Do the citizens matter?
- A study of citizen participation during the planning process of the extension of State Highway 1 - Puhoi to Wellsford, Auckland, New Zealand.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the mayor of Auckland, Len Brown, the population of the Auckland region will grow by more than 200,000 by the end of the time period for Long Term Plan, LTP, 2012-2022.¹ This means more people travelling on the roads, and hopefully more people visiting Northlands, which in turn will lead to social and economic development in the region. While the region develops, it is essential to improve the infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing population. State Highway 1 (SH1), was extended from Orewa to Puhoi by a 7.5 kilometre motorway, which was completed in January 2009. This represented a big change for people living north of Orewa. Travelling was faster and more reliable since vehicles did not have to be stuck behind trucks going at a slow speed up the hills. The environment was also a winner since it takes less gas going on a flat motorway than up and down the hills.

The current SH1 from Puhoi to Wellsford show a crash rate far exceeding the national average.² One way of making the road safer is to construct a motorway, which has no oncoming traffic, a project planned by the New Zealand Traffic Agency (NZTA). The timeframe of this project is extending from 2010 to 2022, at the latest, and the expected cost is NZ$1.69 billion, thus it is a mega project as defined by Bruzelius, Flyvbjerg and Rothengatter (2002). A mega project usually means a different kind of process than a regular infrastructure project considering the cost, time, who is involved and who is benefiting from the project.³

Citizen participation is important in planning processes as most planning changes affect the daily life of citizens, how this is handled differs from one project to another. Recurrent consultation is needed when outlining the planned result of the project. It is of great importance to be aware of how other consultation work has proceeded in other processes when starting up a new mega project. This is in order to be able to make the best decisions possible for the project. It is also of importance to be aware of how the local interest groups and the local inhabitants can be a part of the process.

A big change in the landscape like this will be, will most likely face opposition, but from the very start there has been an open dialogue between the NZTA, and citizens, businesses, local interest groups and other government agencies. There has been both positive and negative feedback considering the need or no need of a new motorway. Unreliable travelling times caused by difficult terrain, steep gradients and heavy commercial vehicles are good reasons to build a new motorway and also the high accident rate is another reason to improve the road quality. Of course there are a lot of negative consequences such as the high cost, environmental effects, and lack of accessibility for some people living along the way. These examples, along with multiple others are taken into consideration when planning the new SH1.

² NZTA, "Puhoi to Wellsford Project Summary Statement January 2010", 2010: 6
³ Bruzelius, Flyvbjerg, and Rothengatter, 2002: 144
1.1 Purpose of thesis

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how this planning process involves citizen participation. To be able to do this, the different actors involved and the stages the mega project goes through was identified. Consultation with the public must be a part of a mega project like this, both according to law and for ethical reasons, and there are different ways of how to do it. Forester (2008) identifies three ways of communication when consulting the public: dialogue, debate and negotiation. To understand how to use these three types of communication is essential for a good result of the consultation because a different purpose of consultation requires a different type of communication.

The questions this thesis strives to answer are:
- What actors are visible in this project, and what are their roles during the process?
- How did the residents experience citizen participation in the decision on giving Puhoi an access point or not?
- What stages do the mega project go through, and how is citizen participation a part of the process?

1.2 Methodology

When first learning about the planning project on an extension of SH1, it was surprising to learn that making a change, which may negatively impact on the people living in the area, was even an option. To get a better understanding of the process I read all the information I could get hold of from the NZTA, such as the project overview, newsletters and information from the different parties involved. The relations between the different actors when making this decision was investigated by reading the publications of the NZTA and also by interviewing representatives from the NZTA, the Rodney Local Board (RLB) and Puhoi and Districts Motorway Action Group (PADMAG). However to be familiar with only this specific mega project is not enough. To be aware of how other mega projects processes have proceeded and what difficulty they may have had is a vital part of studying this particular mega project. It is also of interest to be familiar with how empowered parties and local interest groups are connected to be able to understand how things are proceeding. When learning about other mega projects caution must be taken not to be too dependent on earlier studies, but to be able to see and understand the process going on at this specific place.

An ethnographic view of the project was used to be able to get the opinions of the locals not engaged in a local interest group. This study took place in Puhoi, New Zealand, with the purpose of getting as close to the mega project, the people affected by it and the opinions surrounding it, as possible. When living in an area where a big change is about to happen, people are going to talk about it in their daily life. Therefore it was almost impossible not to listen and use that information. An ethnographic method is a method where the researcher observes people in a specific place, and also listens and participates in different types of conversations. People in the area of Puhoi have different thoughts and ideas about what they prefer considering the extension of SH1, they are also more or less engaged in the mega project. Most people did have a strong opinion, were eager to express it and wanted to talk

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4 Forester, 2006: 23
5 Bryman, 2011: 378
about it. The people of Puhoi who participated in this study were all well aware of the thesis and the aim of it. My role, as a researcher, was thus a participating observer.⁶ There might be difficulties using this type of method as the people being observed may say things they are not completely sure about, especially in this case where they might have thought the process was proceeding in a certain way because of specific reasons, when in fact that was not the case. The participating observer’s job is to filter the information and to only use what was relevant for the study. In this case that is their thoughts and feelings about the motorway itself and about how much their voice matters in the project. How they felt citizen participation was used in the decision on giving Puhoi an access point or not was also of interest. What they knew, or think they did, about the legal issues of the process was not of interest in this thesis.

Interviewing is a method used in ethnographic studies, in this case it is vital in understanding the different actors’ views on the mega project. Other types of information are visible when interviewing, compared to written information about the mega project. A semi-structured model was used, which means the questions asked are open-ended so in that way the interviewed person can answer in the way he or she wants,⁷ meaning they are not guided towards specific answers. This is of importance in this study since the aim is to investigate how the different actors behave towards each other, and how they perceive their role in the process, when it comes to their rights and obligations. When interviewing it is important to clarify the purpose of the interview,⁸ and also act ethically in terms of informing the interviewed person about the fact that participation is optional, they have a choice of being anonymous and that the answers will be handled confidentially and will only be used in this specific thesis.⁹ The possible difficulties of this method may be the interviews getting side-tracked to areas not of interest to this thesis. In those cases it is necessary to go back to the interview scheme in trying to bring focus back on the purpose.

Representatives from the NZTA, the RLB and PADMAG were interviewed with the aim of getting the different views on citizen participation during the decision-making process. Two female representatives from the NZTA were interviewed together at their office in Auckland City. They chose to use their work titles only since they did not see the point in using their names, as one of them said, it is not of importance who we are but the fact that we represent the NZTA.¹⁰ Their titles are Communication and Consultation Adviser and Communication and Consultation Manager. Tracey Martin, an elected member of the Rodney Local Board, Auckland Council was also interviewed with the purpose of getting a better knowledge of how Auckland Council, and in this case the RLB, works with citizen participation, both in general and in the planning process of SH1. Frances Hardy, from the local interest group PADMAG, was also interviewed. She is a mother of three children and she lives in Mahurangi West, just north of Puhoi.

The data received from earlier studies, ethnographic observations and interviews was combined in order to understand how citizen participation was used and perceived. The

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⁶ Bryman, 2011: 389
⁷ Bryman, 2011: 415
⁸ Bryman, 2011: 420
⁹ Johannessen, Tufte and Johansson, 2003: 61-63
¹⁰ Interview, Female Advisor, "NZTA", 121130
interviews were conducted with representatives from three fields of action with varying amounts of power, rights and obligations. Without interviewing, it would not be possible to get the type of data needed to define the relations between the fields. The ethnographic observations were used as a confirmation and a commentary on the actual process. How the public perceive the process is a good measure of the results of consultation.

