

Notes of meeting at NZTA Hamilton Office
on 2 September 2026
to discuss the
Hamilton Southern Links Project

Present:

NZTA	Andrew Corkill Susan Collins Sarah Anderson Andy Oakley
WDC	Councillor Mike Keir Councillor Crystal Beavis Megan May
TCC	Charles Fletcher Maggie Wilcock Lyn Harris David Ralfe Peter Nation

The Government has released its Major Transport Projects Pipeline (July 2026) which has moved Hamilton Southern Links into Phase two “Preparing for construction, and route protection”, which is already designated. The current Government committed to the 17 RoNS listed in the 2024 Transport Government Policy Statement. It is funding construction of the Cambridge to Piarere RoNS, now out to tender for construction.

The recent political debate over fuel levies, and delays to reintroduction of increases, will reduce available funds to NZTA, which has an obligation to maintain the existing roading network within available funds. The November 2026 election may result in more changes, so NZTA are not able to discuss politics or outcomes as NZTA remains apolitical.

Attached is a list of issues we may be able to address in today’s meeting (which did not follow in any particular format). These notes capture the essence of the topics considered/discussed (in no particular order).

1. Southern Links

Construction is on hold for an indefinite period. The current work is being scaled back. Works being completed include initial Geotech investigations, ground water monitoring, topographical survey other aspects to make it easier to pick up and continue with construction funding becomes available at a later date.

The \$100 million budget is a long way from being spent and the balance of funding not required to complete the works has been returned to the NLTF.

Concerns were raised by TCC about whether the land offered a solid foundation for the road, having been swamp land, but NZTA has no current plan to change the route alignment between the expressway and the airport.

WDC Councillors repeated concerns that there is no local road connectivity to the new design plans, as shared by NZTA with TCC and Council in May 2026. In particular the removal of the roundabout on Tamahere Drive.

Sarah Anderson and Susan Collins explained the roundabout was removed when it was decided to keep the southern ramps to the Tamahere Interchange. Councillor Kier suggested this decision needs discussion and review.

Concern was also expressed that the new Interchange for Southern Links into the Expressway does not provide for access to the east. No explanation has been offered.

Councillors and TCC would like to review that plan further with NZTA and asked if a copy could be made available (Airport to Expressway) for a future discussion with suggested amendments for consideration by NZTA. TCC and WDC would like to have preferred design options discussed prior to this becoming live again including local connectivity, upgrading of the Tamahere connection with retention of Northbound offramp and Southbound onramp.

Future Proof and Blueprint plans for Hamilton and the Waikato all refer to the imminent availability of the Hamilton Southern Links road connection, which is needed for the roading network, the growth of the Peacocks cell, access to the West of Hamilton City and expressway routes north, the new Inland Port at Ruakura plus the increased traffic across to Tauranga and its expanding port facilities serving the Waikato.

TCC and Council are developing Vision Tamahere 2075 as a new Community Plan for Tamahere, incorporating Blueprint updates, Future Proof considerations and a Spatial Plan or Structure Plan for Tamahere, Matangi and part of Tauwhare.

NZTA was invited to participate in this planning work and indicated it has an interest in doing so, especially for road network route development.

2. Narrows Bridge (SH21)

Strengthening work was done some years ago and the Narrows Bridge has a projected life of another 15 years, so it is considered fit for purpose for current traffic use including heavy trucks. This bridge is now 90 years old.

Peter Nation invited NZTA staff to spend some time at the Narrows Bridge observing the traffic. There is plentiful evidence of scrapes and bumps with hub caps, vehicle parts, etc. Heavy trucks communicate with each other so that they stop at either end, for each to pass across the bridge, as it is not possible for two trucks to cross the bridge side by side in opposite directions.

On 16 September 2010, after erosion and scouring were found to be threatening the bridge's foundations, NZTA closed the bridge until it erected a single lane bailey bridge in October 2010 - with traffic light controls which are still at the site – to make repairs.

TCC suggested NZTA could put back a bailey bridge so that there will be an effective two lane crossing of the river at the Narrows, and that this could serve to extend the life of the Narrows Bridge by taking some of the traffic load.

Vegetation is a safety concern with signage blocked and vegetation intrusion forcing cyclists & vehicles to go wide where no space is available & visibility is impaired. The western side of the bridge needs urgent vegetation control maintenance work. NZTA will address this.

