



May 2016

Tell us what you think about plans to replace the Opawa Bridge on State Highway 1

Building a new bridge for State Highway 1 over the Opawa River

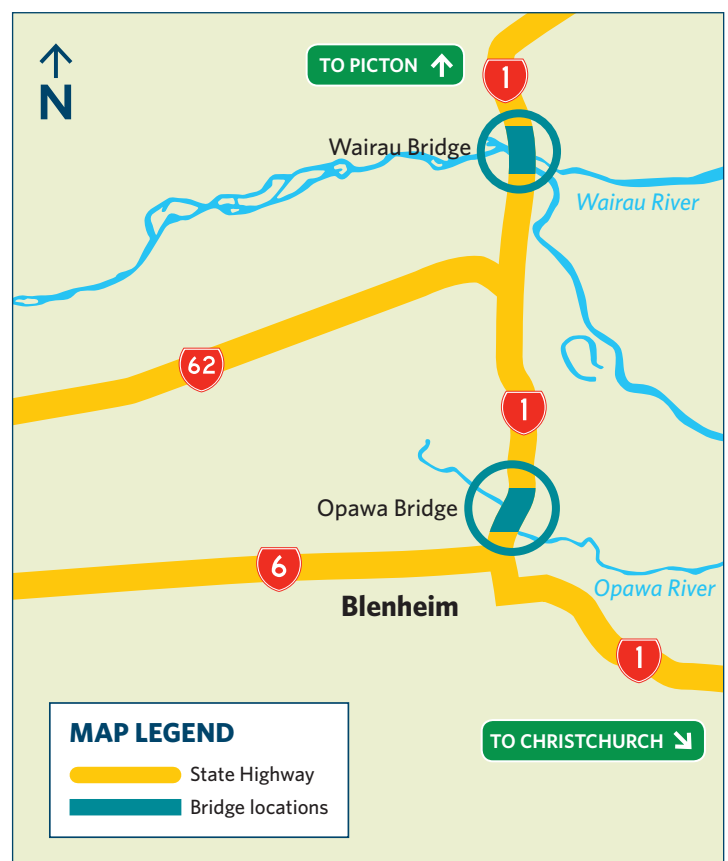
Where we are today on the investigation

Last year the NZ Transport Agency launched an investigation of the Wairau and Opawa Bridges to improve travel on State Highway 1 north of Blenheim. The investigation of these bridges was identified as part of the Government's Accelerated Regional Roading Package, which provided funding to progress a selection of regionally important state highway projects to address economic efficiency, safety, and resilience issues on our regional transport networks.

We considered strengthening, replacing or duplicating both bridges. Following an earlier investigation, the Wairau Bridge was found to be in serviceable condition. It has been certified to carry heavier vehicles and can be effectively maintained. Replacement of this bridge may be considered in the future. The Opawa Bridge, however, was identified for replacement. Upgrading it is a high priority for the Marlborough District Council and residents.

Early investigation of the Opawa Bridge confirmed it is too narrow for some vehicles, large freight vehicles in particular. We have also learned the bridge is vulnerable in an earthquake and is susceptible to damage from heavy floods.

In January 2016 the Government announced a preferred option: build a new two-lane bridge on the western side of the existing bridge. The existing bridge will be kept for pedestrians and cyclists. This proposal is estimated to cost between \$14 and \$17.5 million.



What we are asking of you

Now is your chance to review the investigation findings and give feedback on the preferred option. Read more information on www.nzta.govt.nz/opawa-bridge-replacement and fill out the survey in this brochure or online.



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The state of the existing bridge

As part of our earlier investigation, we have identified two problems with the State Highway 1 Opawa Bridge and the traffic flow over it:

Problem one: The bridge is too narrow

At 5.49m wide between kerbs, the bridge does not meet today's requirements, particularly for heavy commercial vehicles.

When large vehicles cross the bridge, they become a hazard, particularly if they cross the centre line. Many opposing vehicles must slow down or stop because they cannot pass, causing frequent delays and uncertain travel times.

Also, long traffic flows trail behind large freight trucks that travel along State Highway 1 heading to or departing from the interisland ferries. This adds to congestion on the bridge, making journey times unreliable.

Problem two: The bridge has poor structural resilience

The bridge's structure would not be adequately able to withstand a significant earthquake. Its structure could be affected as a result of shaking or liquefaction that could cause the bridge piers, or the entire structure, to collapse. Also, the bridge is vulnerable to significant flooding events as floodwater could undermine the bridge's central pier and cause partial bridge collapse.

Given the importance of the bridge to the transport network, we need to ensure we can keep this route open.

Why the road and bridge are strategically important

The Opawa Bridge is located on State Highway 1 between Picton and Blenheim. It is integral to the state highway network and the interisland ferries. It is also a vital freight link between the North and South Island via the Port of Picton, which is why the Government included investigating its replacement in the Accelerated Regional Roding Programme.

