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# SH1 Weld Pass

April 2018

Community engagement report

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NZ Transport Agency  
Private Bag 6995  
Wellington 6141

This document is available on the NZ Transport Agency's website at [www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1-weld-pass](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1-weld-pass)

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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The NZ Transport Agency is looking at how we can improve road safety, reduce crashes and improve efficiency on State Highway 1 (SH1) through Weld Pass.

Weld Pass is located on SH1 12km south of Blenheim and 10km north of Seddon. The pass starts at the Seventeen Valley Stream to the north and winds up the side of a valley approximately 180m to its highest point, before dropping down to the Utuwai Overpass to the south.

The road is part of a vital link between Christchurch and Picton. It is used for freight, by tourists, holidaymakers and people driving to work. Tight corners and steep drop offs make it a high-risk road. Between January 2007 and December 2016, 12 people were seriously injured on this stretch of road.

[Previous investigations \[PDF, 10 MB\]](#) into the route between Picton and Christchurch highlighted that there is a very poor road safety record on the section of highway between Seventeen Valley Stream to the Utuwai Overpass. These investigations identified the need for safety improvements.

We're now looking at a range of safety improvements to prevent deaths and serious injuries. These include wide road shoulders so drivers have room to recover if they make a mistake, safety barriers along the side and centre of the road to prevent drivers running off the road or having head-on crashes, and slow vehicle lanes so people can safely pass slower vehicles on uphill sections.

Fixing the problems with this road would help prevent people being killed or seriously injured, and make sure people have more reliable access south on SH1.

# ENGAGEMENT

Marlborough locals know the Weld Pass road better than anyone. Safe Roads wanted to give them a chance to have their say, gather their views on how safety could be improved and to find solutions that will work best for all those who live on and use this road.

## Community engagement

Safe Roads initiated a public engagement programme to give locals an opportunity to share their ideas with the project team about their issues with the road.

A total of 31 people provided feedback over the three-week feedback period either online or by completing a printed feedback form.

We also produced a range of supporting material:

- **Feedback via Social Pinpoint** – for those who wanted to go online to give their feedback.
- **Physical feedback stations** – for people without internet access to give their feedback in any of three locations in Blenheim (Marlborough District Council reception, Marlborough Library and Marlborough Roads office).
- **Hardcopy feedback form** – collated at the locations above and returned to Safe Roads for analysing.
- **Posters** - outlining the range of safety treatments that could be considered for the route, for example side barriers and wide centrelines, were available at the locations above.

## Raising awareness and promoting participation

Safe Roads promoted the engagement programme by delivering:

- Targeted Facebook posts on the NZ Transport Agency National, Auckland/Northland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Central North Island, Wellington and South Island Facebook pages.
- A media release about the online engagement, that was distributed to local media on Friday 24 February.
- Information to Marlborough District Council, for distribution through their channels.

# FEEDBACK

## What did we ask people?

1. Have we got it right?

2. What do you think about the following safety improvements?

- Better signs and road markings to warn drivers of intersections, stop signs or sharp curves down the road.
- Rumble strips to give drivers a wake-up call if they stray across the line.
- Flexible safety barriers stop your vehicle before you go over the bank. They also catch you before you hit something harder like a tree, power pole or, in the case of barriers along the centre of the road, an oncoming vehicle.
- Slow vehicle lanes and passing lanes so that there's safe places to pass.
- Widening the sealed road shoulders so there's space to recover if drivers lose control or drift out of their lane. This will also make it easier for us to keep the road open if there's an earthquake or landslide. What problems have you experienced or are you aware of on this road?

People who added their thoughts using Social Pinpoint were asked to write comments and use a marker to locate them on a map of the road to highlight areas we should focus on. The key themes from this feedback are reflected below.

### Areas to pass/pull over

*"If we are going to straighten the road can we have a slow vehicle lane to help the trucks let the cars go?"*

*"Passing lanes on the way up would be great but really only necessary near the top. The average tractor has a top speed of 30kmh, harvester 25kmh and for 6 weeks of every year there is a lot of truck and trailer units, harvesters, tractor and gondola units on this stretch of road as well as a lot of tractors through the year"*

The most common theme in feedback was the need for more places for slower vehicles, particularly heavy vehicles, campervans and tourist vehicles to pull over so other vehicles could pass them safely.

Many felt that the lack of places to pass led to drivers getting frustrated and overtaking dangerously.

### Driver behaviour

*"Slow drivers who do not pull over to let other drivers pass."*

There were many comments about the lack of passing opportunities. These noted that slower drivers do not pull over when they have the opportunity to do so.

## Alternative routing

*“Scrap this winding section altogether please and reroute the highway so that it runs next to or close to the main trunk railway line instead”*

Several comments noted the potential for an alternative route that follows the existing main trunk rail line to the north of the existing road alignment.

