



The route through the gorge is the eastern spoke for the Manawatu freight distribution hub linking to the Hawke's Bay, Gisborne and Wairarapa regions



ROADING

Mesh, rock bolting and drainage stabilisation measures have been installed in many sections to prevent further erosion of the slope faces

which makes it easier for the river to erode the toe support of the adjacent slope as it seeks to widen its base.

The result of this continual lateral erosion is the numerous prehistoric landslides documented in the geological record along with precipitating the historically documented events of today.

A GORGE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Manawatu region is recognised as a 'logistics centre of gravity' both nationally and for the lower North Island. The Manawatu hub has evolved because nationwide distribution companies recognise efficiencies and cost savings that can be made by operating from the area.

It has a central location, comparatively cheap land, reliable labour resources, easy access to national road, rail, and air and sea ports. The area has an excellent service industry base, and is within a 160 km radius of around a million people.

These logistics benefits result in faster response times and lower cost-to-serve models, especially for the lower North Island region. This also promotes business efficiency across the country and fundamentally benefits NZ Inc.

The Manawatu Gorge is a short but critical piece of SH3 and in the current government vernacular should perhaps be termed a 'gorge of national significance'. This short piece of road and associated bridges is the eastern spoke for the Manawatu distribution hub linking to the Hawke's Bay, Gisborne and Wairarapa regions.

The NZ government has designated this road 'strategically important', but apparently, this is different from a 'road of national significance'. Perhaps there is some bureaucratic confusion as to the meaning of strategic – perhaps it means the road is significant and of strategic importance, but only in a regional context.

The importance of this link would appear to be greater than the problem of Arthur's Pass which, with significantly less traffic and tourists, still managed to get a substantial (and successful) viaduct solution.

Beyond the disruption to domestic operators, the regional exporters and importers who rely on the Manawatu Gorge link are now impeded when shipping product through the port of Napier. They are further limited since the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake which also closed CentrePort in Wellington, effectively choking the southern spoke of the Manawatu hub. In addition, thousands of tourists also use the route each year.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE OPTIONS TO THE GORGE

In 2012, the NZTA commissioned a confidential report that has recently been made public, detailing the issues connected with the closure of SH3 through the Manawatu Gorge. This report presented four potential route options to replace the current alignment.

All options have an environmental and design compliance time-frame of three to five years with an estimated three to seven-year construction programme. The options are outlined below along with their benefit-to-cost ratios (BCR).

Upon checking the calculations from the report, Corporate Logistics has concerns as to the interpretation of the BCR tables presented in the report and at this time is seeking clarifications as to the costs shown.

The gorge has already been open for 145 years, so any BCR should logically be calculated on a representative timeline, not the short-term perspective of many New Zealand projects.

Option A

Option A is a greenfields option and traverses the Tararua Range south of the existing gorge route. It is 5910 m in length and has a projected cost of \$309 million. Its BCR is estimated at 1.4.

This options shows that 90% of the project's cost is item 3.4 (cut to waste onsite, including unused ex topsoil) and requires the removal of 52 million cu m of material. It is unknown who will own this resource, but assumes it should logically be the Crown.

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