

MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

Meeting of the Regional Transport Committee

Te Kōmiti Waka-ā-Rohe

Tuesday 21 June 2022
Commencing at 1.30p.m.
via Zoom

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
4.1 Henry Hudson - The dangers of rockfall on Rocks Road	
A. A2910169 Tabled Document - Rocks Road Hudson - NCA	2
7 Public Transport Update	
A. A2909022 Route 5	8
B. A2909027 Route 6	9

Rocks Road Slope Instability: NCC Regional Transport Committee 21 June 2022

Henry Hudson, Spokesperson Nelson Citizens Alliance

Thank you for the opportunity to present on behalf of Nelson Citizens Alliance on slope instability along Rocks Road. Many people are concerned about the resilience of Rocks Road as a primary transport corridor. Apart from sea level rise and storm surge closures of Rocks Road; road closures because of slope failures have also occurred far more frequently than forecast in the 2011 WK-NZTA slope stability report. Frequent failures have occurred in the absence of major earthquakes and predicted more extreme rainfall.

Initial cliff face slope stability works were in response to major failures in 2011, with drainage, meshing, pinning and shotcrete of sections of the cliff face undertaken in 2012. Several subsequent failures illustrate the need for further stabilisation and review of resilience. I bring your attention to two recent failures of the cliff face:

- December 2021 with rock fall and debris slide material covering Rocks Road (Figure 1).
- February 2022 with a failure across the road, but in particular, a large boulder fell from the cliff face and rolled across the road (Figure 2).

We wrote to our Member of Parliament (Rachel Boyack) and Minister of Transport (Michael Wood) noting falling boulders could demolish a vehicle or kill walkers or cyclists if they were unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Transport Agency should not be playing Russian Roulette with people's lives.

While we have responses from our MP, Minister and WK-NZTA, we have not had any response or acknowledgement of the issues with the Regional Transport Chair, hence I bring this matter to your attention again.

In discussing these slope failures with Rachel Boyack, Member of Parliament, she initially responded that concerns would be address by the Nelson Future Access Plan proposal for Rocks Road. However, it is now recognised that this is not the case. Specifically:

- The high sea wall along the shore platform, outstanding natural landscape, segment of Rocks Road (Figure 3) will not prevent boulders and debris falling from the cliff face and covering Rocks Road with the potential for injury or death.
- The high sea wall will probably stop all but catastrophic rock and debris falls from crossing the road to the sea,
- The one thing the sea wall option guarantees is significantly reducing or eliminating the iconic near shore sea views for which the waterfront is renown.

Similarly, the proposed widening and revetment extending some 20 m further into the sea over the southern section of Rocks Road will not prevent a major slope failure causing death or injury from failure of the Tahunanui hillside. The revetment along Rocks Road (Figure 4) will only have one certain outcome – it will eliminate the iconic Days Track seawall benches and swimming. There will be no beach.

In terms of an example of the slope failure hazard, in October 2017 attention was brought to a failure of hillslope bounded by Moncrieff Avenue and Rocks Road, between Grenville Terrace and The Cliffs. The upslope failure and debris posed a threat of burial of the house at 537 Rocks Road and material spreading across Rocks Road.

As is the case for much of the hillside, the slope failure is largely attributable to ground saturation because of leakage of reticulated water, stormwater and sewer pipes and natural subsurface flow from rainfall. As a result, the hillslope is primed for failure during relatively modest rainfall events.

The remedial action was to repair/improve drainage at the head of the slump at the retaining wall along Moncrieff Avenue, which appears to have been successful. Similar actions are required over much of the Tahunanui hillside, and along the cliffs of Rocks Road.

In terms of Tahunanui Drive and Rocks Road, we would encourage the Regional Transport Committee to engage with WK-NZTA to address concerns raised by many people regarding heavy traffic:

