

# WAIARIKI BAY OF PLENTY

## AT A GLANCE

*Our focus in the Bay of Plenty is to help create a safer, more resilient transport system. In urban centres we will work with partners to ensure that development, infrastructure and transport options meet the different needs of our local communities and support delivery of the step changes.*

## COVID-19 INSIGHTS AND IMPACTS

This section sets out the how the current pandemic might impact on land transport in the Bay of Plenty. Significant levels of uncertainty remain regarding the scale and duration of COVID-19 impacts, particularly in the medium to long-term. We will continue to monitor and update as things change.

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON KEY SECTORS

- Bay of Plenty may be significantly impacted by the pandemic.
- The region's population growth is highly reliant on net migration, which will be impacted by border restrictions.
- Tauranga's economy is dominated by construction and retail. Both sectors are expected to suffer from a slowing of population growth.
- The strength of Port of Tauranga and the region's horticulture sector are positives, but their contribution to the economy hinge on a relatively quick global recovery.
- Rotorua has a heavy reliance on tourism and will be disproportionately impacted by border closures. Domestic tourism may increase, particularly in the short-term, because of Rotorua's proximity to the three largest upper North Island population centres.

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITIES

Under the slower recovery scenario:

- the region's forecast fall in employment to 2021 (relative to BAU) is -7.0%, higher than the national average of -6.7%<sup>35</sup>
- Tauranga City (-7.9%) and Rotorua Lakes District (-7.5%) are forecast to experience the greatest impacts<sup>35</sup>
- Tauranga City is not forecast to return to BAU employment levels in the coming decade, while the eastern districts are forecast to be ahead of BAU by 2031<sup>35</sup>

- Eastern Bay of Plenty was lagging pre-COVID-19, but the area is forecast to recover relatively well from the post-COVID-19 downturn
- Māori and Pasifika, and youth, are likely to experience the greatest impacts, particularly those in Tauranga and Rotorua. An increase in youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) is expected
- population growth expected to slow, at least in the short to medium-term.

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE LAND TRANSPORT SYSTEM

- Expected that there will be an easing of growth in transport demand over the short-term, because of slower population growth in Tauranga and western Bay of Plenty, and reduced employment and discretionary trips.
- No significant changes are expected in the nature and location of transport demand over the medium to long-term, but the pace of growth is expected to be slower than pre-COVID-19 forecasts.
- Work to ensure the effective integration of land-use and transport remains a priority, to support mode shift and reductions in GHG. This includes sequencing of development, ensuring growth areas are serviced with active mode and PT infrastructure and services, and linking housing to employment and essential services.

- Providing safe and reliable connections to Port of Tauranga remain critical to supporting national recovery efforts.
- There will be an ongoing need for transport services to support COVID-19 recovery by improving access to employment and essential services for vulnerable communities.
- There will be ongoing pressure on transport revenue as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown.



**SIGNIFICANCE OF STEP CHANGE TO REGION 2021-31**

**KEY**

## REGION STEP CHANGES

### IMPROVE URBAN FORM

The population of the western Bay of Plenty sub-region (Tauranga and western Bay of Plenty) is projected to grow from 190,000 to 260,000 over the next 50 years, requiring 51,000 new homes. 80% of this growth is expected in Tauranga city.<sup>62</sup> Rotorua is expected to receive moderate levels of growth over the coming decade.

### TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY

The Tauranga urban area is one of the fastest growing urban centres in New Zealand. Nearly 90% of journeys to work in Tauranga and Rotorua are taken by private vehicle.<sup>52</sup>

### SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS

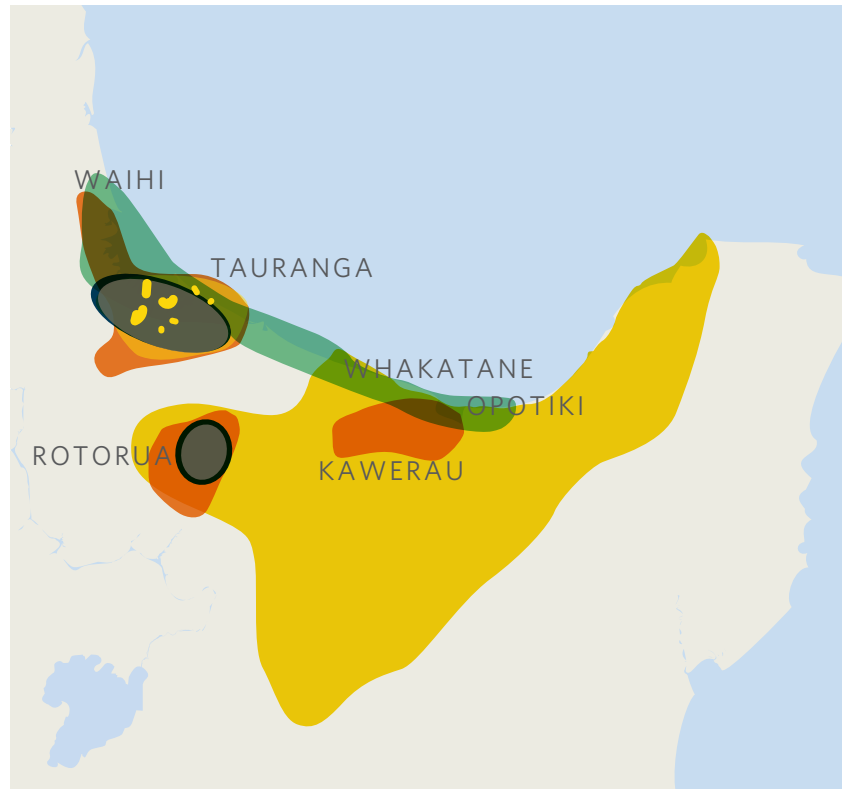
Bay of Plenty has a relatively poor safety record with issues around speeding, alcohol and drug impairment, people not wearing seatbelts and run-off road crashes.<sup>47</sup>

### TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Sea level rise and extreme weather will impact the region.

### SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bay of Plenty has some communities with high levels of deprivation and unemployment, which will be exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19. Access to education, healthcare and employment must improve, particularly in the east and south of the region, to deliver better social and economic outcomes. We will continue to support inter-regional connectivity, especially road and rail freight connections to key ports and hubs.



**308,499**  
REGIONAL POPULATION<sup>25</sup>

**15.2%**  
REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH 2013-18<sup>25</sup>

**6.6%**  
OF NATIONAL POPULATION<sup>25</sup> 2018

**5.8%**  
OF NATIONAL DEATHS & SERIOUS INJURIES (DSI)<sup>47</sup>  
**175** TOTAL DSI<sup>47</sup>  
ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR PERIOD 2016-19

**7%**  
OF NATIONAL VEHICLE EMISSIONS<sup>48</sup>

**5.6%**  
OF NATIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT  
YEAR END MARCH 2018<sup>26</sup>  
**4.2%**  
REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

**4.1%**  
NATIONAL RATE  
YEAR END JUNE 2019<sup>49</sup>

## BAY OF PLENTY TODAY

Because of the level of uncertainty of population and economic trends, this section has not been reviewed in detail for Arataki V2.

### THE BAY OF PLENTY'S ECONOMY IS LARGELY BASED ON EXPORT INDUSTRIES INCLUDING TOURISM, HORTICULTURE AND FORESTRY.

The Port of Tauranga is also a significant contributor to New Zealand's economy, handling 25% of the country's imports and exports.<sup>28</sup> Rail freight movements to and from the Port of Tauranga reduce the number of heavy vehicles travelling through the urban area, and improving safety and emission outcomes. However increasing numbers of trains moving through at-grade rail crossings contributes to delays and congestion on the Tauranga road network.

