

# Preferred route identified for Transmission Gully

Investigations into cost and design options for a state highway through Transmission Gully have identified a preferred route. Before this route can be finalised, the public are being asked for their views so they can be considered for inclusion in the design.

There has been discussion for many years on building an alternative highway to the coastal route (State Highway 1) which is narrow in places and becomes congested during peak hours. An alignment for the Gully route was designed in 1996 and land was designated in local plans in 2004.

Community feedback in 2005 overwhelmingly favoured Transmission Gully and it was included in Greater Wellington Regional Council's Western Corridor Plan in 2006.

## In-depth investigations

Investigations started in 2006 and provided the first real opportunity to conduct on-site, in-depth studies into the impact of the designated alignment on ground and environmental conditions. Limited knowledge of these effects was available when the alignment was first proposed.

Drilling and seismic survey testing, a road safety audit, traffic modelling, cost, risk and value engineering assessments have been undertaken in order to arrive at an option that provides the most appropriate environmental, transport and engineering solutions and is value-for-money.

## Advantages of preferred route

The preferred route has several advantages, including greater resilience to earthquakes and less impact on waterways, and is cheaper to construct in real terms than the designated alignment. It minimises the impact of geological hazards like fault lines, landslides and soft terrain.

The preferred Transmission Gully route is currently estimated to cost \$1.025 billion and should result in a saving of about \$275 million on the cost of the originally designated alignment. That is because the previous estimate of \$985 million inflation adjusted today would be \$1.3 billion, based on Land Transport New Zealand's escalation figures.

The Government is committed to the release of \$405 million earmarked for the Western Corridor highway once the Wellington region re-confirms its commitment to the route. The region's councils have been invited to present a regional funding plan for the shortfall to the Government by late 2009.

## Consensus and feedback

A consensus on the preferred route has been reached by Transit New Zealand and Wellington's regional and territorial councils which have cooperated closely during the preliminary investigations.

The next stage of the project is public engagement then we will prepare consent applications. All households in the Greater Wellington region will receive a brochure with a feedback form this month. Submissions close on 20 August 2008. The draft scheme assessment report, which will provide you with detailed information, will be available at the end of July and we need to obtain your feedback so this can be considered before the report is finalised later this year.



## Why build a road through Transmission Gully?

The proposed 27-kilometre, four-lane state highway with a 100km/h speed limit would provide an alternative access to and from Wellington and the South Island. It would run inland mostly through rural land from MacKays Crossing, north of Paekakariki, across State Highway 58 at Pauatahanui and reconnect to State Highway 1 at Linden, south of Porirua.

The Gully route would take pressure off the narrow two-lane coastal highway between Paekakariki and Pukerua Bay which carries up to 24,000 vehicles a day. It would improve the security of the region's roading network in the light of concern about the coastal highway being disrupted by a major storm or earthquake.

Should Transmission Gully proceed, it will be part of the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Western Corridor Plan, comprising rail and road solutions to congestion, traffic flow and road safety.

## How will travellers benefit?

Compared to the coastal highway, the preferred Transmission Gully route would provide:

- A safer road: four-lane highway with central median barrier
- Less likelihood of landslides, floods and road rupturing from a major storm or earthquake
- Peak period travel time savings estimated at around 10 minutes per vehicle for Kapiti to/from Wellington, 15 minutes Kapiti to/from Hutt and five to seven minutes Porirua to/from Hutt Valley
- Shorter and more efficient route for freight movements to and from Seaview/Gracefield, Wingate and Wairarapa
- Easier access from State Highway 1 to Porirua and Hutt Valley
- Important arterial route for residential and light commercial areas east of State Highway 1 in Porirua.

## Why the preferred route?

Work undertaken on Transmission Gully since 2006 provided the first real opportunity to conduct on-site, in-depth investigations into the impact of the designated alignment on ground and environmental conditions. Limited knowledge of these effects was available when the alignment was first designed in 1996.

The preferred route follows the established Transmission Gully corridor but departs from the designated alignment along some of its length. Apart from the identified \$275 million in cost savings, the preferred route provides several benefits:

### Environmental improvements

The preferred route will largely avoid native forests and will have fewer and shorter stream crossings. This will reduce the project's effects on aquatic life, freshwater and marine ecosystems. It will also fit better within the natural land form than the designated route and will be less noisy for nearby residents or those using recreational areas.

### Improved route security

The preferred route crosses the Ohariu Fault on an earth embankment compared to the viaduct proposed for the 2004 route. The embankment will perform better in a major earthquake and be easier and quicker to repair.

The preferred route cuts less into the hills and follows flatter slopes to reduce the risk of landslides.

### Improved highway safety and function

The preferred route better suits the proposed 100km/h speed limit. It provides a median barrier along the entire route, crawler lanes on the steepest sections and auxiliary lanes for vehicles merging between interchanges.

