

BAY OF PLENTY



The transport system in the Bay of Plenty supports a strong and growing economy by providing access that is safer, more resilient and efficient across the region.

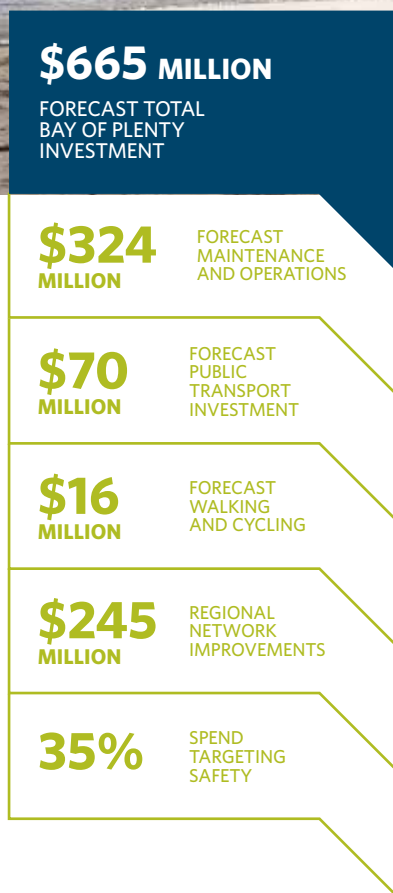
The Bay of Plenty is part of the upper North Island, which is home to more than half of New Zealand’s population and employment opportunities. The Port of Tauranga is a significant contributor to New Zealand’s economy. Projected growth will drive significant demands on the transport network through freight movements, especially on the key strategic road network, such as SH29. The rail network is an important part of the region’s transport system, supporting the demands for freight movement.

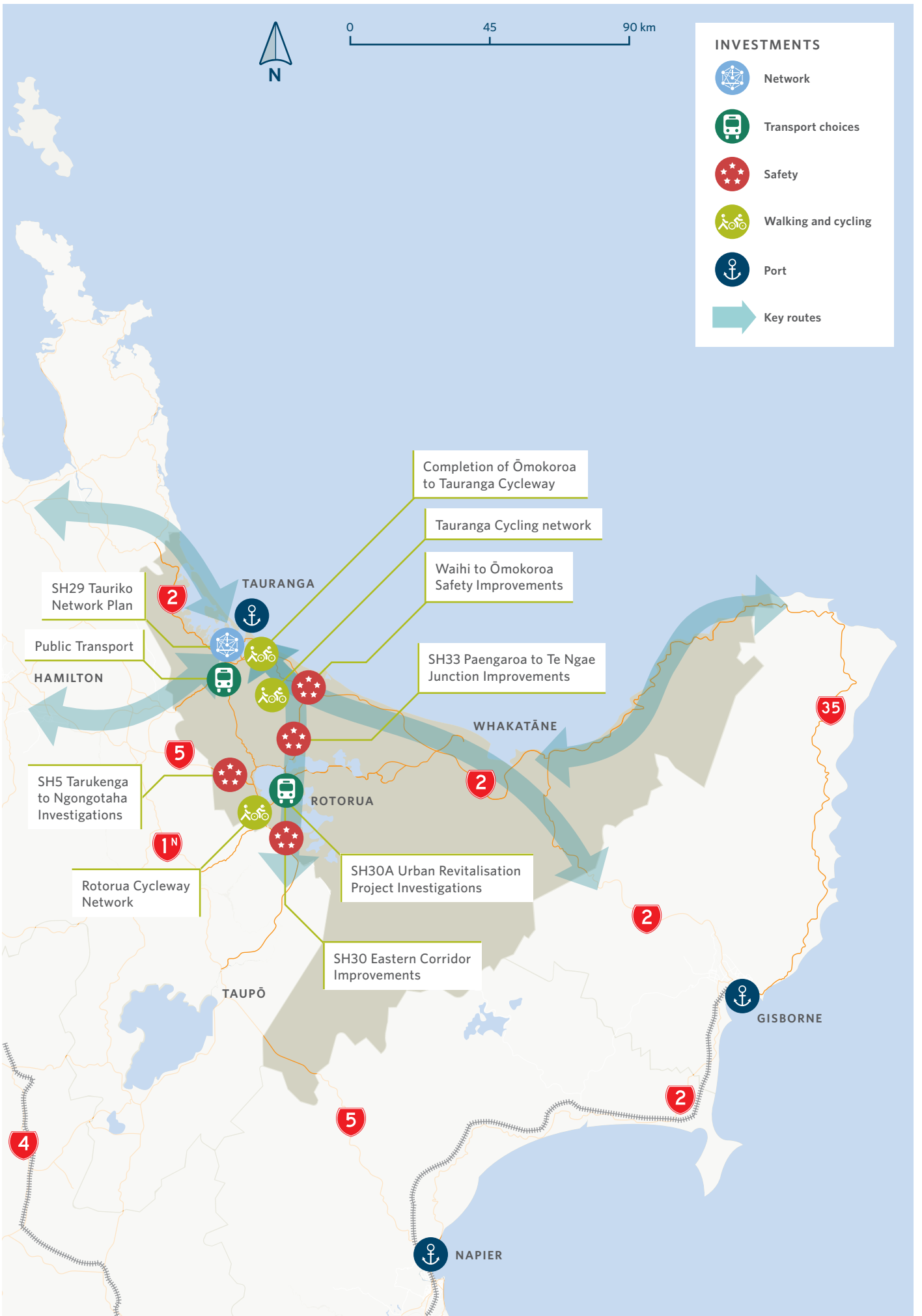
Freight volumes are forecast to increase by 59 percent across the upper North Island in the next 30 years, increasing pressure on road and rail to and from the Port of Tauranga, including SH29 and SH2, north and east.

