

2 Waihi to Tauranga Corridor



Artist impression - the Wairoa Road overbridge is one of three large span ridge bridges across the Takitimu North Link project

Our biggest roading project to date now in construction

In this rapidly growing and beautiful part of Aotearoa New Zealand, people can look forward to more options on how they travel, helping them get where they're going safely - with the Takitimu North Link project now in construction.

We were delighted to announce construction starting on the Takitimu North Link Stage One project last week. The new 6.8km expressway provides an alternative route to State Highway 2, improving safety and accessibility, and providing more transport choice for communities with a continuous and separate shared path. Cycling, riding e-bikes, electric scooters, electric skateboards and walking are all catered for with regular access points from local roads to connect communities and the opportunity to pause and appreciate our surroundings.

Fulton Hogan and HEB Joint Venture have been awarded the construction contract. They are ready to hit the ground running with enabling works underway, essential ecological and environmental investigations continuing, and main construction beginning this summer.

The five-year project includes three million cubic metres of earthworks as well as the construction of eight bridges,

29 culverts, eight stream diversions and seven wetlands.

The contract award is an important milestone for the New Zealand Upgrade Programme, which will provide better travel choices that help people in growing communities get where they're going safely. Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail are delivering the Government's \$8.7 billion investment in road, rail, public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure.

We have been in contact with many of our project neighbours in recent weeks, as we've prepared for the construction phase of the project. Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19 in our local community, we are unable to meet face-to-face with the community before the end of this year. We are planning opportunities to meet our team early 2022. If you have questions or concerns in the meantime, please contact us on **0800 865 776** or info@takitimunorthlink.co.nz

What you'll see on site over the holiday season

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On Takitimu North Link, a team of archaeologists, ecologists, Kaitiaki (cultural monitors) and other members of our site crew are busy setting up several environmental controls and monitoring across the whole alignment. The main focus continues to be between Cambridge Road and Wairoa Valley and includes archaeological investigations, site clearance, fencing and stream diversion.

For our maintenance work we have 20 chip seal sites to complete on SH2 between Bethlehem and Athenree. Five sites across 4.5km are finished, with a further 9.8km to go during January and February.

We've listened to feedback and are working differently this year to make your journey smoother and more efficient. This includes completing work at night and splitting longer work sites into parts so we have shorter sections of loose chip the following days. We will keep you informed of these works as much in advance as possible.

We have a statutory shut down period between midday 23 December and 5 January and will not be working on the highways during this time. However, given the increase holiday traffic flows and the need to give our teams a well-deserved break works will not start up on SH2 between Waihi and Omokoroa until Monday 10 January.

We intend to minimise temporary traffic management as much as possible during the break but in order to keep everyone as safe we will still need to have sections of lane shifts with reduced speed and shoulder closures. Please take heed to the temporary traffic management that remains in place and watch out for the teams who will be undertaking regular checks of safety devices.

Safety improvement works will recommence Monday 10 January from Athenree Road to Tanners Point Road, Rea Road/ Tetley Road intersection and Lund Road to Sargent Drive.

Also ahead for early January is the area of SH2 Takitimu Drive under the Waihi Road overbridge, which requires substantial work to repair the pavement; the road surface and underlying



A team of archaeologists and Kaitiaki are working across the Takitimu North Link project alignment

layers, and upgrade the drainage. It is a situation we have been monitoring for the past four years and now have an opportunity to fit this into our maintenance programme. This work will be sequenced so one lane in each direction will remain open at all times and we will be providing more information about this before the work begins on 5 January 2022.

Later this summer a section of the Kopurererua Valley cycleway will be closed permanently as required by the Takitimu North Link construction, there will be an alternate detour available on the eastern side SH29 using the existing cycleway network. We will share more details on this in the new year and signage will be in place for track users. Once complete the project will provide a new 6.8km shared path with more options for travel.

To keep across travel times on your journey this summer, you can check Journey Planner here: journeys.nzta.govt.nz

We were delighted to receive the following feedback

"In the 15 years that we have lived here we have never felt this safe on that part of highway.

Travelling is now a joy rather than that feeling of constant apprehension and unease we used to experience on this stretch of road in the past.

