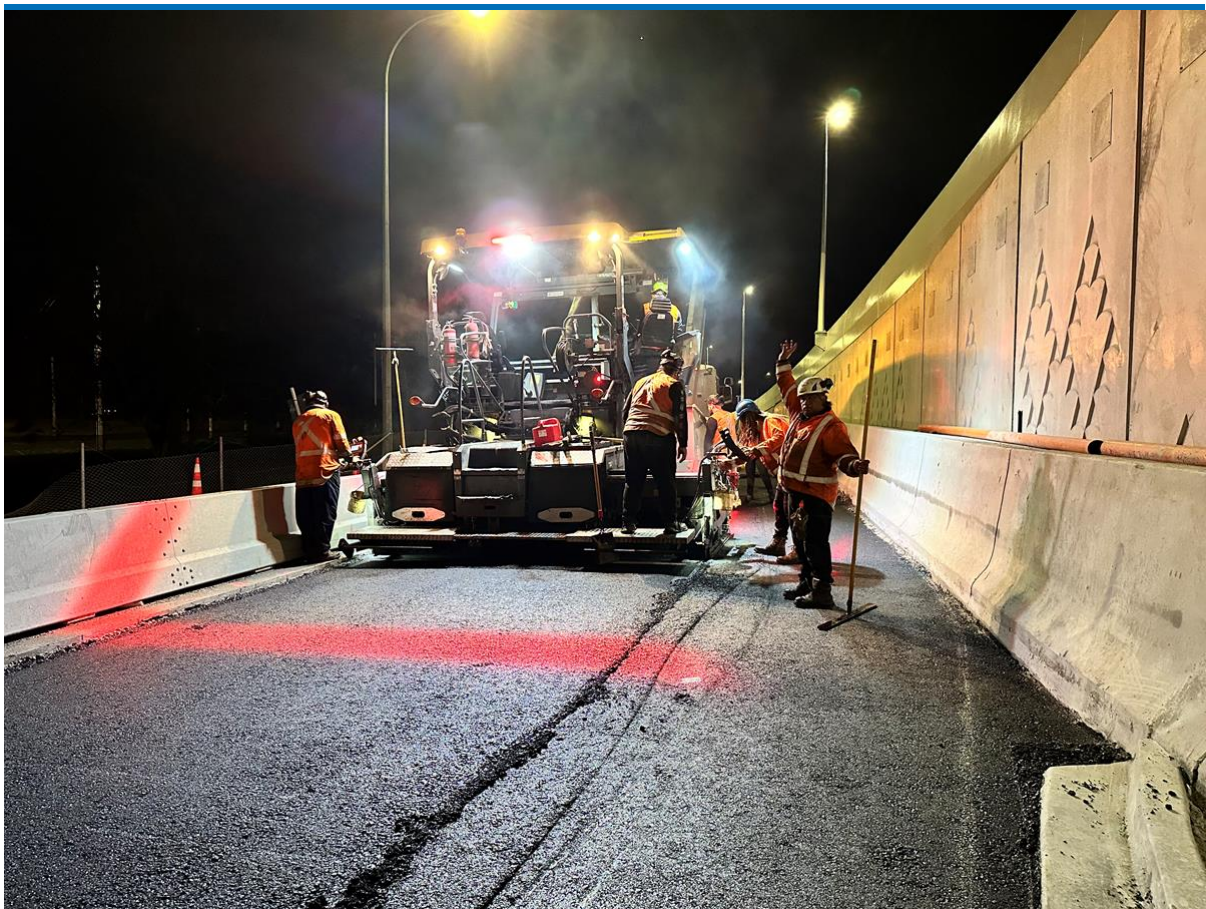


## Baypark to Bayfair Link

Project update

27 July 2023



On the Bay Link project, sequencing of the construction programme is critical. Activities need to happen in a specific order and if one activity shifts, this impacts a number of subsequent activities.

The project site is a busy place with construction activity happening close to live traffic. Extensive planning goes into traffic staging to determine how construction can proceed while maintaining the safety of people walking, cycling, driving and road workers at all times.

One solution is to use traffic switches, whereby the road layout is adjusted temporarily so that access is maintained at the same time as the required work zones are accessible.

Did you know that in 2022 and 2023, the lanes on State Highway 2/Maunganui Road near the Bayfair roundabout were moved 10 times to accommodate the construction of the new roundabout, the underpass and bridge supports for the Bayfair flyover? And there's more to come.

The next major traffic switch coming up will see us closing the gap at SH2/SH29A Te Maunga interchange, with the fourth and last ramp of the interchange expected to open in mid-August.

Until project completion, you will continue to see minor traffic switches, where the location of lanes or work zones changes, to complete work in the Bayfair and Baypark areas.

