The purpose of this project...

- Improve economic growth and productivity for Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty through more efficient movement of people and freight between Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga and Rotorua.
- Improve the reliability of the transport network through a more robust and safer road between Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga and Rotorua.
- Reduce travel times between Waikato and Auckland.
- Support the growth strategy for the central Waikato.

The Ngaruawahia Section will:

- Connect the Huntly section of the Expressway, due to be completed in 2019, to the Te Rapa Section, which is programmed to be completed in 2013.
- The Taupiri Link will be part of SH1B until the Ngaruawahia Section is completed in 2014. From 2014 - 2019 it will be part of SH1 and from 2019 it will no longer be part of the strategic highway network. From this date the Huntly Section will connect directly with the Ngaruawahia Section.
- When complete the Ngaruawahia Section, including the upgraded section of SH1B (Gordonton Road), will reduce traffic congestion and improve safety within Taupiri and Ngaruawahia.

Taupiri Link to commence construction

The first 2.2km of the Ngaruawahia section through Taupiri village is known as the ‘Taupiri Link’.

The NZTA has identified an opportunity to advance the construction of the Taupiri Link ahead of the main Ngaruawahia section. To achieve early delivery of this part of the project works, the NZTA has recently completed full engineering design and tender documents for a ‘Measure and Value’ contract. The Taupiri Link contract is programmed for tender in July and August 2010, with construction programmed to commence in November 2010.

The Taupiri Link, which is an upgrade of the existing SH1B, will commence at a new roundabout on the existing SH1 south of the Mangawara Stream Bridge. From there it follows the existing Gordonton Road (SH1B) and climbs over the North Island Main Trunk Railway (NIMTR). From there the link crosses a new roundabout at Orini Road before continuing generally along the existing Gordonton Road alignment.

The new roundabout intersection linking Gordonton Road (SH1B) with SH1 will offer immediate safety improvements to all users.

The new Taupiri Link will replace the existing Gordonton Road interchange with SH1.
Specific details of the Taupiri Link design follow:

- A two lane roundabout connecting SH1, Wright Street and Gordonton Road;
- Elimination of the existing intersection between Gordonton Road, Wright Street and Greenlane Road, with Greenlane Road becoming a no exit;
- Retention of the existing Gordonton Road Rail Overbridge to carry vehicular traffic over the North Island Main Trunk railway, with a new shared pedestrian/cycle bridge constructed immediately adjacent;
- A single lane roundabout connecting Orini Road and Gordonton Road;
- Left in/left out access between Te Putu Street and Gordonton Road;
- A service lane from Te Putu Street to provide access to the existing residential properties on the west side of Gordonton Road, south of Te Putu Street;
- Retention of the existing Gordonton Road alignment southeast of the cemetery;
- Retention of the existing posted speed limit of 70km/h;
- Mitigation of noise effects through the use of quiet road surfaces (asphalt) and construction of noise walls at a number of locations on the route;
- A new independent piped stormwater reticulation network to collect stormwater from the new roading works.

The construction period for the Taupiri Link will be approximately 12 months. Therefore, with construction commencing in November 2010, it will be completed by November 2011. The contract will require that particular attention is paid to minimising the impacts of construction activities on Taupiri residents. Nonetheless at times it will be necessary to provide temporary diversions of traffic along Te Putu Street, Taupiri. All temporary diversions will be managed in consultation with Waikato District Council.

The construction cost for the Taupiri Link is estimated to be $7 million.

Landscape Design

The aim of the landscaping design for the Taupiri Link is to reflect the unique character of Taupiri. To enhance amenity for both residents and road users the design uses imagery representing local iconic landscape features and cultural patterns, with the concrete retaining barriers including narratives, images and patterns referencing the Taupiri Mountain.

Planting will be selected with regard to the history of the site. This will range from large indigenous specimen trees, through to low level shrub and grass species in large swathes and lineal bands. Trees will include Podocarpus hallii, (Hall’s Totara) and Knightia excelsa, (Rewarewa / Honeysuckle), found within the forested Hakarimata Range and on the Taupiri Mountain Range. Trees used within stormwater treatment areas and gullies include species selected from the Cultural Impact Assessment Report for the Waikato Expressway and feedback from the Waikato District Council and local iwi.

All plants will be sourced from local plant nurseries that follow eco-sourcing principles.

Some existing trees will be removed to allow for the new roading development. A qualified arborist will assess and carry out pruning, crown lifting or other maintenance on the remaining trees where required. This work will be managed to minimise damage to the surrounding environment.

The hard materials used for roundabouts, islands and pedestrian areas will reflect the character of the area. The roundabout design is intended to evoke a sense of place for road users and the local community. Hard landscape patterning (charcoal and white granite sets) will express the change, movement and mobility of the adjacent Waikato River, its cultural associations, and its use for power generation; while meeting the functional requirements of the interchange in terms of safety, sightlines and maintenance. The entries to the pedestrian underpass will provide a pedestrian friendly environment with the retaining walls (which will be in filled with stone from a local quarry) ensuring good sightlines and increasing the passive security of these areas.
Ngaruawahia Section Overview

The Ngaruawahia section of the Waikato Expressway is 12.5km in length and runs from Taupiri to Horotiu. At Taupiri it starts immediately south of the Mangawara Stream Bridge on Great South Road (SH1) and from there turns left onto Gordonton Road (SH1B) and follows Gordonton Road to the east of Taupiri for approximately 2.2km before it turns to the south towards Lake Areare and Lake Road. The Ngaruawahia section crosses Lake Road about 1km east of River Road before turning southwest to cross River Road and the Waikato River approximately 400m south (upstream) of the Horotiu Bridge. It rejoins SH1 just north of Hutchinson Road (and Fonterra’s Te Rapa dairy factory) at the beginning of the Te Rapa section of the Waikato Expressway at Horotiu. The Te Rapa Section is due for completion in 2013 and will become SH1 from Horotiu to Avalon Drive in Hamilton. The timing for the construction of the main Ngaruawahia section is dependent on when the NZTA is able to secure all of the outstanding planning approvals.

Although there are uncertainties in the planning process, the NZTA is hopeful that construction on the Ngaruawahia section (excluding Taupiri Link) will commence in late 2011. The main Ngaruawahia section will be a ‘Design and Construct’ contract, which is a joint venture between civil and structural design engineers and roading contractors.

The construction period for the main Ngaruawahia section will be approximately three years. Therefore, if construction commences in late 2011, it will be completed by the end of 2014.

For more information
For further information online visit:
www.nzta.govt.nz/rons
www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/waikato-expressway
www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/ngaruawahia

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