The Bay of Plenty's population grew by 40,758 or 15.2% between 2013-18, the second highest percentage rate in the country,<sup>25</sup> partially because of Auckland's growth. Tauranga is home to approximately 136,713 people, almost half of the regions population.

Tauranga also has one of the highest rates of private vehicle use among New Zealand cities. This has been shaped by

current neighbourhood layout and travel to one of its three main employment hubs. This reliance on private vehicles also impacts on the high carbon emissions in the city.

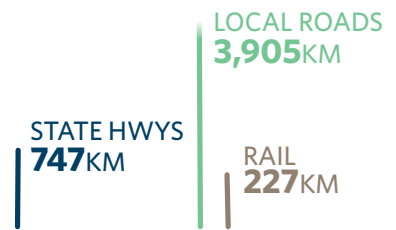
The Bay of Plenty is a surge region, identified by the government as needing investment to support regional economic development. While the western Bay of Plenty is one of the fastest growing areas of New Zealand, other parts of the region are falling behind. In the centre of the region, Rotorua (72,500), Whakatane (34,400) and Opotiki (9,720) are beginning to experience reasonable population and economic growth after a flat period in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

By contrast, outside of the main towns, the eastern and southern areas of the region have not experienced the same growth. These areas are relatively sparsely populated, face ongoing challenges with static and declining populations, and are also experiencing issues associated with high unemployment and low incomes. There are particularly high levels of deprivation

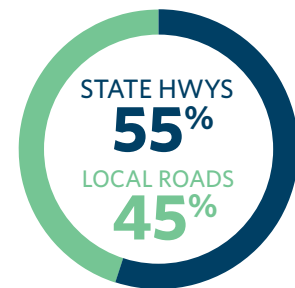
in parts of the Whakatane, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau districts.<sup>56</sup>

There are a number of growth management processes underway in the region such as SmartGrowth (Tauranga and western Bay of Plenty), Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI), Rotorua Connect, Rotorua Spatial Plan and Eastern Bay of Plenty Beyond Today.

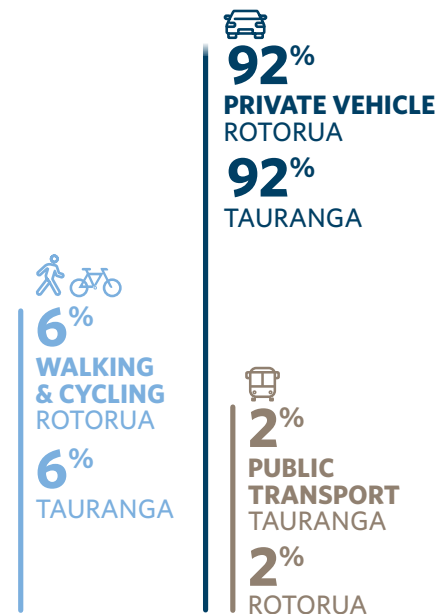
Road safety remains an issue in the region, particularly along its key state highway routes and within urban areas.



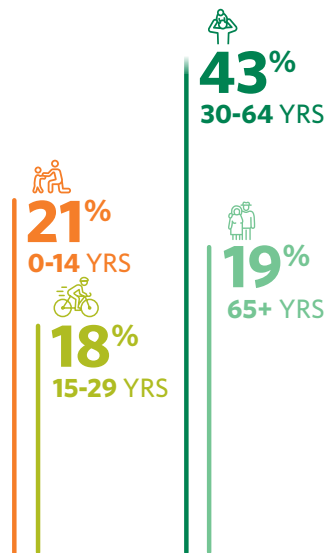
**KILOMETRES OF NETWORK IN REGION** 2016/17<sup>40+41</sup>



