

Shaping our TOMORROW

Ngā rā anamata

ANNUAL PLAN 2019/20

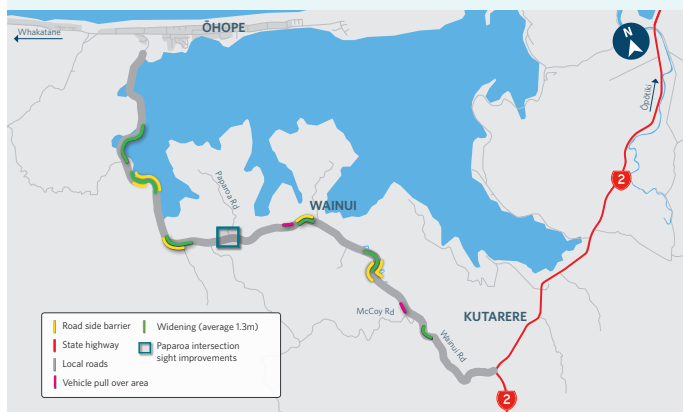
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ACCELERATING PROJECTS FOR ROAD SAFETY AND ACTIVE TRANSPORT

What is this project?

Wainui Road forms part of the main connection between Ōhope and Ōpōtiki. It is a highly used arterial transport route in our District that many commuters and visitors use every day. The route has a poor safety record and continues to present a major unacceptable crash risk. In partnership with the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), there is an opportunity to complete improvements to this road sooner than planned. This is possible because of a new funding scheme which provides an increased investment rate from NZTA for qualifying projects, and this project meets the requirements.



Note: Upgrades and improvements are indicative only and subject to finalisation of priorities and funding

Why bring the project forward?

The NZTA provides a significant amount of the funding that we spend on our local roads (they are also wholly responsible for state highways). NZTA have recently introduced a new enhanced form of funding which would see the Wainui Road safety improvements receive 82% funding support rather than the 64% that would otherwise be available. The new enhanced funding is available for a limited time with projects needing to be completed by 30 June 2021. The scheme has been implemented by NZTA to bring forward projects in line with national transportation priorities. These priorities include road safety, resilience and improving access for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and people who are mobility restricted. As part of the scheme, the portion of Council financial contribution that is reduced by NZTA's increased investment, must be used to bring forward other transport projects in line with these priorities.

What improvements will be made to the route?

The project encompasses improvements for the entire route between Ōhope and Ōpōtiki including Wainui Road and State Highway 2. Improvements include road widening, safety barriers, minor realignments and passing areas. For the portion of Wainui Road within the Whakatāne District specific improvements include widening and/or side barriers at the six highest risk locations, sight distance improvements to the Paparoa Road intersection and two tourist stopping bays along the route.

What will the project cost?

The total cost of improvements along the whole route from Ōhope through to Ōpōtiki is estimated at \$33 million. Improvements on the Wainui Road section within the Whakatāne District are estimated at \$6.8 million. The Council would need to contribute \$2.45 million (\$1.22 million for this project, with the remaining \$1.2 million to be used for other roading improvements) with the balance being funded by NZTA.

Who pays?

The local share of funding required is \$2.45 million (split over two financial years). This would be loan-funded over 25 years and repaid through Rooding Rates. This would result in an increase in total rates by 0.38%

How will this help to progress other transportation priorities - like active transport?

As part of the enhanced funding opportunity from NZTA, any cost savings must also be invested back into transportation priorities. This will potentially enable us to use \$1.2million to accelerate other selected projects. At the time of consultation on our Annual Plan, there is very high demand on the new NZTA fund and Council is awaiting clarity from NZTA on which further projects would qualify to be accelerated. The preference is for projects within the Active Whakatāne Strategy but otherwise there may be an opportunity to bring forward safety improvements on Thornton Road.

Selected Active Whakatāne Projects would focus on our priority areas being: safe ways to schools, commuter routes, and improvements for vulnerable/impaired active travel users. If the Thornton Road safety improvement project was brought forward this would provide improvements to the out of context curves near Blueberry Corner and Smith Road which both have a high crash risk. The selected projects will be determined by Council's ability to optimise NZTA financial investment to get the best value for money, for our Community.



What is the Active Whakatāne Strategy?

The Active Whakatāne Strategy aims to promote healthier, safer, more inclusive and more active modes of transport. It recognises that people travel within and across our District in a wide variety of ways, including walking, driving, cycling, mobility devices, and scootering, for example. Over the past year the Council has engaged with the community on the development of the Strategy which is due for completion by mid-2019. The strategy will be a key reference document, ensuring that future roading and recreation projects keep the community's desire for easy and safe accessibility centre of mind during design. Following completion of the strategy, Council will work with a range of partners to find ways to implement the priorities.



What if we don't get enhanced funding?

This exciting opportunity to bring forward such projects at very little cost to the community, is only possible with the enhanced investment from NZTA. Should these projects not meet the requirements to attract this increased investment rate, Council would not proceed in bringing these projects forward.



FURTHER INFORMATION