IE-73  
**Presentations on NZTA Projects, Puhoi to Wellsford Motorway and Victoria Park Tunnel**

**TO:** Infrastructure & Environment Committee  
**ON:** 13 July 2010  
**AUTHOR:** Acting Manager Transport Planning  

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**Summary:**

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is to present the progress on two projects outside of North Shore City but which have strategic implications for the City.

The Victoria Park Tunnel project is under construction and will provide additional traffic lanes between St Mary's Bay and the central motorway junction (CMJ). For North Shore City there are transport related issues linked with an increase in capacity south of the harbour bridge. These include the possibility of high occupancy vehicles using the busway from Constellation and Esmonde Road and the Onewa Rd southbound on ramp.

Some issues regarding the disruption of the Busway during the execution of the Victoria Park Tunnel works should also be discussed. Proposals have been mooted for the existing bus priority lane in Fanshawe Street to be utilised for general traffic storage during the closure of other northbound ramps. North Shore’s view, which is supported by ARTA officers, is that this would be deleterious to the performance of the Busway and could detract from its attractiveness and success.

Instead, it is submitted, this event should be used as an opportunity to further promote the Busway and therefore reduce the volume of traffic by encouraging travel behaviour change. This would require action by NZTA with respect to promotion of the Busway as an alternative, and providing additional funding for more service capacity.

The Puhoi to Wellsford motorway is currently under investigation. The study is investigating options to extend the northern motorway from where it currently ends (Puhoi) through to north of Wellsford. The project has reached the stage where NZTA would like to present the findings so far and to outline the favoured option of an entirely new road, explaining the various features of this. Councillor Ken McKay has previously reported back on the outcomes from the Political Liaison Group Meetings. The minutes of the Political Liaison Group meeting held on 16 April 2010 has been attached to this report.

Some issues regarding the provision of an interchange for access to the proposed motorway have been raised by North Shore City Council and the Committee would like to bring these to the attention of the NZTA design team for due consideration and report back.

Wayne McDonald from NZTA will present on the findings of the Puhoi to Wellsford study and Darren Utting from the Victoria Park Alliance will provide an update on the progress of the Victoria Park Tunnel.

**Officer’s Recommendations:**

1. That the report be received.

2. That NZTA and the Victoria Park Alliance consider the impact of its traffic management plans for the Victoria Park Tunnel project on the operations of the Northern Busway.

3. The NZTA consider Council’s submission regarding the provision of an appropriate interchange access to the proposed Puhoi to Wellsford motorway at or near Puhoi favourably.
Links to, and Consistency with:

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<th>Policy</th>
<th>Description of link and the consistency or inconsistency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) City Blueprint:</td>
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<td>(b) City Plan:</td>
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<td>(c) Annual Plan:</td>
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<td>(d) District Plan:</td>
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<td>(e) Other council strategies/plans:</td>
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<td>(f) Council Policy Manual:</td>
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Significance

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<tr>
<td>(a) Impact [implication × how many people affected]</td>
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<td>(d) Can the decision, policy or proposal be reversed?</td>
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<td>(e) Describe any alteration of service levels of any council significant activity</td>
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<td>(g) Does this decision involve changing the way in which a significant activity is delivered?</td>
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<td>(h) If this is a significant decision, how does it take account of the relationship of Māori to ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga?</td>
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Community views

| (a) | What information does the council have on community views on this matter? | None |
| (b) | What communication and/or consultation has been undertaken? | None |
| (c) | What consideration has been given to community views on this matter? | None |
| (d) | Further consultation is / is not required (strike out one option) | Not applicable |

Auckland Transition Agency Requirements:

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<th>Tick Yes or No to each question</th>
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<td>(a) Does the decision being made -</td>
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<td>• significantly prejudice the reorganisation</td>
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<td>• significantly constrain the powers or capacity of the Auckland Council or any subsidiary of the Auckland Council following the reorganisation</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>• have a significant negative impact on the assets or liabilities that are transferred to the Auckland Council as a result of the reorganisation</td>
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Submission on Puhoi to Wellsford Motorway

The proposed Puhoi to Wellsford motorway has reached a stage of conceptual development where the intentions of NZTA are becoming clearer. Arising from recent meetings Council would like to submit that the provision of an interchange for access at or near Puhoi is essential to the short term and long term success of the road.

It is suggested that omitting the interchange in the vicinity of Puhoi would reduce the functionality and amenity of the proposed motorway to the detriment of the local economy. The reasons are briefly described below.