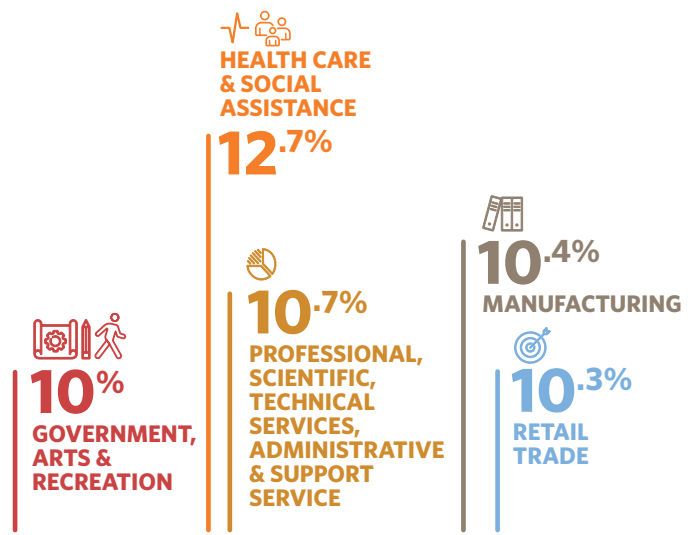
**PERCENTAGE OF KILOMETRES TRAVELLED** 2016/17<sup>51</sup>



**MODE SHARE (JOURNEY TO WORK)** 2018<sup>52</sup>



**POPULATION AGE PROFILE** 2018<sup>25</sup>



**TOP 5 EMPLOYMENT SECTORS** YEAR END MARCH 2018<sup>53</sup>

## BAY OF PLENTY TOMORROW

Prior to COVID-19, the western Bay of Plenty was one of the fastest growing areas in New Zealand. Net migration accounts for the majority of population growth in the region, which will slow down in the short to medium-term as border closures lead to lower immigration. Some population growth was expected to be related to demand from business and population movements out of Auckland, which could slow down as a result of lower growth there.

The challenge remains to ensure urban development, transport infrastructure and services meet the needs of our local communities during the recovery and to prepare for future growth. Future freight growth, including modal mix and how goods are moved to and from the port, which will be crucial to New Zealand's COVID-19 recovery, need to be considered to ensure that Tauranga's transport system can appropriately provide for the needs of all users.

The development, growth pressures and opportunities across the region differ. Medium to high population growth was projected across the western Bay of Plenty and Rotorua. Lower population growth was forecast in the eastern and southern Bay of Plenty. Overall the population was predicted to increase by 180,000 by 2043.<sup>27</sup> The resumption of growth in the long-term will increase the use of the transport network for both people and freight, especially on road networks such as SH29.

There is a challenge to fund new infrastructure and services to cater for the existing growth in Tauranga. The significant number of people living on fixed incomes will put pressure on all of the Bay of Plenty's councils' ability to maintain and fund new infrastructure. Rural communities in the east and south are also looking for improved connections to urban areas for access to health, employment opportunities and social services.

The Bay of Plenty will be impacted by the decline of international tourism, particularly in Rotorua, but its proximity to Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga could see domestic tourism increase. Primary industries such as horticulture may be helpful for the economic recovery, subject to the recovery of demand from international markets.

COVID-19 will exacerbate issues such as high unemployment and rates of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), particularly among Māori. Bay of Plenty's NEET rate is already higher than the national rate, particularly in districts such as Rotorua.<sup>58</sup> Compared to New Zealand as a whole, Māori make up almost twice as much of the region's population<sup>1</sup> and a higher proportion of the workforce. Māori, particularly young people, are vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 because they are more likely to be engaged in part-time or casual employment in sectors such as tourism and hospitality.

Emerging technologies, such as on-demand shuttles, could provide a feasible shared transport option in the future to help people get around within rural communities, and improve access to services in urban centres. Improved access to high-quality data and information will enable better management of the existing transport system to get the most out of existing infrastructure.

In Tauranga, there will continue to be increasing demand to plan, book and pay digitally for journeys. The growing popularity of online purchasing and home delivery will impact on-demand travel, including the movement of freight.

