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SH2 north of Tauranga - what's the problem?

State Highway 2 north of Tauranga is a busy freight and commuter route, as well as an important tourist link for the northern Bay of Plenty and Coromandel Peninsula.

Currently, approximately 18,500 vehicles travel across the Wairoa River bridge each day. Nine percent or 1700 of those are heavy commercial vehicles.

The population of areas served by the highway is growing. Considerable horticulture-related growth (eg avocado and kiwifruit) is expected in the northern Bay of Plenty over the next 30 years. A lot of produce will be transported via State Highway 2 to the Port of Tauranga for export.

By 2031, traffic numbers are predicted to increase to over 30,000 vehicles per day, worsening safety and congestion issues, as well as increasing costs for freight operators.





SH2 north of Tauranga - what's the answer?

The **Tauranga Northern Link** is proposed as a 6.8km inland route from the tolled section of Takitimu Drive (Route K) through to Loop Road just west of Te Puna.

Once constructed, the Tauranga Northern Link will separate local and state highway traffic. It will reduce travel time, improve trip reliability, freight movements and safety, as well as relieve congestion. It will improve access and support public transport, cycling and walking on the current state highway route through Bethlehem and Te Puna.

Traffic flows on the existing highway across the Wairoa River bridge are predicted to reduce to current volumes and the traffic flow on the Tauranga Northern Link to be about 20,000 to 25,000 vehicles per day.

Secondary investigation

This secondary investigation aims to review the existing designation to ensure the project will accommodate future traffic flows generated by changing land use.

The investigations include reviewing:

- ground conditions
- current and proposed land use patterns
- traffic flows generated by anticipated growth
- road upgrades necessary to accommodate such changes in traffic flows
- cultural, archaeological, ecological, visual and social assessments where there are changes to the designation
- updating the economic analyses - calculating the costs of each option and identifying a benefit-cost ratio for funding purposes
- altering the designation areas as necessary.

The extent of any alteration(s) to designation will be identified during 2011.

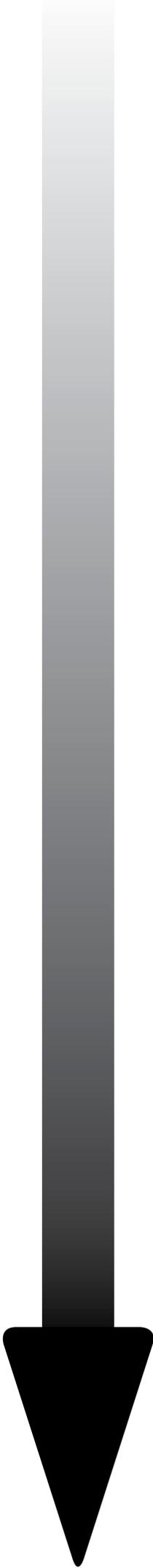
What happens next?

The outcome of the investigation is a Scheme Assessment Report. Once the report is approved by the NZTA and any alterations to the designation are confirmed by Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga City Council, the NZTA can then apply for funding for the detailed design of the alignment and structures.

The next project phase (design) also includes purchasing any necessary property and lodging resource consents.

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The history of the Tauranga Northern Link project

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- Early 1990s** A bypass of Bethlehem and Te Puna was considered.
 - 1997** The Tauranga Northern Arterial Options Report identified options for both a northern corridor and a southern corridor.
 - 2001** The favoured southern corridor option was designated.
 - 2001-** Development in both Bethlehem and areas further north since then have been influenced by the Tauranga Northern Link's alignment. The Omokoroa-Te Puna Designation was also developed. This designation joins the Tauranga Northern Link at Loop Road and runs up to the west of the Omokoroa Road intersection.
 - Now** The Tauranga Northern Link is a key part of the region's SmartGrowth strategy.

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Objectives of this open day

This open day presents ideas for your consideration and comment on two projects:

1

The secondary investigation into the **Tauranga Northern Link** is looking at potential changes to the original designation. Points presented for your consideration are:

- the location of the interchange at Loop Road or Minden Road and what effect it would have on the need for on/off-ramps at Clarke Road
- how the Tauranga Northern Link could connect with Takitimu Drive (Route K) and how this connection would affect the need for on/off-ramps at Cambridge Road
- how 15th Avenue could connect with Takitimu Drive in the southbound direction.

2

The **Bethlehem to Waihi Road safety improvements project**. Points presented for your consideration are:

- whether this section of State Highway 2 should be four-laned
- potential effects on the environment.

Information for each proposal is displayed.

Please give us your feedback on the forms provided.



Options for the TNL's western end – Minden Road

The Tauranga Northern Link's current designation provides for a 'seagull' intersection (a 'T' intersection with separating islands) near Loop Road. The later Omokoroa-Te Puna designation provides for a grade-separated interchange with on/off-ramps and an overbridge to replace the seagull intersection.

The NZTA is now considering not providing the seagull interchange and moving the proposed Omokoroa-Te Puna interchange to either 100m east of Loop Road or to Minden Road. This move would better provide for the anticipated population growth in the Te Puna-Minden area. Both options would require minor alterations to the designation.

Moving the western interchange to either location means the proposed Clarke Road ramps are no longer required because the new layouts would provide for all traffic movements. (The original seagull intersection required the Clarke Road ramps to provide access to the local road network.)

1 Moving the interchange to 100m east of Loop Road

Adjusting the interchange location to east of Loop Road would improve the connection to the existing state highway (which will revert to a local road when the TNL is built). This interchange would result in more traffic on the existing state highway than the Minden Road option, meaning other improvements (eg upgrading the SH2-Wairoa Road intersection) may be needed. The form of the intersection – in terms of which road goes over which (TNL or the local road) – is still to be determined.