## Walking and cycling

*“A cycle, walking and hitchhiker's lane - it is a popular training ground for local road cyclists.”*

Some comments said the road was dangerous for people on cycles as well as for people walking along the road. This was usually because of the narrow and winding nature of the road, blind corners, and the lack of a verge which meant there was no room for cyclists if drivers made mistakes.

## Narrow roads and condition of roads

*“Widening the road and straightening the road are the best ways to make it safer*

*“The only way this road will become safer will be when this road is completely realigned removing the tight corners to make it much straighter & safer”*

A number of comments were about the poor quality of the road in some sections, particularly worn-out surfaces, gravel on the road and the difficulty negotiating the narrow Pukapuka Stream bridge at the northern end of the Weld Pass hill.

Several comments said the road was challenging to drive.

## Motorcycles

*“Safety improvements for motorcyclists should include barriers high enough to prevent a rider from going over the top of the barrier and no gaps to prevent limbs from getting caught or a rider hitting the posts.”*

Comments from people who ride motorcycles on this road highlight concern around the safety of riders on roads with flexible barriers. Flexible and w-section road safety barriers are a valuable tool for reducing deaths and serious injuries on NZ roads, they can reduce the number of people on motorcycles who are killed or seriously injured by up to 50 percent. Safe Roads is working with ACC to look at how we can install under-run protection on sections of road used by high numbers of motorcycles.

## NEXT STEPS

We will consider the feedback we received as we look at options for improving road safety and travel times along State Highway 1 through Weld Pass.

We expect to be able to share our thoughts by May 2018.

More information is available at [www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1-weld-pass](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh1-weld-pass)



# APPENDICES

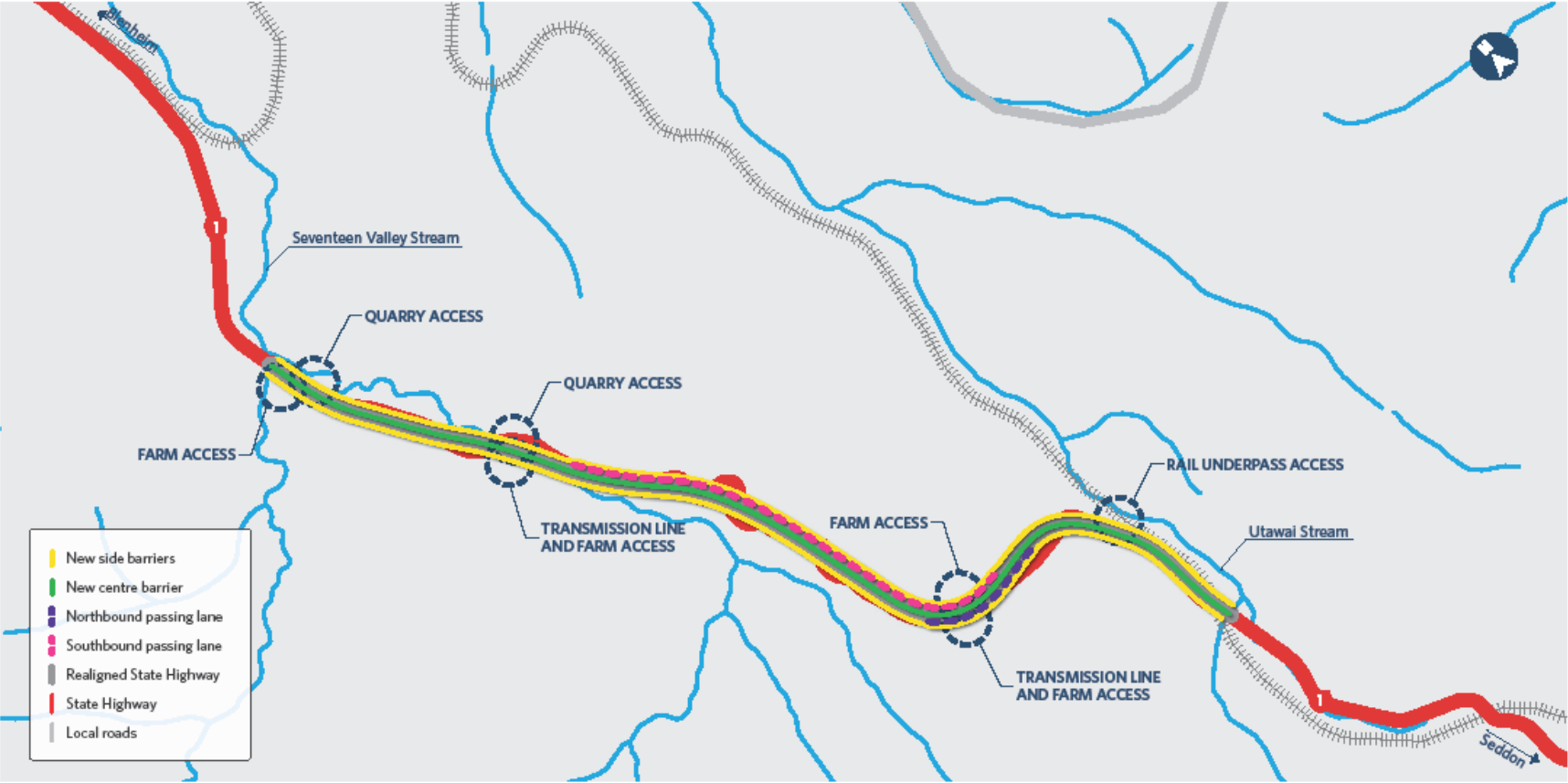
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# Appendix A: Safety Improvement poster

