

State Highway 35 Mangahauini Gorge

Consultation feedback summary

Transport Rebuild East Coast



August 2024



Community engagement sessions in Tairāwhiti

We've had great conversations about how to make SH35 Mangahauini Gorge safer and more resilient. Thanks to everyone who got involved.

In March and April 2024, we held 11 community events across Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay and Wairoa to discuss potential rebuild projects on State Highway 2 and 5 in Eskdale, State Highway 2 around Devil's Elbow and on State Highway 35 through the Mangahauini Gorge.

We also gathered feedback online, via a 0800 number, email, and a paper feedback form and met with Treaty partners, councils and other key stakeholders.

This document is a short summary of the feedback we captured and the next steps.

Next steps

Thank you for your feedback. All comments and insights have been considered and used alongside the technical work to help refine the ideas.

Although the investigations looked at potentially making changes to the road alignment and alternative routes, we are now focusing on recovery work to restore and protect the state highway on its existing alignment through the gorge.

Your feedback and our investigations have given us a clearer understanding of the issues and high-risk sites, which will help shape our recovery work. Several projects will be scheduled for this and next year's construction season on SH35.

We will continue to work closely with iwi/hapū partners, council, stakeholders and local contractors on the scoping of the recovery projects on SH35.

Ngā mihi nui - thanks for your support.

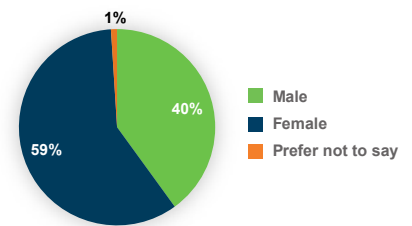
About TREC

The Transport Rebuild East Coast (TREC) alliance is the delivery organisation for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail. Along with repairing East Coast state highways and rail after Cyclone Gabrielle, the Transport Rebuild East Coast (TREC) alliance was looking at ways to make the transport network more resilient in the future.

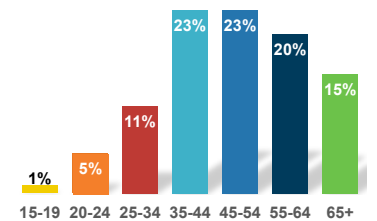


Who we heard from

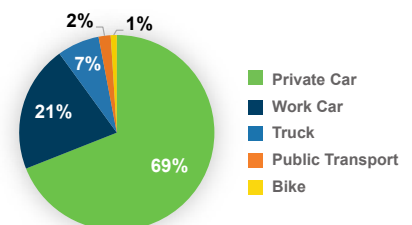
Gender



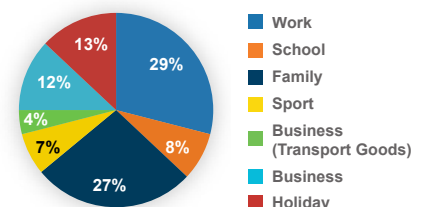
Age group



How do you travel?



Main reason for travel



What was investigated for SH35 Mangahauini Gorge

The Mangahauini Gorge section of SH35 has been prone to full road or single lane closures for many years. There have been ongoing issues with river scour, flooding and trees coming down. These disruptions have impacted people's lives and the regional economy.

During last year's weather events, Mangahauini Gorge suffered major damage - from road underslips to a landslide that created a dam.

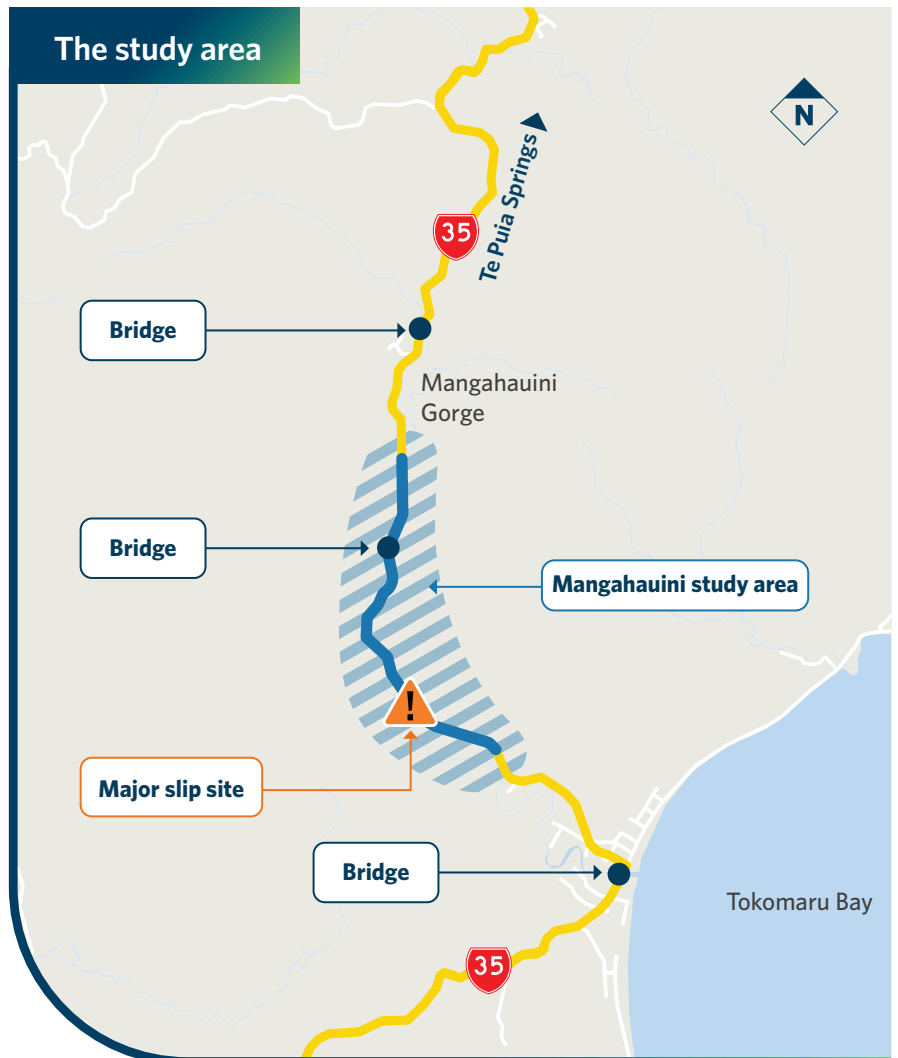
Along with carrying out urgent recovery work, TREC investigated potential longer-term solutions to this high-risk area.