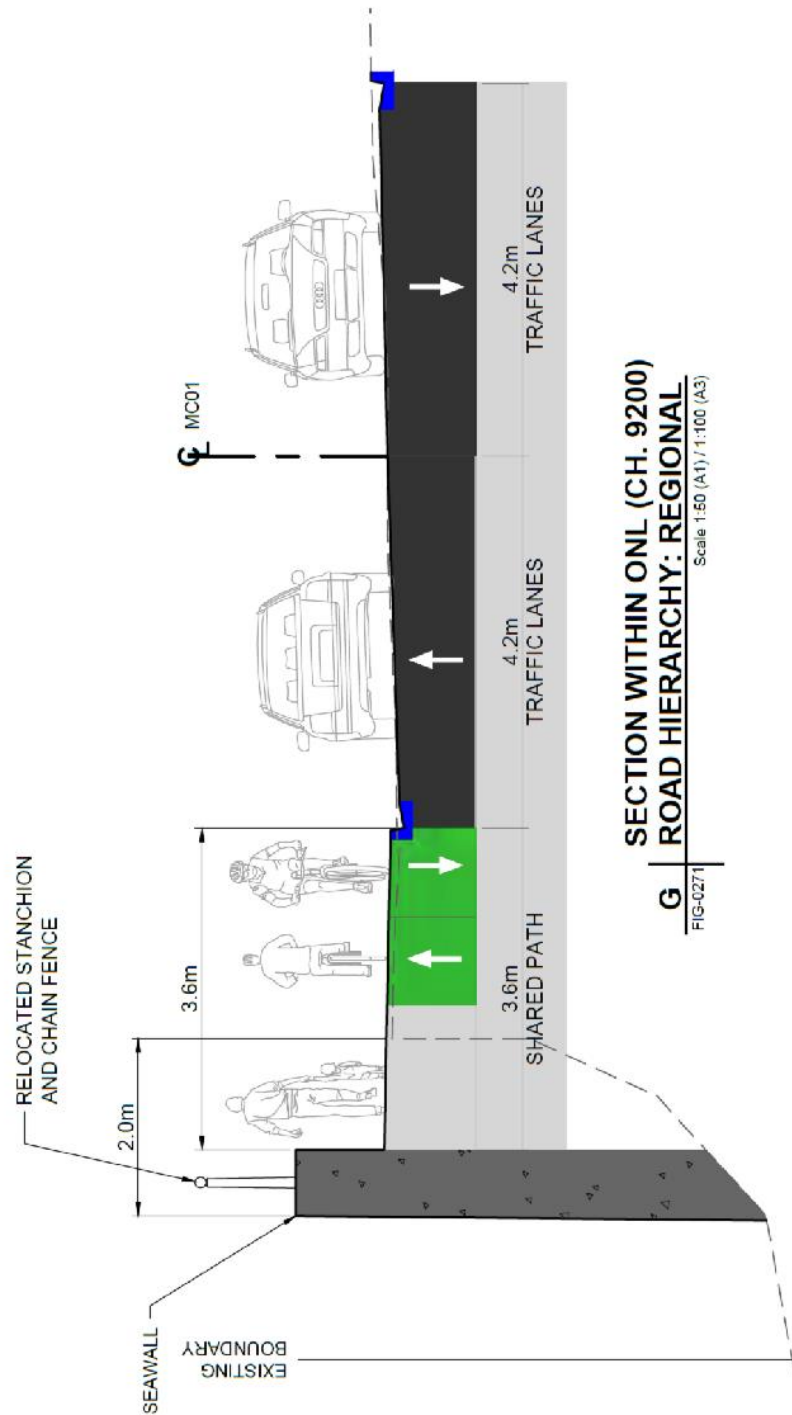
- It is intimidating to walk or bike along Rocks Road with huge trucks that barely fit within the roadway travelling by at high speed. If nothing else, people I have engaged with would be far more comfortable if the speed limit were reduced to 30 km/h on Tahunanui Drive and Rocks Road.
- There are three perceived advantages of a reduced speed limit:
 - Walkers and cyclists would feel less intimidated by huge trucks passing close by.
 - The noise and vibration of heavy truck traffic would be reduced.
 - There would be more opportunity to safely cross the road.
- Diversion of trucks from Tahunanui Drive and Rocks Road is the preferred option of many people who live adjacent to these roads and for people who bike and walk. Perceived advantages include:
 - A safer, far more pleasant environment, far more in keeping with having a well-loved, and highly utilised, iconic waterfront.
 - An elimination of much of the noise and vibration of the heavy truck traffic.
 - The probable reduction in excessive vibration causing frequent small scale rockfalls and debris falls along Rocks Road.
 - Damage to the road surface would be significantly reduced, and it might be possible to maintain a relatively smooth, quiet surface with integrity, without continual repairs.
 - It is well known that Rocks Road (and Tahunanui Drive) were never constructed for the huge trucks that use these roads. The diversion of these heavy trucks would probably eliminate or reduce the stress on the sea wall to the point where sea wall replacement is not required.

Thank you for your consideration.



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