1.3 Delimitation
This thesis investigates the citizen participation during the planning process of the construction of a new motorway, State Highway 1 from Puhoi to Wellsford, 50 kilometres north of Auckland, New Zealand. The different actors in the process were acknowledged but their possible economic or political interest in taking part in the process was not taken into consideration. Neither was focus on what is right or wrong in this process, or processes like this. How citizen participation was used in a specific question of interest was the main focus of this thesis. The specific question of interest was the one considering constructing an access point at Puhoi or not, although other questions of interest to the NZTA and the local interest group are mentioned in trying to map out the amount of citizen participation. That specific question was chosen since it engages the local interest group, as well as the local residents in the Puhoi area. Some want the access point, some do not, others are ambivalent, and some do not want the extension of the SH1 at all. The different stages the mega project goes through is mentioned to show how a mega project like this proceeds, and how citizen participation is used in the different stages.

1.4 Source criticism
All but one of the academic literature sources used in this thesis is of examples from Europe - which may be of importance. Even though New Zealand is a western country, the culture, laws and regulation differ from those in Europe. This may be visible in the planning of a mega project when the laws regulating planning processes are different and therefore the behaviour of the actors may be different from the mega project planning processes described in the academic sources used in this thesis. The article from New Zealand was written in 1995 but gives examples of planning processes from, for instance, the 1960’s. The laws on consultation were changed in 1991 when the Resource Management Act 1991 was implemented, which stated that consultation is compulsory during the formal phase of a planning process. To compare citizen participation from that article with this on-going process was therefore done with care.

The ethnographic observations done in Puhoi were subjective since the population living in Puhoi will experience a change of ways of travelling from what they have been used to for almost 15 years if the access point is not provided. Most of them see that as deterioration and are therefore negative to the NZTA and the way the outcome of citizen participation is used in the decision. However, their actual thoughts are what were of interest in this thesis, so them being subjective was not an issue.

11 Interview, Female Manager, ”NZTA.”, 121130
During the interviews it is important to be balanced and receptive towards the interviewed.\textsuperscript{12} PADMAG was formed to be able to make the NZTA change their plans - an implicit criticism of the NZTA. The NZTA on the other hand is a delivery agency for central government. It is a public agency with an obligation to provide the public with information. Its view on the process might differ and it may not be willing to accommodate complications during the process. To interpret the facts from this interview and not having a preconception about the NZTA was important. These diverse factors were acknowledged when investigating the mega project planning process.

1.5 Disposition
An introduction to the theory of the thesis is presented at first. A presentation of earlier studies considering this kind of mega project planning and citizen participation in both New Zealand and other parts of the world is following. The chapter on the case study begins with an introduction to the project, followed by a presentation of the actors and what their role in the project is. Different voices from the local residents are presented next in trying to show the local views on how they are a part in the decision on giving an access point to Puhoi or not. The different stage the mega project goes through finishes the chapter on the case study. A concluding discussion finishes this thesis, followed by an appendix showing a map of the area.

2. THEORY
2.1 Mega projects
Numerous studies have been made around the world about mega projects; its conflicts and the different stages the processes go through. Most of them deal with the difficulties these mega projects face, but some of them are studying well-performed projects with successful outcomes. The different ways of how a mega project proceeds was looked at when outlining a theoretical framework for this thesis.

A mega project comes with a lot of challenges and predictions, those predictions often fail as the time and cost factors almost always change along the process. Even though these facts are well known to the people making the final decisions, like politicians and engineers, a mega project is something to strive for. Mega projects often means modern projects, which in turn means modern engineering technique and brave political decisions, something that is valuable to engineers and politicians.\textsuperscript{13} The brave decisions may be very risky, and the result can be either a success or a failure, or somewhere in between. Exclusiveness makes a city or a region special and different from others, something to strive for when competing with other cities or regions in attracting inhabitants, businesses and tourists.\textsuperscript{14} The chance of exclusiveness, is more important than the risk of the project being more expensive or taking longer time than estimated. Most mega projects face changes during the process, all of the

\textsuperscript{12} Bryman, 2011: 420
\textsuperscript{13} Giezen, 2012: 783
\textsuperscript{14} Heldt Cassel, 2008: 163.
changes from the original plan are called scope creep\textsuperscript{15} and play an important role in the process of planning a mega project. A big part of scope creep is the political influence, many of these mega projects take a long time both to plan and construct. The political power in the region can therefore change during the mega project’s lifetime, and that often means different interests and instructions from politicians. A planned change often engages people, when it does it is often because they are resistant to the suggested change. For some projects this engagement with the people results in a longer and more costly process. Delays due to the locals’ resistance in a project are also a part of scope creep. For some reason mega projects almost always costs up 50-100\% more than what is first estimated and it is not uncommon for a project to overrun estimated costs by more than 100\%.\textsuperscript{16} There is a strong correlation between the time delays and the cost overruns\textsuperscript{17}. Giezen (2012) says problems occurring during project management, which can be a reason for delays and also cost overruns, often occur because of the preceding planning process;\textsuperscript{18} this is one of the reasons it is of critical importance to be thorough when planning a mega project.

\textbf{2.2 Rationality and power}

In these kinds of projects there is often one main actor in power who makes the final decisions, of course with influences from other participants. A democratic process is one to strive for, but it is not always as easy as it sounds. Flyvbjerg (1998) did a study on a planning process case of Aalborg, Denmark. His interest was in the relationship between rationality and power. According to Flyvbjerg (1998) the closer an actor is to political power, the less rationality and technical documentation is used.\textsuperscript{19} In reality this can have devastating consequences. When the actor with greatest power is not interested in documenting what is needed for a certain place or region, but instead decides unilaterally what is best for that specific place or region, the result may end up not profiting the people who were affected by the change the process brought.

In some mega projects, power can be seen as an actor rather than something an actor exerts. This means power can in some way create the reality it wants by producing the knowledge and rationality needed to define the preferred reality, rather than understanding what reality is.\textsuperscript{20} What can be seen in this example is, an actor with power may act irrationally because of the force of the power. Therefore it is very important to have the constant communication with other actors and people affected. As Flyvbjerg (1998) says, those without much influence still possess the power of rational argument.\textsuperscript{21} In the Aalborg project the lack of meetings with the public is an illustration that in most cases the greater the power the less the rationality but also the weakness of the better argument.\textsuperscript{22} By saying that Flyvbjerg (1998) yet again shows that power do not necessary equal good arguments and

\begin{itemize}
\item Giezen, 2012: 783
\item Bruzelius, Flyvbjerg, and Rothengatter, 2002: 144
\item Giezen, 2012: 782
\item Giezen, 2012: 783
\item Flyvbjerg, 1998: 31
\item Flyvbjerg, 1998: 36
\item Flyvbjerg, 1998: 37
\item Flyvbjerg, 1998: 80
\end{itemize}
good decisions. This also shows the importance of people engaged in a project getting together and forming a local interest group.\textsuperscript{23} It is the only way of making a change in a mega project.