The development, growth pressures and opportunities across the region differ. Medium to high population growth is projected across the western Bay of Plenty and Rotorua. In the eastern Bay of Plenty, lower population growth is forecast. The response of the transport system to the challenges will differ across the region, requiring strong partnerships and innovative system-wide solutions.

Under the Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Growth Study, transport is pivotal to economic growth in the region with a focus on:

- efficient and reliable connections between eastern Bay of Plenty and Tauranga.
- support development of new industries in eastern Bay of Plenty.
- driver licensing programmes to support access to education, training and jobs.
- support tourist initiatives such as the ‘Rainforest Highway’ between Murupara and Lake Waikaremoana.





DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN THE BAY OF PLENTY

Population growth in the western Bay of Plenty is projected to continue, together with significant land use change. In Tauranga, 97 percent of people travel in single occupancy private vehicles to work, and 90 percent in Rotorua, above the national average of 79.5 percent. Providing and promoting improved access through more affordable, safe and convenient travel choices is needed to support desirable urban spaces and liveable communities. The collaborative land use and transport planning work for the future growth area at Tauriko and the existing Tauranga urban area are examples of the development of a more balanced transport system for the western Bay of Plenty. In Rotorua, medium growth is predicted with a focus on urban regeneration, growth in the eastern corridor (State Highway 30) and game changing cycling investment.

Limited population and land use changes in eastern Bay of Plenty is projected. Providing safer, more reliable and affordable access to transport services and choices will unlock opportunities for people and communities in the area. This includes connections for people, freight and tourists that support regional economies and wellbeing. Initiatives such as the Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Growth Study may identify new opportunities for transport to support wider regional growth outcomes. Current initiatives being investigated include the Ōpōtiki Harbour development and the Kawerau Container Terminal.

CONTINUED SAFETY INVESTMENT

Investment in safety continues to be a vital factor on the region's key routes, such as SH2 and SH29, and within urban areas such as Tauranga.

One example of where the Transport Agency is targeting significant investment in safety is along SH2 between Waihi and Ōmokoroa. An immediate programme of work on the Waihi to Ōmokoroa section of the corridor is to be carried out over the next five years. This work is focused on preventing head-on and run-off crashes, and providing safer connections for the local community.

Further examples are the programmes of work include SH33 Paengaroa to Te Ngae Junction and SH5 Tarukenga to Ngongotaha.

More generally, the Transport Agency will also continue to address areas where speed limit management would dramatically improve the safety on key corridors.

TOURISM

Improving tourism in the Bay of Plenty presents a significant regional economic development opportunity. It is important that the region's transport network delivers safe and reliable journeys for the growing number of visitors to the region, as well as for those who travel beyond it.

Tourism is a significant contributor to Tauranga's economy, with high domestic visitor numbers during the peak summer months alongside the rapidly growing cruise ship industry. Tourism is also a key economic driver for Rotorua, one of the country's top five tourist destinations.