This option would require altering the landscape mitigation plans. Stormwater would be treated before being discharged. Consultation and investigations are continuing but other effects as a result of the change are expected to be minor.

The currently approved landscape planting plan would be applied. Similar species would be planted where orchard shelter belts are affected.

This option would still require an over/under bridge (no ramps) to be built at Minden Road to maintain access for the Minden area to Te Puna.

2 Moving the interchange to Minden Road

Providing ramps at Minden Road would improve access to the TNL from local roads and would reduce the traffic volume (compared with the Loop Road interchange) by approximately 3000 vehicles per day on the existing state highway. This is likely to be the cheaper of the two options.

However, it would also mean the intersection of Minden Road and SH2 at the Te Puna commercial area would come under increased pressure for north-south movements, so a change to the layout of that intersection would likely be required.

This option would require altering the landscape mitigation plans. Stormwater would be treated before it was discharged. Consultation and investigations are continuing but other effects as a result of the change are expected to be minor.

For both options, current conditions would require quiet road surface seal and small noise barriers where houses are located within 50m of the road.

Clarke Road

Both options remove the need for the Clarke Road ramps. Therefore, the NZTA is considering removing the ramps from the designation. Removing the ramps is expected to have little impact on the traffic flow on Clarke Road.

Question

What, if any, comments do you have about the potential effects of this proposal?

Please provide your feedback on the form provided.



Options for the TNL's eastern end - Takitimu Drive

The Tauranga Northern Link's current designation includes a grade-separated interchange at its connection to Takitimu Drive (Route K). Due to land use changes since the original designation (eg the new suburb of Pyes Pa West, development at Tauriko) and associated changes to traffic volumes, other options are now being considered:

1 A roundabout

A roundabout is the cheapest option and, if built in the near future, could last 15 years or more before needing an upgrade. Preliminary designs indicate it could be located within the TNL's existing designation.

A roundabout could result in a delay at peak times of about one minute.

2 A grade-separated interchange

Changes to the designated option are being considered to determine if the layout for a grade-separated interchange could be made more cost effective and consistent with the NZTA's strategic priorities (eg SH29 has priority over the TNL due to its importance as the key freight link to the Port of Tauranga).

Environmental assessments are underway for each option, but any effects are likely to be minor.

The likely application of quiet road seal will meet current designation conditions. The landscaping will comply with the existing conditions and also seek to be consistent with the planting already underway in the Kopurererua Valley Reserves Management Plan.

Cambridge Road ramps

The NZTA is also considering removing the ramps connecting the TNL to Cambridge Road. Local traffic would be able to use existing roads (including Tamatea Arikini Drive or Route J and the Beaumaris Boulevard-Waihi Road connection) to access Tauranga central, rather than using the highway (TNL and Takitimu Drive) to make short trips.

Removing the ramps:

- would reduce the cost of the project and mean there would be less traffic on Cambridge Road
- requires reviewing the access to Smith's Reserve, and the NZTA and Tauranga City Council are investigating options.

Question

What, if any, comments do you have about the potential effects of this proposal?

Please provide your feedback on the form provided.



Options for 15th Avenue connection to Takitimu Drive

The connection of 15th Avenue to Takitimu Drive was included as part the Route PJK designation process, but it was not constructed. The NZTA is looking at whether it could be constructed in conjunction with the Tauranga Northern Link and how it could tie in with the current road network.

A 15th Avenue connection would put about 10 percent more traffic on the Tauranga Northern Link (which improves its economic viability). Correspondingly, it would reduce the volume of traffic on the existing highway through Bethlehem by 10 percent. The connection would also improve access from the hospital area to Tauriko and the Kaimais (currently, access is only available along this route in the opposite direction).

However, the proposed location of the ramp is in a challenging environment on the side of a steep slope. It is likely to be elevated for some distance, making it expensive to build. It would require a minor alteration to the designation.

Environmental factors

Noise surveys indicate that no additional mitigation is required to meet current designation conditions.

The stormwater run-off from the new structure would be channelled to existing treatment areas, and remedial planting would be undertaken within the construction zone. Care would be taken during construction to manage sediment run-off into the valley.

Any planting in the valley floor would comply with designation conditions.

Question

What, if any, comments do you have about the potential effects of this proposal?

Please provide your feedback on the form provided.



Bethlehem to Waihi Road safety improvements

This project aims to improve safety on the Bethlehem to Waihi Road section of State Highway 2. It is a short-to-medium term project and is independent of the Tauranga Northern Link.

The 80km/h section of highway between Bethlehem and Waihi Road currently has two lanes westbound (towards Bethlehem) and one lane eastbound. It has a poor safety record.

It is proposed to improve safety by:

- smoothing out some of the curves
- improving the camber, safety markings and signage
- installing a median barrier.

Options for access to properties in the 50km/h area are being reviewed in order to provide a safe solution. We are considering a flush (painted) or raised median for this area.

The proposed realignment would require an alteration to the designation.

Following environmental assessments:

- a quiet road surface seal is recommended to reduce traffic noise
- solid fencing would be installed to reduce traffic noise in certain locations
- construction noise would be managed carefully to meet New Zealand standards
- sediment created during construction would be managed
- restorative landscaping would be undertaken in stormwater reserves and other areas affected by construction
- road stormwater run-off would be treated prior to discharge into existing ponds or wetlands.

Average annual daily traffic (AADT) = 23,500 currently

Forecast AADT without TNL = greater than 30,000
(resulting in motorists diverting to local roads)

Forecast AADT with TNL = approximately 24,000

Crash history = 4 injury crashes and 21 non-injury crashes between 2005 and 2009

Question

What, if any, comments do you have about the potential effects of this proposal? Please provide your feedback on the form provided.