

Otaki to Levin Expressway – Frequently asked questions

Why do we need an expressway between Otaki and Levin?

The Otaki to Levin expressway is part of the Wellington Northern Corridor road of national significance (RoNS) between Levin and Wellington Airport. Completion of the Wellington Northern Corridor will support economic growth in the city and the wider region by improving access to Wellington's port, Central Business District, interisland ferry terminals and airport.

What is a road of national significance?

The RoNS programme is one of New Zealand's biggest ever infrastructure investments. A key part of the government's National Infrastructure Plan, the \$10 billion programme aims to complete seven essential state highways projects to reduce congestion, improve safety and support economic growth.

The seven RoNS projects are: Wellington Northern Corridor SH1, Puhoi to Wellsford SH1, completing the Auckland Western Ring Route SH16 and SH20, Victoria Park Tunnel Auckland SH1, Waikato Expressway SH1, Tauranga Eastern Corridor SH2 and Christchurch Motorways.

These are considered the most urgent roading projects within or near New Zealand's five largest population centres.

How does the Otaki to Levin Expressway relate to the rest of the Wellington Northern Corridor RoNS projects?

The Otaki to Levin expressway is part of the Wellington Northern Corridor from Levin to Wellington Airport. Further development of other sections of the Wellington Northern Corridor is being progressed and includes projects already highlighted by the Regional Transport Committee and the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) for investigation, design or construction.

The aim is to substantially advance this and the other six roads of national significance across the country in the next 10 years to improve New Zealand's productivity and economic growth.

What does the project involve?

The initial phase of the project includes investigating a four-lane expressway between Otaki and Levin, investigating options for an alternative route for Levin and the implementation of improvement measures on SH1 to the north of Levin.

How long is the route?

The study area is approximately 30km in length, from north of Otaki to north of Levin.

What are the start and finish points of the route?

The route will start at Taylor's Road, to the north of Otaki, and finish immediately south of the Manawatu River Bridge, to the north of Levin.

Why do we need an expressway in this location?

Otaki to Levin forms part of the Wellington Northern Corridor road of national significance (RoNS). The aim of the project is to improve safety and reduce congestion by improving the route between north of Otaki and north of Levin.

What route will the expressway take?

No route has yet been chosen for the expressway between north of Otaki and north of Levin. Options for an upgrade of SH1 have previously been investigated including routes to the west of Lake Horowhenua, west of Levin, through Levin and east of Levin. Route options will be investigated as part of the scoping and scheme assessment phases, including those options previously suggested.

What are the key project milestones?

The NZ TA expects to be able to consult on broad route options in early 2012 and on a preferred route in mid 2012. The NZTA plans to lodge consent applications with the Environment Protection Authority during early to mid 2013.

When will it be completed?

SH 1 between Otaki and Levin is part of the Wellington Northern Corridor RoNS. It falls into the third phase of the RoNS programme which is expected to be substantially completed within ten years.

How does this project relate to the Peka Peka to Otaki expressway project?

The project team will be working with the Peka Peka to Otaki expressway team to ensure the plans for the two projects are co-ordinated.

What is an expressway?

Expressways are high speed, high volume roads connecting key destinations. They are typically straight roads with a speed limit of 100kph, are median divided and only have grade separated intersections (i.e. no signals, roundabouts or private accesses) so that there should be no need for through traffic to stop on them.

What will the project cost?

At this stage the estimated cost for the Otaki to Levin expressway is \$140m. The project cost will become clearer when a route is selected.

Will my property be affected by the expressway?

The route for the expressway has not yet been selected. The NZTA won't know what properties will be affected until the preferred route has been confirmed. This is unlikely to be until mid 2012.

How do expressways cater for pedestrians and cyclists?

For safety reasons, pedestrians and cyclists are normally not encouraged to use expressways. Often, dedicated cycling/walking paths are created instead, where needed. As part of the planning process for the Otaki to Levin expressway, the NZTA will take the needs of pedestrians and cyclists into account.

How will the NZTA deal with issues such as noise, vibration and light pollution?

There are a number of standards and guidelines the project team must follow to ensure issues such as noise, vibration and light pollution are mitigated to an acceptable level.

Will the community and stakeholders have an opportunity to be involved?

Yes - public input will be sought on the NZTA's plans for the Otaki to Levin Expressway. The first formal public consultation period will be in early 2012 on broad route options. A second round of consultation will follow in mid 2012 on the preferred route option. The public can provide feedback to NZTA at any time by e-mailing info@o2l.co.nz

How does NZTA communicate with affected community groups and iwi?

The NZTA will place emphasis on building up relationships with iwi and community groups and keep them informed about the project. The Agency is committed to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and abides by its statutory responsibilities under the Land Transport Management Act and Resource Management Act to consult with iwi on all appropriate matters.

How wide will the expressway be?

The exact width of the expressway will vary from location to location. A corridor 100m wide is typically designated to allow for the expressway, buffer zones, local road access and construction access.

Isn't a route already designated for the Otaki to Levin expressway?

Previous studies have identified potential corridor options for an expressway between Otaki to Levin. However, those studies did not carry out sufficient work to enable a route to be designated under the Resource Management Act.