### **What do traffic switches mean for road users?**

When travelling through the project site be prepared for changes, please drive with caution, follow the directions provided on traffic management signage and reduce your speed. Lowered speed limits are in place across the Bay Link site for the project's duration.



## **Upcoming major traffic switch at Te Maunga interchange**

Te Maunga interchange, at the SH2 and SH29A intersection at Baypark, has been operating without its fourth ramp since its partial opening in 2022. In August, the remaining ramp is scheduled to open and will temporarily take all traffic from SH2/Tauranga Eastern Link/Pāpāmoa over the newly signalised interchange. This change will enable SH2 at ground level, underneath the interchange, to be completed.

The traffic switch, including opening the ramp, the commissioning of new traffic lights on Te Maunga interchange and the closure of SH2 northbound underneath the



interchange will mean changes for people travelling on SH2 from Pāpāmoa and SH29A from Maungatapu.

Further information will be communicated in coming weeks.



*Approximately 10,000 plants have taken root on the north-western banks of the SH2/29A Te Maunga interchange, either side of the railway line.*

## **120,000 plants to be planted as part of Bay Link**

With the project completing one major infrastructure element after another, you'll also start to see more landscaping and streetscape works taking place. This includes planting, the installation of mahi toi – cultural artworks and the development of the new signalised Bayfair roundabout. Winter is planting season in the Bay of Plenty, and you'll see planting underway across the site in coming months.

As part of the project, we will plant more than 120,000 plants. Planting across the project will integrate with the existing landscape and draw upon Mātauranga Māori to incorporate cultural values, and use species to support local wildlife including invertebrates and bird species. Achieving a low maintenance environment in key areas is also extremely important. This will be done by including hardy native species that can withstand drought and the Tauranga coastal conditions.

Most plants are native plants to support the existing ecosystem and include low level planting, shrubs and trees such as tarata, kanuka and grasses such as tussock. It also provides an opportunity to reintroduce rare or endangered plant species, such as (but not limited to) kakabeak, shrubby tororaro, sand coprosma, wind grass and koromiko.

Did you know that as part of the project, two wetlands have been constructed and planted? The northern wetland is located next to Matapihi Road and the southern wetland is located beyond Titoki Place, near the rail line which runs adjacent to SH29A.

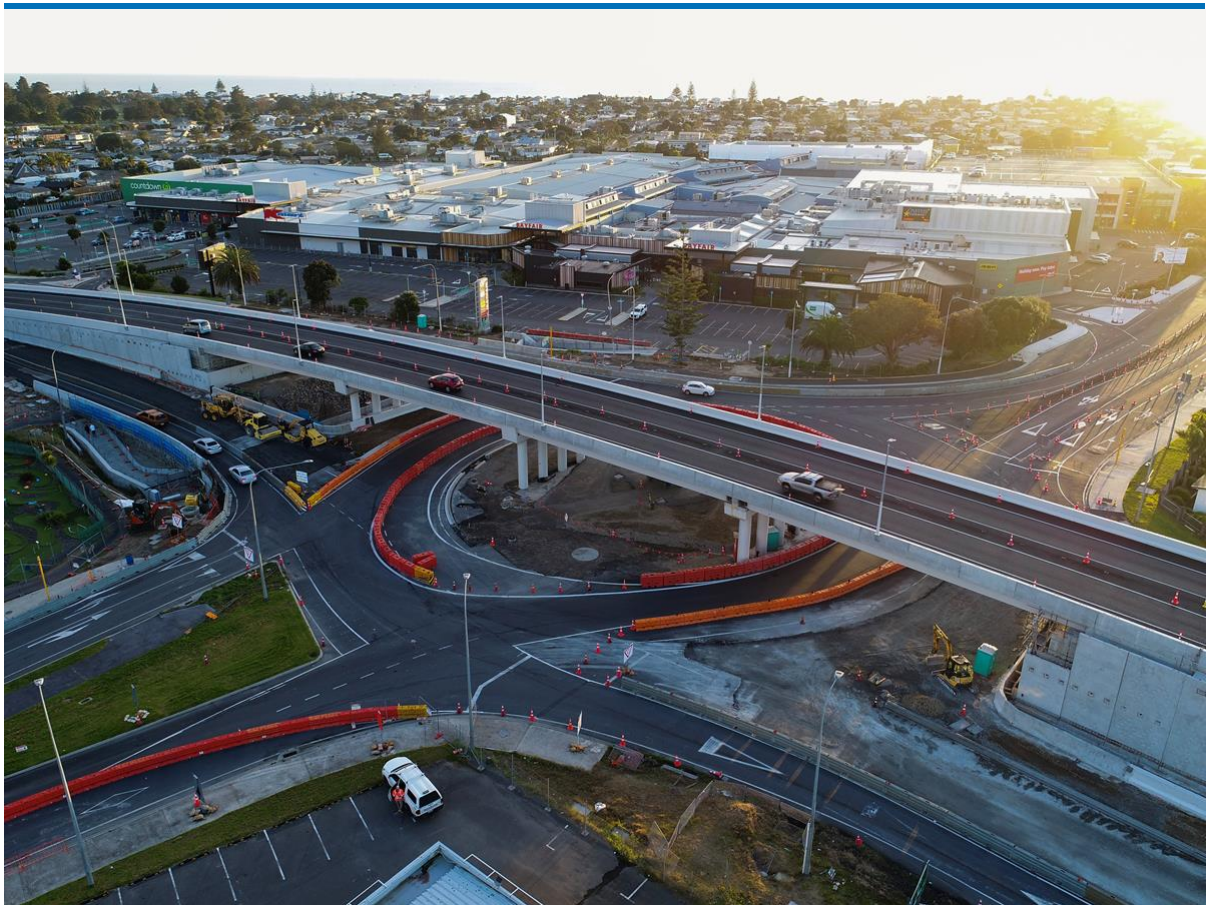
Wetlands act as the 'kidneys of the earth', cleaning the water that flows into them, trapping sediment and soils, filtering out nutrients and removing contaminants. They also help to maintain water tables and return nitrogen to the atmosphere.