A wide range of ideas

We considered a range of ideas - from planting and drainage and small repairs, through to possible new routes to avoid the Mangahauini Gorge altogether. Early work showed the new routes would cross through land with weak geology and high landslide risks.

These issues, along with the land required and the large quantity of earthworks that would need to be disposed of, led us to focus on an area within the gorge.

During engagement we asked people about options in this study area, such as resealing and repairing the current route, making changes to the road alignment to avoid high-risk areas and alternative routes.



SH35 Mangahauini Gorge between Te Puia Springs and Tokomaru Bay



What we heard

Feedback emphasised the need for improved and maintained infrastructure that can withstand hazards.

People want to see increased resilience; they generally support making changes to avoid areas prone to slips and rockfall.

While there was support for repairing the current route, most people do not see this as a sustainable and resilient option.

Some people question the resilience of an alternative route.

Most people see that repairing the network and in particular SH35 needs to be part of a wider central and local government investment. That rebuilding the network needs to include climate change adaptation.

Isolation was mentioned as the most important risk to mitigate to enable safe and reliable access to the state highway network during or after severe weather events.

It's important to respect culturally significant sites, ecology and te ao Māori values in any rebuild process.



What you said

"Everyone on all levels - central, local government, whanau, communities, hapu, iwi - all got the biggest wakeup call last year. My patai is: are we listening?"

"Without any investment communities will become landlocked given there is no alternative route to Te Puia Springs hospital services (for Tokomaru Bay residents) nor is there an alternative route to Gisborne for all communities north of Tokomaru Bay. When access to Gisborne is cut the economic wellbeing of everyone in Te Tairāwhiti suffers."

"Road conditions are the most concerning, causing delays in hospital appointments and all repairs to vehicles, we would appreciate help."

"This is our home. This is our ukaipo - our ancestral land."

"Local knowledge included and considered. Locals being a part of the learning. Cultural experts valued."

"I do not support the tar sealing until there is a better road. You can't tar seal the road only for it to fall into the River. Don't waste money. Close the highway at night, you'll get way more mahi done."



"The state of the road surface makes me anxious that I may damage my vehicle and become stranded if I am in an area that does not have cell phone coverage."

"A safe state highway that is resilient during weather events. One where there has been considerable investment and quality work is completed that will stand up to weather events. Currently we have a network where the investment has been due to being reactive post weather events."

"Anxiety levels rise while driving the highway especially during rain events (not just severe but normal rain), this usually results the cancellation of travel. Although there are many road work sites on SH35 most of our population living on the east coast show patience as the most important thing is access to and from Gisborne and/or afar."

"Please explore alternative access routes for Tokomaru Bay, what if again all bridges are out of action?"

"Access to all communities on the 35 are important for our health students to access patients in those communities, and for patients to have access to health services they require either in their community or needing to travel out of Tairāwhiti."

"The gorge has too many challenges, we need to have a credible alternative. There was an old route (to the west) why not strengthen this too as you'll never hold river back."

By the numbers

11 community drop-ins

237

335 people came to the events

pieces of feedback were collected

710 website views during consultation

79 ideas captured by staff on post-it notes and notepads

132 people completed a digital survey

700 subscribers to our TREC Pānui

30 people filled out a feedback form or emailed us

Whakapā mai • Get in touch

Visit our website
nzta.govt.nz/trec

Email us
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Call us
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