Coastal erosion, sea level rise, flooding and storms are predicted to intensify over the next 30 years, resulting in an increased risk to the road and rail network. This adds to the existing tsunami risk and resilience issues. Rockfall, landslip, erosion, flooding and coastal inundation/erosion are high natural risks in the region. The greatest is the Waioeka Gorge which sits within both the Bay of Plenty and Gisborne areas.

Waka Kotahi has jointly established the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI), in a partnership with Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and tangata whenua. Together, we have committed to developing a refreshed, coordinated and aligned approach to the future urban form and transport needs for the western Bay of Plenty sub-region over the next 50 years. The key challenges UFTI aims to address are:

- the lack of housing supply, suitable housing, transport choice, and a high dependency on private vehicles restricts access to social and economic opportunities and is leading to poor social and environmental outcomes
- the harbour geography and dispersed land-use pattern (places of employment, education, and recreational locations), and increasing traffic volumes has a negative impact on the safe and efficient movement of people and goods
- the ability to access community facilities – infrastructure levels of service do not meet community needs and expectations – and this is impacting on people's ability to fully enjoying the region's lifestyle.

## KEY SYSTEM INSIGHTS

- Tauranga and, to a lesser extent Rotorua, risk an increased dependence on private vehicles and carbon emissions if they don't address existing growth patterns of low-density housing and development around the city's edge.
- Development in Rotorua needs to consider both its population and visitor growth in the medium to long-term and ensure there is support for existing communities to live, play and access essential services. Rotorua's role as a key cycling destination should be supported through safe and convenient networks for walking and cycling.
- Maintaining safe and reliable connections to the Port of Tauranga is critical to supporting both the regional and national economies during COVID-19 recovery and beyond.
- Land-use and the land transport system need to cater for the high proportion (39%) of Tauranga's population that is projected to be over 65 years by 2050.
- The East Cape area is at risk of disruption because of a combination of more severe weather events and unstable terrain. Managing resilience through the Waioeka Gorge and Waimana Gorge is important as it forms part of the primary connection between Gisborne and Bay of Plenty.
- A focus on safety is needed in the Tauranga, Rotorua and Whakatane urban areas, on SH2 between Tauranga and Waihi, on SH29 and on high-risk rural roads.
- Regional economic growth, particularly in the south and east of the region, can be supported by improved access to employment and essential services for remote communities and access to visitor destinations.

## FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

This section represents the existing commitments (eg the NLTP and NZUP). V2 has not been updated to include economic stimulus packages as that space continues to evolve.

### WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY SUB-REGION

Completion of the UFTI work programme to address the key challenges facing the sub-region and help deliver an integrated, strategic approach for the development of the western Bay of Plenty's urban form and transport system.

This collaborative land-use and transport planning work along with planning for the future growth area at Tauriko, the Te Papa peninsula and the existing Tauranga urban area are examples of the development of a more balanced transport system.

### ROTORUA

- Complete Rotorua CyWay urban cycling programme.

### EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY










- The Motu Cycle Trail is looking to extend through Whakatāne, providing further tourism and safety opportunities.