3. **Airport Road (SH21) from the Tamahere Interchange to the Narrows Bridge.**

Possible speed reduction and engine braking were discussed. Community have safety concerns, especially with school buses stopping outside 576 Airport Road in the afternoon and children being picked up by parked cars, walking along the road to Pencarrow Road or crossing the road to their homes in the Newall Road/Twin Oaks Drive area.

NZTA acknowledges the issues on SH21 but has constraints on its current budget for speed reviews. Therefore, any review is unlikely to happen anytime soon. This section of road is now on the NZTA speed review register.

Traffic numbers are far more than projected – currently more than 10,200 vehicles per day with 1,100 heavies daily. Big issue for Tamahere residents and the local roads with significant traffic congestion.

The Wiremu Tamihana Drive junction at Airport Road is very congested. NZTA committed to build a **roundabout** at this junction when numbers increased – that number has been surpassed ... what is proposed?

At the top of the hill traffic turning into or out of Pencarrow Road are at risk. The centre slip lane could be made more obvious and longer for both directions of travel.

4. **Tamahere Interchange**

TCC representatives noted the Tamahere Interchange was built to overcome deaths at a four way intersection, it was never designed to be part of an expressway. As such it was suggested that it may not be 'fit for purpose' and may need upgrading – evidenced by a recent logging truck rollover closing the interchange. The roundabouts are too small and not level (downhill camber seems to be the cause of the truck roll over as it turned to access the on-ramp to the South from the west side)

NZTA indicated that it has no plans to further upgrade or change this Interchange.

TCC requested that temporary signs installed during the HCC Morrinsville Road closure be made permanent to warn of large cues and merging issues as you approach the Hamilton end of the Tamahere Interchange, from Ruakura and Hillcrest. Nose to tail accidents are a concern for traffic at 110 kph not seeing stationary traffic in a long que back to the almost blind corner at the Bollard/Cherry Lane exit.

5. **Working together to facilitate Government priority to build the Hamilton Southern Links sooner** rather than later.

TCC and WDC representatives observed that, like the South Island, we need unity of force from our Council's, MP's, Iwi interests, Chamber of Commerce, Business interests and leaders and Community leaders, to push for the early construction of Hamilton Southern Links.

This effort needs to be planned and supported.

NZTA is happy to discuss with all interested parties but are directed by the Government of the day.



Meeting with NZTA
2 September 2026

Issues to discuss

1. As Southern Links is now on hold (Government funding announcement) how does NZTA propose to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the network infrastructure, using the Tamahere interchange from the Expressway on SH21 (Airport Road) to the Airport and SH3?
2. Specifically:
 - a. the Narrows Bridge – what is the plan?
 - b. Intersection with Wiremu Tamihana Drive?
 - c. Intersection with Pencarrow Road?
 - d. Intersection with Raynes Road?
 - e. Intersection with Mystery Creek Road?
 - f. Waipa District Council concerns for the bridges in Cambridge, restrictions on use by heavy trucks resulting in diversion to the Narrows Bridge (GPS routing) and Hamilton
3. When the modelling was done for the Hamilton section of the Expressway design, traffic number projections for SH21 were grossly underestimated. Currently, some 10,200 total vehicles use the Tamahere end of SH21, with more than 1,000 heavy trucks moving goods through the network, daily. Tamahere local road congestion is a problem now, solutions?
4. Does NZTA consider the Tamahere interchange to be “fit for purpose” and is there any thought to upgrade the interchange, given the accidents that have occurred here (e.g. truck trailer roll over – gradient and size concerns)?
5. How can we most effectively work with NZTA to secure approval for construction of Southern Links sooner rather than later? Are PPP funding and tolls being considered?
6. Southern Links design work – current position and can you provide details/plans of the current position? What is still to be done (geo tech, modelling, etc)?
7. Is NZTA open to considering suggestions from Waikato District Council and the Tamahere Community, which might promote changes to the design/plans in Tamahere? E.g. access to the East from the Expressway
8. Currently Council and TCC are developing plans for the development of Tamahere, Matangi and part of Tauwhare over the next 50 years. Is NZTA willing to assist with information on its network projections and plans for this planning work?