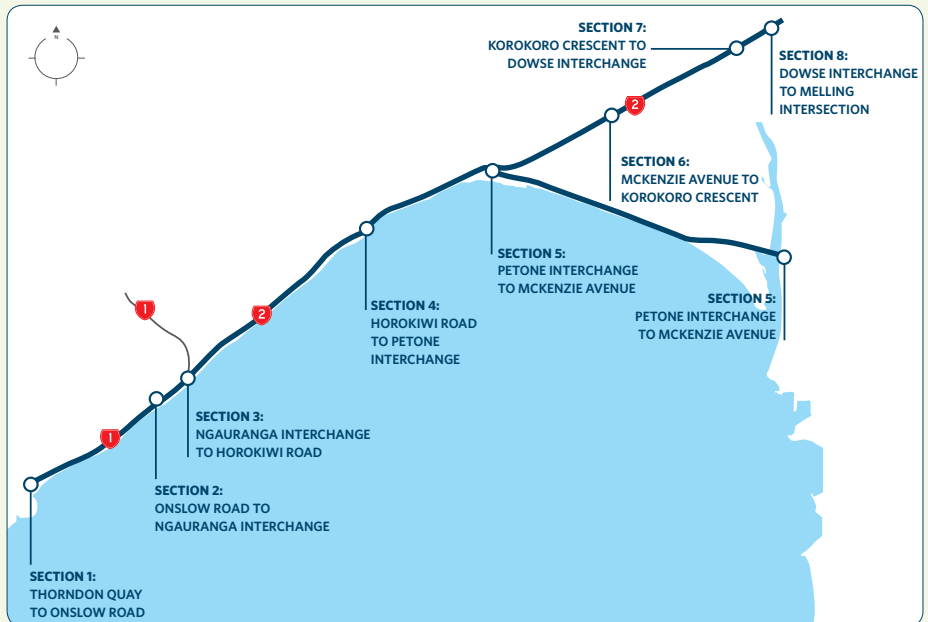
We are working in partnership with Wellington City and Hutt City Councils on this proposal to ensure that the Walking and Cycling Link effectively connects with each council’s facilities at either end of the highway.

Since the end of last year, we have been asking key stakeholders, interested user groups and the public what we could do to improve walking and cycling between Wellington and Lower Hutt. So far, we have come up with two preferred options, listed below.

Option 1 – upgrade the existing cycleway to provide a 3m wide dedicated path from Petone to Ngauranga with connections to other existing walking and cycling paths. This option would require us to reclaim a minor amount of the shoreline at Petone. We expect this option could cost between \$12 and \$16 million.

Option 2 – a new 3m cycleway on the seaward side of the rail corridor with new connections to existing walking and cycling paths at Petone and Ngauranga. This option would require us to reclaim a significant amount of the shoreline. We expect this option could cost between \$36 and \$48 million.

How to fund the options and the cost differences between the two will be key decision making criteria. Option 1 costs less and would be a similar amount to what we have previously anticipated. Option 2 is more expensive. However, its costs might be reduced if we were to use the excess soil and rock to be taken from the nearby hillsides for construction of the Link Road. This would mean that the timing of the two proposals would need to be considered further as construction of the Link Road is currently scheduled for 2019.



More information on these proposals will be available at the 22 February information day. A separate newsletter has also been issued and is available on our website.

If you haven't already taken part in our survey, please fill it out online before the end of February at www.nzta.govt.nz/w2hmlink or send us an email to w2hmlink@nzta.govt.nz.

We will be summarising this feedback and letting you know what our investigations have concluded later this year.

What do you believe are the benefits of Option 1 compared with Option 2?

Which is your preferred option?

Does your preference change based on its construction timeframe?

Will an improved walking and cycling link encourage you to walk or cycle to work?

Location and time of Information Days

Come and see us at one of our Public Information Days. We will have more information available about the Link Road and team members will be on hand to take your feedback or talk to you about your ideas and concerns. Information about the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link will be available at the first information day. The dates are:

When	Saturday 22 February 2014
Where	Opus Research and Training Facility 33 The Esplanade, Petone
Time	10am-3pm
or	
When	Wednesday 26 February 2014
Where	Linden Community Centre, Tawa
Time	3pm-8pm

We're providing a children's play area so please bring the kids along!

If you can't join us at information days, Link Road information and questionnaires will be available at your local library:

Petone: Britannia Street, Petone

Johnsonville: 5 Broderick Road, Johnsonville

Tawa: 158 Main Road (Cnr Cambridge Street and Main Road), Tawa

Porirua: 17 Parumoana Street, Porirua

You can get more information by visiting www.nzta.govt.nz/petone-grenada-link-road (you can fill in a questionnaire there too).

Freephone: 0508 P2G INFO

Emailing: petone2grenada@nzta.govt.nz

Writing: Petone to Grenada Link Road Team
Freepost 225938
PO Box 5084, Thorndon
Wellington 6145

Next steps

We welcome your feedback as it will help us refine our plans for the Link Road and will inform our next steps for the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link.

Please either visit us at one of our information days in February or send us your feedback before the end of March via our website or email address. We will summarise everyone's feedback in a report that we will make publicly available later in the year. Your personal details will remain private.

We expect to refine our proposals further and make decisions on the Link Road at the end of the year or in early 2015. We will then complete a scheme assessment report and consult with the community on our proposals. This will include discussions about how we mitigate potential construction and operation impacts. You can expect to hear about these from 2015.

The Link Road is currently scheduled to begin construction around 2019. This timing will depend on when consents are granted and how we agree to fund construction.

Indicative project timeline

Early 2013	Link Road work starts
2013/2014	Options investigated
Early 2014	Public consultation on proposals
Late 2014	Preferred option confirmed
Mid 2015	Seek RMA approvals
2016-2018	Detailed design
2019-2023	Construction (subject to funding)

Contact us

For the Petone to Grenada Link Road:

Website: www.nzta.govt.nz/petone-grenada-link-road

Email: petone2grenada@nzta.govt.nz

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