\textbf{2.3 Citizen participation}

One difficulty planning processes often face is the way to communicate with people affected by the result of the planned change. Forester (2008) says a better understanding of the differences between dialogue, debate and negotiation is needed when communicating with people affected.\textsuperscript{24} Planners, and other people working with the project and with citizen participation in the project, must know what they are doing when communicating with people affected by the plans. There are big differences between these three ways of communicating, they mean different things and will have different outcomes. Forester (2008) uses a table with four different types of integration of participation with negotiation. These four types are:

- High participation and effective negotiations give mediated negotiations.
- High participation and weak negotiations give public hearings.
- Low participation and weak negotiations give bureaucratic procedure.
- Low participation and effective negotiations give deal-making.\textsuperscript{25}

Depending on the purpose of communicating with people, different methods should be used. The most preferable and the most worth striving for of the four options in the table is the deal-making since that makes an instant result and the planning process can continue, but that is also the hardest one to achieve. To actually achieve deal making it is preferable to know how to get there. The differences between dialogue, debate and negotiation are therefore useful to know. According to Forester (2008) a debate is all about the arguments, and whether or not you agree, if you do not agree you must argue your position. A dialogue on the other hand is about a mutual understanding of what the other person knows. Finally, the result of negotiation is an agreement upon some sort of action going on.\textsuperscript{26}

Being thorough is vital when planning a mega project; one way of minimizing the mistakes in the planning process is to have a constant communication with the people affected by the planned change.\textsuperscript{27} Rivers and Buchan (1995) came up with a list of guiding principles of consultation. Their study is of different planning projects in New Zealand, one of a road improvement concerning access to Wellington. When planning that project the planners tried to proceed as smoothly as possible by doing a full social and environmental impact investigation. This was helpful in choosing the preferred route, but it was not good enough. More effort was needed from the local authorities; and lack of awareness from residents and land use planners was also an issue in this project.\textsuperscript{28} This example shows how much effort is needed when engaging in consultation with local people. To undertake investigations may not be enough - recurrent communication is fundamental. Another studied example was of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Interview, Female Advisor, ”NZTA.”, 121130
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Forester, 2006: 20
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Forester, 2006: 21
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Forester, 2006: 23
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Rivers and Buchan, 1995: 185
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Rivers and Buchan, 1995: 183
\end{itemize}
construction of a major hydro-dam in the Whanganui River, on the West coast of the North Island. Because of the growing need of electricity in the 1960s the hydro-dam was needed, but probably not wanted by the public in the area. The hydro-dam project was planned completely in secrecy without the public having any idea of what was being planned and hence no chance to give feedback. Not even the people living by the river, and directly affected by any changes in the river, knew about the plans when constructing started. Social and environmental aspects were not taken into consideration, and as one can presume the project was not a success. Today, planning a major infrastructural project in secrecy would not be possible, due to laws and regulations formed in 1991. But this specific case shows the importance in having a constant communication with locals and expert groups. They almost always have input the planners have not yet thought about, or have not realised the effects a part of the project may have on the social life or the environment.

The list of guiding principles of consultation Rivers and Buchan (1995) came up with consists of a number of elements such as:  
- Respecting cultural and local knowledge and expertise
- Be prepared to make changes considering the feedback
- Information must be accurate, honest and presented clearly
- Consulting people and make sure that they are representative of all the people likely to be affected
- When deciding on consultation, it is important to listen to people’s ideas instead of trying to promote something to them.

Rivers and Buchan (1995) also identified some issues that may possibly arise when using consultation as a method. These are:  
- The risk of promising people more than can be delivered and therefore leading people to favour of the project
- The risk of consulting people more interested in the local, cultural life than larger-group decision-making
- The time it takes to consult people and then analyse their feedback to achieve something constructive out of it.

But the benefits overcome the issues since consultation leads to better decision-making and fewer problems later on in the process. It also creates a better understanding and acceptance of the project.

In most planning projects citizen participation is a part of the process, in some projects more than others. What is common for most of them is that interest in, or resistance to, a part of the project often coincides with specific ideas. In the case of SH1 this is clear, most feedback from locals related to the different access points, and if and how the location was the right location. Feedback on whether to construct the road or not, a comprehensive question, was not as common.

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29 Rivers and Buchan, 1995: 184
30 Rivers and Buchan, 1995: 185
31 Flyvbjerg, 1998: 78
3. CASE STUDY

3.1 State Highway 1 Puhoi to Wellsford

There are a number of small townships and villages in the Auckland Region, some are expected to grow in the future; both in population and economically, some are not. Three of these townships and villages are of interest in this thesis - Puhoi, Warkworth and Wellsford. They are situated 50\textsuperscript{32}, 60\textsuperscript{33} and 69\textsuperscript{34} kilometres north of central Auckland, the capital city in the region. At the moment the motorway from Auckland ends just south of Puhoi, but an extension to Wellsford is in the planning phase. The growing population in the Auckland region, and the expected economic growth in Warkworth and Wellsford\textsuperscript{35} would mean more people traveling on the roads. A further extension of the current motorway, from Puhoi to Wellsford is being planned in two steps, the first being Puhoi to Warkworth and the second Warkworth to Wellsford.\textsuperscript{36}

The project is a mega project and therefore comes with challenges different from other projects. As seen on the map, the new motorway will connect to the existing SH1 motorway south of Puhoi, just north of the Johnstone’s Hill tunnels. The NZTA is the main actor responsible for planning and funding the construction of the SH1 extension. To determine where the access point are going to be located, the NZTA waited for the Auckland Council to release their future land use plans in the Auckland Plan and the LTP. Only two access points were justified, at Warkworth and Wellsford, because of the expected economic growth in Warkworth and Wellsford,\textsuperscript{37} and no access point at Puhoi since the expected growth is not big enough.\textsuperscript{38} The expected lack of growth is one of the main reasons for the NZTA not to construct the access point. The

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics{Fig1.png}
\caption{The preferred route Puhoi to Warkworth. Source: The New Zealand Traffic Agency.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{35} Auckland Council, "Auckland Plan Chapters 8-15.", 2012: 235
\textsuperscript{36} NZTA. "Puhoi to Wellsford Project Summary Statement 2010.", 2010: 7
\textsuperscript{37} NZTA. "Newsletter 2 June 2010.", 2010: 2
\textsuperscript{38} Auckland Council, "Auckland Plan Chapters 8-15.", 2012: 236
communication and consultation manager at the NZTA says the NZTA are not making any decisions based on what they think, they are a delivery agency for central government which means they are planning the best solution to what the government is asking for. When deciding on different solutions they are only looking at facts and plans for the future. Citizen participation is of course a part in this, but it must be presented with actual facts and results rather than feelings and ideas. If the result is these two access points at Warkworth and Wellsford, and not one at Puhoi, it means the 1 200 households and 4 000 residents in Puhoi and the surrounding area will not be able to use the Johnstone’s Hill tunnels anymore and will be forced to go over the hills yet again, after 15 years of being able to go through the tunnels if desired. In many people’s view this represents a deterioration of the current situation.

3.2 Actors

A number of actors are visible in this mega project, some with greater power and more influence than others. The figure below shows how the actors are connected and working together. NZTA are on the top of the figure since they are the delivering agency for central government. They have an on-going communication with the Auckland Council, RLB, Auckland Transport and Hōkai Nuku throughout the project. PADMAG and the citizens are one level down because they do not have the same instant communication with the NZTA, but do instead communicate with RLB, who then pass that information on to NZTA. When the NZTA performs their consultation phases they have direct communication with PADMAG and the citizens, hence the links between them in the figure.

![Figure 2. Links between the actors involved in the project of extending SH1 Puhoi to Wellsford. Source: Author](image)

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39 Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA.", 121130
40 Rodney Local Board. "Local Board Plan 2011.", 2011: 19
New Zealand Traffic Agency

The NZTA is the main actor in this project since they are a delivery agent for central government, and therefore the agency responsible for planning and funding construction. The NZTA has a specific goal they always work towards in every project: to move people and freight in an efficient and safe manner. The NZTA is working with all types of transport in trying to improve the economic growth of New Zealand. Naturally they are the actor with greatest power and influence in the project as well as receiving feedback from other actors in this mega project. Their work with this project started in 2009 when SH1 became a Road of National Significance (RoNS) and the planning of an extension of the motorway could be a reality. They are working with four objectives, which are guiding the process forward. These objectives have been endorsed by the Transport Minister, and are of key importance to the project. These four objectives are:

- To enhance inter-regional and national economic growth and productivity.
- To improve movement of freight and people between Auckland and Northland.
- To improve the connectivity between the medium to long-term growth areas in the northern Rodney area.
- To improve the reliability of transport network through a more robust and safer route between Auckland and Northland.42

The first consultation phase included a public meeting just after the announcement was made that there would be an extension of the current motorway. A total of 40 kilometres of new motorway was presented with access points both at Warkworth and Wellsford. The result of the fast move forward was an intense and emotional meeting with upset locals who wanted an access point at Puhoi. The communication and consultation adviser at NZTA saw one explanation to the harsh reactions as being the rural people not being as used to road works and road changes as urban people are.43 This type of meeting could be categorized as a public hearing according to Forester (2008), since it was high participation and weak negotiations.44 The Auckland Council has completed a land-use plan for the region where they have set aside land just north of the Johnstone’s Hill tunnels as possible access point land. This means that the NZTA have permission to construct off ramps if needed, that is, if the decision to give Puhoi an access point is made.

