

# MIN-4576 – O Mahurangi Penlink Update

5 August 2024

The purpose of this paper is to update you on the forecasted delay in completion of the O Mahurangi Penlink project, and the approach to mitigate and manage this delay.

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## Delay to completing the project:

- The publicly communicated date for construction of the O Mahurangi Penlink project to finish is late 2026. The O Mahurangi Alliance is now forecasting a delay to the Wēiti River Bridge portion of the project. Forecasted completion of the bridge is now early 2028.
- The Wēiti River Bridge design is an extradosed bridge, which is an innovative design that combines elements of a box girder and cable stayed bridge. While it is the first of its kind in New Zealand, these types of bridges have been used overseas. The extradosed bridge design was chosen during the tender process for its span length (it allows for fewer bridge piers in the narrow Wēiti River navigational channel) and its carbon benefits, which was a key outcome required under the previous Government Policy Statement on land transport
- The construction of the Wēiti River bridge has been delayed by a combination of factors:
  - the design and construction of the bridge has been more complex than anticipated at tender – this includes complex interfaces between temporary staging and permanent works.
  - initial assumptions regarding ground conditions and access to bridge abutments made during the tender process changed once onsite. As the tender process occurred during COVID-19, bidders had very limited access to the site during lockdown.
- Construction of the Wēiti River bridge has passed the point of considering an alternative solution. Several of the bridge foundation piles are complete. A change to the type of bridge constructed would require new design work and revisiting the consenting process, which would lead to increased costs and programme delays.

## Cost and programme implications

- O Mahurangi Penlink is set up as an alliance, where risk (including cost overrun) is shared between all project partners. The project team is working to contain cost within the project's allocated contingency.
- To gain greater certainty of final cost and completion date, the alliance is currently undertaking a cost-to-complete process, which is informed by the recently completed detailed design and improved understanding of constructability. This will be completed in October, at which point we will be in a position to update the wider public on the programme.
- All other works are still forecast to be complete late 2026. NZTA expects to be in a position to open the portion of the road from State Highway 1 to the Duck Creek Road interchange on programme, providing improved access to residents of Stillwater and others along the corridor.

### **Risk and mitigations:**

- The team have already undertaken a number of initiatives to mitigate the programme delay including:
  - Optimisation and international review of the design; integration of temporary works, construction methodology and activity programme durations.
  - Construction methodology improvements including integrating temporary works with permanent works to work more efficiently.
  - Forward resource planning to acquire necessary specialised skills from the team currently working on the balanced cantilever bridge for Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway.
  - Temporary closure of Wēiti River channel to optimise the installation of temporary staging on the eastern side.
- Further initiatives for programme mitigation will continue to be explored and implemented.

### **Communications and engagement with stakeholders:**

- We anticipate that the local community will become aware of the delay before we are ready to provide an updated programme. We will be using the following holding line for reactive stakeholder and media queries, until we are ready to communicate a new opening date in late October:

*O Mahurangi Penlink is forecasting a delay for the Wēiti River bridge component of the project which is a complex design spanning a large open waterway. The team is currently working through the programme to understand the extent of this delay and we will update our stakeholders and community as soon as possible.*

Noted by Minister