

Appendix A: Effects on Putorino Community



Memorandum

To	File
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From	Josh Taylor
Office	Napier
Date	2 August 2023
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Subject	Waikare Gorge - HDC S92 Response - Effects on Putorino Community

Under Section 92 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991, the Hastings District Council have requested further information to support the assessment of the SH2 Waikare Gorge Realignment Notice of Requirement. This memo responds to additional information item **3. Effects on Putorino Community**.

Requested information:

The proposed new State Highway 2 alignment will bypass Putorino village. The AEE does not assess the impact on persons residing or working in this small village. Please address by providing a Social Impact Assessment addressing the social effects the realignment will have on this community.

1 Response:

1.1 Community Feedback

Since 2019 significant engagement has been undertaken with affected landowners, Iwi, stakeholders and the Putorino/ Waikare community. During this engagement the feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly supportive of the realignment and the benefits that it will bring to the community including greater confidence in the resilience of the only access to their community along with the benefit of reduced traffic through the village.

The table on the following page highlights the communities' feedback to date:

Date	Engagement	Feedback
13 th Nov 2019	<p>Putorino Community Engagement Event</p> <p>A community event was held at the local Putorino School to get feedback on the Waikare Gorge short-listed options in conjunction with obtaining their feedback on the SH2/35 Passing Opportunities business case</p> <p>The community had the opportunity to view posters which showed the broad area where the two shortlisted realignments were being considered and also the PGF objectives.</p>	<p><i>The community were overwhelmingly in support but didn't have a preference on a shortlisted option, rather they were supportive of the road being realigned, made safer and more resilient</i></p> <p>They were most concerned about providing feedback on where the road was unsafe and feeding into the Passing Opportunities project</p>
May 2020	<p>Media Releases</p> <p>Waka Kotahi issued a media release on 22 May 2020 "Waikare Gorge Realignment Project Moving Ahead" updating the public on the status of the project and presenting the shortlisted options.</p> <p>This was shortly followed by an independent article released on 28 May 2020 by Stuff which included feedback from Putorino residents on the Waikare Gorge project collected via verbal interviews.</p>	<p>The Waka Kotahi media release was well received including positive feedback regarding the use of fly-through models to highlight the short listed options.</p> <p>The independent article by Stuff contained overwhelmingly supportive feedback from Putorino residents on the project and the possibility of a realignment of the highway away from the Putorino village.</p>

A copy of the May 2020 Stuff article title "Moving highway out of town? 'Great, I'll never have my paper flogged again'" is attached to this memo.

1.2 Specific Concerns Raised by the Community

Waikare Hotel

In early 2019 there was feedback received from a resident expressing concern of what a potential bypass could mean for the local Waikare Hotel. However not long after this feedback was received the Hotel was sold to a private purchaser who has converted the Hotel into private residential accommodation and ceased business operations. There have not been any Hospitality Businesses operating in Putorino since the closure of the hotel.

School and Sports Complex

Consideration was asked of opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the local school and sports complex both located on Waikare Road.

The increased resilience and safety provided by the proposed realignment, along with the upgraded intersection to Putorino off the proposed realignment, combined with appropriate

directional signage and removal heavy traffic away the existing intersection with Waikare Road are expected to mitigate the affects of realigning State Highway 2.

1.3 Desktop Preliminary Assessment of Potential Social Impacts

A desktop preliminary assessment of potential social impacts was undertaken in 2020 as part of the development of the projects interim business case. This assessment raised the following points.

1. The community has aspirations for Putorino to be maintained and supported as a viable settlement to visit, live, and work. However, there is potential for the recommended option to result in a decline of Putorino due to reduced passing trade (enabling tourists and through-traffic to bypass Putorino).
2. The recommended option will also sever private land holdings. Consultation with the affected landowners has commenced and should continue, in order to minimise the effects of the project on their properties and land use activities.
3. Some basic or 'standard' mitigation could include:
 - a. Maintaining access to Putorino.
 - b. Providing directional signage on the road/at intersections to point people in the direction of Putorino for toilets, refreshments, amenities.
 - c. Providing stock underpasses on private property, where necessary.
 - d. Moving or replacing farm infrastructure that is directly affected by the project.
 - e. Providing for appropriate Public Works Act compensation for land acquisition.