In the Auckland Plan, Puhoi is not an expected growth area during the next 30 years, which means an access point is not needed. A traffic inspection was made, to be sure about the amount of traffic going through the tunnels, and that came up with the same results. Instead, the Auckland Plan says Auckland and Warkworth are the growth nodes in the Auckland Region; hence an access point at Warkworth is defensible. Although the directives from Auckland Council are clear, the NZTA are investigating the possibility of having an access point at Puhoi. There are different alternatives as to how this can proceed, getting on and off both northbound and southbound, or getting off northbound and on southbound. The

41 Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA.", 121130
43 Interview, Female Advisor, "NZTA", 121130
44 Forester, 2006: 21
communication and consultation manager wants to point out that NZTA is a delivering agency to the government, which means they are working by directives received from the government.\textsuperscript{45}

Currently the project is in an informal phase, which means the NZTA is not legally obliged to go through with any consultation. But the communication and consultation manager said that anyone not consulting the public would be “out of his or her mind”.\textsuperscript{46} In such a mega project this is, which affects a lot of people, consulting must take place, even during the informal phase. Both the communication and consultation manager and adviser find the relations between NZTA and the other agencies and the public positive. They understand the different reasons why and why not access may not be given or given, and why the access point is wanted or not wanted. The relations with PADMAG is somehow different than the relations with other agencies since the PADMAG have a strong opinion about what they want, which is an access point at Puhoi.\textsuperscript{47}

\textit{Auckland Council}
When planning a mega project in a region, the local council is a given actor. In this case it is the Auckland Council, founded in 2010 when eight smaller councils were amalgamated to create the greater Auckland Council. One of the reasons for amalgamating to create the “SuperCity”\textsuperscript{48} was the goal of Auckland becoming the world’s most liveable city,\textsuperscript{49} with help from the surrounding region. Although Auckland Council is the main council in the area, the eight smaller councils still operate as local boards with elected members looking after and promoting their local communities’ interest. Auckland Council is responsible for the land-use plans in the Auckland region, and they are therefore playing a big part in deciding where it is possible to construct this motorway. In 2012, two separate land-use plans were released, the Auckland Plan and the Auckland Council Long Term Plan 2012-2022. The Auckland Plan stated the Puhoi area as a region of little or no growth, meaning the Auckland Council believe the area may develop in a way that preserves the character of Puhoi, therefore a low priority for infrastructural, service and planning changes.\textsuperscript{50} It also says Puhoi and its surroundings are an important tourist route that may suffer if access is not given to Puhoi. The Auckland Council thus suggests a low-cost option to give Puhoi access by constructing exit and entry for northbound traffic.\textsuperscript{51} Climate changes are of big importance in trying to create the world’s most liveable city, the dependence on fossil fuel must decrease. One way of doing that is to increase walking, cycling and public transport use.\textsuperscript{52} Some people living in Puhoi argue that constructing a completely new motorway only increases the dependency on fossil fuel, rather

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA", 121130
\item \textsuperscript{46} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{47} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Local Government Online. “Rodney District Council.”, http://www.localgovt.co.nz/site/Local_Government/find_a_council/by_region/Auckland/Rodney/default.aspx (Accessed 2012-12-10)
\item \textsuperscript{49} Auckland Council, "Auckland Plan Chapters 1-7.", 2012: 69
\item \textsuperscript{50} Auckland Council, "Auckland Plan Chapters 8-15.", 2012: 236
\item \textsuperscript{51} Auckland Council, "Auckland Plan Chapters 8-15.", 2012: 335
\item \textsuperscript{52} Auckland Council, "Auckland Plan Chapters 8-15.", 2012: 314
\end{itemize}
than decreasing it. That is because the easier it is to use a car for transport, the more people and more often will use it.

**Rodney Local Board**

The RLB is a part of Auckland Council. RLB members are elected and work to provide the best possible services for the Rodney district, a part of the greater Auckland region. One way of doing that is to have a constant communication with Rodney residents, and conduct thorough consultation when changes or plans are being proposed. When the Rodney Local Board Plan was released in 2011, a massive consultation with the public had been done in order to really understand and capture the needs and ideas of the public. The Rodney District covers 46% of the Auckland region, most of it is rural, and the population is older than the national average. These facts are important to have in mind when conducting consultation. The RLB organized 15 stakeholder meetings where they communicated with the locals, face to face to learn about what the residents want in their region in the future. The process was long, Tracey Martin said the RLB put so much time and effort in this consultation phase in order to be really confident that the public supports the decisions being made.

Because the RLB consists of elected members to represent the citizens, and because they must fight for funding every year to provide what the community requires, it is vital to have a good communication and relationship with the public. Tracey Martin and the RLB are very supportive of the extension of the SH1 motorway to Wellsford, they are confident that it is needed in the district, partly due to population growth but also in order to upgrade the public transport system. Without the motorway a public transport system from Wellsford or Warkworth to Auckland will not be built. The transport must be more time and energy efficient to be possible. When constructing the motorway, an access point at Puhoi is a must, but a complete diamond shaped interchange is not, an off-ramp to get off the motorway going north, and an on-ramp to go south is what is needed.53

The Rodney Local Board Plan states that the construction of the new motorway is fundamental to continue the economic growth in the area. An access point at Puhoi is not a question or something to prefer in the plan, but it is what the majority of the citizens of Rodney district want and therefore it is in the plan.54 Because the SH1 is a RoNS and therefore belongs to the NZTA, the RLB has no direct say in the decision; they are instead acting as advocates on the behalf of the citizens of Rodney district.55 The RLB do not perform any consultation regarding the extension of the SH1, but they are acting as one of the links between the residents and PADMAG, and the NZTA. This requires a good relationship between the parties, and Tracey Martin thinks the relationships with the Rodney residents is good. The RLB are supportive of the extension as well as of the access point, which most of the citizens also are. What some of the citizens of Puhoi are worried about is that Puhoi will become a growth centre if access is provided. But Tracey Martin claims that it must not be. The relationship with the NZTA is also good according to Tracey Martin, they are doing the best they can in this mega project. Some citizens affected by the construction of the new

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53 Interview, Martin, "RLB", 121217.
54 Rodney Local Board. "Local Board Plan 2011.", 2011: 19
55 Rodney Local Board. "Local Board Plan 2011.", 2011: 7
motorway are very upset and can be quite aggressive. The NZTA are therefore becoming more and more cautious when consulting and giving information. For some this is a sign of weakness, and when the NZTA waits to give information, in order to be absolutely sure of what they are saying, people believe it to be a way of keeping the citizens out of the decision, when that is not the purpose, according to Tracey Martin. Tracey Martin also says the NZTA are running out of reasons not to construct the access point, so the relations between the NZTA, the RLB and the public might be more difficult in the future.56

*Auckland Transport*

Auckland Transport handles the public transport in the Auckland Region, such as railroads, ferry lines and buses, but also cycleways, walkways and roads. How people and children get to work and school is also in the hands of Auckland Transport. They are a part of the project because they are working together with NZTA in a particular part of the SH1 extension project, the Hill Street intersection in Warkworth.57 Auckland Transport will therefore not be of particular interest in this thesis since they are not working with the access point at Puhoi.

