CENTRAL HAWKE'S BAY DISTRICT COUNCIL

TOD BRIDGE, ŌTĀNE

27 March 2026

Sixty-six year-old Tod Bridge was badly damaged during Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023 and closed after being partially destroyed. It is one of three remaining cyclone-damaged bridges in our district.

While we qualify for NZTA-Waka kotahi funding for all of the options available to us, we won't apply for funding until we know which option we're pursuing. So, faced with a decision about the future of the bridge, we would like the community's views before we progress.

A quick note about funding
We rely heavily on New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) to co-fund transport repairs caused by weather events, so it is crucial that we align with NZTA's funding requirements and processes, which include assessing the cost benefit analysis of potential work options.

When NZTA agrees to co-fund, they fund 89% of the cost, leaving Council to cover the 11% balance through rate-based funding. See the FAQs (on the back of this page) for more information on how NZTA funding works.

We have looked into what we can do and worked out what we can't. Now we need to know what you think the best option is and why. What are the important considerations for the community that need to be taken into account when deciding which option to go with?

All options are only feasible if NZTA approves the funding.

OPTION 1: Build a new bridge

We could decide to build a new bridge. This would involve demolishing the old bridge and replacing it with a whole new bridge and re-opening the road.

What would that cost?
The high-level estimate for replacing the bridge is $4.5 million, which would make the ratepayer contribution (based on the estimate) $495,000. If this is the preferred option, Council will need to seek approval for the funding from NZTA. This is not guaranteed.

Pros:
- The road can re-open
- The bridge would be modern, fit-for-purpose with good resilience and minimal ongoing maintenance
- Original pre-cylone route remains
- Local businesses could benefit from summer-traffic
- Qualifies for significant NZTA funding, although approval is not guaranteed

Cons:
- We would use some of the annual roading budget funded by ratepayers
- Traffic levels on Tod Road would resume to pre-cyclone levels
- The most expensive 'upfront' option

OPTION 2: Repair the bridge

We could repair the bridge and re-open the road.

What would that cost?
The estimate for repairing the bridge is $2 million. If approved by NZTA, this would make the ratepayer contribution (based on the estimate) $220,000.

The damaged bridge would be repaired. However, the ongoing maintenance costs would be higher than with a new bridge and there would be strengthening costs in the future.

Pros:
- The road can re-open
- Local businesses could benefit from summer-traffic
- Qualifies for significant NZTA funding, although approval is not guaranteed

Cons:
- We would use some of the annual rates-funded roading budget
- Ongoing maintenance costs, which would be rates-funded, including strengthening work (yet to be estimated)
- Not the cheapest option
- Traffic levels on Tod Road would resume to pre-cyclone levels

OPTION 3: Close Tod Road

We could decide to not replace the bridge, demolish it and close the road. This means Tod Road would become a dead-end road from both sides, terminating where the bridge used to be. The alternative route adds a further 3.7km to the distance people must travel.

What would that cost?
The cost of closing the road includes a couple of things:

1. The damaged bridge would need to be demolished
2. Subject to NZTA support, seal Evan Road to provide a safer route for ongoing higher traffic. This is estimated at $800,000. Subject to approval, NZTA would likely fund 89%, with $88,000 being rates funded. If this is the preferred option, Council will need to seek approval for the funding from NZTA

Pros:
- Less traffic on dead-end portions of Tod Road may be beneficial for residents
- Sealing Evan Road would make it safer road for the heavier traffic volumes
- It is the cheapest option
- Qualifies for NZTA funding, although approval is not guaranteed

Cons:
- Traffic would have to go up to 3.7km further
- The intersection at the end of Evan Road may need a safety review to better handle heavier traffic.
- We would use some of the annual rates-funded roading budget (but less than the other options)

OPTION 4: Culvert option

We considered a culvert option in response to public feedback; however, we do not recommend progressing it further as it is unlikely to deliver sufficient value.

- A high-level culvert solution - estimated at approximately $2-4 million (no detailed technical assessment completed). Similar to the new bridge option.
- A low-level culvert solution - requires significant earthworks and would result in poor road geometry and safety issues

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does co-funding mean?

We cannot afford to fund the recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle independently, as the impact on rates would be too significant. We rely heavily on NZTA to co-fund transport repairs caused by weather events, so it is crucial that we align with NZTA's funding requirements and processes.

We have worked closely with NZTA to understand the specific funding criteria applicable to the recovery efforts following Cyclone Gabrielle, including investigating repair solutions and gaining individual funding approval for each damaged site. This process has taken time and required careful planning and documentation to ensure all repair solutions meet NZTA's standards and criteria to qualify for co-funding, and contributes to long-term resilience of the district's transport infrastructure.

How does NZTA use cost-benefit analysis to allocate funds for road repairs?

NZTA uses cost-benefit analysis (CBA) to evaluate the economic efficiency of transport investments, ensuring taxpayer funds achieve maximum public value.

NZTA's CBA calculates the monetary value of projected benefits of a given project, such as reduced travel time, improved safety, and lower emissions, AGAINST costs, such as construction and maintenance. The result is expressed as a benefit-cost ratio (BCR), with projects typically requiring a BCR ≥ 1 to proceed.

A BCR ≥ 1 is also required to support any spend over $2 million without a business case submitted.

How does NZTA co-funding work?

All repair solutions that we seek co-funding on must meet NZTA's standards and criteria to qualify for co-funding. Funding, depending on the project:

- 59% - NZTA provides Council with a FAR (funding assistance rate) of 59% of funds to complete general maintenance and repairs on our roading network, and we fund the balance of 41%. When the district undergoes a state of emergency or significant weather event such as Cyclone Gabrielle, NZTA will enhance the FAR and provide us with a higher co-funding percentage.

- 89% - NZTA contributes 89% of the total approved costs for a project, while the remaining 11% must be funded by Council or other sources. This higher FAR rate reduces the financial burden on councils, ensuring that essential transport recovery and development work can proceed without placing excessive strain on local ratepayers. This funding is time-limited, as it applies to recovery work. Projects funded at this assistance rate must be completed by June 2029.

- There is no guarantee of funding. It is approved on a case-by-case basis.