## 1 Weld Pass safety improvements



We're looking at making these safety improvements to help prevent people being killed or seriously injured on this stretch of road.



# Appendix B: Feedback form



We're making Weld Pass safer



We want to make SH1 Weld Pass safer and we need your help to do this. We're considering some possible improvements but it's important to us to know what you think.

## Feedback form

Weld Pass is a winding section of State Highway 1 (SH1) that's 12km south of Blenheim and 10km north of Seddon. We've looked closely at this stretch to understand what the issues are and how we can prevent crashes.

### What do you think about the following safety improvements?

- **Better signs and road markings** to warn drivers of intersections, stop signs or sharp curves down the road.
- **Rumble strips** to give drivers a wake-up call if they stray across the line.
- **Flexible safety barriers** stop your vehicle before you go over the bank. They also catch you before you hit something harder like a tree, power pole or, in the case of barriers along the centre of the road, an oncoming vehicle.
- **Slow vehicle lanes and passing lanes** so that there's safe places to pass.
- **Widening the sealed road shoulders** so there's space to recover if drivers lose control or drift out of their lane. This will also make it easier for us to keep the road open if there's an earthquake or landslide.

### Have we got it right? Please let us know what you think below.

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Once you've written your feedback please pass this form to the person at the counter. We'll be looking at what you and others in the community have to say before we decide what improvements we make.

Nga korero muna - Important privacy information: All personal information that you provide via this feedback form will be held and protected by the New Zealand Transport Agency in accordance with our privacy statement and with the Privacy Act 1993. Feedback is public information. Please indicate if your comments are commercially sensitive or, for some other reason, you do not want them disclosed.

Thanks for your feedback.  
If you have any questions,  
please don't hesitate to contact:

Evan Freshwater  
Community Engagement Manager  
Email: [evan.freshwater@saferoads.co.nz](mailto:evan.freshwater@saferoads.co.nz)  
Phone: 027 587 3124



## Appendix C: Media release

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22 Feb 2018 11:06 am

The NZ Transport Agency is inviting people to have their say on safety improvements to the Weld Pass\* section of State Highway 1 in Marlborough.

This stretch of highway is part of a vital link between Christchurch and Picton – 12 km south of Blenheim and 10 km north of Seddon. It is used for freight, and by tourists, holidaymakers and people driving to work. Tight corners and steep drop offs make it a high-risk road.

From 2007 to 2016, over ten years, 12 people were seriously injured in nine crashes on this 3 km stretch of road.

“There are things we can do to make this road safer and it’s important that locals and people using this road have their say so we can be sure we get it right,” says Transport Agency System Manager Frank Porter.

“The improvements we’re looking at include wide road shoulders so drivers have room to recover if they make a mistake, safety barriers along the side and centre of the road to prevent drivers running off the road or having head-on crashes, as well as slow vehicle lanes so there’s room to safely pass slower vehicles on uphill sections.

“People make mistakes on the road, but they shouldn’t have to die for them. Improvements like these can give them a second chance. These changes will also improve our ability to keep the road open if there are earthquakes or landslides.”

The project team has been in touch with local landowners and iwi to discuss these improvements, and is keen to hear from others. The consultation runs for three weeks from 23 February (Friday) to 16 March (Friday).

To have your say check out the [NZ Transport Agency website](#) or pick up a feedback form from the Marlborough District Council office or Marlborough District Library in Blenheim.

Safety improvements to Weld Pass on SH1 are part of the government’s \$600 million Safe Roads and Roadsides programme, targeting the prevention of 900 deaths and serious injuries on high-risk rural state highways over the next decade.