*Hōkai Nuku*

In most changing projects in New Zealand, either infrastructural or other, the Maori, as the indigenous people, have their say on how they want things to proceed considering their cultural values. In this process a special team has been set together called Hōkai Nuku. They work closely together with the NZTA to make sure cultural treasures along the preferred route of SH1 are protected and to make sure the managing of these treasures is done correctly to make them last for future generations. Hōkai Nuku is also engaged in environmental, economic and social issues, apart from the cultural, not only in the favour of the Maori, but for mutual benefit. This collaboration has been proceeding since November 2010.58 What the motorway looks like is not of interest for Hōkai Nuku, they are primarily interested in the spiritual connection with the land and the adverse affects of the project, hence they are not a part in making the decision about an access point at Puhoi.59

*Puhoi and Districts Motorway Action Group*

PADMAG is the local interest group working for an access point at Puhoi. They have been arguing for an access point since the first information, which only gave access points to Warkworth and Wellsford, was received. A number of reasons for having an access point at Puhoi were acknowledged and presented to the Rodney Local Board on the 8th of December 2010. These included arguments saying access would keep the already existing access to the motorway to Auckland and if access was not given it would force people to use a longer road, both in time and kilometres. This is a contradiction to the Auckland Plan where less

56 Interview, Martin, "RLB", 121217.
59 Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA", 121130
dependency on fossil fuel is a goal. Another argument is that an access point would be crucial in a case of emergency. The time it takes for an emergency vehicle to reach a Puhoi address, or in the near area, will increase if access is not available. In the event of a car crash somewhere on the motorway, or on the old SH1, it will be more difficult to divert the traffic if there were to be only two access points, 22 kilometres apart.

If no access point at Puhoi is constructed it means trucks delivering goods to the Puhoi area are forced to use the Hibiscus Coast Highway, and during nights the Grand Drive, to get to and from Puhoi and Auckland. The Hibiscus Coast Highway from Puhoi to Orewa is longer and more fossil fuel is needed since it stretches up and down the hills. During the days trucks and logs are not allowed to go on the Grand Drive, a shortcut to the motorway, passing schools and homes, instead they must continue on the Hibiscus Coast Highway. The part of Hibiscus Coast Highway going through Orewa is in the phase of becoming more of a boulevard, rather than the main road from Orewa to Auckland it used to be. To have trucks and logs going through there would not be preferable for anyone. Frances Hardy, member of PADMAG, points out that what needs to be remembered is that an access to the motorway from Puhoi has been a reality for four years, and by the time the extension of the motorway is said to be finished, another ten years will have passed. That means 14 years of access that suddenly will be taken away if an access point at Puhoi will be denied.

During the process, PADMAG has had several meetings together with the NZTA and the RLB. These meetings are a way of letting the decision makers know what the community wants and needs. One of the main things PADMAG wants to make clear in the process is that a full access is not the purpose. What the PADMAG wants is a north off, south on, which means getting off the motorway at Puhoi going north, and getting on at Puhoi going south. This is a much less costly and a less difficult option to construct. Frances Hardy refers to a meeting held at the Puhoi Sports Club on June 7th 2010 when a representative from the NZTA said that the cost and engineering feasibility of providing access ramps were not relevant issues. The main reason for not having an access point was instead information from Rodney District Council saying that Puhoi probably did not want access since they wanted the village to stay the way it always has been. These ideas came from the Puhoi Forum, which is a local group of people living in Puhoi. They once decided on a structural plan saying the village should be saved from development and changes in a one-kilometre radius from the Puhoi Store. But when consulting the people of Puhoi in the phase one of the planning process, about 719 out of 750 people expressed a wish for an access point at Puhoi. Only four out of 750 people did not want an access point because of the wish that the village stayed the same.

Frances Hardy thinks one of the main reasons for not giving access to Puhoi is the tolling. At the moment there is only one toll road in New Zealand, the extension from Orewa to Puhoi. The new extension to Wellsford is likely to be tolled as a way of financing the project. The current toll is NZ$2.20 and the toll on the new extension would probably be the same.

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61 Interview, Hardy, "PADMAG", 121119.
62 ibid.
63 ibid.
64 ibid.
there is an access point at Puhoi there is a chance some people get off at one point and therefore only pay one of the tolls. If instead there were no access point at Puhoi, people would have to pay both tolls.65

In mid-November 2012 PADMAG was waiting for a decision made by the NZTA about giving Puhoi an access point or not. According to Frances Hardy they have done everything in their power to make the NZTA change their minds about giving an access point to Puhoi. They have the local community behind them with almost everyone wanting the access point and the councils supporting an access point at Puhoi. When the process first started, the eight different councils in the Auckland Region were still running by themselves. PADMAG contacted all of them, giving them their arguments and seeking back-up. All the eight councils stood by the PADMAG saying that providing an access point is the only reasonable thing to do. But in 2010, the councils became one council, and the process took another turn. Even though they have all this in their favour, Frances Hardy thinks a decision has been made not to give Puhoi access, and that the decision was made a couple of months ago, but the NZTA is waiting on making the decision public until just before Christmas to make it harder for PADMAG and others to react since everyone is busy celebrating Christmas and New Year.66

Frances Hardy does not feel like the NZTA are listening to the PADMAG and their arguments. She feels like they are not interested in what PADMAG has to say and that they are making it harder than necessary to come up with a mutual proposal of how to give Puhoi access to the extension of the motorway. One example of that are the meetings the NZTA had with the public. The first meeting resulted in many upset people having their say on the indicative route, including not giving an access point to Puhoi. The following meetings held by the NZTA were held during the whole day, making the amount of people in the room at the same time less and therefore not as powerful as if everyone had been there at the same time.67

3.3 Local voices
Joel Clayford, a lecturer at the Planning School at Auckland University, specialising in urban infrastructure and economic development planning, blogs on different input on on-going planning projects in the Auckland region. He does not want the motorway to be built at all as he only sees it as an escape to Auckland from Northland, instead of the opposite. If the extension of SH1 motorway is constructed, it will mean more chances to live further north and work in Auckland, which in turn means heavier traffic and more congestion at earlier hours. If the motorway is to be constructed, Joel Clayford sees no reason for having an access point at Puhoi since he argues Puhoi has never been seen as a growth area worth spending an additional NZ$40 million on, whereas Warkworth and Wellsford are.68

Although most residents in Puhoi want the access point, there are different reasons for it, and different thoughts on the process.69 Some, like a man in his forties, father of two children

65 Interview, Hardy, "PADMAG", 121119.
66 ibid.
67 ibid.
68 Clayford, 2010.
69 The opinions of the people of Puhoi were gathered by informal conversations in Puhoi.
in primary school in Orewa, do not want the motorway at all. He thinks the current SH1 is good enough, the only problems he can see is on Friday afternoons going north, and Sunday afternoons going south, because of the Auckland people going to their holiday homes for the weekend. This is an even greater issue on public holidays when more people go north. But this does not justify constructing a completely new motorway costing several million of dollars, according to him. Take some of the money and improve the current road is what this man is suggesting. Although, he says, if the new motorway is to be built, an access point at Puhoi is a must otherwise Puhoi would die. Both the pub and the store are relying on people passing by, having a drink or a coffee. If one of them starts to fail in income, and has to be shut, the other would probably be shut too in a short period of time, he reckons. His wife, also in her forties, had a conversation with a man living next to the preferred route and she was concerned about housing and land prices. This man’s neighbour had been contacted by the NZTA and informed about the fact that the NZTA will buy his land to construct the motorway. The first man’s land was not on the preferred route and the NZTA will therefore not buy his land. Instead his house will be about a hundred metres from the new motorway. This is probably not the plan he and his family had when buying the house in the first place, and it will probably be difficult to sell the house now when the motorway is to be constructed. The only option, if they decide to stay, is to plant lots of trees and bushes, an attempt to hide themselves from the motorway, and hide the motorway from themselves, she said.