- The road has occasionally been dubbed the "Holiday Highway" reflecting on the observed preponderance of weekend and tourist traffic along this route. Indeed there are many resorts, centres of entertainment for tourists, tourists focused businesses, and a range of accommodation types along the old main road and the coast, and these may represent the majority of economic opportunities in the area. Although this name for the road has been used as a reference to comment negatively on its ranking in the investment priorities in the Region, it is still useful to describe legitimate business activities in the Puhoi / Mahurangi area. To throttle back this short list of opportunities for this area by diverting the "drive by" customers would negatively impact this area and would detract from the aggregate of the regional economy.

- By the time that the motorway is completed and operational the businesses in the area would have enjoyed the reality of the current high level of service and amenity of direct access via the tunnels for up to 10 years and would be severely disadvantaged by losing access at that time. Claims for injurious affection from all involved could be significant as the injured parties could represent that the current plans were not known or anticipated until now.
• On the other hand the expectation of the improved motorway amenity could be represented as pending since Alpurt was first proposed in the mid 1980’s. Therefore investment and development decisions would have been made over a period of 25 years. Injurious affection claims could legitimately reach back to that period as it is unreasonable to expect the public to have anticipated that an access at Puhoi or somewhere along this stretch of the motorway would be denied to them.

• As the additional travel time along the old road is quite significant for local traffic that could no longer use the motorway, and the route is winding and steep, it is quite likely that political pressure would be high in the short term, and at frequent intervals in the future, to add an intersection. This would eventually result in retrofitting being required to install an intersection. This would be disruptive and relatively expensive both in terms of starting a new portion of work, rework of existing assets, and through the inevitable escalation of costs between this construction period and the next when the work is eventually done.

• Since a decision has been made to proceed with the road, in spite of Regional misgivings, it would be counterintuitive to selectively favour only one class of road user - often described as freight and commercial traffic to Northland - and to disadvantage another class of traffic that included local residents and businesses.

• While it is recognised that there could be an inclination for commuters to favour this area for suburban type development, thereby increasing the burden of energy consumption and carbon emissions on the region, and detracting from objectives to increase urban density within the Metropolitan Urban Limit (MUL), other actions can be taken to limit this phenomenon. These would include stringent zoning and development restrictions, many of which are already in place, while further restriction could be introduced after due consideration. On the other hand the cost of petroleum fuels is destined for a continuous increase over the short to medium term and this, together with tolling fees and reduced availability of petroleum fuel, will militate against long term daily commutes and will undermine the inclination to ignore this cost in decisions on where to live.

• If an access at Puhoi is omitted the distance between the intersections will be very much longer and this would reduce the operational efficiency of the road and cause traffic management difficulties for the police. When accidents occur and bush fires obstruct travel traffic must be diverted from the road. This often happens and causes severe delays. The greater the distance between intersections, the longer the deviation has to be. It may also cause problems during the staging of the construction, as this will be carried out over an extended period in a completely new alignment separated from the existing road.

In summary, a short term saving on the provision of the intersection at on near Puhoi will detract from the long term amenity and functionality of the proposed highway for the above reasons.

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<th>Name and title of signatories</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepared by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation of statutory compliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>In accordance with section 76 of the Local Government Act 2002, this report is approved as:</td>
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<td>(a) containing sufficient information about the options and their benefits and costs, bearing in mind the significance of the decisions; and,</td>
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<td>(b) is based on adequate knowledge about, and adequate consideration of, the views and preferences of affected and interested parties bearing in mind the significance of the decision.</td>
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Date: 23 June 2009
I. Introductions

Meeting commenced at 10.15am
Welcome and introductions took place.

II. Strategic Context Overview

a. Presentation – Key Points

Strategic Assessment: study area includes whole of Auckland, and Northland regions. All roads of national significance (RoNS) will be studied using a similar process. 80% of population growth in NZ is predicted to be north of Taupo.
Corridor is important to Northland and North Auckland region, in terms of resilience and reliability. Primary products in the Auckland region, tourist destinations/freight are key factors for this route.

In terms of what the impact would be for economic development, the following areas have been identified, tourist destinations more accessible, better connections with industries, reducing transport costs, improving linkages to Auckland which can allow Northland to diversify into service industries. Improved access to support fledgling industries and to stimulate growth and population density.