The Opawa Bridge, on the northern edge of Blenheim, spans 170m and carries 9,800 vehicles/day. It serves many functions in the region today, though it has changed little over its 100-year life. It:

- is a protected heritage item under the Wairau / Awatere Resource Management Plan
- is listed as a category 1 historic place by Heritage New Zealand
- is an important local gateway to Blenheim
- carries a considerable amount of inter-regional traffic. This is because Marlborough is an export-focussed producer of primary products

- is a key cycle route with plans underway to extend an off-road cycle path that serves as a transport corridor for local access between Spring Creek and Blenheim. This is something the Marlborough District Council, the Transport Agency, and Government (through its urban cycleway fund) are investing in.

We appreciate that the road and bridge are integral to the larger Picton to Christchurch state highway network. Some people have expressed an interest in building a bypass route to the east. This is a separate issue. We need to replace the Opawa Bridge now in order to address its identified problems, particularly as the majority of its current users will continue to use it to access central Blenheim from the north.

A bypass remains a future option, and will be considered as part of a separate investigation of State Highway 1 between Picton and Blenheim.

Preferred option

The preferred option is to create a new two-lane bridge to the west of the existing bridge for vehicular traffic with pedestrians and cyclists using the existing bridge.

As part of our investigations, we developed a long list of all possible options to address the two problems. Thirteen separate options were investigated and assessed, including a do-nothing option, using a variety of criteria. You can read more about all of the options and the detailed analysis on our website, www.nzta.govt.nz/opawa-bridge-replacement.

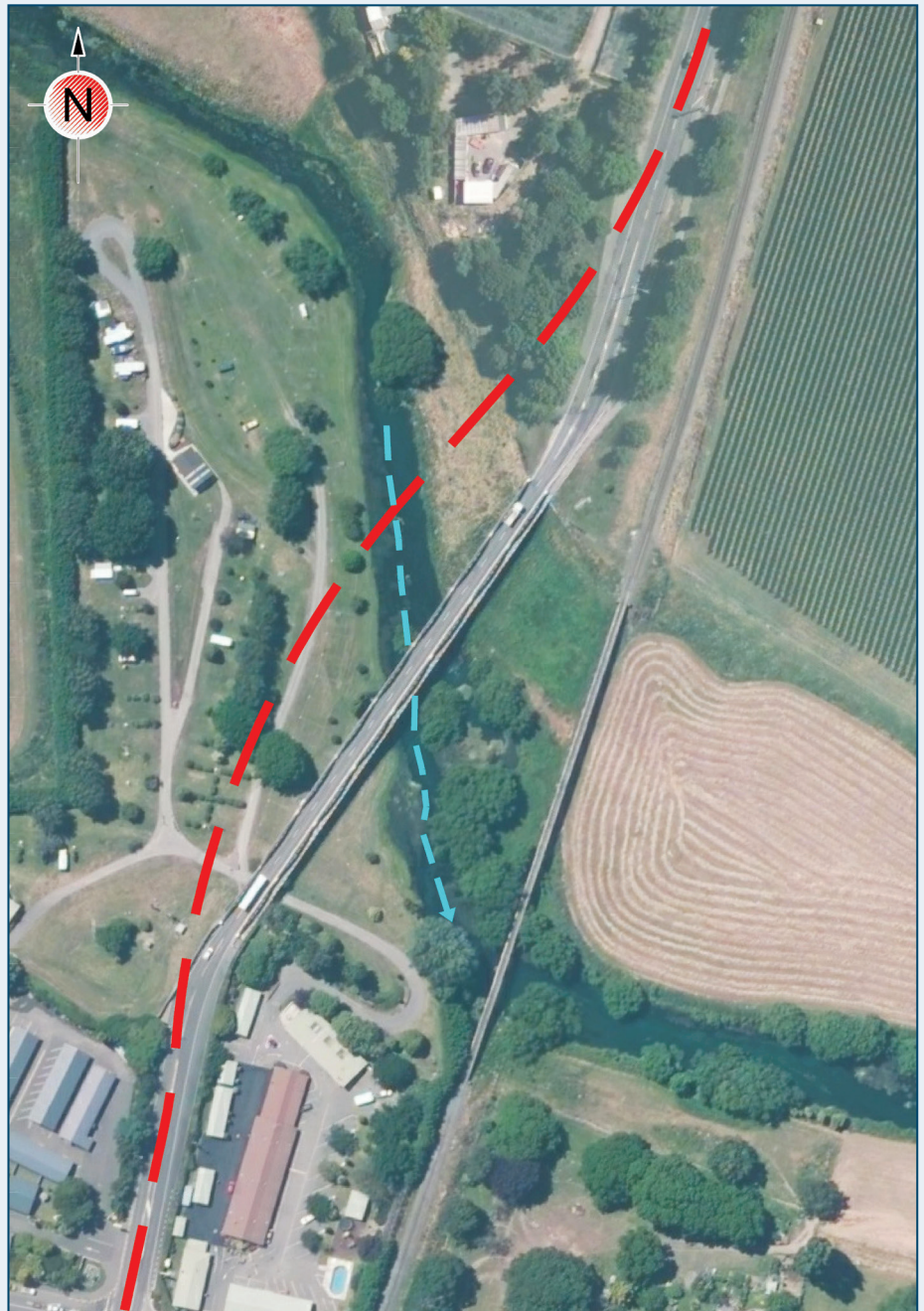
Taking into account all of the information investigated to date, including stakeholder, iwi, and affected landowner feedback, the preferred option is to build a new 10.8m wide bridge. This will operate as a full two-lane highway and cater for on-road cyclists with a 1.5m wide shoulder on each side.

