Welcome to the latest update on the NZ Transport Agency’s Ngauranga to Aotea Quay Project. This three kilometre section of State Highway 1 (SH1) between Ngauranga Gorge and the Aotea Quay on and off-ramps is the most congested part of Wellington’s motorway network. We’ve already made some real improvements to travel times here (you can read more about that in the article on Stage 1 below), and freeing up traffic flows along this stretch of road will be critical to reducing travel times between Johnsonville and the Terrace Tunnel.

This update will let you know about how we’re already giving drivers a shorter journey along this route and what’s happening next with this project.

How will we get traffic moving from Ngauranga to Aotea Quay?

As you can see from the map below, there are many reasons why this particular stretch of road gets so jam-packed. From road capacity to traffic management to train crossings and merging traffic, it all adds up to the most congested bit of Wellington’s motorway network.

To make this stretch of road work better, we’re planning to turn it into New Zealand’s first ever “fully-managed motorway” (as well as building four lanes in each direction over the longer term). We will install an Active Traffic Management System, using electronic message signs that display varying speed limits and lane controls. This will help keep traffic moving smoothly and improve travel times and safety.

And if drivers do what the signs say, everyone will get to their destination faster.

Stage 1 work already giving drivers a faster journey

From February to June 2013, we widened the State Highway 2 northbound on-ramp and improved its merge areas. Drivers here are already reaping the benefits of this work. Peak travel times have gone down 1.5 minutes between Ngauranga Gorge and the weigh station at the State Highway 2 on-ramp. And on State Highway 1, peak travel times have gone down by 2.5 minutes from Hobson Street to the weigh station.

But there’s even more good news to report here for traffic heading north. Early in the project, we found that by adding an extra lane headed north and shortening the merge between State Highway 1 and 2 southbound, we could get traffic moving faster here. Southbound peak morning travel times have gone down by 1.5 minutes from Ngauranga to Hobson Street (SH1) and 2 minutes from Petone to Hobson Street (SH2). And northbound peak afternoon travel time from Hobson Street to Ngauranga (SH1) has gone down by 2 minutes and 4 minutes from Hobson Street to Petone (SH2).

You can watch before and after videos of these improvements by visiting www.nzta.govt.nz/ngauranga-to-aotea-quay
Northern Corridor Benefits

The Ngauranga to Aotea Quay project is part of the Wellington Northern Corridor (Levin to Wellington Airport), one of seven roads of national significance that the Government has identified as essential state highways which require upgrading to reduce traffic congestion, improve safety and support economic growth in New Zealand.

The Wellington Northern Corridor has a number of benefits, including:

- Reducing travel times between Levin and Wellington Airport by 39 minutes in the morning peak period
- Supporting economic growth in the region, including creating about 8,000 construction jobs and between 870 and 3,700 other jobs as firms set up new employment centres, and planned developments occur
- Better travel time reliability. For example, Transmission Gully is expected to take around 18 minutes end to end day in, day out and will eliminate virtually all travel time variability between Linden and MacKays Crossing.
- A safer journey for all road users. We expect the number of fatal and serious crashes to reduce from 142 to 101 in the five year period after the Wellington Northern Corridor is finished.

Project Benefits

By managing this section of the road better, we will see:

- Better traffic flows, leading to lower stress for drivers
- More reliable journey times
- A safer road for everyone who uses it
- Better driving conditions that will help influence better behaviour by drivers
- A flexible, “value for money” solution that makes the best use of the road, and
- Little or no adverse effect on the environment.

Project timeline

FEBRUARY 2013: Stage 1 – SH2 Northbound on-ramp – Complete

Stage 1 construction began in February 2013, including widening the ramp and improvements to merge areas. This work was finished in June 2013.

2014: Stage 2 – Active Traffic Management System Upgrade

The Stage 2 upgrade will include removal of the current signs (and the gantries they are mounted on), the installation of new signs and gantries and changes to the central median barrier.

2015: Stage 3 – Four Lanes Northbound

Stage 3 includes widening SH1 northbound from three to four lanes.

TBC (2016+): Stage 4 – Four Lanes Southbound

Stage 4 includes widening SH1 southbound from three to four lanes. Please note that Stage 4 will be affected by other projects, the Terrace Tunnel duplication and seismic risk considerations for the Thorndon Overbridge.

Our contact details

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