



SPAN UNDERWAY: Spartan Construction's Peter Littleton, Grant Hume and Sam Hurna at the site of the new bridge being built by the developer of The Lakes to provide access to the subdivision. PICTURE / JOHN BORREN 120609JB068OP

Lakes earthworks carve \$5m off Pyes Pa bypass

by John Cousins
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Massive earthworks to shape The Lakes subdivision have carved up to \$5 million off the cost of building a new road from Pyes Pa to Tauriko.

Construction of the foundations for the \$50 million Pyes Pa bypass has finished with minimum fuss, thanks to the road being an extremely convenient place to put all the material shifted by the subdivision's earthmovers.

The developer of The Lakes, Grasshopper Holdings, was contracted to build the foundations of the 4.5km bypass from Pyes Pa Rd, next to the crematorium, and emerges at the Route K roundabout.

The bypass will ease traffic pressure on the Tauranga end of Pyes Pa Rd and provide quicker access to the downtown via Route K.

However motorists will not enjoy the benefits for another two years because the

Lane changes on Hewletts Rd

Peak-time queues along Hewletts Rd are expected to get even worse early this week with the loss of one city-bound lane.

New Zealand Transport Agency has announced the existing three lanes will narrow to two lanes between the Totara St and Tasman Quay intersections, and two lanes will narrow to one lane from just past Tasman Quay.

NZTA project manager Kevin Reid said the changes could result in vehicles queuing further back along Hewletts Rd.

The narrowing was needed so that the area around the old toll plaza could be four-laned, so it lined up with the new road

foundations need to compact into swampy soils before the road can be built.

Grasshopper paid \$7m to build the first 400-metre section of the

road from the Route K roundabout, while Tauranga City Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency have so far paid \$27m, including \$22m for the

around the Ballance Fertiliser corner.

There would also be drainage works.

Mr Reid said the lane changes were likely to be in place for up to five months, and he expected delays for a few days until people got used to the new layout.

A temporary speed restriction of 50km/h will be put in place.

Mr Reid encouraged commuters to consider measures such as later or earlier work starts during this difficult part of the Harbour Link project, when construction was coming into contact with traffic.

— John Cousins

4.1km of earthworks. Fill was also sourced from IMF Westland's neighbouring Tauriko business estate.

Agency regional director Harry Wilson estimated that \$3m to \$5m was saved by negotiating with Grasshopper to do the earthworks.

Construction of the foundations commenced in October 2007 and a further \$16m would be spent to complete the project by June 2011.

Pyes Pa bypass was shaping up to become Tauranga's next toll road after Route K. Council wanted to fund its \$10m to \$11m share of costs from tolls.

Council viewed the bypass as an extension of the Route K tolls scheme, but that was conditional on a lot of other things happening first.

Redefining the Route K tolls scheme would be explored when council and the agency start formal talks on Route K becoming a part of Tauranga's state highway network, once Harbour Link opens later this year.