

# Caversham Highway Improvements Project



The Caversham highway forms a critical link in the State Highway 1 (SH1) southern arterial route into Dunedin, and it is part of the key freight route via State Highway 88, to the Port Chalmers container port.

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) has awarded a contract to Downer EDI Works to design and then construct the Caversham Highway Improvements project on SH1 between Andersons Bay Road and Lookout Point in Dunedin. The first commitment under this contract is for the project design with a value of \$1.6m.

## Project background

The highway has progressively been upgraded, with the construction of the two-lane Caversham bypass in 1987 and a fourth lane between Lookout Point and Barnes Drive 13 years later. Currently, up to 25,000 vehicles a day use SH1 from Andersons Bay Road to Lookout Point, making it one of the busiest roads in the Otago region. During peak hour travel, a traffic bottleneck can form on the two-lane Caversham bypass, causing traffic queues back as far as Andersons Bay Road.

This congestion increases the time it takes to drive from Mosgiel to Dunedin and vice versa during peak travel periods and disrupts the flow of freight to and from the Port Chalmers container port.

The Caversham Highway Improvements project is expected to cost between \$30m and \$50m to complete and will be one of the largest road construction projects in Otago since the Fairfield motorway project that opened in 2003.

## Why is this project needed?

If SH1 from Anderson Bay Road to Lookout Point is left as it is, traffic delays will worsen, particularly during peak travel times. This will place greater pressure on nearby local roads as drivers seek alternative routes to avoid this congestion. Without any improvements to the Caversham highway, road safety will inevitably be compromised. The crash rate for the project area exceeds the national standard for urban and rural highways. Only yellow lines separate traffic on this 25,000 vehicles-per-day corridor, where some sections have an 80km/h speed limit.

# What is planned?

## Andersons Bay Road to Barnes Drive

This section of the project will include a new overbridge at the Glen and a separated four-lane highway from the King Edward Street overbridge to Barnes Drive. Improvements are also planned to the road layout at Barnes Drive. These involve building separate left-turn lanes to create two through lanes in each direction, while the right-turn lane for Caversham will also be extended.

The northbound on-ramp from the Glen will be closed once this project is completed because there is not enough room for it to merge with the new four-lane highway. The Goodall Street pedestrian bridge will also be raised and extended. The speed limit for the Anderson Bay Road to Barnes Drive section of this project will remain at 80km/h.



## Barnes Drive to Lookout Point

The major work here involves widening and realigning the highway between Barnes Drive and Lookout Point. Safety will be improved through a central median to separate opposing traffic flows, as well as the provision of separate service lanes for most of the remaining properties alongside the highway.

Safety at Lookout Point will be improved by restricting right-hand turns on to SH1 at Mornington Road and South Road and closing the Short Street access onto the highway. Further investigations are being undertaken into the viability of building a traffic overbridge to directly link Mornington Road and Riselaw Road (and South Road). A decision on this is expected mid-year. The speed limit for this portion of the project will increase from 50km/h to 60km/h.



# What are the benefits?

Once this project is completed, road users will enjoy an efficient four-lane median-separated highway between Lookout Point and Andersons Bay Road, offering improved safety, less peak hour traffic congestion and reduced travel times.

It will also complete the four-laning of SH1 from Andersons Bay Road in Dunedin through to Mosgiel. This project also supports economic growth by providing easier access for road freight to the Dunedin CBD and the Port Chalmers container port.

### Walking and cycling

Options to enable pedestrians and cyclists to safely cross SH1 at Lookout Point include a new road bridge, an overbridge for pedestrians and cyclists or an underpass. A decision on one of these options will be made in mid-2010.

A pedestrian and cycle route that runs parallel to SH1 between Lookout Point and Kensington Hill is currently under investigation.

### Environmental

This project is in an already heavily urbanised area that has been used as a state highway corridor for a long time. However, the nearby Caversham Valley Forest Reserve and Lookout Point Reserve do have some ecological interest and value. The Caversham Valley Forest Reserve is home to the unusual and primitive arthropod *Onychophora* and giant spring tail (*Collembola*), both native invertebrates.

While the project will affect very small sections of these reserves, any losses will be made up with plantings and relocating any affected invertebrates. Other plantings will be used to enhance the area's biodiversity and to make it more attractive.

### Historical

No archaeological sites are recorded within the project area, but the NZTA will work with iwi, the Historic Places Trust and other heritage agencies and groups on matters around potential archaeological sites. A detailed archaeological assessment of the project is being carried out to see if certain sites along the proposed project route could be affected.

## When will things happen?

### Andersons Bay Road to Barnes Drive

Estimated construction start date  
early 2011

Estimated construction completion date  
2013

### Barnes Drive to Lookout Point

Estimated construction start date  
late 2012

Estimated construction completion date  
2014



### For more information

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