



2 Muldoon's Corner Easing project - update

Project progress

Since the project began our contractors have:

- Set up a worksite at the summit with a 'base camp' down at Kaitoke Country Gardens
- Established haul, or access, roads up to the first cut and down to the first fill site
- Removed a passing lane on the southern side of the summit by installing concrete barriers to protect workers from moving traffic and also to provide access for the haul trucks
- Started installing the first of a number of new culverts

The logistics involved in this project are not easy. There are massive amounts of earth to move - 230,000 cubic metres - from very high, steep hills to very deep, steep gullies.

Large areas of material are excavated or 'cut' from the hillside and relocated to gully sites as 'fill'.

The highest cut on the project will be at 55m. The digger you can see perched on the hillside close to the road summit in the photograph is just below the top of a 40m cut. Operating machinery in these sorts of situations requires great skill and care that the job gets done efficiently while ensuring everyone, workers and members of the public, is safe.

Traffic management is also an integral part of site safety. Large construction trucks and vehicles have to cross the state highway to access the cut and fill sites. In order to do this safely we are controlling traffic with manual stop/go signs and you may expect short delays of up to five minutes - so please consider allowing a little extra time for your journey. However, there will not be any traffic management during peak traffic flows so commuting traffic should not be delayed by the project.



For those who drive over the hill, either daily as commuters, or regularly to access the region's facilities such as shopping, hospital or airport, it will come as no surprise that the progress of this project is very much dependant on the weather. This means there will be times when we cannot get as much done as we would like, or that the order of work will be adjusted to suit the conditions. Our programme has allowed for this flexibility.

Keeping it green

Whenever major roading works are carried out there are always resource consents and conditions that must be adhered too during construction.

There are a number of consents on this project that relate to the area's streams and culverts and the protection of wildlife within them. For instance, we cannot carry out any earthworks on the project which would affect these streams between 1 May and 31 August each year so as not to disturb the fish spawning during that period. We must also make sure that the streams are protected from sediment, or mud that runs off the work site, all year round.

As part of the project we are installing large concrete culverts to carry water under the new road and down to the bottom of the gullies. Each culvert will be buried within compacted fill and will join into an energy dissipation unit. This is a large concrete chamber 3.3m high, 5.6m long, and 4.5m wide, which will reduce the speed of the water flow before eventually running into the stream at the bottom of the gully.

In order to make sure the culvert allows the migration of fish between the valley floor, watercourses and streams further up the hill, small blocks, or ledges, are set along the lower half of the precast concrete pipes forming the culvert. These will enable fish to rest as they would behind a natural shelf of rock or vegetation as they make their way upstream.

There are many fish species within the Rimutaka Hill streams, among them: long and short fin eels; dwarf galaxias; freshwater crayfish; and various members of the bully family.



Sections of the 1.35m diameter pipe lined up ready to install as part of the new culvert which will be about 80m long and slope down a vertical drop of 25m.



The energy dissipation unit is assembled on site using pre-cast sections.

Stakeholders

At the beginning of our major projects NZ Transport Agency liaises with key stakeholders, such as local and regional councils, Iwi, affected landowners, road user representatives and emergency services, and discuss any issues that may be particularly important to them. With this in mind, a workshop was held last month to define a combined set of values and objectives for the project and to set the scene for the partnership between the project and its stakeholders over the next two and a half years.

A draft charter is being prepared and we will publish the final version next newsletter.

Contact details

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