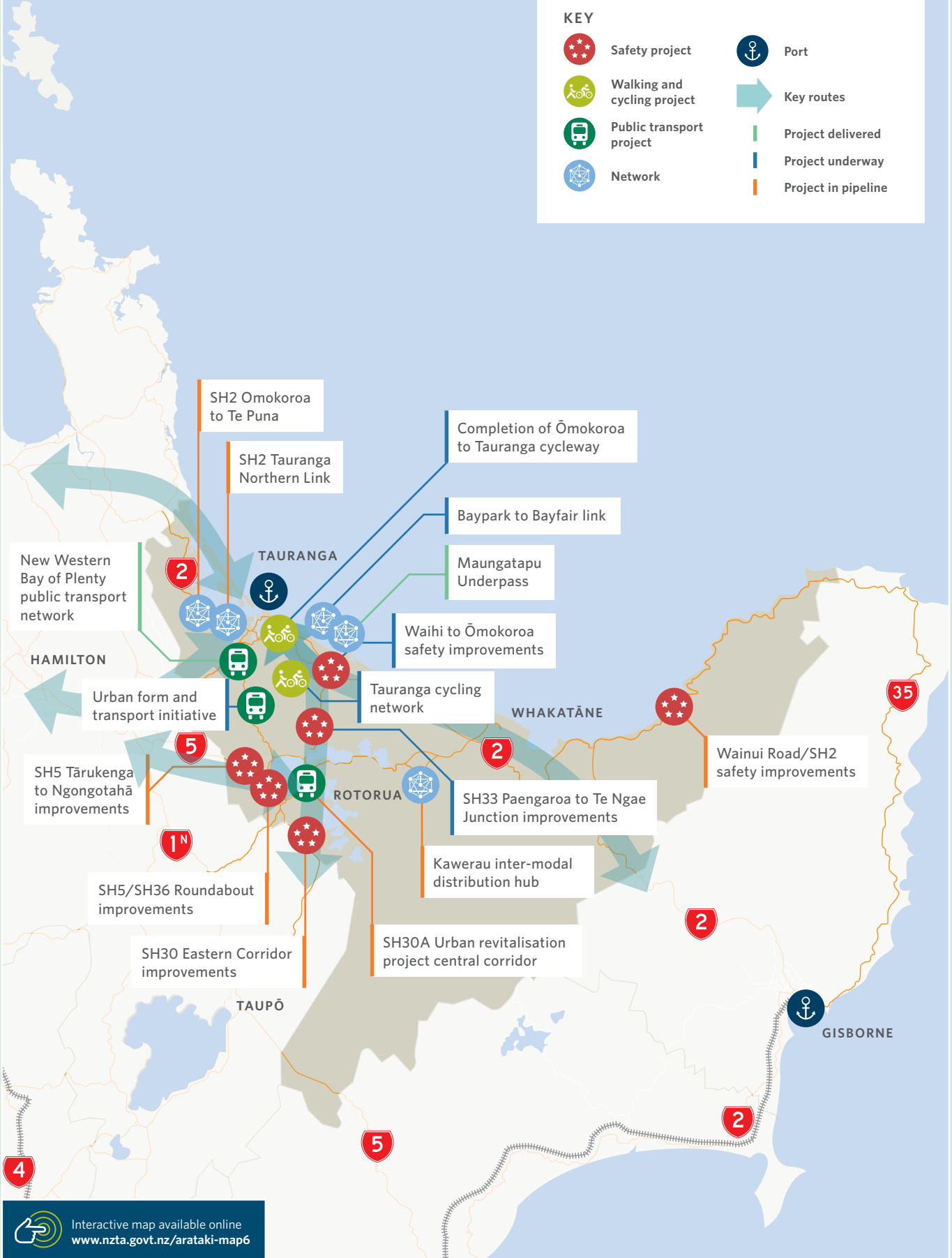
Safety improvements are continuing in the Rotorua SH30 Eastern Corridor between Sala Street and Iles Road. Further examples include SH33 Paengaroa to Te Ngae Junction and SH5 Tarukenga to Ngongotaha.

In early 2020 the government NZ Upgrade Programme was announced, along with a regional programme which included funding for several state highway projects in Tauranga and Rotorua to support urban growth and improve safety outcomes.

This map shows all projects underway during the period

**KEY**

	Safety project		Port
	Walking and cycling project		Key routes
	Public transport project		Project delivered
	Network		Project underway
			Project in pipeline



## AREAS OF FOCUS: BAY OF PLENTY 2021-31

### TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE (HIGH)

We will continue to work to understand the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation, and start to prioritise interventions and responses for high-risk areas.

#### ADAPTATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and effects of climate change
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and 'low cost/low-risk' investments
- enabling quick recovery following disruption to the land transport system
- working with local authorities to plan for long-term retreat from highly affected areas.