Another woman in Puhoi, also in her forties and with two children in primary school and one child at pre-school in Orewa, is not too worried about having an access point or not. In ten years time, when the motorway is supposed to be finished, she says, two of her children will be old enough to drive their own car and the third will only have a couple of years left in school. They will at that time not be relying on their parents taking them to school every day. To use the tunnels will therefore not be as important for daily life, as it is today. A third woman, in her forties with two children in primary school in Orewa are quite sure the access point at Puhoi will not be happening because of the big extra cost that results in. Her thoughts about the NZTA are not very positive, she thinks they have not handled the issue in a professional way. This woman, together with others is surprised by the fact that an access point at Puhoi may not be a reality. She cannot see any reason for not constructing it, apart from the cost and difficulties constructing it at this specific place, due to the river and the soil type. But, she says, this mega project has a high cost already, constructing an access point at Puhoi will not make a big difference in the end. One of the few locals who expressed thoughts on not wanting the access point was a man in his forties with one child at primary school in Orewa and one child at college in Warkworth. He wants to keep Puhoi the way it is now and fears the access point would mean an unwanted development, making Puhoi something bigger than it should be.

The overall approach to the access point at Puhoi, from parents with children in primary school age is that they absolutely want access to the motorway going south, but if that is not happening it will not affect their life exceptionally. Their children will be old enough, or almost old enough to drive their own car and the everyday trip to Orewa is therefore not needed for the parents. Although if they decide to work in Orewa or Auckland, access to the tunnel would be preferable, if they work in, for example, Warkworth or Wellsford the
difference from now would be small. The locals’ thoughts on their part in the project is similar, the ones not active in PADMAG or another local interest group believe their voice is not heard. The impression they left was that there was no point in trying to make a difference, they thought the NZTA already had made up their mind about not giving Puhoi access and there was nothing they could do to convince the NZTA to change their minds. Some expressed disappointment in how the project and the locals were handled, they felt that it was the people in Auckland deciding on how life would be for them, without being interested in what the residents in the area wanted.

3.4 Planning process and citizen participation
In 2009 the Government nominated the SH1 as a Road of National Significance (RoNS), which was the starting point for the motorway extension from Puhoi to Wellsford. The main reasons for doing this extension is safety and to better connect Auckland with Northland and Upper North Island. This will in turn boost both the economic growth, but also the expected rise in population. The planning process involves five stages from investigation to construction.

Route investigation and community consultation
When the project first was announced in 2010 the first phase of consultation was set from June to August. Three key points were discussed:
- When completed the new highway will be entirely separate from the existing SH1.
- There will be access points to the new highway at Warkworth and Wellsford.
- The new highway will pass Warkworth to the west and Wellsford to the east.

In June-July 2010, 25 000 newsletters were distributed, also advertising in newspapers and information on the NZTA website was provided to make it as easy as possible for people to get their voices heard. The results of this consultation were presented in newsletter 3 in September 2010. About 30 different route options between Puhoi and Wellsford were presented. The thoughts about the Wellsford and Warkworth access points east and west of the towns were mixed. Of interest to this thesis are the thoughts about the access point at Puhoi.

Some strong arguments supporting an access point were received. Most of them concerned the local community and what effects the SH1 without access points until Warkworth would have on the community, like businesses relying on passing trade, integration of Puhoi with the wider Auckland region and emergency vehicle access. But also for the traffic itself, an access point at Puhoi would reduce travel distances and time for people living in Puhoi and further north, an access point would also mean trucks not having to go through Orewa, but instead being able to go through the tunnels and still deliver to the area around Puhoi. Some people expressed concerns about what the effects would be on tourism.

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72 NZTA. "Newsletter 3 September 2010.", 2010: 2
73 Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA", 121130
between Puhoi and Warkworth. If tourists choose to use the new motorway they would miss out on spontaneous tourist attractions.\textsuperscript{74} Although the arguments for an access point at Puhoi were in the majority, some people expressed support for not having an access point at Puhoi, mostly due to the cost of construction of an access point.\textsuperscript{75} The most common method, 41\%, for people expressing their concerns was through electronic feedback forms. Posted feedback and telephone queries were surprisingly common, 26\% and 12\%,\textsuperscript{76} since these forms of feedback require more of an effort than to fill in an electronic feedback form and press the send button. This shows peoples’ interest in the well-being of the community. The public had a large degree of influence during this first phase, as the route was not yet confirmed. Good knowledge about almost everything was received and helped in narrowing down the 30 options to three different options that were consulted about in phase two.\textsuperscript{77}

The phase two of consultation started in November 2010 and ended in late January 2011.\textsuperscript{78} This proceeded through publication of newsletter 4, which explained the indicative route and what the NZTA wanted feedback on. In newsletter 4 there was also information about the question of the access point at Puhoi. The NZTA made it clear that a decision was not yet taken and that they worked closely together with the Auckland Council regarding future plans in the region. The Auckland Council was at the time working on the LTP 2012-2022. In the LTP information about what the plans are for the area was presented and the NZTA stated they would wait for that plan to finish up before making any definite decision about the access point at Puhoi.\textsuperscript{79} The feedback they wanted was therefore about the indicative route and also about an access point at Puhoi. To meet the people affected by the construction of the new SH1, the NZTA arranged five public meetings, four in Warkworth and one in Puhoi, the first one in late November 2010 and the last one in late January 2011. They were all successful with participation ranging between 100-250 people.\textsuperscript{80}

The received feedback was categorised into three different groups to make it easier to make something good out of it. These three groups were; the need for the road, the features of the road, and the local conditions or challenges.\textsuperscript{81} A summary of the feedback was presented in newsletter 5 in April 2011. During this phase the feedback was major, a lot of the concerns were about the indicative route and how it would affect the local environment such as the air quality, visual impact in the area and how the construction vehicles will access the area when constructing. The different opinions of the people affected were very clear in this phase two of consultation. For example, people expressed concerns about the possible negative impact a bypass would have on Warkworth, at the same time people believe that a bypass would have a

\textsuperscript{74} NZTA. "Newsletter 3 September 2010.", 2010: 2
\textsuperscript{75} NZTA. "Newsletter 3 September 2010.", 2010: 3
\textsuperscript{76} NZTA. "Newsletter 3 September 2010.", 2010: 4
\textsuperscript{77} Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA", 121130
\textsuperscript{79} NZTA. "Newsletter 4 November 2010.", 2010: 3-4
\textsuperscript{80} NZTA. "Newsletter 5 April 2011.", 2011: 1
\textsuperscript{81} NZTA. "Newsletter 5 April 2011.", 2011: 1
positive impact on Warkworth. This shows the difficulties in planning a mega project like this; it is impossible to make everyone happy.

Some people expressed opinions about not wanting the new road at all; their concerns were that they did not think New Zealand could afford such a mega project and that the benefits would not outweigh the costs. Instead they wanted an upgrade of the existing road and an upgrade of public transport, rail and sea links with Northland. The arguments concerning the access point at Puhoi were pretty much the same as in phase one, although some arguments considering the existing motorway through the tunnels were mentioned. The extension from Orewa to Puhoi was partly financed by making it a toll road, New Zealand’s first electronic toll road called the Northern Gateway Toll Road (NGTR). Some of the arguments for having an access point at Puhoi were connected to the NGTR, people living in Puhoi and the area around would not be able to use the NGTR, if the access point is denied, which in turn would mean NZTA would lose valuable income. Some of the Puhoi residents feel like they have been fooled by the NZTA. As one woman said, they are the ones who have been paying for that road, if an access point is denied, they would not be able to use the road they paid for.

