

Hamilton Section



PART OF THE WAIKATO EXPRESSWAY



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Last section opening to traffic

Decades in the planning, six years in the building - the final section of the Waikato Expressway opens to traffic this month.

The four-lane 22km Hamilton section, which takes State Highway 1 east of the city, is the region's biggest ever infrastructure project. Its opening marks the completion of the whole 102km Waikato Expressway project.

The Hamilton section, just like the earlier sections north and south, takes the highway out of built-up areas, providing a safer and more efficient way to move people and freight.

Remember when a drive to Hamilton involved passing through towns like Pokeno, Huntly, Ngaaruawaahia from the north, or Cambridge from the south? Now with the Hamilton section opening, there's a four-lane highway from Bombay to south of Cambridge.

We certainly saved the hardest to last. While some of those earlier sections were straight forward,



By Jo Wilton
- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency
Waikato regional manager
Transport Services Infrastructure

Hamilton was far more challenging - crossing local roads, a busy railway line, gullies and streams. It required 16 bridges, an underpass and five interchanges. All built on very soft soils.

It's been quite a journey for all involved- going back to the early planning and investigation days by staff in the Ministry of Works, then later Transit NZ. Then Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency saw things through - from designation, consenting, tendering and finally construction.

There are a lot of people and organisations to thank for their hard work and support in getting this project built.

Starting with the forward thinkers, planners, designers and decision-makers who could see there was a better, safer way to transport people and freight on a route east of Hamilton.

Our local councils were unwavering in their support for the expressway, always aware of the safety and economic benefits it would bring.

And then the thousands of people who had a hand in the project. More than 7500 people worked on the site in some capacity during construction - all under the umbrella of the CityEdge Alliance partners Waka Kotahi, Fletcher Construction, Higgins, Coffey, Beca and sub-alliance member Hick Bros plus sub-contractors and suppliers.

Also, we will never under-estimate the contribution of our neighbours, the landowners who have had properties purchased for the road, divided by it, or had their rural landscape changed by it.

For me, one of the highlights of the project has been working with Waikato-Tainui who have partnered with us on the project and driven cultural and environmental outcomes we can all be proud of. This came through a comprehensive project plan and the hard work of Tangata Whenua Working Group members.

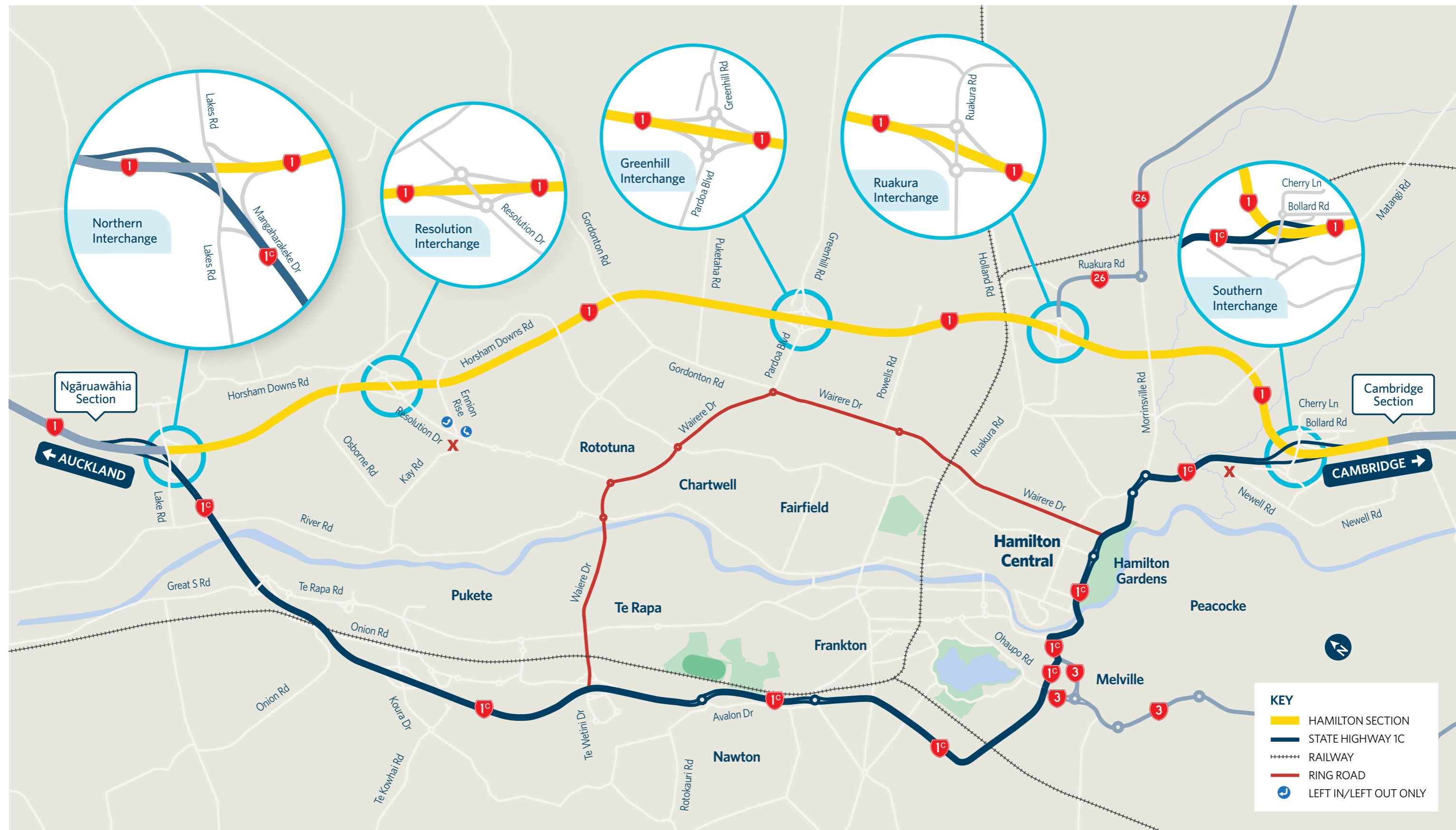
*Maa te kotahitanga ka whai kaha ai
taatou hei awarua ki te ora.*

