

frequently asked questions and answers

TIMING

When will construction start?

All going well, by mid-2010. There are still some time related risks outside Council's control which could delay the start beyond this.

Why is it taking so long to start building this road?

There are many aspects which make the Western Link a unique and challenging project. Below are some of those challenges:

Funding:

Until Land Transport New Zealand (the previous funding authority, merged with Transit NZ to form the NZ Transport Authority in July 2008) agreed to a 90% subsidy in principle for the road in March 2007, the road was unaffordable to Council. Gaining and keeping the support of the necessary central Government agencies for the project has been ongoing. Final approval of construction funding for the various elements of the project is still to be gained.

Obtaining a Designation:

The Notice of Requirement for the Designation issued in 1997 was challenged and was not confirmed as a Designation until July 2006 after two Environment Court and two High Court hearings. The designation is needed to allow the land to be used for transportation purposes and gives it legal protection for this purpose.

Private Development:

A significant amount of potential and 'in the pipe line' development in Kapiti applied for through Plan Changes (i.e. Airport, Waikanae North and Maypole Developments) has meant that predicting future traffic levels, which determines the form of the road and intersections, and the level of future proofing, has been a moving target.

Politics:

Community concerns over the form of the road, changes in Central Government and the Council have led to various reviews and setbacks, but Council now has a preliminary design which we believe will meet and even exceed community expectations.

Design/planning Complexity:

The Designation width is typically 100m so careful consideration of adjoining land uses and future development has to be considered and gives many options to be investigated to come up with an optimum design for the road alignment.

Property Purchase:

Land purchased for the project has been acquired under the Public Works Act, but to date the compulsory acquisition processes have not been required. Our aim is to deal with property owners in good faith as this is a small, relatively close knit, community. Currently three private properties remain to be purchased (in an advanced state of negotiation) plus the transferral of various large blocks of NZ Transport Agency land.

Historic Places Trust Approvals and Resource Consents:

This has not been straightforward due to strong cultural concerns and the absence of archaeological information along the route.

Will the Waikanae Bridge section be constructed first?

This is likely to be the case, but there are complications in opening the bridge section alone as it alters traffic patterns and will impact on both local roads and State Highway 1 to the south of the river. The Otaihanga to Te Moana Road section requires 1.5 km of road each side of the bridge. This section will need to be started early in the contract period to enable completion of Stage 1 in a three year window. The bridge is 180m long and a major structure so it will take about a year to construct by itself. Once built, it will enable greater access and flexibility, as the river will be able to be crossed by construction traffic.

It has not been decided whether the construction contract will specify a sequence for the sections making up Stage 1. The emphasis will be given to the bridge section, but the contractor needs to be able to programme their workload efficiently in order to achieve the lowest overall price.

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DESIGN

Where is it?

Detailed plans are available through the Kapiti Coast District Council website and the design can be viewed on Google Earth.

How long is the road?

Stage 1 is 8 kilometres approximately including intersections. The full extent of all three stages is 16 kilometres.

How many lanes will it have?

Two lanes side by side (one each way) between intersections, with multiple lanes for turning and through traffic at signalised intersections.

What types of intersections will there be?

Intersections will be signalised 'T' junctions or crossroads, and single lane roundabouts.

What will the speed limits be?

50km/hr in urban areas (Raumati Rd to Otaihanga Road).
70km/hr in rural areas (Otaihanga Road to Te Moana Road).

Will it be a noisy road?

The intention is to surface the entire road in various grades of asphalt (smooth and black - also known as blacktop, hotmix, asphaltic cement) if affordable. This reduces tyre noise at source which is generally the most effective way to reduce noise levels. If chipseal is used between intersections, it will be a smaller grade chip than used on the highway. The road will be designed to have a noise level at the boundary of the Designation, less than the maximum permitted by the Conditions of the Designation. Naturally shaped 'bundling' using peat to lower noise levels outside the designation is also being considered for this purpose, with noise fences/sound barriers not likely to be needed due to careful placement of the road.

Will it have bus and cyclist lanes?

It will have 1.5m wide sealed shoulders marked as cycle lanes as well as provision for off-road shared cycle paths. Dedicated bus lanes will not be needed in the short/medium term, but buses can certainly use the route.

In the long term, should bus lanes be required, then there is land available within the designation.

When will the design be finalised?

The detailed design should be completed by August 2009.

MANAGEMENT

What are the major tasks yet to be completed before construction can start?

The final resource consent for Stage 1 (Otaihanga Road to Te Moana Road) is expected in May 2009. Authorities (permissions) relating to the impact on archaeological sites are expected in July 2009. Negotiations for a small number of remaining private properties plus various blocks of New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) land are in an advanced stage of negotiation. Economic analysis comparing the benefits to the costs of the project for final approval of construction funding from NZTA, is being worked towards.

Who will own, operate and maintain the road?

Kapiti Coast District Council.

Will Council own the land the road is on?

Yes. Council will own a 100m wide (approx) strip of land that forms the Designation, which includes space for cycleways, walkways, stormwater drainage and appropriate landscaping to mitigate the effects of the road on the environment.

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STRATEGIC

Will it attract State Highway through traffic?

Only if State Highway One (SH1) becomes impassable / severely congested. The route will not otherwise be attractive to through traffic due to the lower speed limits and increased number of intersections (Stage 1 WL has five signalised intersections and two roundabouts, the adjacent section of SH1 currently has two sets of signals). SH1 traffic flows, especially at peak times, will be reduced due to local traffic using the Western Link instead.

Why isn't a bridge built at Otaihanga or a similar location that connects to existing local roads?