**More information about the safety improvements as well as information on how to share feedback is on the NZ Transport Agency website: [www.nzta.govt.nz/sh1-wp](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/sh1-wp)**

**Feedback forms are also available at:**

Marlborough District Council  
15 Seymour St  
Blenheim

Marlborough District Library (Blenheim)  
33 Arthur Street  
Blenheim

Marlborough Roads Office  
Level 1, The Forum  
Market Square  
Blenheim

\* The Weld Pass starts at the Seventeen Valley Stream to the north and winds up the side of a valley about 180 metres to the top of the pass, before dropping down to the Utuwai Overpass to the south.

*The NZ Transport Agency works to create transport solutions for all New Zealanders – from helping new drivers earn their licences, to leading safety campaigns to investing in public transport, state highways and local roads.*



## Appendix D: Newspaper articles



26 Feb 2018  
Nelson Mail, Nelson

Author: Emily Heyward • Section: General News • Article Type: News Item  
Audience : 8,835 • Page: 3 • Printed size: 314.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: NZ  
Country: New Zealand • ASR: NZD 730 • words: 416 • Item ID: 917415293  
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# \$16m set aside to make twisty Weld Pass safer

**EMILY HEYWARD**

A winding stretch of highway south of Blenheim is set for a multimillion-dollar upgrade to make it safer.

The Weld Pass, between Blenheim and Seddon, has sent a dozen people to hospital as a result of serious crashes in 10 years.

One man was killed in 2009 after plunging 100 metres off the edge of the road.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) has set aside \$16 million for the project, which could see more safety barriers to stop drivers going off the edge, and barriers down the centre lines to stop head-on collisions.

Seddon Volunteer Fire Brigade senior station officer Rebecca Stevens said straightening the notorious 3km stretch of road would make it safer.

But she also hoped for more barriers.

Stevens had been called to many car crashes on the Weld Pass in her time as a volunteer firefighter.

"There's one corner we used to go to quite often but they have put a barrier up there now. They used to go down the side and there was a tree and a flax that sort of stopped them going any further," she said.

"Just straightening some of the bends

and [having] barriers ... because you are always quite worried when you are driving along there and you look down.

"There's nowhere to stop when you start going over the edge," she said.

The Weld Pass could also be "wet and slippery" at times, making it more dangerous for drivers, she said.

Farmer Paul Kemp, whose 1600-hectare farm runs alongside the Weld Pass, said he hoped the road would be straightened, to make it safer for tourists.

"If you're a local, like people travelling to Seddon everyday, it's just another corner.

"When you take foreigners to the bottom of the hill they go 'man, what a pass, what a hill'," he said.

"To straighten up what's there would be fine because a lot of the road is already there, it just needs straightening out."

NZTA system manager Frank Porter said they were looking at widening the road to make it safer.

"The improvements we're looking at include wide road shoulders so drivers have room to recover if they make a mistake, safety barriers along the side and centre of the road to prevent drivers running off the road or having head-on crashes, as well as slow vehicle lanes so there's room to safely pass slower vehicles on uphill sections," he said.



26 Feb 2018  
Marlborough Express, Blenheim Marlborough

Author: Emily Heyward • Section: General News • Article Type: News Item  
Audience: 5,645 • Page: 1 • Printed size: 1031.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: NZ  
Country: New Zealand • ASR: NZD 2,107 • words: 636 • Item ID: 917412634  
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Freight, workers, locals and tourists use the notoriously windy Weld Pass every day.

PHOTO: SCOTT HAMMOND/STUFF

#### EMILY HEYWARD

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But she also hoped for more barriers.

Stevens had been called to many car crashes on the Weld Pass in her time as a volunteer firefighter.

"There's one corner we used to go to quite often but they have put a barrier up there now. They used

to go down the side and there was a tree and a flax that sort of stopped them going any further," she said.

One particular spot, about three bends from the top of the pass travelling northbound, was the most vulnerable corner, she said.

Stevens said she had been called to the same corner at least three times in two years, including a truck with pigs on board that tipped over.

"Just straightening some of the bends and [having] barriers ... because you are always quite worried when you are driving along there and you look down.

"There's nowhere to stop when you start going over the edge," she said.

The Weld Pass could also be "wet and slippery" at times, making it more dangerous for drivers, she said.

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just another corner.

"When you take foreigners to the bottom of the hill they go 'man, what a pass, what a hill'," he said.

"To straighten up what's there would be fine because a lot of the road is already there, it just needs straightening out."

The Weld Pass was used daily by tourists, locals, freight and people driving to and from work.

NZTA system manager Frank Porter said they were looking at widening the road to make it safer.

"The improvements we're looking at include wide road shoulders so drivers have room to recover if they make a mistake, safety barriers along the side and centre of the road to prevent drivers running off the road or having head-on crashes, as well as slow vehicle lanes so there's room to safely pass slower vehicles on uphill sections," he said.

Porter said the improvements would give people a "second chance" if they made a mistake.

"People make mistakes on the road, but they shouldn't have to die for them ... These changes will