Detail about the corridor:
16000 vehicles per day increases by 50% during holiday periods.
Future predictions are double that.
Freight is 80% by road. Likely to increase by 250% (this is measured by weight)
Pipeline transports a significant amount of liquid, which affects % split. With and without pipeline % split is Northland to/from Rest of NZ:

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<tr>
<td>Without pipeline</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>51%</td>
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III. Network Plan

a. Presentation – Key Points

The Network Plan identifies all non State highway activities required to support land use and the RoNS. The purpose of the plan is to consider RoNS as part of a network, identify all activities required to support land use and RoNS development, maximise integration opportunities. Examples include local road connections, walking and cycling, public transport; land use changes.

Ensure connections to the RoNS are appropriate and support land use objectives.

Network Plan is a living document and has a long term focus.

Land Use - the most important thing in terms of delivery is land use. Where we connect this new road to the rest of the network to ensure it supports the existing planned land use as well as long term aspirations. Identifying future land use plans is one of the key elements in developing the Network Plan. To do this we have reviewed published documents, obtained additional information from Councils, discussed land use with Council officers, identified areas which require further investigation.

TC highlighted the key land use areas south of the route and also along the route. He also covered the route further north as well – Te Hana, Kaiwaka and Mangawhai Heads.

TC went through the bypass options for Warkworth and Wellsford, listing the pros and cons for East and West routes.

Northland/Auckland Boundary Issues: Kaiwaka – Wellsford – Mangawhai triangle. Split between KDC/NRC & RDC/ARC. There have been no past discussions between regions on role and interactions between towns. TC mentioned that the three growth areas had already been looked at with the officers and work was already underway. He was happy to receive feedback.

Next steps are to set-up and evaluate the network options, share with NZTA Board and share with Councils.

b. Discussion

Question CR: Is the population growth necessarily going to have an effect on the road? Are you doing the modelling for origin destination?
TC responded that the land use north and south of the route is important in terms of understanding the transport demand, while land use along the route is important in terms of both the demand as well as providing the appropriate connections.

MF commented that what was really highlighted by the presentation was that by having two roads networks (existing SH1, plus new route) and limiting the number of exits, we will get the best of both worlds.

Referring to Next Steps slide, KP asked how long it was going to take. BG replied that development of the network plan is an iterative process, investigation phase takes 12 months and we are already 2 months into that. Within 12 months we should have a preferred alignment. The Network Plan will continue to be reviewed during this time.

MS asked if it would go to the Board in 12 months and BG replied, no as it is an iterative process, with the alignment development we will go to the board several times maybe 3 or 4 times this year.

KP said that sense he was getting was that there appeared to be a lot of commonality about where connections and route should be, consequently as you go through the process with the Board, you minimise risk, go faster, do it quicker, surely there would be an opportunity to get this done in less time.

The group as a whole agreed access is only required at Warkworth and Wellsford. Preference was for a central interchange at Warkworth and a west bypass. There was mixed views on whether the Wellsford bypass should go to the east or west.

IV. Scheme Assessment Development

a. Presentation - Key Points

Recap of some of the things already discussed and the key objectives set by the Minister and went through the four Project objectives.

Funding in place through to start of construction. Have started investigation phase. Currently undertaking scoping phase which involves constraint mapping and option shortlisting.

Developing Network Plan in parallel. Have started stakeholder engagement. Starting to plan for first round of consultation. Although this is not a requirement of the RMA it is something we need to do.

Delivery Plan no different to the one presented last time. We're still running to programme. With regards to your concerns about timing, at this stage we are only focussed on Puhoi to Warkworth and the Warkworth bypass. This follows feedback from last meeting.

Baseline programme - we're doing all we can to deliver this faster, still needs to go through the “legal gates” of the RMA which means we need to follow the proper process.

The programme is based on the statutory requirements we have to comply with, this being the RMA and PWA. Note we currently have no designation, consents or property for the route. As part of the RMA process we have to pass some “legal tests”. This includes showing we have considered all options and that the preferred option has only minor effect.

There have been some changes to the RMA which we will be making use of. However, the changes mean we have to have significant more detail developed up front than previously.

The terrain is very difficult to put a road through (contour map). Significant contours which result in large earthworks volumes, for example, 12-14 million cubic metres just between Puhoi and Warkworth. Geology inland gets better. Existing SH is not sitting on best land.

Land Use

Puhoi is a special historic zone. Plan reconfirms the east bypass of Warkworth is almost impossible to do. Wellsford not such a constraint.

The other thing worth noting is number of businesses along the route. Sheep World, Honey Centre etc, form constraints.

Environmental
Puhoi and Warkworth, very limited DOC land. Warkworth to Wellsford significantly more DOC land especially on the eastern side of SH1.

Cultural heritage sites run mostly along the coastline, not much along existing corridor. Lots of significant outstanding natural landscape which is quite a constraint from a planning perspective.