Before the public was informed and asked to give feedback in every phase, the people directly affected by the new motorway were personally informed of the new stages. The communication and consultation advisor explained the importance of these people hearing the news from the NZTA first, instead of seeing it in the newspaper, as it actually affects their daily life. People from the NZTA drove to the properties affected by this and spoke to them in person. She said it was appreciated, and really the only option for the NZTA. The first phase of consultations held a large degree of influence from the locals, it was the NZTA asking questions and wanting feedback on these questions. The following two phases of consultation were more a type of communication.

**Preparing reports for consent**

![Figure 3. The planning process of State Highway 1 Puhoi to Wellsford. Source: New Zealand Traffic Agency](image)

As the figure shows the process is now in stage two, preparing reports for comments, and will be so until the start of 2013. Newsletter 6 was published in April 2012; the feedback was presented and utilized when defining the preferred route between Puhoi and Warkworth. Some changes have been made to the indicative route, which means that the arguments and

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82 NZTA. "Newsletter 5 April 2011.", 2011: 2
84 NZTA. "Newsletter 5 April 2011.", 2011: 2
85 Interview, Female Advisor, "NZTA.", 20121130
concerns of the people have been taken into consideration when defining the route. Some of these changes were because of different native species living in the areas. There were also areas that had poor constructing conditions such as high risk of flooding and unstable soil type. The NZTA probably had no choice but to listen to the local knowledge and make a change to the indicative route. These types of difficulties would mean some big damages to the road, and the surrounding area, if they were not taken into consideration. Constructing the road only to see it be flooded a few years later is not an alternative. Therefore, the reason to take these concerns into account and actually change the indicative route is expected.

In November 2012 the NZTA released another newsletter, an update on the Puhoi issue. Since the information days in May 2012, a project team consisting of representatives from the project team at the NZTA, Auckland Council and Auckland Transport has been working with all options possible. That includes no access point at all, a full diamond interchange with four off ramps, and every option in between. They are considering some aspects during the process, such as safe entry and exit to the motorway, environmental aspects and community feedback from earlier consultation. Another aspect of importance to the outcome is the National Land Transport Programme 2012-15 (NLTP 2012-15), which was released in August 2012. The NLTP is released every three years and summarises the expected infrastructural projects to be funded by the NZTA. In the NLTP 2012-15 four key themes was highlighted:

- Improving safety.
- Ensuring value for money.
- Providing a range of travel choices.
- Supporting economic growth and productivity.

These four key elements are visible in the plan for SH1 Puhoi to Wellsford. NZ$40 million will be invested in this mega project, with the purpose of continuing the investigation work and property acquisitions. The main goal is that the result will improve safety, reduce congestion and have more reliable travel times. The NLTP 2012-15 believes the new motorway will be an entry to regional economic growth in both the Rodney District and all of the Northlands.

The updated newsletter also gives information on improved safety on the current SH1, like new safety barriers and a wide flush median near the Wellsford Golf Club. This shows the NZTA are not abandoning the SH1 while planning for the new motorway. Safety is still one of the things the NZTA always strives to improve.

Consent hearing process
The decision on whether to give Puhoi access to the motorway or not will hopefully be released in the near future, but no-one really knows when. For either outcome, opposition will most certainly meet it. However, if the decision is made not to give Puhoi access, there will be stronger opposition than if the NZTA were to give Puhoi access. A court process will

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86 NZTA. "Newsletter 3 September 2010.", 2010: 4
87 NZTA. "Update November 2012.", 2012: 1
88 NZTA. "National Land Transport Programme 2012-15.", 2012: 9
89 NZTA. "Update November 2012.", 2012: 2
probably be needed before the construction can be started; this is included in the timeframe to make a delay unlikely.  

The next planned stage, stage 3, is the consent hearing process and will start in January 2013. This stage’s main goal is to construct the new route and make the final decisions on it. Again will the public be able to have their say on the route by sending in submissions to the NZTA. These submissions will be notified publically and are followed by an appeals period. If there are any appeals these will be resolved, and a final construction on the extension of SH1 motorway will be made. This stage is also the beginning of the formal stage, which in reality means that this is the first time the NZTA are legally forced to do consulting. It is also, legally, the first opportunity for groups like PADMAG to give an opinion and ask for a change of the present plans.  

Preliminary design and detailed design and construction  
Stage 4 is about preparing the designing of the route based on the decision made in stage 3. The NZTA are not constructing the road on their own, but instead they are funding the construction. The hired contractors will then be able to start preparing for the project, if everything goes as planned this will take place during 2014. When the designing is finished the actual constructing work will take place. The project may proceed in stages as funding becomes available. In this way different sectors can be constructed and opened at different times. Before construction starts, purchasing of property must be done as well as the securing of funding. At the moment the earliest completion date for the Puhoi to Warkworth section is set at 2019, but the timeline finishes at 2022 to allow for flexibility depending on when construction can be started, with five to six construction seasons expected.

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90 Interview, Female Advisor, "NZTA", 121130  
92 Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA", 121130  
4. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

4.1 Actors and their roles

The difference between the actors in relation to the power they hold is very clear in the
decision on giving Puhoi an access point to the motorway or not. That is neither surprising
nor strange, as the governments’ delivering agency, New Zealand Traffic Agency (NZTA),
responsible for planning and funding the construction of the new SH1 Puhoi to Wellsford sits
on a greater amount of power than the local interest group Puhoi and Districts Motorway
Action Group (PADMAG) and the Rodney residents. The other way around would on the
other hand be both surprising and strange. Somewhere in between these two actors we find
the Auckland Council, and more specifically the Rodney Local Board (RLB), acting as the
connection link between the NZTA and the locals and PADMAG. The other two visible
actors in the project, Auckland Transport and Hōkai Nuku do not have any interest in the
question of giving Puhoi an access point or not and are therefore not a part in the decision-
making process. The majority of the locals and the PADMAG want the access point, the RLB
are also convinced an access point is the only possible option. The NZTA on the other hand
do not have a certain view but are referring to the Auckland Plan when making the decision.
How to interpret the Auckland Plan is individually, which can create disagreements. The
NZTA are doing more than what is required by law, in their view, by consulting during the
informal phase, although they said that anyone planning such a mega project like this would
be “out of their mind” if not consulting. They give an impression of doing everything by the
book: interpreting the Auckland Plan: consulting; and giving information out to the public.
But the public and the PADMAG have a different view, they feel the NZTA is actually not
listening to what they have to say. They feel the consultations are just for show, but that they
do not have a real influence in making the decision.

Flyvbjerg’s (1998) theory of rationality and power may be implemented in this case. The
NZTA are clearly the ones with power, and that makes the PADMAG and the Rodney
residents the ones with rationality. In most cases when locals are upset about a planning
change they have good reasons, in this case, 1 200 households and 4 000 residents would be
affected in one way or another. To me they all have good reasons for wanting the access point
and not wanting the access point. This makes it harder for the NZTA to make a decision and it
might be one of the reasons they are referring to what is said in the Auckland Plan. Although
they are the actor with the most power, according to the theories of Flyvbjerg they lack the
sense of rationality, they might be so blinded by their power and their options that they do not
see the rationality in the process. Tracey Martin mentioned the fact that she thinks the NZTA
are soon running out of reasons not to construct the access point, which can be linked to
Flyvbjerg (2008) and his idea of the weakness of the better argument. The NZTA give the
impression of not wanting to give Puhoi access, but the only good argument they have is the
Auckland Plan stating Puhoi is not an expected growth area. If the growth area is set aside,
the Auckland Plan give many different reasons for giving Puhoi an access point would be the

94 Interview, Female Manager, "NZTA", 121130
95 Interview, Martin, "RLB", 121217.
96 Flyvbjerg, 1998: 80
only right thing to do. The PADMAG and the Rodney residents on the other hand has good arguments, one can say better arguments, but they are the actors with less power, maybe more rationality though.