Tourism is essential to the eastern Bay of Plenty, including to attractions around Whakatāne and further east towards and beyond Ōpōtiki. Areas such as Te Urewera, while an already important tourism location, are the focus of investigations to understand future opportunities. This work is progressing collaboratively with Ngāi Tūhoe, the Whakatāne and Wairoa district councils and the Transport Agency.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In December 2018, the new Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint network will be implemented. It will provide higher frequency services based around key routes, more direct services from key origins and destinations and extended operating hours. The fleet will also be improved, including the introduction of electric buses.

With the new network in place, the focus will turn to optimising and improving existing infrastructure to provide priority to public transport. Improved infrastructure will allow for the more effective operation of new routes. Opportunities on the existing transport network are being investigated for high occupancy vehicle lanes and priority bus lanes to support this.

Public transport services in Rotorua and the eastern Bay of Plenty give access to employment, education and social opportunities, with a particular focus of enabling access to those with limited transport choice. This includes connections between communities and towns throughout the region. Public transport in Rotorua links the city centre to the surrounding suburbs, the airport, hospital and key visitor destinations. The introduction of bike racks on buses in Tauranga supports integration with the cycling sector.

ENHANCING WALKING AND CYCLING

Improvements to and construction of new walking and cycling networks will encourage more people to choose to walk or cycle to work, school, the shops, and for recreation, as well as tourist attractions.

In Tauranga, completing the strategic urban network of cycleways connecting the suburbs to the CBD and completing the links to key journeys from residential areas to education, employment and social opportunities are progressing. In Rotorua, investment will allow the 'Cy-Way' programme to be completed. In the east, the Motu Cycle Trail, one of NZ's Great Rides, is looking to extend through Whakatāne, providing further tourism and safety opportunities.

Funding will also be used to promote walking and cycling, as well as cycle skills education, in schools.

MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

To support a safe and reliable transport network, maintaining the region's transport links is a primary objective of the NLTP. The Transport Agency is working with councils in the Bay of Plenty to strengthen the resilience of the network, particularly between Tauranga, Ōpōtiki and Gisborne. Investigations are also being prioritised to provide sustainable alternative options in the event of network disruption.

INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- SH2 Waihi to Ōmokoroa safety improvements.
- SH33 Paengaroa to Te Ngae Road safety improvements.
- Western Bay of Plenty new public transport access programme.
- Urban cycling – complete Rotorua Cy-way and develop business case for Tauranga urban cycling programme to provide better transport choice.
- Rotorua, SH30 eastern corridor between Sala Street and Iles Road, stage 1 safety improvements investigations.
- Develop Tauranga's urban transport safety programme to improve access, safety, reliability, urban development and liveability.
- Tauriko Network Plan, support urban development to improve access.

CASE STUDY

WEIGH RIGHT

The nationwide Weigh Right Programme is designed to reduce heavy vehicle overloading on New Zealand roads. It will also help improve productivity and safety, while ensuring heavy vehicle operators pay their fair share of road maintenance.

The programme will see the installation of roadside technology and the development of intelligent software to direct potentially overloaded vehicles into 12 weigh stations throughout New Zealand. To do this, four existing weigh stations are being upgraded and an additional eight will be built at new sites.



This network will cover almost half of all New Zealand's freight kilometres travelled. The national sites are:

- Marsden in Northland
- three locations in the Auckland region (North Shore, Stanley St and Bombay)
- Tauranga Port
- Paengaroa (Bay of Plenty)
- Taupō
- Napier
- Ohakea (Manawatū)
- Mackay's Crossing (Wellington)
- Rakaia (Mid Canterbury) and
- Glasnevin (North Canterbury).

The sites have been selected based on heavy vehicle volumes and risk profile. The highest volume sites are close to major centres, ports or significant highway junctions. These sites cover almost half of New Zealand's freight kilometres travelled. It is expected to have all sites operational by December 2020.

By addressing the impacts of heavy vehicle overloading, the Weigh Right Programme will contribute to increased productivity for compliant operators through fewer weigh station stops. It will also support a level playing field across the commercial heavy vehicle industry.

Currently, competitors who are illegally overloading can unfairly disadvantage compliant operators. Heavy vehicle safety will also improve by reducing the risk of rollovers from overloading.

To support weight compliance, the programme is building a new easy-to-use heavy vehicle permits system.