The 8000m<sup>2</sup> southern wetland is home to approximately 35,000 plants. In association with local tangata whenua, plants were chosen for their tolerance to the local environment, weather conditions and their ability to provide appropriate habitat opportunities for insects and animals.

In the wetland's shallow water (up to 30cm deep), vegetation consists of purei (tussock forming sedge), sharp spike sedge, twig rush, tussock swamp twig rush, water milfoil and kapungawha (soft stem bulrush).

In the deeper water (between 30cm and 1m deep) kuta (tall spikerush), twig rush, red pond weed/manihi, and kapungawha are more suitable.

Plants were eco-sourced and harvested from local vegetation. This helps protect the biodiversity of the native vegetation within this ecological area. Including the wetlands vegetation, more than 120,000 plants will be planted as part of the project.



## Te Horoipia bridge

Te Horoipia Bridge (Bayfair flyover) has been gifted its name by mana whenua to reflect the cultural history and landscape in which it sits. Horoipia is the name of an ancient waterway of this area, which means 'the washing of the spears'. There were many puna-wai (freshwater springs) throughout this area which were used by the toa (warriors) to purify and cleanse their taiaha (weapons) after battle.

It was also used as an urupā – the warriors would often stop and bury tūpāpaku in the swamp areas. Te Horoipia area is located between Ohuki and the sea, situated between Omanu to the west and Wharawhara to the east. This place is of great historical significance and considered wāhi tapu (sacred).

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## Guardians of the environment

On Bay Link, environmental management plans are in place to manage specific potential effects of the project's construction. We take our responsibility to look after the environment in which we operate seriously.

**Water quality:** Sediment retention ponds, water diversions, bunding and silt fencing are used to ensure stormwater is effectively treated before being integrated into the stormwater network. Run-off is tested after significant rain events to ensure that it complies with consent conditions.

**Air quality:** Dust management is a key focus for Bay Link. Water carts operate on rotation around the site keeping exposed soils damp and we apply polymer and hydroseed to exposed areas to help stabilise the soil. We also monitor air quality during construction.

**Noise and vibration:** Construction noise and vibration can vary considerably depending on the machinery being used, the ground conditions encountered and the distance of the receiver from the work activity. Monitoring takes place both day and night to ensure any noise and/or vibration complies with approved, consented levels.

**Archaeological discovery:** Given the history of the project area, there is the potential to discover items of historical significance during earthworks operations. Cultural monitors from the local iwi are present on site during all excavation works. If anything of potential historical significance is uncovered, an 'Accidental Discover' protocol is followed. Work stops while an investigation takes place to determine the extent of the discovery in collaboration with the project archaeologist and local iwi.

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## Why aren't we working 24/7?

There are many reasons we don't operate a 24-hour work schedule on the Bay Link project, including the level of noise and vibration associated with construction work.

Bay Link is taking place alongside a mixture of residential, iwi, commercial and industrial land. Construction is occurring on land with existing infrastructure next to established communities, making it significantly more complex than a project on an undeveloped, greenfields site.

Projects in urban environments are generally more challenging because work generating noise and vibration is carried out around homes, businesses and within live traffic lanes and having to accommodate existing services. We complete night works where we can, however it's also important that residents adjacent to works are treated considerately.

The costs associated with running a 24-hour project also increase with staffing, traffic management and floodlights required to create safe work zones and daylight conditions to work within.