### Improved connections to local roads

An eastern Porirua interchange will connect to both James Cook Drive in Whitby and Warspite Avenue in Waitangirua, providing improved connections with the wider eastern Porirua area.

## What if my property is affected by the preferred route?

Transit is contacting landowners directly to talk to them about the possible impact the preferred route might have on their properties and answer any questions. This builds on the contacts that have already taken place during the investigative phase of the Transmission Gully project.

A number of existing properties, rights-of-way and accesses will be affected by the designated Transmission Gully alignment. This is also the case with the preferred route.

In some cases, landowners affected by the designated alignment will no longer be affected by the preferred route. There will also be landowners whose properties were previously untouched but who will now be affected by the preferred route.

Transit is working with all those whose properties are affected by the route.



## Opportunity to protect the environment

The preferred Transmission Gully route allows a better opportunity to enhance the environment and preserve people's enjoyment of their properties and recreational areas.

Planting is well underway in a number of areas with native trees and shrubs. More than 150,000 have been planted with many now well established. Additional planting is planned and this will allow easier passage for birds within the area.

The preferred route allows an opportunity to avoid adverse effects on aquatic life. It will have fewer stream crossings and will generally cut less into the hills, making it easier and simpler to treat run-off and stormwater along the route. Measures to control run-off will include sediment captured during construction and enhancements to the stormwater management system. Provision will be made for fish passage and natural debris flows in streams.

Work on environmental effects completed for the designated alignment identified the need for protection of several terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. This work has continued and

has included a detailed physical survey of the Te Puka and Horokiri Streams and Duck Creek.

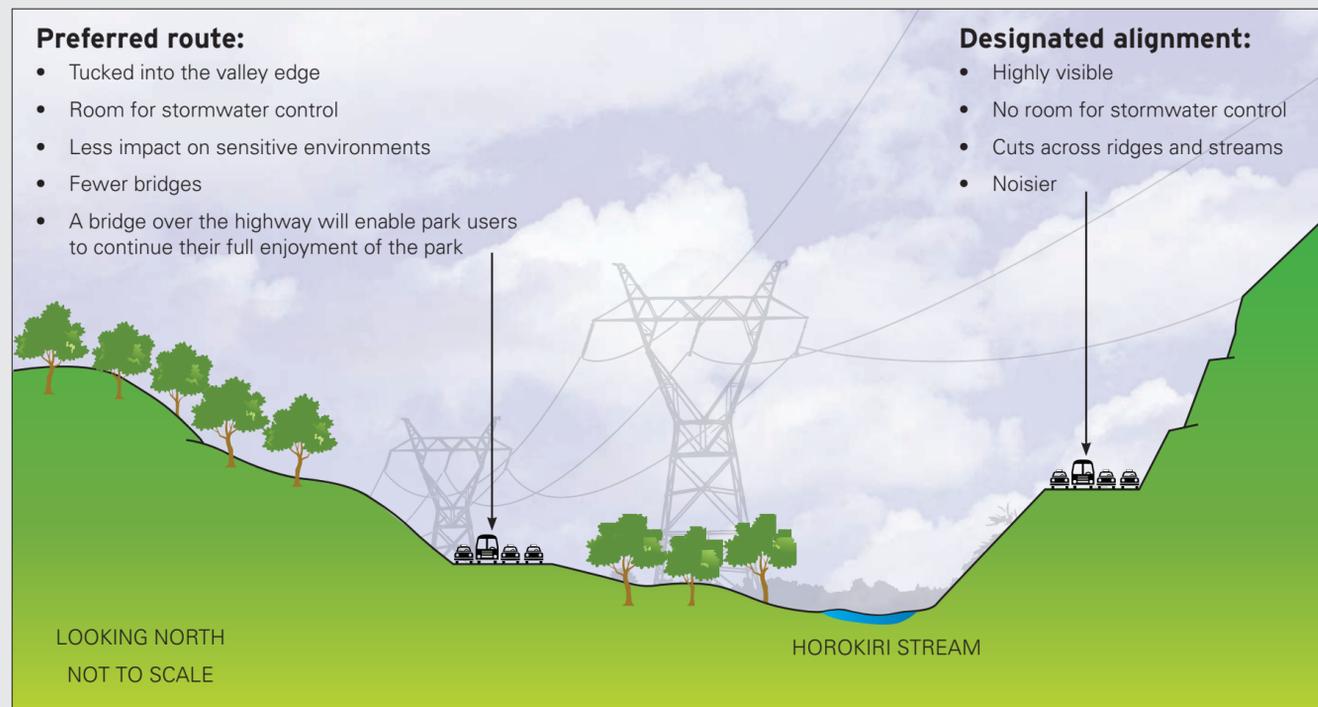
Other specific social and environmental investigations included:

- Noise monitoring to enable measures to reduce project and traffic noise
- Visual and social effects considered to enable landscaping sensitive to existing landforms and to minimise the visual impact of the highway
- Assessment of stormwater management requirements.

