

Bypass a step closer to reality

Earthworks on the state highway extension through The Lakes subdivision have been completed eight months ahead of schedule, marking a successful collaboration between Grasshopper Developments, Tauranga City Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency.

The 4.5km stretch of highway will eventually become the new road linking the roundabout at SH 29 at the Lakes Entrance with State Highway 36 near the crematorium on Pycs Pa Road.

The work completed is the enabling works for the Pycs Pa bypass and has cost \$35.6 million, to date.

The collaboration between private developer, local authority and government is

not common, but it has happened before says Grasshopper director Graeme Lee.

"Tauranga and NZTA were the joint principals," says Graeme. "Grasshopper was the contractor. It was a negotiated agreement, as opposed to one that is tendered."

The tender for the drainage and carriageway is about to be called, says Graeme.

This is expected to be completed over two summers, with the bypass opening scheduled for May 2011.

The bypass earthworks have involved shifting more than 1.2 million tonnes of dirt. A million metric tonnes is a pile the size of a rugby field 100x40 metres and 250 metres high.

Construction was started in 2007, and completed in April this year.

"We are most proud of having no LTIs - Lost Time Incidents on this contract, which is a real credit to our team," says Graeme.

By Andrew Campbell