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## Above and beyond ground at Bay Link

The Bay Link project has involved considerable below-ground preparation to enable above-ground construction. With the project's structures evident at both Baypark



and Bayfair, here's a look back at the work that has already been completed and the tasks still to come before the project's completion in late 2023.

1. **Utility relocation:** The Bay Link project is crisscrossed by a multitude of essential services feeding Pāpāmoa, such as power, gas and telecommunications. In fact, the ground beneath SH2 is as busy as the road above it. Across the site, services have been relocated to ensure they remain accessible in future.
2. **Earthworks:** Bay Link includes the replacement of all existing pavement within the project area. Material not suitable for road construction has been excavated and removed, while material for the construction of road pavements and flyovers has been imported.
3. **Drainage installation:** Bay Link will create a greater road surface area than previously existed. To fit with the new road design and improve stormwater management, drains have been upgraded and a new stormwater pipe constructed to service Bayfair Shopping Centre. Two wetlands have also been constructed to help manage stormwater collected off the road network.
4. **Ground improvement:** Stone columns and lattice piles have been installed throughout the project to densify the ground and limit potential liquefaction should an earthquake occur. These ground improvements also help support the weight of the project's structures and limit settlement.
5. **Embankment and retaining wall construction:** Embankments and 16 permanent retaining walls have been built across the project site, forming the sides of the Bayfair flyover and Te Maunga interchange.
6. **Bridge construction:** Bay Link features three bridges – two single-span bridges as part of the Te Maunga interchange and one four-span bridge as part of the Bayfair flyover. A total of 46 bridge beams have been lifted into place.
7. **Pavement construction:** Following on from below-ground activities, up to 450mm of granular and asphalt pavement is constructed. A rigorous testing regime is implemented throughout pavement construction to ensure the pavement can withstand highway traffic.
8. **Underpass construction:** The underpass for people walking and cycling has been constructed in stages to accommodate SH2 traffic. Two outer box sections are located on the Bayfair and Matapihi verges, connected by a central open-air trench.
9. **Finishing work:** Once all construction is complete, landscaping and beautification will take place across the site. The project will feature numerous cultural artworks and elements, developed in partnership with local iwi.

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## Pothole patrol

Winter brings wet, cold... and potholes to our roads. The dark and often rainy months from May to September are the time our state highways are most at risk from damage, with water the main culprit.

Over the colder, wetter months (specifically May – August) Waka Kotahi focusses on 'holding' roads in their current state. This means you will see us filling potholes, undertaking minor repairs to failed sections of road, and other activities that ensure the road is operational.

Over winter, we have crews out monitoring the highway network, ready to respond swiftly once they are aware of potholes and other rain defects.

Across the network, there are crews on call at night and over the weekends, who spring into action once we are notified of a problem that needs immediate repair. They are contractually obliged to repair potholes within 48 hours, or in case of an urgent situation, they need to be on-site within an hour.

In some instances, emergency repairs may need to be carried out on the network during the day resulting in minor delays. Please follow the directions of traffic management crews, including slowing down or stopping if this has been deemed necessary to keep road users and road workers safe while the repairs are carried out.

All drivers on our winter roads should expect to encounter potholes – particularly after rainstorms. The key to avoiding damaging your car is to drive to the conditions, and that means being sensible behind the wheel, especially at night and any time it is raining. Slow down, stay alert and make sure you report any potholes to us so we can get them sorted right away.

Call 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 44 44 49) to let us know about any issues on the state highway network.

Remember, when you see a hole – call the pothole patrol!

Drivers should have insurance for their vehicles in the event of any damage that occurs on the road. Your insurer should be your first point of contact if your vehicle is damaged. If appropriate, your insurer will then get in touch with Waka Kotahi. Along with its contractors, Waka Kotahi only has liability if we know about a pothole and do not repair it within the contractual timeframe.

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## Plan your journey - drive to winter conditions

The recent change in weather has been a good prompt for road users to think about winter conditions and the adjustments required when driving during the colder, wetter months of the year. Ice, fog and rain can make for unforgiving road conditions.

Allowing extra time for your journeys and driving to the road and weather conditions will ensure you reach your destination safely.

We have already seen this year the impact weather can have on the state highway network, and that was reinforced during this week's weather. With more wet weather forecast, people are asked to follow some simple tips to ensure you reach your destination safely:

- During wet weather it's a good idea to maintain a greater following distance between your vehicle and the one in front, slow down and be prepared for unexpected hazards.
- If driving long distances consider sharing the driving and ensure you take regular breaks.
- Finally, check the [Waka Kotahi Journey Planner](#) before you leave home to ensure you have the latest information on the state highway network. A well-planned journey is more likely to be a safe journey.

## More information

For more information on the Baypark to Bayfair Link upgrade project, contact us at [baylink@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:baylink@nzta.govt.nz)

Visit our website [www.nzta.govt.nz/baylink](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/baylink)

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