A statement of identified Maori interest was completed. Archaeological investigations were undertaken in three areas most likely to have historic sites. However, no archaeological discoveries were made along the route.

Further work will be conducted and we will work with local environmental groups to ensure we deliver the best possible outcomes.

## Battle Hill Farm Forest Park



Battle Hill Farm Forest Park is an important regional recreational park owned by Greater Wellington Regional Council. It is the site of the last battle in the region between Maori and the Crown in 1846.

It is widely used for walking, horse riding, equestrian events, mountain biking, camping and picnicking. It also includes a commercial farm operation.

The designated Transmission Gully alignment crossed the park at a height of about 20 - 30 metres above the Horokiri Valley floor. It would cut across the ends of several ridges and relatively steep greywacke slopes that are currently covered in pine forest. It would also have cut across the eastern tributaries of the Horokiri Stream that are important fish habitats.

The highway and large faces cut into the hillsides would be visible from much of the park including the flat land in the bottom of the valley and Paekakariki Hill Road.

The preferred route reduces earthworks and crosses the park on flatter land on the valley floor close in against the low rounded hills known as Gas Line Ridge. The ecological and environmental benefits include:

- Less risk of sediment entering Horokiri Stream
- Less risk of sediment affecting Pauatahanui Inlet

- Reduced intrusion of the highway on people's view and on the landscape
- Reduced direct noise effects
- Fewer structures such as viaducts.

Both the designated alignment and preferred route are located well away from the colonial homestead, cottage, woolshed, stockyards and grave sites, and the site of the battle itself on the ridge leading up to Battle Hill summit.

The preferred route will continue to allow full recreational access to the park. A bridge will be provided across the highway to the rear of the park so that park activities can continue largely as before.

### What will it be like to live near or use regional parks near the preferred route?

- The preferred route largely avoids native forest areas.
- Sensitive landscaping appropriate to land form will minimise the visual impact of the road.
- The appearance of bridges, viaducts and retaining walls will be sympathetic with their locations.
- Appropriate route design and landscaping will reduce noise levels.

As Battle Hill Farm Forest Park is an important regional recreational park, we welcome feedback from all park users.

## What happens next?

Transit is engaging with the community to receive public feedback on the preferred route. This supplement in The Dominion Post marks the start of that process and will be followed by brochures containing a feedback form delivered to all households in the Greater Wellington region this month.

The region's councils and Maori are being briefed as are affected landowners. Groups that have a special interest in Transmission Gully will be offered briefings. Some of these groups have already been involved in briefings about Transmission Gully through the investigative phase.

Transit will engage with the general public through information days. Dates will be advised through your local community newspaper and online on the Transit website.

### Community feedback - timeline

<b>2005</b>	After community feedback, Transmission Gully was added to the Western Corridor Plan
<b>2006 - 08</b>	Transmission Gully project team consults regional and local councils, landowners, Maori and other groups with a special interest in the route
<b>14 July - 20 August 2008</b>	Public feedback sought on preferred route
<b>Ongoing</b>	Community engagement, including local information days (to be advertised)

## What information is available?

### Written material:

- This pull-out insert from The Dominion Post
- A brochure with a feedback form to be delivered to households - also available in public libraries
- Submissions close 20 August 2008

### Online:

[www.transit.govt.nz/projects/transmission-gully/](http://www.transit.govt.nz/projects/transmission-gully/)

Information is available online as well as answers to frequently asked questions, maps and images.

Detailed engineering proposals for sections of the preferred route are shown on aerial photographs on the website as follows:

1. MacKays Crossing to SH1 Paekakariki
2. SH1 Paekakariki to Wainui Saddle
3. Wainui Saddle to Horokiri Stream
4. Horokiri Stream to Battle Hill
5. Battle Hill to Golf Course
6. Golf Course to SH58
7. SH58 to Whitby
8. Whitby to Warspite Avenue
9. Warspite Avenue to Linden

### What your feedback means to the project

We value your feedback in order for us to provide the best alignment for Transmission Gully.

All comments received will be recorded. You can comment by returning the feedback form in the brochure you will receive in the mail or pick up one from your local public library. You can write to us, email or phone with your comments. The information will be collated and reported back to the Transit Board to aid their final decision on the route.

**Please take the time to fill in a feedback form online or from the brochure you will receive in the mail. Submissions close 20 August 2008. Postage is free.**

Your comments and any other contact we have with you will assist us in providing the best possible alignment for Transmission Gully.

Your feedback is welcome at any stage of the development of the project.

## Want to know more?

**See:** [www.transit.govt.nz/projects/transmission-gully/](http://www.transit.govt.nz/projects/transmission-gully/)

**Email:** [transmissiongully@transit.govt.nz](mailto:transmissiongully@transit.govt.nz)

**Freephone:** 0800TGINFO (0800 844 636)

**Mail:** Transmission Gully Project

PO Box 27477

Marion Square

Wellington 6041

