

Overview

The NZ Transport Agency is investigating options to deliver a safe and efficient route for cyclists between Ngauranga and Petone along State Highway 2 (SH2). This project aims to 'close the gap' of the existing cycleway along SH2, support cyclists and encourage more people to travel by bike between the Hutt Valley and Wellington.

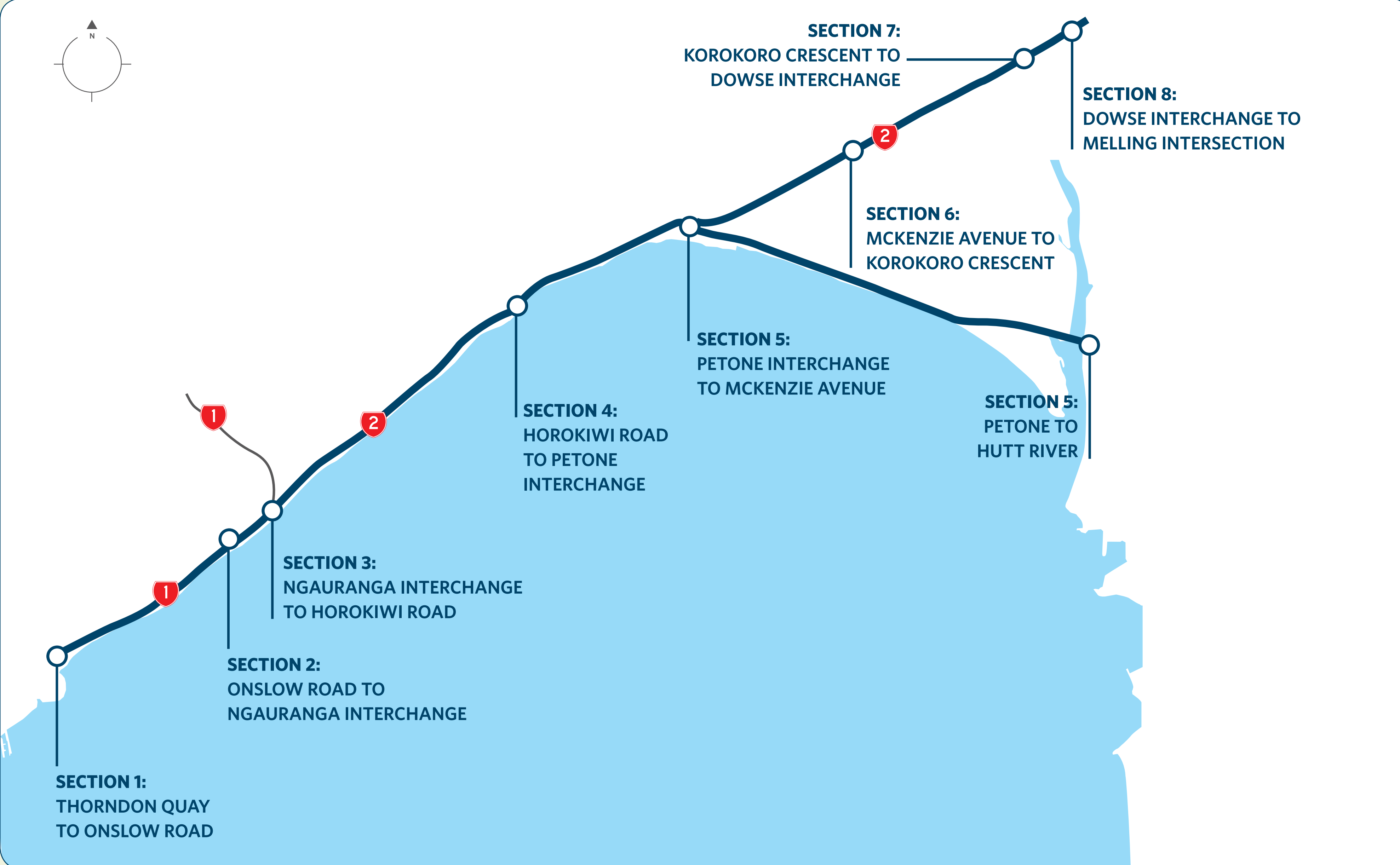
The 4.7km stretch of SH2 between Petone and Ngauranga comprises a transport corridor bordered to the west by the Wellington Fault escarpment and to the east by Wellington Harbour. The transport corridor is a high volume route with a posted speed limit of 100km/h which carries over 60,000 vehicles and 400 cyclists per day. To the east of the motorway is the Wellington suburban rail network.

The Transport Agency is working in partnership with Wellington City and Hutt City Councils on this project, to ensure that the

cycleway effectively and efficiently connects with other cycling facilities at both ends of the highway corridor.

The key objectives for the Project are to:

- Improve walking and cycling safety between Lower Hutt and Wellington, particularly between Petone and Ngauranga
- Provide a facility that generates more use of the Lower Hutt to Wellington transport corridor by pedestrians and cyclists, regardless of ability
- Separate pedestrians and cyclists from highway traffic between Petone and Ngauranga
- Improve network resilience by providing a walking and cycling facility with better safety standards and capacity
- Manage the impacts of the project on the communities by choosing options that avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts as much as is practicable.



Why are the improvements needed?

Facilities for cyclists and pedestrians between the Hutt Valley and Ngauranga are currently limited. Without a dedicated cycleway/pedestrian path between Petone and Horokiwi, cyclists and pedestrians are forced onto the shoulder of SH2. A separate 3.8km cycleway/pedestrian path is available between Horokiwi and Ngauranga, but is not used by the majority of cyclists who choose to use the shoulders of the highway instead. Their issues with the current cycleway include it being too narrow for two-way travel, its width isn't consistent and it has maintenance, drainage, flooding and uneven surface issues that make it off-putting.

Cyclists are free to choose to use the shoulder of the highway, but this makes them vulnerable in a high speed area without physical separation between cyclists and vehicles.

The existing off-road shared pedestrian/cycle path on Hutt Road also needs attention as it has a high crash history. These occur when cyclists are confronted by vehicles turning into the driveways of various businesses along Hutt Road.

Project history

There have been a number of studies and public consultation since 2006 to consider ways to improve the facilities for pedestrians and cyclists between Wellington and Hutt City. In 2008, the NZTA implemented a number of interim safety improvements to the SH2 shoulder for cyclists while long term improvements were still under consideration. These improvements included:

- Highlighting potential conflict points with the use of green road surfacing
- A trial of surface material to gauge feedback from cyclists
- Hold rails to assist cyclists at crossing points
- Installation of activated warning signs at locations where width and visibility are restricted or cyclists are crossing
- Raised road markings to discourage vehicles from encroaching on the shoulder
- Shoulder widening (where feasible) and the use of catch fences to prevent debris from falling on the hard shoulder.

Public consultation in 2012 informed a number of preliminary options, which have been further refined by feedback

Surveys began at the end of 2013 asking for further feedback on ways to improve walking and cycling links and two preferred options are now being considered.

There could be a benefit to aligning the Walking and Cycling Link with the construction of the Petone to Grenada Link Road (Link Road). One particular benefit is that excess soil and rock taken from the hillside to construct the Link Road could be used for the construction of the Walking and Cycling Link where we need to reclaim the shoreline. If we decide to combine them, more work will need to be done regarding funding and joint construction, particularly as the Link Road is not scheduled for construction until around 2019.

Next steps

Investigations for the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link are expected to be completed mid-late 2014. Further design work will be required after a preferred solution is identified. The project will then be subject to approvals and funding applications before anything can be constructed.

Timeline

