



Opawa River Bridge



Wairau River Bridge

# What's happening - Opawa and Wairau Bridges

**RESILIENCE**

**FREIGHT**

**SAFE & RELIABLE JOURNEYS**

🕒 5-10 MINUTE READ

We're investigating options to improve travel across the Wairau and Opawa Bridges on State Highway 1 north of Blenheim. These bridges, along with the shorter Spring Creek Bridge, are vital links in Marlborough's roading network and need to significantly improve to meet future transport requirements.

Both the Opawa and Wairau Bridges are vulnerable in an earthquake and cause problems for larger freight vehicles. Improvements are most important for the Opawa River Bridge, which is too narrow for two wide vehicles to cross at the same time. This is a potential safety risk and makes journey times variable and unreliable.

Because both bridges are critical to State Highway 1 as a key freight route for the South Island, the Government is considering replacing, duplicating or strengthening them as part of its accelerated regional roading package. This package ensures funding to investigate and get consent for an agreed solution for each bridge. Proposals will also consider what will best support the key freight route between Blenheim and Picton. When we've finished our investigations we will still need to apply for construction funding for any of our proposals.



## Our work

We're currently investigating options, including strengthening, replacing or duplicating the bridges. A part of this work includes meeting key stakeholders, including Marlborough District Council, the AA, Road Transport Association and iwi. We'll also meet potentially affected landowners, where options could affect people's property.

Our work won't be complete without hearing from you, and we expect to bring proposals to the local community to get your feedback in May. This is an important chance for you to help us refine our proposals, ensuring we understand what's important to you as the people who will most use the bridges.

You can expect to hear more from us about our proposals and how to get involved soon. In the meantime, you're welcome to talk to us about any specific issues or questions you have.

You can contact us by email at **[marlborough-bridges@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:marlborough-bridges@nzta.govt.nz)** or by calling Donna Hills on **03 546 3676**.

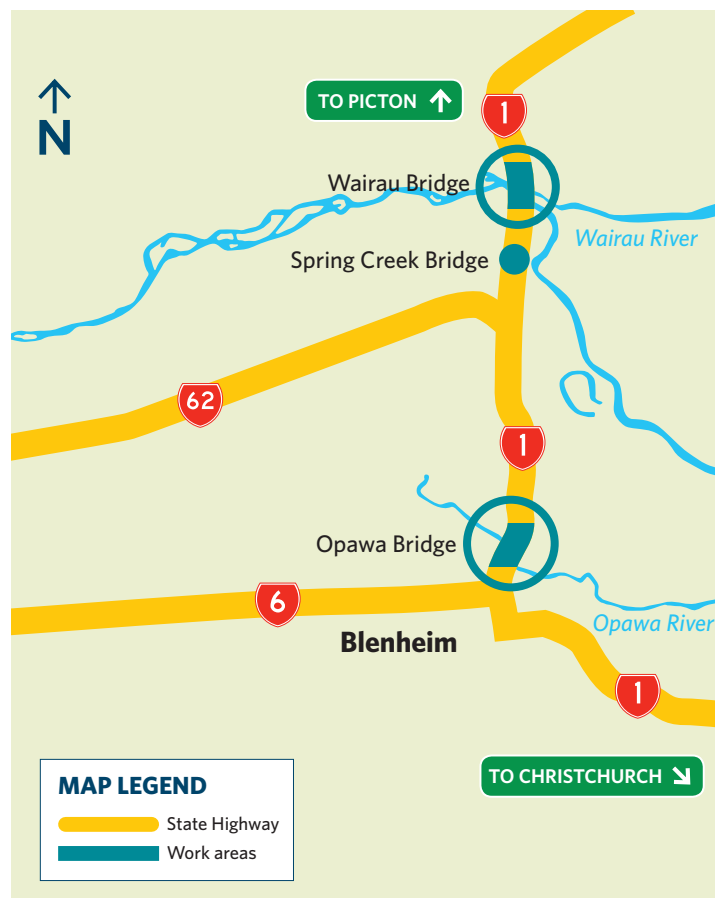
## → The issues

**Wairau Bridge:** As well as being vulnerable in an earthquake, a significant flood of the Wairau River could severely damage the piers of the Wairau Bridge and result in the bridge being closed. The bridge is 50 years old and was designed for lighter vehicles. We would normally anticipate it lasting up to 100 years, however, the impact of larger and heavier trucks travelling across it means the bridge will need to be replaced or strengthened sooner than expected.

This bridge is critically important to the state highway network because it provides a direct link between Picton and Blenheim. If something happened to close or affect the bridge, cars would face a lengthy detour to reconnect with State Highway 1. Freight vehicles would be stranded as there is no alternative route for them to cross the river. Both situations would significantly affect north and southbound travel.

**Opawa Bridge:** This bridge is a 100-year-old structure. It's narrow and can't accommodate two wide vehicles travelling across it at the same time, causing delays for travellers. Because of its age it will need to be replaced or strengthened to ensure the highway and the Marlborough district are more resilient in an earthquake.

Any changes relating to this bridge will need to acknowledge the bridge's heritage value. The bridge acts as a gateway to Blenheim township and its narrow width currently encourages people to slow down as they enter the town. Any option to replace or strengthen this bridge will have to take this into account.



## → Outcomes

At the heart of our investigation work is our key objective to keep people and goods moving along State Highway 1 between Blenheim and Picton. Essentially, we want to:

- make journey times more reliable
- make sure freight moves efficiently
- make the region more resilient to natural disasters and
- support State Highway 1's strategic freight route between Picton and Christchurch.

## → Next steps timeline

<b>Early 2015</b>	Investigate improvement options
<b>May 2015</b>	Engage with the public on options
<b>Mid 2015</b>	Confirm preferred solutions

## Contact us

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