

## **Rotorua Eastern Arterial (REA) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q1: Where is the Rotorua Eastern Arterial project at currently?**

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) has selected a preferred route, which is the existing designation with some adjustments to the boundaries. The next task is to start the Resource Management Act (RMA) process to confirm the designation boundaries where they are outside of the existing REA designation that is shown in the Rotorua District Council's District Plan.

### **Q2: Why do we need the Rotorua Eastern Arterial?**

The current State Highway 30 (Te Ngae Road) serves dual purposes. It's an important local road serving its community, as well as a regionally strategic state highway moving people and freight through the wider region.

The existing highway is nearing capacity and traffic volumes are forecast to increase, along with safety and congestion problems.

The volume of traffic on State Highway 30 effectively severs (acts as a barrier) the community it serves. Pedestrians, including school children, have to cross a busy road to access schools, shops and other community facilities.

The NZTA's main objectives for the REA are to:

- facilitate the movement of freight and tourist traffic along the state highway network and between the central business district and the airport;
- provide a safe, efficient and reliable transport link through Rotorua's eastern suburbs;
- support the growth in Rotorua's eastern suburbs and wider Bay of Plenty and central North Island;
- enable lake water quality improvements to proceed.

### **Q3: Were other options considered?**

Various route alignments and variations have been investigated since the early 1960's. The most recent investigation looked at three options; (1) use of the existing designation, (2) upgrade of Te Ngae Road, and (3) Vaughan Road link.

### **Q4: Why has the existing designation been selected as the preferred option?**

The amended REA designation delivers the best outcomes and benefits, they include:

- It is the only option that effectively separates the highway through traffic from local commuter traffic along the full length of the corridor.
- It is the most economic option and takes into consideration safety, efficiency and wider economic benefits with the least impact on directly affected land owners and businesses.
- It is the only option where all the current and expected link and intersection congestion problems can be mitigated effectively.
- It provides enhanced route security – the new road will be built to modern seismic and waterway standards, improving its resilience.

- It will allow for efficient alternative transport development opportunities (e.g. safe areas for bus stops, pedestrian crossings and cycle facilities on Te Ngae Road).
- It provides opportunities and encourages safer access to and across Te Ngae Road (community integration).
- It will be safer - significantly reducing crashes on Te Ngae Road.
- It removes constraints on land development beside SH30/Te Ngae Road, allowing for local and wider economic growth.
- It provides opportunities to address the water quality issues of Lake Rotorua associated with water run-off from the eastern suburbs.

#### **Q5: What are the mitigation measures being considered as part of the preferred Rotorua Eastern Arterial route?**

The existing REA designation will generate environmental effects such as social, cultural, noise and visual impacts. Adverse environmental effects will be mitigated (ie lessened to make them less harsh or severe), examples include:

##### **Social impacts**

- Working with the Rotorua District Council (RDC) to change the form of Te Ngae Road as a more community focused road, with enhanced access provisions and alternative transport opportunities.
- Working with RDC to relocate and/or create new community facilities where possible.
- Reduction or removal of the current constraints on development within the Eastern Suburbs, especially along Te Ngae Road.

##### **Cultural**

- Adjusting the designation (moving and reducing width) so it reduces the impact on environmentally and culturally sensitive land.

##### **Noise and vibration**

- Construction noise and vibration will comply with all NZTA guidelines and the New Zealand construction standard.
- Limited hours of construction.
- Pre-construction home/building surveys.
- Low noise road surfacing.
- Solid noise walls/barriers and earth bunds.

##### **Visual effects of the road, flyovers, bridges**

- Strategic planting of vegetation.
- Urban design detailing along the alignment, flyovers and retaining walls.
- Strategic lighting on intersections, flyovers and ramps.

##### **Pedestrian and cyclist access and connections**

- Pedestrian and cyclist underpass/overpass.
- Pedestrian and cyclist pathways.

##### **Stormwater treatment, and environmental and Lake water quality**

- Treatment of stormwater from the road prior to discharge to RDC network.
- Treatment of the catchments stormwater where possible.
- Creation of wetland environments.
- Treatment to existing contaminated land.

