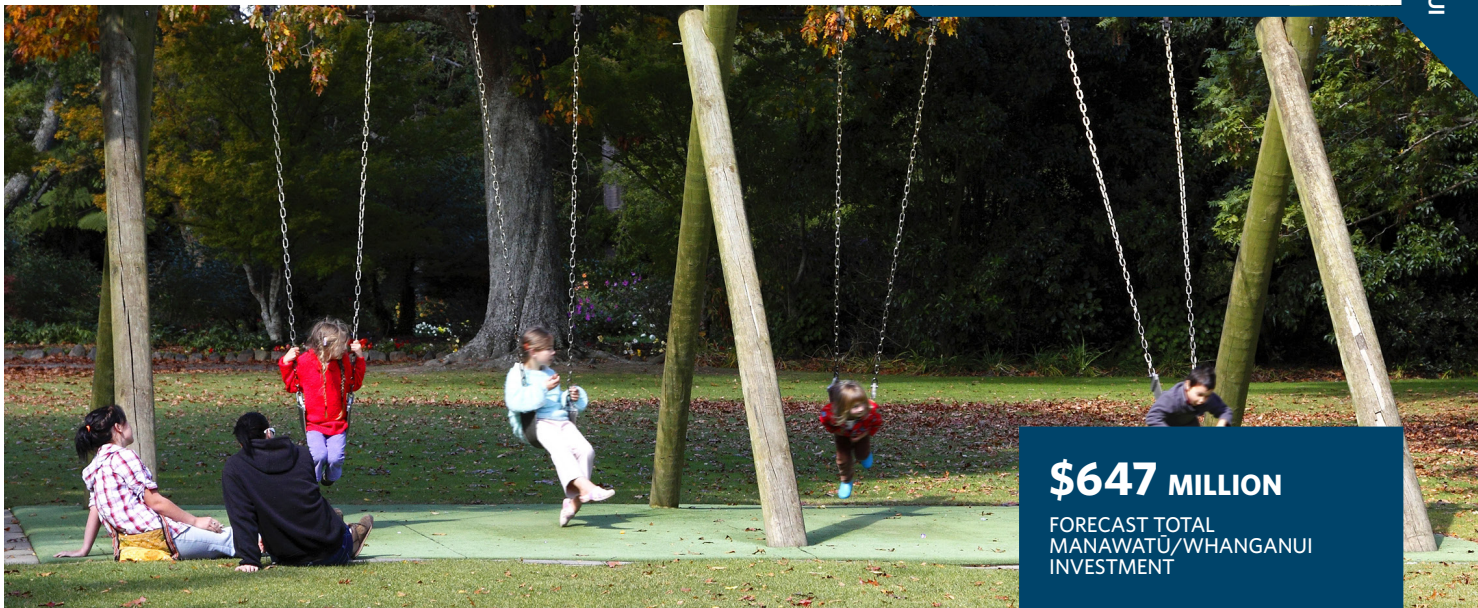


MANAWATŪ/WHANGANUI



The Manawatū/Whanganui region is a transport 'crossroads' where critical road and rail corridors important for regional and national economic prosperity intersect.

SH1 and SH3 intersect in the region, as do the main north/south and east/west rail lines. Several major distribution centres are operating or being developed in the region, which rely on good access to a number of ports and/or airports.

As a key freight and transport hub for the central North Island, the Manawatū/Whanganui region has enormous strategic value for the whole of New Zealand. This is highlighted by the fact that a key priority for the Transport Agency in this NLTP is the development of the SH3 project highway Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Gorge to connect the Manawatū, Tararua District, Hawke's Bay and northern Wairarapa. It replaces the highway through the Manawatū Gorge, now indefinitely closed by a mass land movement.

TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES

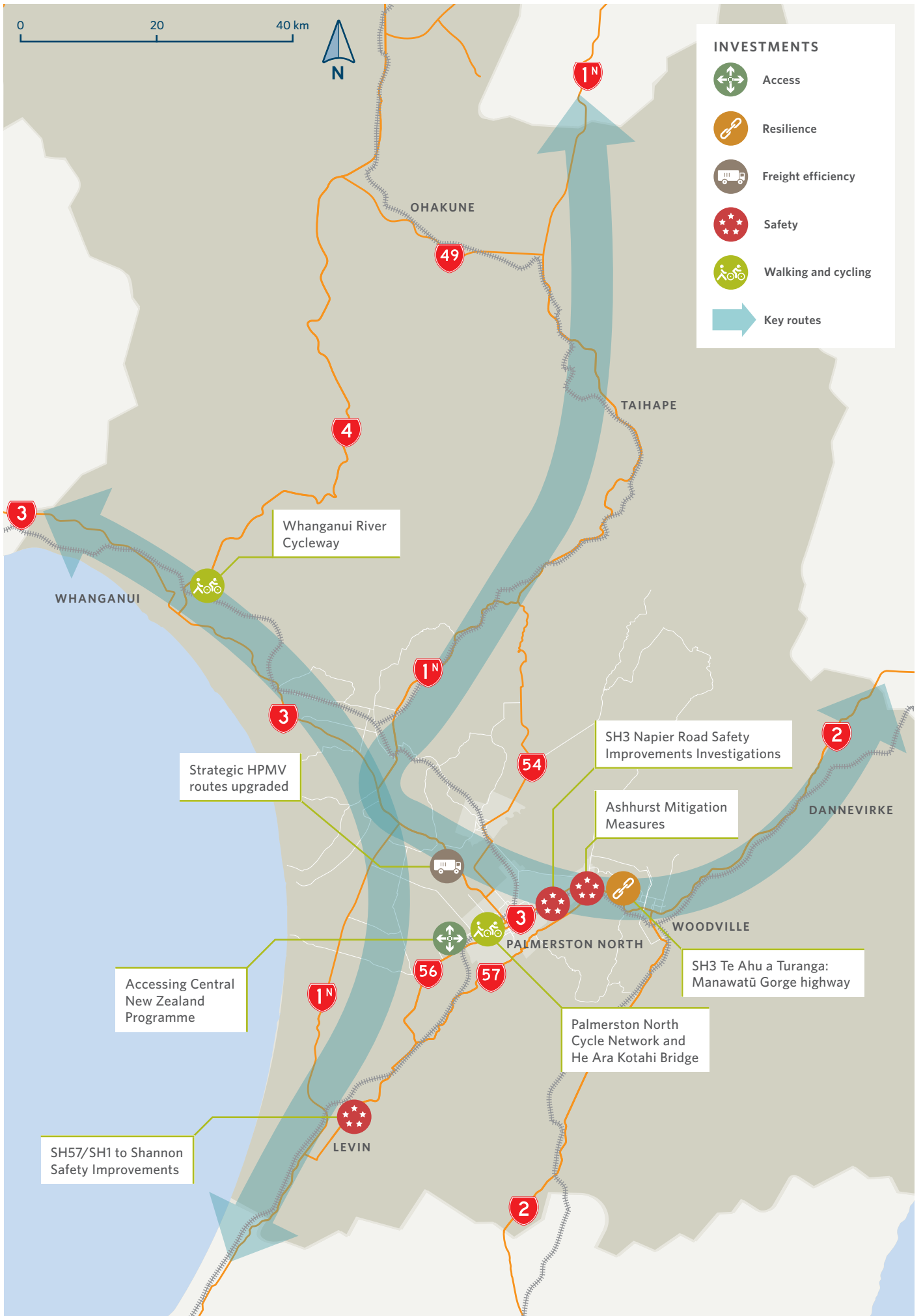
Safety, connecting communities and enabling economic growth are other key drivers of land transport planning for the Manawatū/Whanganui region. During the next three years and beyond, investment in the region will improve safety and access for local communities, along with regional connectivity for freight movements, linking up to the new SH3 across the Ruahine Ranges, and diverting traffic, including freight, from central Palmerston North and other communities.

Working with industry, local government and local communities, the Transport Agency will look to progress the Palmerston North Integrated Transport Improvements project, to assist in building the region's resilience and provide a safer, more effective connection between some of the region's key industrial areas and improve access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The indefinite closure of the Manawatū Gorge and the temporary closure of SH1 after serious storms has shown the need for a resilient land transport system that keeps routes to key destinations and the region's communities open.

The Transport Agency is committed to delivering a safe transport network. It will increase investment in roads and roadsides, and will review how speed limits can help achieve safer journeys for all.





The Transport Agency will continue to look at the further development of all transport modes, including rail, public transport and active travel options, such as walking and cycling.

NETWORK MAINTENANCE

Keeping the land transport system well maintained and safe is a large part of the investment from the NLTP in the Manawatū/Whanganui region. Over the 2018-21 NLTP period, local roads will receive about \$231m and state highways around \$92m for maintenance.

IMPROVING SAFETY

The Transport Agency will progress improvements at a number of intersections on Napier Road from Keith Street to Whakarongo, in order to improve safety and access.