Mitigation Update

- a. Maintaining access to Putorino. *A realigned and upgraded intersection is proposed at the location of the Putorino access road. This will include a right turn bay, widened shoulders and landscaping to highlight and enhance the access to Putorino. The community has since raised several times that the removal of heavy traffic and high volumes of traffic will improve the liveability of the settlement.*
- b. Providing directional signage on the road/at intersections to point people in the direction of Putorino for toilets, refreshments, amenities. *Directional signage will be installed at the intersection discussed above and will include a signage review to highlight additional facilities such as the sports facility and the camp ground.*
- c. Providing stock underpasses on private property, where necessary. *Stock underpass and general access has been discussed at length with the affected landowners and requirements have been incorporated into the design.*
- d. Moving or replacing farm infrastructure that is directly affected by the project. *On-going discussions are being had with the affected landowners. Affected farm infrastructure will be moved or replaced.*
- e. Providing for appropriate Public Works Act compensation for land acquisition. *This will be addressed as part of the property negotiation phase and appropriate compensation for land acquisition including in accordance with the Public Works Act will be provided.*

Moving highway out of town? 'Great, I'll never have my paper flogged again'

Marty Sharpe · 08:58, May 28 2020



One of two proposals at Waikare Gorge on SH2 - White Alignment.

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Not a lot happens in Putorino, and soon it may be even less, and that seems to be fine with locals.

Roughly halfway between Napier and Wairoa, the tiny settlement on State Highway 2 is - like many in rural parts - a shadow of its former self.

The shop closed more than a decade ago. The garage not long after, and the pub, the Waikare Hotel, shut its doors last year. Once it was a regular bus stop for inter-city buses, and the sunny deck of the pub was awash with motorists and farmers rubbing elbows in the afternoon sun.

It still has a school, with 17 pupils, a decent-sized sports centre, a tiny fire station and more than 100 people that call the place home.



MARTY SHAWPE/STUFF

The Waikare Hotel in the centre of Putorino shut its doors last year.

More from Stuff:

- * [State Highway 2 between Wairoa and Napier to finally reopen after cyclone](#)
- * [The not fast and the very furious: 30kph limit plans for NZ towns](#)
- * [Napier City Council appoints new CEO](#)

Fair to say, it's busiest days are behind Putorino and, if a new proposal by the New Zealand Transport Agency comes to fruition it will be, as one local puts it, "like lockdown level 4 forever".

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She means that in a good way.

None of the residents contacted by *Stuff* had any qualms about the highway being moved so it bypassed the settlement and the tricky route into Waikare gorge that lies adjacent to it.



One of two proposals at Waikare Gorge on SH2 - Orange Alignment.

Late last year NZTA [announced a proposal](#) that would see the route moved inland, closer to the rail line, with a bridge over the Waikare River.

The agency wants to make the highway safer and less likely to suffer closures.



The proposed Waikare Gorge realignment with the two options.

It is working on a business case investigating preferred alignment options and how improved access and resilience of Waikare Gorge will help unlock the Tairāwhiti (Gisborne) region's economic potential.

Over the next few months it will undertake in-depth analysis of two potential options, after \$5m was secured from the Provincial Growth Fund.

The funding will support Waka Kotahi's work to get the project ready for construction, including land purchase, consents, designation of the route, design and detailed geo-technical investigation.



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Senior project manager Rob Partridge said it was too early to estimate the cost of the project.

A local woman who did not want to be named said shifting the highway would be welcomed.

"The pub's closed, and there aren't any other businesses open any more, so it won't affect any of that," she said.

"The logging trucks start up along the road at about 1.30am - 2am, so if they were further away that would be brilliant," she said.

"It'll be like lockdown level 4. I'll never have to worry about my newspaper getting flogged," she said.

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