

24 October 2024

s9(2)(a)

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REF: OIA-16486

Dear s9(2)(a)

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 22 September 2024 requesting information about the proposed toll for Te Ahu a Turanga Manawatū Tararua Highway and the alternative routes currently in place, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

17 October we wrote to you to advise that we were extending the timeframe for responding to your request, as allowed for under the Act. This letter provides you with a full response to your request.

I have numbered your request for ease of reference and will address each part in turn.

1. *Could I please request the traffic counts for the Saddle Road, Pahiatua Track and Ballance Valley Road.*

The information relating to the first part of your request is released to you in full and enclosed in the attached document:

- Attachment 1: OIA-16486 Traffic Counts.

2. *The maintenance spend for the Saddle Road, Pahiatua Track and Ballance Valley Road for the past three years.*

In relation to part two of your request, this is provided to you in the below table. I note that following a comprehensive maintenance programme through the 2018-2021 and 2021-2023 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) periods to bring the three roads up to an acceptable level of service for their function as detour routes. As a result, annual spend was lower in the 2023/24 year:

Figure 1: NZTA maintenance spend for Saddle Rd, Pahiatua Track, and Ballance Valley Road

NZTA maintenance spend for Saddle Rd, Pahiatua Track, and Ballance Valley Road – 2020/21-2023/24	
Year	Spend
2020/21	4,675,212.72
2021/22	4,342,437.38
2022/23	5,272,140.94
2023/24	2,255,277.17

3. *The annual plan budget for the Saddle Road and Pahiatua Track*

For part three of your request, I can confirm that the total budget for the three routes for the 2024/25 financial year, excluding emergency works, is \$2,528,859.00. For the 2024-2027 NLTP, \$7,002,693 has been allocated to these routes from the State Highway Operations and Pothole Prevention Activity Classes. This is outlined in the below table:

Figure 2: 2024-2027 NLTP maintenance allocations

Activity Class	2024-2025	2025 - 2026	2026 - 2027
SH Operations	\$1,473,109	\$1,327,150	\$955,342
Pothole Prevention	\$1,055,750	\$1,082,144	\$1,109,198

4. *The modelling used in the consultation document that came up with 11,000 traffic movements a day and the proportion of traffic that would take the alternate routes.*

In response to question 4, the modelling was undertaken by Mobility Lab as part of preparing the Toll Modelling Assessment (the assessment) for the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA). Both the NZTA-produced Tolling Assessment Summary of that assessment (the summary), and the assessment itself, are available on our website and provided to you by email on 25 September 2024 (NZT-9792 refers).

The Tolling Assessment Summary notes that the forecast traffic volumes for when the highway opens in 2025 is 10,902 per day, increasing to 14,250 per day in 2048. This is based upon 2016 counts from the Manawatu Gorge, pre-closure, and applying a 3 percent annual growth rate. Please refer to section 2.1 of the assessment for more detail.

The summary and the assessment can be found at www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/te-ahu-a-turanga/consultation/te-ahu-a-turanga-tolling-consultation.

5. *Any correspondence and analysis on the social impact of a toll.*

The summary affirms that the proposed toll will not significantly or unduly reduce the benefits of the project. This is detailed on page three of the summary. We have released the tolling assessment and summary documents, in which this is outlined. These are available at: www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/te-ahu-a-turanga/consultation/te-ahu-a-turanga-tolling-consultation.

NZTA will consider the feedback gathered from the community through the consultation process and compile the engagement report, which will also be posted on our website.

The NZTA Board will consider the results of the consultation, and the Board may then recommend tolling to the Minister of Transport. The final decision on whether or not to toll each road rests with Cabinet on the recommendation of the Minister of Transport.

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 Linda Stewart, Director Regional Relationships (Taranaki/Hawke's Bay/Gisborne/Manawatu) by email to linda.stewart@nzta.govt.nz or by phone on s9(2)(a)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Elston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robyn Elston
National Manager System Design