Major congestion and disruption to the local roads forming the route would result, with negative impacts on residents in those streets; consequently it is unlikely such a bridge would gain consent. Due to the reduced economic benefits to the state highway, this would mean Council would be very unlikely to gain 90% funding for it (making it unaffordable). We would also in effect be starting from scratch with all the statutory approvals and land purchases required.

How is the road cyclist and pedestrian friendly?

On and off-road cyclist lanes are provided together with beside road footpaths. Additional cycling and pedestrian facilities are located away from the road using the full corridor available which provides a more informal landscaped facility. These pathways connect with surrounding streets to improve overall connectivity along the length of the road.

STATUTORY APPROVALS

What is the Designation?

It is a legal status obtained under the Resource Management Act which is applied to an area of land identified for a public work (in this case transportation works).

What are the Conditions of the Designation?

Designations generally have a set of rules that apply to them, known as Conditions. The Conditions applying to the Western Link Road designation cover matters including the general form of the road and associated facilities, landscaping, stormwater control, erosion and sediment control, noise and visual requirements.

What about Resource Consents?

Resource Consents under the Resource Management Act are also required. These deal with more specific effects than the Designation Conditions. Resource Consents from Greater Wellington Regional Council cover discharges to waterways, earthworks, construction effects and other matters. Three of the four sections of Stage 1 are now consented with the consents for the fourth section (Otaihanga Road to Te Moana Road) expected shortly. Council also requires an 'Outline Plan' to be produced which demonstrates how the proposal will comply with the Conditions of the Designation.

What about Approvals under the Historic Places Act?

Historic Places Act approvals are also required as the project may "destroy, damage or modify"¹ known and unknown archaeological sites. Conditions on these approvals require such things as monitoring by archaeologists during earthworks and training and instruction of machine operators. An application has now been lodged with the Historic Places Trust for construction of the works.

¹ Wording in the Historic Places Act 1993

frequently asked questions and answers

CONSTRUCTION

How long will it take to build?

About three years, work occurring at two or three locations simultaneously and connecting up with each other. Earthworks will be able to progress well during the winter due to the high proportion of sand material to be used and free draining ground conditions.

Will there be disruption to local traffic during construction?

Yes, but this will be kept to the minimum possible. All projects of this nature have impacts during construction but the eventual benefits will make any disruption worthwhile. All major east-west road intersections with the Western Link will have to remain open to traffic at all times or detours provided under approved Traffic Management Plans.

During construction how will noise, dust and vibration be controlled?

A Construction Management Plan will be produced and enforced to ensure effects are minimised. This might restrict work to certain hours or specify that certain equipment be used (for example to minimise noise and vibration). Shallow bores within the Designation will be used for construction water to aid in dust control. Sand blow fences are also an option in specific locations. Much of the corridor is not close to any existing development so work can take place with relatively little disruption. Due to the highly erodible nature of the fine wind blown sand which forms the dunes, covering and re-vegetation of finished surfaces will be required as soon as possible.

OPERATION

How will the visual and noise effects be reduced once the road is in operation?

The road has been aligned within the corridor taking into account adjacent land uses, future anticipated land uses and the existing landscape. Where feasible it has been aligned away from existing residential areas. The landscaping design ensures the road is fitted into the landscape rather than the landscape being fitted around the road. Care has been taken to minimise cuts to significant landmark dunes and to avoid as far as possible wetland areas in the corridor. Over time it is envisaged adjacent private properties will want to open up and 'face' the high quality public space created further enhancing its value, security and safety.

The Designation conditions stipulate what mitigation measures or level of effect is allowed. For instance, the daily average noise level at the Designation boundary can be no higher than 62 decibels (the level of a quiet conversation in an office type environment). Low noise road surfacing and sound barriers will be used where required, but it is expected these will be necessary in only a few locations.

Planting and mounding of peat to blend in with the existing natural landforms will also be used as visual screening.

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FINANCIAL / ECONOMIC

What will it cost?

The total cost of the project is expected to be in the range \$106 million to \$119 million with a 90% subsidy from NZTA.

How much will it cost ratepayers?

Council has budgeted \$17 million for construction of the project. This has been budgeted along with operation and maintenance costs in the LTCCP (Long Term Council Community Plan).

Ways of keeping maintenance and operation costs down are being carefully considered as part of the design.

What economic and safety benefits will the road have?

The road will remove local and commuter traffic from the State Highway making the highway less congested and safer. The Western Link will be a lower speed road, have fewer heavy vehicles and make more alternate routes available to travellers so it will be intrinsically safer enabling people to reach their destination over a shorter route, earlier and with less hassle.

Large savings in time, fuel consumption, other vehicle running costs and a reduction in carbon emissions are projected over the 50 year economic analysis period due to the shorter local trips the road will provide. Getting from Waikanae Beach to Paraparaumu Beach will take less than half the time it currently does. The project has regional and national benefits due to removing traffic from SH1.

What social, environmental and community benefits will the project have?

A high level of provision for the active modes of transport (cycling/walking/horse riding) with multiple connections and a variety of off-road paths has always been important in the design of the corridor. The vision is to create safe, enjoyable spaces, with careful landscaping, planting, signage, seating and an art trail so the link becomes a draw card to locals and people from outside the district alike. The link will become an important recreational area and natural systems will be enhanced and protected (dune land forms where feasible, wetland and native bush areas) creating a green/blue corridor for the movement of birds and improved native habitat. It is more than a road, more than a transportation corridor, the vision is that it will better connect and enhance communities through these means.

Council is retaining all the land within the Designation which future proofs the corridor and allows the full benefits of the project to be realised.

The design now has a strong urban design focus - it considers current and future land uses and planning policy adjacent to the corridor so sustainable future economic potential is maintained or enhanced.