



Puhoi to Wellsford

Update

Newsletter 03 - September 2010

Consultation provides valuable feedback

Seven weeks of consultation have given the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) valuable feedback on proposals for the new road of national significance, State Highway One from Puhoi to Wellsford.



Improving safety for those driving between Auckland and Wellsford is just one of the goals of the new Puhoi to Wellsford highway project.

Individuals, businesses, road users, local groups, and government agencies have provided a wealth of written and oral feedback, which along with technical studies will help the NZTA determine the indicative route for the new road. Thank you to everyone who has contributed feedback - your input has been invaluable in these early stages of investigation.

What we asked you

The first round of consultation began on 21 June 2010. The aim was to get feedback on the new highway being an entirely new road (off-line) with the existing SH1 remaining as an alternative route; the road bypassing

Warkworth to the west and Wellsford to the east; and access to the highway only at Warkworth and Wellsford.

To do this, 25,000 newsletters were distributed. There was extensive newspaper advertising and editorial coverage, and information was provided on the NZTA website.

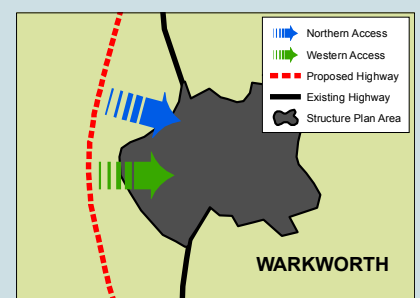
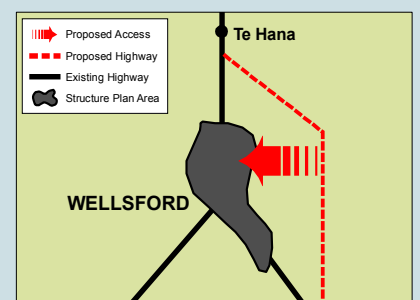
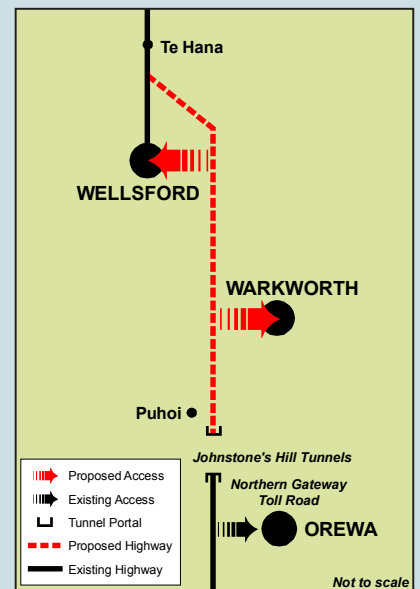
Listening to feedback

A series of individual interviews and group discussions with residents, businesses and local groups were held to present the information, seek and encourage feedback, and obtain local knowledge. We also received over 600 feedback forms.

What we asked you

We asked for your feedback on three main project principles:

- The new highway being an entirely new road (off line).
- The road bypassing Warkworth to the west and Wellsford to the east.
- Highway access only at Warkworth and Wellsford.



Puhoi to Wellsford: Summary of initial feedback



The feedback

The proposals that were consulted on raised a variety of opinions from many different people, which all need to be carefully considered before the NZTA can make an informed decision about an indicative route. Below is a summary of the feedback received:

Entirely new highway

Feedback showed widespread support for building an entirely new highway (an “off-line” route). This was highlighted by the freight industry, in particular, for ease of use and continual flow of movement around towns such as Warkworth and Wellsford.

There was concern expressed by some about the difficult terrain in the Dome Valley and the cost of a new motorway. It was felt a new road through Dome Valley could delay or defer improvements to the existing road, which has a poor safety record.

Some people thought that the project should not be an entirely new highway but a staged, cost effective upgrade of the existing road. And feedback was received by those who thought that a road was not the best type of infrastructure to build as it increases the use of private vehicles and our dependence on fossil fuels. Concerns were also raised about the potential environmental effects of construction and operation including noise and air pollution.

Bypass Warkworth to the west

The principle that passing west around Warkworth was accepted as the most sensible option and received good support.

Detailed feedback was received from some residents on the outskirts of Warkworth looking at exact positioning of the route including some wanting the route to run between Woodcocks Road and Hudson Road along the proposed Western Collector route.

There was also some expectation by locals that the bypass would be in the vicinity of Carran Road (as shown in the Warkworth Structure Plan) but others suggested it could run east of the river or further west close to Streamlands Swamp Road.

Bypass Wellsford to the east

Response to the proposal to bypass Wellsford to the east revealed that there had been some expectation it would run to the west of the town. Some felt a western bypass linking SH16 would be the best option.

Feedback however, generally supported an eastern bypass as long as it was close to town so that passing traffic would be encouraged to break its journey at Wellsford. It was also noted that an eastern bypass provides the opportunity to create a better connection to Mangawhai and the chance to improve the intersection at Wayby Valley Road.

Access location at Warkworth

There were competing and conflicting views about where the access point should be located at Warkworth with issues raised about both the northern and western options. There were also some suggestions for a southern access and for multiple access locations.

There was strong support for a northern access point to better service the significant and growing eastern coastal settlements of Snells Beach, Sandspit, Matakana, Omaha and Leigh. This would also better service the recreational traffic to destinations such as Goat Island marine reserve, the Tawharanui Peninsula, Kawau Island, and the surrounding area.