4.2 Rodney residents and citizen participation

The most spectacular thing about this project, to me, is the fact that if an access point is not given to Puhoi it will mean a significant negative change to the people in Puhoi, not being able to go through the tunnels, but the longer way up and down the hills. When constructing is planned to be finished, they have had the opportunity to go through the tunnels for the past 15 years. It is an unusual planned result of an infrastructural plan. Also, the fact that the majority of the community wants the access point: has legitimate reasons for it; and have been good at letting the NZTA know. The NZTA are still not convinced the access point should be given, due to the Auckland Plan stating the Puhoi and surrounding area are not a planned growth area. Most of the people in Puhoi I have spoken to also express the wish of Puhoi not growing rapidly, wanting Puhoi to stay the way it is. But on the other hand, if access is not given it would mean less people stopping by on their way north or south, the store, the pub and the cheese factory would lose visitors and income, and in a worst case scenario must shut down and that is something that would have a great impact on the area. What must be realised is that an area like Puhoi, or any area for that matter, will not always stay the same, if the infrastructure connecting Puhoi to the rest of the country changes, Puhoi must change with it. Either by having access to the new motorway and growing, rapidly or slowly, or by not having access and growing, probably slowly. A third possible option is to not have access, meaning less of an income for the pub and the store, one of them or both having to shut down, and people leaving Puhoi making a development going backwards rather than forwards.

Another interesting aspect of the project is the citizens’ strong will in absolutely wanting access point, for various reasons. But almost everyone also said that if an access point is not to be constructed it would not affect their lives too much since their children will have finished school, or almost finished school, by then. The majority of the people in Puhoi I observed mentioned the reason not having to get to school in Orewa everyday, but no one mentioned the fact that they needed to get to work somehow. One reason may be that most of them I spoke to is stay-at-home mothers, or parents working north of Puhoi. But surely the stay-at-home mothers will start work again when their kids have finished school, and I assume would prefer to go through the tunnels, if working south of Puhoi. Most of them claim that it is not a big deal to them personally, but it is vital for the survival of the village to get access to the new motorway. This shows their own interest comes first, getting easy access to the motorway, quick travel times to Orewa and Auckland and safer roads, but when they see beyond that they see the village and the community being affected by having or not having access. When it comes to citizen participation many of the locals do not feel they have been seen or heard by the NZTA. They have had the meetings but did not really listen to what the locals had to say, according to the locals. The NZTA, on the other hand, believes they do a great job consulting the locals.

PADMAG has done everything in their power to get an access point at Puhoi, which includes having the locals and the councils behind them, giving the NZTA their arguments and being open and honest about their wishes. They have also pointed out what is said in the
Auckland Plan about tourism, fossil fuel dependency and emergency vehicle access. Because this is a mega project an overrun in both time and budget is expected. So far the NZTA are on time, even though a decision has not been made. Frances Hardy from PADMAG is convinced the decision is delaying the project, but the NZTA says the decision was given some extra time in the timeframe, including a court process. Another aspect on the fact that the decision may or may not delay the mega project is that the constructing will start in Warkworth going south. It is therefore not necessary the decision must be made before constructing starts. This means no one really knows when the decision will be made and how much of a say the residents will have in the end.

In this particular decision, the role of citizen participation is hard to define since the final decision is not yet made. But from what I have seen in the newsletters and learnt from the interviews and observations, the role of citizen participation in this decision is not big. The impression from everyone except the NZTA is that the consultations is done only because it is a legal right to have a say on an infrastructural plan, some of the feedback was used when defining the route, and some was not. That is the case in every infrastructural change, it is impossible to give in to every opinion, but interesting in this mega project is that the feedback used was the feedback on the environment and flora and fauna, the feedback on the locals daily life have not been used and not formed the basis for any changes to the route. If they did not change the route it could have been catastrophic, but who makes the decision on what type of feedback is worth changing the route for and what type of feedback is not?

4.3 Mega project and citizen participation

How the NZTA have performed their consultation, a part of citizen participation, is interesting to look in to. The list of guiding principles by Rivers and Buchan (1995) is one way of analysing their work. The first principle is of using culturally appropriate methods, by letting the Maori group Hōkai Nuku be a part of the project they have achieved that principle, although Hōkai Nuku is not a part in the decision on giving Puhoi an access point or not. The NZTA have been making changes in response to the feedback received and therefore they achieved that principle as well, although they have not made any changes to the route said. The principle on listening rather than promoting may be the one principle not achieved, according to the locals, but not according to the NZTA. The locals expressed feelings about having been listened to, but not heard. By that I mean the NZTA had the consultations and listened to what the locals had to say, but filtered the information and only used what they wanted, which often was obvious changes to the route. The other information was presented in the newsletters, but that was all there was. The NZTA on the other hand explained how the consultation phases proceeded and how they used the feedback from the locals, sounding convincing about the fact that they did use all the response given from the locals when making the decision.

The next principle on respecting local knowledge and expertise is achieved by changing the route after learning about the difficulties in constructing on that soil type and the endangered species living in the area. But again, they have not made any changes to the route

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97 Giezen, 2012: 782
98 Rivers and Buchan, 1995: 185
due to the locals’ fear of changes to the community. By giving out newsletters every now and then, in mailboxes, daily papers and at libraries, the NZTA have ensured the information they have been wanting to give out at every specific time have been accurate, honest and presented clearly. The consultation meetings have been announced in good time to make it as easy as possible for the locals to join. The chance to send feedback back to the NZTA from the newsletters is an honest attempt to get everybody’s view, but it will always only be the ones interested enough in the outcome that will make their voices heard, which means it is difficult to ensure the people consulted are representatives of everyone affected. I am not convinced that the principle of being explicit about the constraints on the outcome of the consultation have been achieved, I have not read or heard anything about how the NZTA will use the feedback given, except after it was received and the NZTA stated in the newsletters how they used the feedback to change the route. They could have expressed how they were going to use the feedback more explicitly to make it clear to the locals how their opinions would be handled.

Rivers and Buchan (1995) stated that it is important to check back with those consulted that their opinions have been interpreted accurately, and the NZTA did not probably do this since they have received a great amount of feedback. To contact every single person is not possible. Effective relationships are based on trust, which I got the feeling the locals did not feel for the NZTA. That principle is therefore partly achieved, the NZTA surely are aware of the fact that consultation involves relationships, which should be based on trust. But to actually have that trust is not achieved. The NZTA are well aware of the context and why they are doing consultation, they also let other actors have a say in the process which makes the two final principles achieved.

The consultation was divided into phases, each one with a different purpose and a different approach. During the very first meeting people were very upset about the fact that an access point was not included in the plans. The atmosphere of the meetings was harsh and people yelling were a reality, a public hearing in Foresters (2008) view. It was high participation and weak negotiations, not something to strive for, the following consultation meetings therefore changed in the way they were performed; it was communication rather than consultations. The changing of approach shows the NZTA were worried about the process and the outcome of these meetings. Before giving out any new information, the NZTA wanted to be absolutely sure of what they were suggesting, that takes time and people believed they were being held in the dark. Another effect of waiting a long time before giving any information is that the locals feel the NZTA already made the decisions, so there is no need for any consultation. This is probably not what the NZTA strived for, but that is the actual outcome of their strategy, in the eyes of the locals. Another way of consultation performed was the newsletters and the feedback forms attached, the public was asked to fill in these forms and send them back to the NZTA. A little more than a quarter of all the feedback was received from these forms. Other ways of giving feedback included electronic forms, telephone calls and emailing feedback.

This thesis shows yet again the fact that it is impossible to please everyone when planning an infrastructural change, both during the planning phase, the constructing phase and when the construction is finished.
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5.3 Internet


6. APPENDIX

6.1 Appendix 1

Figure 4. Auckland and surroundings
Source: Google Maps