At the moment we’re still considering all options including upgrading of the existing alignment. We hope to have a preferred alignment by the end of the year.

b. Discussion

BG discussed RMA requirements. Using the call in process should be faster, but the risk being you only get one shot at it. The decision is binding. Therefore we need to be certain we have all the required detail.

KMcD said he was trying to determine if we could get consents on a particular chunk first and then move onto the next chunk, to which BG replied that regardless of how we break it up we have to show the whole alignment is viable otherwise we could get consents for one section and not for another. We need to prove the alignment as a whole is consentable.

V. Other Business

The Political Liaison Group agreed future meetings will be in Wellsford. The next meeting will be just prior to going out to public consultation. Meeting closed at 11:55am.
Consultation underway – have your say before 26 July 2010

Your views are wanted as part of the first phase of consultation for the Puhoi to Wellsford road of national significance. So far some key principles about the highway have been established, but we need your feedback before any detailed planning gets underway.

For the past few months, we’ve been developing key principles for the Puhoi to Wellsford project that will be used to design the new highway.

Our key principles are:
1. When completed, the new highway will be “offline” from the existing SH1, i.e. it will be entirely separate from the existing SH1.
2. There will be access points at Warkworth and Wellsford.
3. The new highway will pass Warkworth to the west and pass Wellsford to the east.

These principles will ensure that the new highway improves the connection between Auckland and Northland, and links to the growth centres in northern Rodney.

Unlike other roads of national significance, the Puhoi to Wellsford project is at a very early stage in the planning process.

While the project team already has a lot of background information about the area, we need your help to find out more so that route planning is properly informed.

Project goals
As one of the roads of national significance, the Puhoi to Wellsford project will:
• Enhance inter-regional and national economic growth and productivity
• Improve movement of freight and people between Auckland and Northland
• Improve the connectivity between the medium to long term growth areas in the northern Rodney area
• Improve the reliability of the transport network through a more robust and safer road between Auckland and Northland.

For more information
For further information online visit: www.nzta.govt.nz/puhoi-wellsford
The new highway

What we think . . .

When completed, the new highway will be completely separate from the current SH1. The existing highway will remain, serving as an alternative route. Construction of the new route may be staged. Which sections will be first and when has yet to be decided.

Why build an entirely new highway rather than upgrade the existing?

Building along a new route will make it possible to have smoother curves, and easier grades than could be achieved by upgrading the existing SH1. It will be easier to build a new highway and construction will cause less disruption for users and adjoining properties than trying to upgrade SH1. It will also result in a safer, more efficient state highway. Current access to properties on the existing SH1 will remain.

Getting on and off the highway

To determine where the best places are to access the highway, we’ve been working with the council to understand their future planning, land use (including local structure plans) and predicted traffic growth in northern Rodney. When considering this information, the NZTA has identified that only Warkworth and Wellsford justify having access points to the proposed highway.

Areas such as Puhoi, Mahurangi West, Moirs Hill, Coiven Bay and Wayby will continue to be served by the existing SH1 which will carry less traffic once the new highway is built.

Looking at Warkworth

The most practical route for the new highway is to pass to the west of Warkworth. A route to the east would cross the Mahurangi Estuary and would be longer.

No decision has been made on where the Warkworth access point should be on the highway. The options are on the outskirts of town either to the north or west. A southern access is not suitable as it would require traffic to Warkworth and eastern beaches to continue along the existing SH1. We seek your views on the two potential access locations and matters you think should be taken into account in choosing between them.

And Wellsford

The best solution for Wellsford is for the highway to pass to the east of the town with a central access point. This will allow a better connection to Mangawhai, surrounding areas, and to industrial and commercial land.

What do you think?

Please use the attached feedback form. You can send it back to us free by using the following address:

FreePost Authority Number 66927,
Puhoi to Wellsford road of national significance,
PO Box 9806,
Nanwemarket,
Auckland 1149.

Or visit the website to use the online form at www.nzta.govt.nz/puhoi-wellsford
We need you!

Access to private land
The project team's technical specialists need to understand the challenges of the countryside, to help us with our planning of the project. This means team members who need to understand more about the important plants, trees, soil, rocks and water courses will need to go on to land in northern Rodney. The team will be contacting some residents to seek permission to go onto their land to learn more about the area. This doesn’t mean the new highway will run through these properties. Where it will go is still undecided and will depend on many factors, including your input during this consultation period.