The main concerns about a northern access point were largely economic with the fear that it would take tourist traffic from Warkworth town centre, and affect local businesses.



Access to Mahurangi West was an issue of concern.

A western access was supported by some people as it would provide a closer link between the industrial and retail areas in Woodcocks Road and the town centre, and minimise travel distance, fuel use and emissions.

There were some concerns about a western access point which include diverting traffic so that it went past Mahurangi College. The college has a roll of 1200, which is expected to increase to 1500 over the next few years.

Some people also felt that a western access would encourage traffic to/from the eastern coastal settlements to continue using the existing highway and the Hill Street intersection, providing little relief for the town.

A western access also raised concerns about the impact on the Council's proposed Western Collector route. People were concerned it would increase traffic volumes including the number of heavy goods vehicles. These would travel through newly-developed and planned subdivisions en route to the motorway, and pose significant safety and access issues for the 500 pupils of Warkworth School in Hill Street.

Access only at Warkworth and Wellsford

The most feedback received by the NZTA was regarding the design principle of access to the new highway being only at Warkworth and Wellsford. This was centred around the need for an access point being available in the Puhoi/Mahurangi West area.

The reasons included: business reliance on passing trade; support for the social fabric of the communities; integration of Puhoi with the wider Auckland region; access for emergency vehicles and traffic diversion options; affect on tourism between Puhoi and Warkworth; avoidance of truck movements from Puhoi through Orewa; reduced travel distances, travel times, fossil fuel use and carbon emissions.

Some feedback stressed the importance of motorway access in lifestyle and location choices. It was also felt that motorway access would not create significant extra development pressures and that the area was not suited to urban-style development. A common sentiment was that reverting to the use of SH17 would be a step backwards using a road that was considered to be less safe and more prone to slips and closures. There was also some support for no access at Puhoi/Mahurangi West mainly due to the cost of a connection.

Northern connection to existing highway

There were differing views on where the new highway should tie back into the existing highway north of Wellsford. Some felt it should be north of Te Hana with one plan showing a “T” junction to Mangawhai Road east of the junction with SH1. Other feedback was in favour of the proposed “tie-in” to the south of Te Hana.



Conserving native flora and fauna along the proposed highway route was an issue raised in many submissions.

Local knowledge

Local knowledge provided valuable information about the geology of the area. The ground conditions in some areas were referred to in a number of submissions as presenting major challenges for road building.

The ecological values of a number of areas between Puhoi and Wellsford were noted including the Sunnybrook Reserve. There was mention of specific flora and fauna in a number of sites including the presence of fernbirds, native frogs and kauri snail in old forestry land between Puhoi and Schedewys Hill. Also mentioned were Hochstetters Frog in Dome Valley and the Moirs Hill Reserve, and Powelliphanta snails.

One of the other major issues that received significant comment was the incidence of flooding. Mention was made of past issues with willows in the Hoteo, now recurring, and flooding on the Kaipara Flats west of Warkworth.

Local knowledge also drew attention to traffic patterns in the area. The delays that occur at various locations were the subject of frequent comments clearly indicating that congestion is not simply a "holiday" issue. There was also concern about the movement of quarry trucks including those from Omaha Valley Road onto SH1 travelling to Auckland.



For more information

For further information online visit: www.nzta.govt.nz/puhoi-wellsford

What happens next?

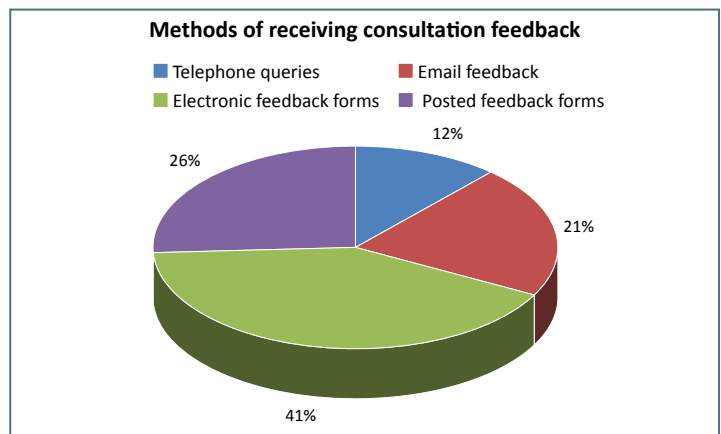
The NZTA and its consultants SKM are now working through all the feedback. This will then be combined with information gathered from other technical studies and investigations. All aspects will then be evaluated using a variety of measures, including operational efficiency, safety and value for money.

The outcome of this process is that an indicative route for the new highway will be determined. If all goes to plan, the NZTA hope to be able to consult with the public before Christmas regarding an indicative route for the new highway.

The NZTA will seek to contact in person property owners whose land is crossed by the indicative route before that information is released to the wider community for comment.

Detailed information will be available from the NZTA in the first instance but property acquisition will be independently overseen by Land Information NZ, who offer an explanation of the process on their website: www.linz.govt.nz

Public consultation will be advertised in a range of newspapers, on the radio and on the NZTA website. Given the nature of the information, a series of open days will be held in the northern Rodney area during the consultation period. This will allow people to talk directly to the engineers, planners and specialists involved in the development of the route. People whose details the NZTA has will be notified about open days in their local area.



Our contact details

For general enquiries, or contact information about the NZ Transport Agency please check our website www.nzta.govt.nz or email us at info@nzta.govt.nz

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