**Q6: Why was Te Ngae Road not the preferred option?**

**Safety and efficiency** – due to vehicles moving to and from properties along Te Ngae Road traffic efficiency is reduced and safety issues increase.

**Noise** – increase in traffic volume causes more noise issues, especially the growing number of heavy commercial vehicles.

**Conflicting traffic movements** – local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists sharing the road with state highway through traffic and heavy vehicles.

**Social and economic impacts** – this option increases negative impacts on local businesses and residents more than the other options. Increases existing community severance issues to residential, commercial and community facilities, eg school children/pedestrian crossing over a busy, four laned state highway.

This option would cause major disruption to the community and traffic during construction.

**Value for money and long term solution** – the predicted increase in traffic will mean if this option was built it will have a limited lifespan (it would be at capacity sooner) and an alternative may still need to be investigated in the future.

**Q7: What are the next steps? Map out the process please.**

The amended REA designation option has been confirmed as the preferred option and the Scheme Assessment has been completed.

The next key step is for the NZTA to confirm the amended designation boundaries and prepare a Notice of Requirement (NoR) for alteration to the designation, which is to be lodged with Rotorua District Council (the Council).

As a key part of the preparation of the NoR, the NZTA needs to complete the consultation process with key stakeholders, affected land owners and Iwi.

Once the NoR is lodged with the Council, it will be publicly notified and a public hearing may be held. Any party may make submissions in support or opposition, and request to be “heard” at the Council Hearing. This part of the process may take some time.

The Council will then make a recommendation, with or without conditions, and if the NZTA are happy with the recommendation, they will accept it, and the Council will then notify submitters and directly affected landowners of the outcome. If there are no appeals to the decision, the changes to the existing designation will be included in the District Plan.

**Q8: Do we have any time-frames (or indication there-of) around the Rotorua Eastern Arterial project?**

The NZTA and Rotorua District Council are currently drafting the Rotorua Eastern Corridor Implementation Plan. This document sets out the growth assumptions for the Eastern suburbs and how these effect transport infrastructure and when interventions, such as the REA, will be required. Traffic growth, SH30/Te Ngae Road safety and congestion issues and land development will be monitored over the coming years for the NZTA to determine the optimum time for designing and constructing the REA.

The following are approximate time frames for the preparation and lodgement of the (NoR).

Consultation with key stakeholders - Mid 2013

NoR ready for submission - end 2013 / beginning 2014

The Rotorua Integrated Network Strategy has identified that, based upon the current level of service and growth predictions, the REA is likely to be required in the period 2020 – 2025.

**Q9: Have you not consulted already?**

Yes, consultation is one of the most important parts of any project. The NZTA has been consulting on this project since the early 1960's and more recently since 2010. That's because roading projects are not just about economics, they affect communities. The NZTA consults with all key stakeholders to understand their views, concerns, needs and suggestions. We do this so we can make an informed decision.

**Q10: Do local Iwi support the selected option? If not, why not?**

The NZTA are still working with tangata whenua to fully understand their issues and concerns with the selected option, and will continue to work with them after the NoR is lodged. Key issues of concern so far raised by tangata whenua are effects on access to the lakeshore, waahi tapu sites, customary sites, wetlands and the adverse effects on Ngapuna Village.

**Q11: What about development plans for Te Ngae Road?**

The Rotorua District Council is currently undergoing a review of its District Plan. Specific development proposals fronting Te Ngae Road (SH30) are also being considered under the existing District Plan framework. These planning processes need to assess the potential impact on Te Ngae Road (SH30) and will benefit from being informed by the Rotorua Eastern Corridor Implementation Plan. In this regard, the NZTA staff are working with the Council and developers through the process of the District Plan review as well as the applications for resource consent.

**Q12: Is the Rotorua Eastern Arterial a Rate Payer funded project?**

The REA project is a State Highway project being undertaken by the NZTA not Rotorua District Council (RDC). The RDC are a key partner, but the project does not rely on any contributions from rate payers.

New Zealand's road users primarily fund the country's land transport system through fuel excise duty (petrol tax), charges on diesel and heavy vehicles (road user charges) and vehicle registration and licensing fees.