If someone calls to ask for permission to visit your land, please ask any questions you need as we're only too happy to discuss the process. We will seek permission to enter any private property and there will be plenty of warning before we need to visit your land. Our personnel will carry identification so don’t be afraid to ask to see it. If you've any concerns, please contact the free call number 0800 227 272 (0800 727 668).

Who are we?

This project is really important to the Government and the NZTA to help develop Northland and Auckland. The NZTA has set up a project team, together with engineering consultants SKM, to deliver this road of national significance.

Chris Perks, Senior Project Manager, is responsible for the engineering of the highway. Jerry Giango, Project Controls Manager, ensures the project is delivered on time and to budget. Brett Gliddon, Principal Project Manager, has overall responsibility for delivering the project. Amanda Cosgrove, Communications & Stakeholder Manager, keeps the public informed. Gillaine Whittle, Project Administrator, coordinates everyone. Paul Glucina, Senior Transport Planner, oversees the strategic transport decisions of the project.
Your views are important to us. First please tell us about any matters raised by the NZTA key principles for the project that have been used to start the design of the new highway:

Passing to the west of Warkworth and to the east of Wellsford

The advantages/disadvantages of an access point to the north or west of Warkworth and to the east of Wellsford

Any other matters you think should be thought about in the overall design of the new highway

Send your feedback to us free at FreePost Authority Number 66927, Puhoi to Wellsford road of national significance, PO Box 9806, Newmarket, Auckland 1149.
Second, please tell us about matters that should be taken into account when choosing the route for the new highway. The new route will be separate from the existing SH1 but likely to be within a few kilometres of it.

The matters you think we should take into account in route planning could relate to your property if you are in this broad corridor, the area where you live or your community. They could include:

- historical sites you value
- issues about noise, air quality, etc.
- natural areas important to you
- cultural and community sites
- landslips and unstable land
- anything else you consider important.

Write your comments here:

Thank you for your time. We will keep you posted on the progress of the project.

Your contact details:
Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr
Name:
Address:
Email:
Phone:
To opt in for email updates, please tick box. 

All feedback needs to be returned by 26 July 2010.
Frequently asked questions

Why is Puhoi to Wellsford a road of national significance project?

The Puhoi to Wellsford route has a strategic role connecting the Auckland and Northland regions and seeks to promote future regional economic growth as well as improving the safety of the route and making journey times more reliable.

Infrastructure development is one of the Government’s key planks for economic growth. This means the Government is investing in infrastructure now to encourage future economic growth rather than wait until the strain on the network becomes a brake on progress.

What stage is the project at now?

The project is divided into the six stages shown in the diagram above. The project is now in the route investigation and community consultation stage. From now till early 2011 the NZTA will undertake a detailed study of the route. This study will consider the full range of issues associated with building the road from both technical and community viewpoints.

How does the new road affect the current work at Warkworth?

The current works in Warkworth are being undertaken to ease immediate congestion along the State Highway and to help facilitate the future growth outlined in the Rodney District Council’s Warkworth Adopted Structure Plan which will result in an increase in east to west travel movements. Improvements to the State Highway corridor which include increasing capacity at key locations, the implemention of traffic signals and new walking and cycling facilities will help better manage traffic along the route which are immediate concerns.

The Puhoi to Wellsford project does take the current works into consideration but this project has long term inter-regional objectives which will take some time to implement. The NZTA’s priority is that both the current works and future route planning are conducive to each other.

When will there be consultation on a preferred route?

Once we have assessed all the feedback from the consultation the next step will be to define a suitable route for the new highway. The project team will consult about the new route as soon as possible to meet the deadlines as indicated above.

Will you be building the highway in sections?

The investigation phase of the project will determine how the new highway is going to be built. Opportunities for building the highway in sections rather than one complete new road will be explored. As the whole project is a new highway any sections will need to connect back to the existing road in the short term.

Will the Puhoi to Wellsford highway be tolled?

Part of our ongoing investigations will be to consider tolls as a source of funding towards the construction of the highway. If these investigations find that tolling can provide a viable source of funding, this may enable the NZTA to build the road sooner than just using public funding alone. We’ll keep everyone informed as this study progresses.

When will the construction start?

Detailed design and construction is the final phase of the project where you will see work out on the road.

Detailed engineering plans are drawn up and contractors are able to start work. Detailed design and construction is proposed to start before 2014. It may be possible to stage this work so sections can be opened at different times – these opportunities will be examined during the investigation phase.

Who can I contact about the project?

Please see below project website and project team contact details.

For more information

For further information online visit: www.nzta.govt.nz/puhoi-wellsford