These improvements are outstanding, you have/ and will save countless lives."

“We’re not doctors, but we are saving lives by improving this road.”

They may not be visibly saving lives, but engineers Georgia Downey and Sian Anderson have a key role to play in doing just that on State Highway 2.

Both work on the \$101m Waihi to Ōmokoroa safety improvements project which is part of the Road to Zero strategy. A vision for an Aotearoa New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured on our roads.

Georgia as a Management, Surveillance and Quality Control (MSQC) engineer with Beca, and Sian a site engineer with HEB on Katikati south.

Georgia monitors design and progress of the build, and Sian oversees quality control on the project site. Sian says the opportunity to work outside attracted her to the profession.

“I enjoy the balance of indoor/outdoors. I love the challenge of doing something in the world, seeing the difference we are making as a team and understanding the meaning and purpose behind the work we do.”

“It is so satisfying to see the changes over time, and know I had a part in building this.”

For Georgia, the technical challenges keep things interesting, and she says the close-knit team is all working towards the same goals.

“There’s a lot to a road, so many layers. There’s pavement design, geometric design, barrier and retaining walls. There’s so much more than meets the eye.”

Sian said the team has experienced abuse in the past from people driving through roadworks, but this is improving.

“It is great to see public perception changing. The people we



(L) Georgia Downey, Management, Surveillance and Quality Control (MSQC) engineer with Beca, and (R) Sian Anderson, site engineer with HEB

engage with are seeing the benefits more as we get further along with the project,” she said.

“If there’s one thing I would like people to know, it’s that when you see a group of us standing on the side of the road, we are actually working.

“We are discussing the site preparations or progress – it is so much easier for the team to meet on site where we can all see it.”

Both Georgia and Sian encourage young people who may be thinking about getting into the engineering industry to “just do it”.

“I love it. Every day is different,” Georgia said.

They both agree on two things; the challenging parts of the job include working in the rain and “trying not to dig up all the [utility] services”, with New Zealand’s geology also presenting some technical challenges, and the best part of the job is working with great teams to make a difference to those travelling along SH2.

“We are all working towards the same thing,” Sian said. “We’re not doctors, but we are saving lives by improving this road.”

Kia Ora to Manu Seddon (Ngāti Hangarau)

Manu is a member of Te Tiriti partnership roopu Te Paerangi, and one of our team of Kaitiaki (cultural monitors) working on the Takitimu North Link project.

Kaitiaki carry out important kaupapa involving overseeing the work on site as guardians of Te Ao Māori. At the moment, much of this work is happening alongside archaeologists who are now working near Harrison Road and Richards Way. This mahi must be completed before construction can get underway, as the Takitimu North Link project passes through locations rich in cultural history. We will share the findings of these investigations when complete.



Can you spot the difference?

When you think about what's involved in building a road, relocating lizards is probably not the first thing to spring to mind.

But kaitiakitanga (guardianship/protection) has a significant role across the Takitimu North Link project, which includes the protection and restoration and enhancement of habitats for indigenous creatures.

There are around 11 different species of native lizards present within mainland habitats throughout the Bay of Plenty region. Our team have completed search and salvage at two of 11 potential lizard sites across the project alignment to date and this work is ongoing. 23 copper skinks have been found, along with more than 800 plague skinks, an invasive Australian pest species which compete for our native lizards' habitat and resources.

Copper skinks were once a non-threatened species but this year their threat status shifted to "at risk, declining" which reinforces the importance of the pre-clearance search and salvage work that we do.

Under the Wildlife authority granted by the Department of Conservation we are legally required to euthanise pest skinks we find during the project.

The native lizards we find are temporarily relocated into the care of an experienced lizard holder while we determine the most suitable release sites for them within their rohe in Tauranga Moana. Look out for more on the lizards' new where soon!



(L) Copper skinks and (R) Plague skinks can look quite similar and require an expert eye to inspect and confirm the difference.



Read more and sign up for updates about the Takitimu North Link at: nzta.govt.nz/takitimunorth



For more information on the SH2 Waihi to Tauranga Corridor project, contact us at:



nzta.govt.nz/waihi2tga



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