We expect to keep the existing bridge and will continue to investigate its future use as a pedestrian and cycle only facility.

A western alignment (upstream) has the least impact on surrounding properties, provides better pedestrian and cyclist access, and requires less property acquisition.

This option resolves the identified problems and meets all criteria for vehicular traffic.

It is estimated to cost between \$14 and \$17.5 million.



Route of the proposed highway realignment to the west of the existing bridge.

Benefits of investment

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. 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 as a strategic freight route between Picton and Christchurch.

The specific benefits of investing to address the Opawa Bridge's identified problems (including weightings) are:

- Benefit 1 (70%): Increased throughput of freight and light vehicles and greater certainty of state highway journey
- Benefit 2 (30%): Greater structural resilience to natural hazard events, resulting in increased availability and access.



How to give feedback

There are a number of ways you can give us your feedback about our preferred proposal.

You can:

1. Attend one of our public information sessions to understand the proposal further (see dates listed below)
2. Read the information on our website and fill out our online feedback form
3. Fill in the hard copy feedback form and mail it to us by using the Freepost address on the reverse or post to: Marlborough Roads, PO Box 1031, Blenheim 7240
4. Fill in the hard copy feedback form and place it in the submission boxes at these locations, including Marlborough District Council (MDC) customer service centres and libraries:
 - MDC Customer Service Centre, Blenheim: 15 Seymour Street
 - Marlborough District Library, Blenheim: 33 Arthur Street
 - Marlborough Roads office, Blenheim: Level 1, The Forum, Unit 2.4, Market Street
 - MDC Customer Service Centre / Picton Library: 67 High Street

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Public information sessions

Please come along to one of our information sessions to speak to the project team about questions you may have on this investigation.

- **Thursday 19 May.** Scenic Hotel Marlborough, Marlborough Room, 4pm – 7pm
- **Saturday 21 May.** Scenic Hotel Marlborough, Chart Room, 10am – 2pm



Next steps

After the engagement period has ended, we will refine the preferred bridge replacement proposal taking on board the feedback received. We aim to seek Resource Management Act consents early in 2017.

In the meantime, we will continue to work with key stakeholders, potentially affected landowners, and the local community and seek input on the potential design of the replacement bridge. Should consents be granted, we expect construction would start in 2018.

Early 2017	Lodge the consent applications
Early 2018	Construction estimated to begin

Contact us

Website: www.nzta.govt.nz/opawa-bridge-replacement

Email: opawa-bridge@nzta.govt.nz

Phone: 03 520 8330

Post: Marlborough Roads office, Level 1, The Forum, Unit 2.4, Market Street, Blenheim

Feedback form

We would encourage you to read the information in the brochure and the supporting information on our website before completing the form: www.nzta.govt.nz/opawa-bridge-replacement. If you would like to submit responses with additional sheets, please be sure to attach them and post everything in an envelope or drop it into a submission box.

Q1. What is your opinion about the NZ Transport Agency's preferred option?

Q2: Tell us what elements you would like to see reflected in the new bridge structure or its design that we could include in our planning.

Q3. Do you have any comments on other options considered by the Transport Agency and if so why?

Q4. Is there anything else you want us to consider to further develop the project?

Thank you for your feedback.

Your feedback is public information

Please note that the NZ Transport Agency may publish any information that you give to us on this form, or provide it to a third party, and you may be individually identified as the submitter. Therefore, please indicate clearly:

- Whether your comments are commercially sensitive or, for any other reason, should not be disclosed.
- Any reason(s) why you should not be identified as the submitter of the feedback.



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For more information on the project and to read answers to frequently asked questions, visit the project website at www.nzta.govt.nz/opawa-bridge-replacement or email opawa-bridge@nzta.govt.nz

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FreePost Authority Number 251610



Marlborough Roads
PO Box 1031
Blenheim 7240

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