

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	Summary of Remutaka Hill Studies
Date	27 November 2024
Briefing number	BRI-3218

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Direct line	Cell phone	1 st contact
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Action taken by Office of the Minister

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen by Minister
- ☐ Agreed
- ☐ Feedback provided
- ☐ Forwarded to
- ☐ Needs change [please specify]
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Overtaken by events

27 November 2024

Hon Simeon Brown – Minister of Transport**SUMMARY OF REMUTAKA HILL STUDIES****Purpose**

1. This briefing provides you with a summary of the previous investigations completed on options to improve the SH2 Remutaka Hill Road Corridor, as requested following your meeting on 29 October 2024 with the Remutaka Road Action Group.
2. This briefing follows on from MIN-4697 which was provided to you in advance of your meeting with the Remutaka Road Action Group.
3. A summary of the 2008 study was provided to you in MIN-4697. The 1995 study has been superseded by the 2008 and 2016 studies.

2016 SH2 Te Marua to Masterton Programme Business Case, October 2016

4. The recommended option from the 2016 Programme Business Case (PBC) was to provide a safer journey and a more reliable, efficient and resilient connection between the Wairarapa and Wellington. The recommended improvements for Remutaka Hill are shown in the below table. This aligns with the focus of the recommended option on acceleration of low-cost improvements to safety, resilience and reliability.

Potential indicative business case	Potential intervention	Estimated costs	Estimated timeframe	Current status
SH2 Remutaka Hill section	Speed limit reduction to reflect road environment as per Speed Management Guide as well as speed limit enforcement for all road users	Low \$100-200k	Short/ immediate By 2017/18	No longer viable under the new rule.
	Geotechnical investigation and preventative slip or mitigation works to improve resilience	High \$1-4 M	Short to Medium By 2026/27	Wellington Transport Alliance (WTA) manages this with Geological Hazard Site Inspection to determine an ongoing

				programme of work.
	Resurfacing frequency increased from every 8 to every 6 years	Low ~\$200-300k per year	Ongoing	Average age of surfacing is currently less than 6 years.
	Realignment of horizontal curves to achieve a consistent speed environment, staged over a ten-year period	Very high ~\$50-100 M	Short to Medium By 2026/27	Not commenced.
	Corridor safety improvements between Remutaka Hill and Te Marua including protecting severe hazards, wide centrelines where appropriate, and intersection safety improvements	High \$2-4 M	Staged Short to Medium By 2023/24	Not commenced and is currently on hold as the economics, BCR, expected DSI savings and costs did not stack up.

5. The 2016 PBC also identified alternative options. Among the alternative options, for the section between Te Marua and Featherston, are major road corridor improvements and construction of a new corridor, such as tunnels, major viaducts, and duplication of existing roads between the Hutt Valley and Wairarapa. These alternative options could provide significant benefits. However, they have high risks around affordability, value for money, environmental impacts, geotechnical feasibility, and iwi consideration.
6. The study noted that investment at the level needed to develop a new road corridor (e.g. a tunnel) was significant over-investment based on forecasted demand. Therefore, tunnel options were not progressed, and cost information was not developed.

Future investigation

7. Please note that NZTA's 30-year strategic plan (Arataki) does not identify the Remutaka Hill section of SH2 as a location where significant change is required in the medium/long-term. Arataki forecasts out to 2050 indicate that at some point in the future demand may begin to exceed corridor capacity. The current short to medium-term strategy for the corridor in Arataki is to: maintain the existing corridor to an appropriate level of service to ensure journeys are safe and reliable; and monitor volumes to understand the scale and nature of on-going demand and determine if any response is required.

Next steps

8. Given the above, SH2 over the Remutaka Hill is unlikely to be investigated in the near future. This project has not been identified in the GPS, nor included in the RLTP and NLTP. Funding in the NLTF is constrained, with limited funding to investigate additional projects.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the contents of this briefing.

VL Browne

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Vanessa Browne

Acting Group General Manager, Transport Services

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Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Transport

Date: 2024