CYCLE FACILITIES

People will soon be able to enjoy He Ara Kotahi, a new walk and cycleway bridging the Manawatū River and linking Massey University and the Linton Army Camp with Palmerston North.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Transport is a key enabler to economic growth. As noted in the Regional Growth Study 2015 that led to the Accelerate25 economic growth initiative overseen by local government, industry and iwi, the region has a mature transport system but with specific future requirements which are acknowledged by the NZ Transport Agency:

- Efficient and well-serviced hubbing – the region needs to have the capacity to efficiently collect, package and redistribute product, and to reduce costs and increase the speed of getting products to market, when compared to other international suppliers.
- Scalability of operations – the region needs the capacity to expedite transport infrastructure investment decision-making. This includes the potential to take advantage of the interest in ‘rail tourism’ to convey increasing numbers of tourists to the Tongariro Whanganui area.
- Importance of the primary sector – reliable access to rural areas to transport products such as mānuka honey, but also for the transport of traditional primary sector products such as logs and farm produce, is vital.
- Palmerston North is a major intersection requiring more investment in streamlined transport movements. The city is at the centre of rail, road and air networks. This intersection of multi-modal and large product and traffic volumes must be as well designed and efficient as possible.
- Forestry is economically important to the region and logs to port movements will increase.
- Revitalisation of the Whanganui Port Area will contribute to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the Whanganui area. There is a need to identify and secure existing and future uses of the port area – including upgrading Wharf One.

Activities that support these aspirations and industry include:

- Whanganui River Marine Precinct and Port Area Revitalisation Project - \$6 million from the Provincial Growth Fund will go towards the revitalisation of the Whanganui Port and an upgrade of the Whanganui rail line
- regional connectivity initiatives (Palmerston North integrated transport improvements) - work is underway to complete a detailed business case for the roading initiatives required to unlock the freight hub and distribution potential of the region. Two projects already being developed are SH3 Napier Road and SH3/54 Kairanga Bunnythorpe Road
- the Transport Agency will be looking for further opportunities to move freight by rail and improving multi-modal freight connections
- Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Gorge Project - the preferred option for the new corridor has been identified and the project will soon be submitting a Notice of Requirement to designate the proposed corridor. At this stage, it is envisaged that construction will start in 2020 and be completed in 2024
- Ashhurst Traffic Mitigation Project - with the closure of the Manawatū Gorge and most of the traffic being diverted across the Saddle Road, a sharp increase in vehicle numbers has led to safety and lifestyle issues for Ashhurst residents. A package of mitigation measures to address noise, safety and community aspirations is being implemented.

Other key projects in the region include:

- Taupō to Waiouru (SH1) business case
- Accessing Central NZ business case (Levin, Bulls and Ashhurst)
- Whirokino Trestle and Manawatū River Bridge replacement (SH1)
- Wellington Northern Corridor, Ōtaki to North of Levin (under re-evaluation)
- SH3, He Ara Kotahi Bridge improvements, Ashhurst cycle/walkway shared pathway
- Tennent Drive upgrade, Food HQ
- route 52 improvements.

INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- \$122m for SH3 Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Gorge Project to create a safer and more resilient route across central New Zealand, linking up the east and west with the Manawatū and Wellington.
- The Accessing Central New Zealand programme will support to the wider economic opportunities identified through the development of the business case for the replacement route for the Manawatū Gorge.
- Maintain safe alternative transport routes until Manawatū Gorge project is completed.
- Improve road and roadside safety on SH57 from south of Levin to Shannon.
- We are looking to support the continuation of the existing Capital Connection service between Wellington and Palmerston North, refurbishing or replacing rolling stock.

CASE STUDY

A TRANSPORT HUB FOR CENTRAL NEW ZEALAND

Along with addressing the need for resilience in key Manawatū/Whanganui road corridors, an opportunity presents itself to improve safety and increase efficiency in the roading network to further enable the role of the region as a hub for freight distribution.

The Manawatū-Whanganui region is strategically located at the crossroads of much east-west and north-south freight movement serving the lower North Island, and the Transport Agency is working collaboratively with local government in the Manawatū Region to investigate options for moving freight across and through the region.

The options will consider the areas of growth in Palmerston North and how the movement of freight is managed on the local road and state highway network.

The Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Economic Action Plan (Accelerate25) identified distribution and transport as key enablers to realise the economic opportunities identified in the action plan.

Palmerston North, as the hub of many freight movements, requires investment to streamline transport movement, particularly east-west movement to the Port of Napier.

Putting in place the replacement route for the Manawatū Gorge will re-establish a key strategic transport and freight link that supports the needs of the people and economies of central New Zealand, while the Palmerston North Integrated Transport Improvements project will unlock regional economic development opportunities, providing a safer and more effective connection between some of the region's key industrial areas and removing heavy trucks from Palmerston North's city centre.

Together, these projects will provide economic and social opportunities for the community, creating a thriving, more liveable Palmerston North, with a reduction in freight moving through the central area of the city.