We have strength when we work together.



The Hamilton section takes SH1 east of the city.

Connections to Hamilton section



Stories told along the route

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency partnered with Waikato-Tainui on developing a plan before the Hamilton project even started, strongly focused on environmental and cultural concerns and outcomes.

The new road passes through the rohe of four Tainui hapuu - Ngaati Koroki-Kahukura, Ngaati Hauaa, Ngaati Mahanga and Ngaati Wairere and these four hapuu made up the Tangata Whenua Working

Group who were embedded in the project from its beginning.

A Cultural Symbolism Plan included the creation of a cultural reserve at Tamahere, Te Whenua Taapui Ahurea O Tamahere, large artworks and storyboards along the route. Bridge abutment designs also tell iwi stories. All bridges have been gifted an iwi name, with many linked to stories from the past which are explained on storyboards.

Storyboards have been erected where shared paths enable access for cyclists and pedestrians. These are at Osborne Road, Resolution Interchange, Greenhill Interchange and the Tamahere cultural reserve.



The cultural reserve at Tamahere taking shape just off the new expressway.

Cultural reserve - Te Whenua Taapui Ahurea O Tamahere

A place for reflection, this reserve recognises the partnership between iwi and Waka Kotahi. And celebrates both the history of the site and the deep connection to the whenua.

Visitors to the reserve can gain a greater understanding of the landscape through which the Hamilton section traverses. Storyboards tell of early life in the area - much of which centred around gardening.

The reserve includes a lookout to view the

surrounding landscape and paa sites, a food stage house (paataka) and a rua (borrow pit) created by pre-European gardeners.

Within 300 metres of the reserve are the archaeological remnants of two paa sites and evidence of intensive gardening with rua and maara kai (cultivations).

Before expressway construction began, archaeological investigations found a large group of rua, fireplaces, and garden features. Further analysis has helped piece together a picture of gardening practices in this area.

The rua in this reserve is preserved for future generations.

Iwi artwork stands tall in the north

Artists Eugene Kara and Fred Graham are behind the main artworks along the route.

Eugene designed the two 10m high Poro Takataka spinning tops at Resolution Interchange. The Poro Takataka acknowledge tangata whenua's ancestral connection to the land and ensure that the land of Waikato-Tainui remains fertile and life sustaining for iwi.

Poro Takataka were taught to tamariki through play and games. They were often made from rakau (wood) or kowhatu (stone) and were whipped to spin by a cord made from harakeke (flax). These skills and techniques were often precursors toward higher learning in life.

"While contemporary in their shape, the Poro Takataka stand as beacons of innovation and prosperity, while harnessing the positive energies of Hani and Puna to help clear and heal the land," says Eugene.

Fred Graham, assisted by son Brett, is behind the Waka Maumahara which is in production and will be erected at Lake Road in spring. The 18m high work acknowledges the origin of the Tainui waka and will face Taupiri Maunga, the ancestral mountain of the Waikato people and resting place of Kings.

It tells the story from Hawaiki, when Hinerau, the wife of a chief called Tinirau, gave birth to a son they named Tainui. Sadly, he did not survive the birth and soon after was buried.

A tree sprung up from his grave and, years later, when the people wished to build a waka, they selected that tree for the purpose. The day after they cut it down, they found it growing back in place. Once again, the tree was chopped down. That night a watch was kept, and they observed a flock of birds fly in, pick up the chips and reassemble the tree. The appropriate rituals were performed before the next felling and the tree revival ceased.