#### MITIGATION

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to ensure urban form and transport planning supports reductions in emissions, private vehicle travel and average trip length
- identifying low-carbon transport options, infrastructure and services in urban areas to support shift from private vehicles to low-emission options
- ensuring network design and operations make the best use of existing systems to manage demand and reduce emissions by prioritising the movement of public transport and low-emission options, and actively managing speed, urban freight and congestion.

### SUPPORT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (HIGH)

Bay of Plenty is a priority for regional development support because of the long-term challenges it faces, such as high unemployment and low incomes. It is a surge region identified by the government as needing investment to support regional economic development, particularly in the south and east. To support regional growth, enable improved access to education, employment and visitor destinations, help raise standards of living and optimise the contribution of transport activities to COVID-19 recovery, we will:

- continue to support improvements in social and economic outcomes in the south and east of the region, particularly improving access to employment, education and essential services for remote communities and supporting economic development and access to visitor destinations

- continue to support the movement of visitors across the region, particularly land-based connections from Rotorua to Eastern Bay, Waikato and Auckland, and between Tauranga, Rotorua, Taupo and areas further south and to the east
- continue to support inter-regional connectivity
- contribute to COVID-19 economic recovery planning in the Bay of Plenty, including for industry sectors to optimise the contribution of transport.

### IMPROVE URBAN FORM (HIGH)

#### TAURANGA

We will support a well-integrated and well-designed land-use and transport system to enhance the living standards of Tauranga by:

- continuing to support and contribute to the development of UFTI
- supporting development of the Te Papa Spatial Framework
- planning for the connection between Tauriko to the central business district by providing transport options between the two key anchor employment centres, whilst ensuring good access to the port remains.
- supporting initiatives that increase the number of residents living within the existing urban area and delivering greater transport choice
- influencing a different approach to connecting Tauriko to central business district by providing transport options between the two key employment centres, ensuring that there remains good access to the port
- optimising the current transport system first.

#### ROTORUA

We recognise the potential for growth in and around Rotorua to support overall living standards, the delivery of safer systems, the effects of climate change and an increased share of travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

Across the region we will engage in planning processes to ensure that significant new developments:

- enhance existing communities, making them a better place to work, live and play
- support an increase in active modes, including trips by foot, bike and e-scooter etc
- reduce the need to travel long distances to access employment and services
- that result in lower emissions per capita
- maintain or improve the safety and efficiency of the transport system.

## **TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY (HIGH)**

Projected population growth in Bay of Plenty will increase travel demand on the region's networks and provides opportunities to support increased use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Our focus will be on:

- supporting the development and implementation of a regional mode shift plan.

### **TAURANGA**

- Continuing to support UFTI to deliver land-use patterns that enable increased use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- Encouraging the Western Bay sub-region councils to take a more active and integrated approach to managing land-use, public transport fare policy and carparking to support increased use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- Investigating solutions that provide more transport options for people and work to reduce travel in single occupant private vehicles.
- Working with Tauranga City Council to encourage actively manage carparking in the city centre, city fringe area and other key centres to increase uptake of public transport, walking and cycling for trips to these locations.
- Identifying opportunities for smaller projects, including optimising the current network, that can improve system outcomes.

### **ROTORUA**

- Supporting improvements to walking and cycling networks with an emphasis on trips of 1-5km length and creating connected networks.
- Supporting public transport services that provide access to employment and essential services that are the more affordable transport choice.

## **SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS (MEDIUM)**

### **SAFETY**

Support implementation of the *Road to Zero: New Zealand's road safety strategy 2020-2030* and associated *Action plan 2020-22*, and regional safety strategies, with a particular emphasis on:

- safety improvements that target run-off road crashes on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h)
- target road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on alcohol and drug impairment, and people not wearing seatbelts
- speed management on high-risk rural roads.

### **HEALTH**

Our approach to delivering better health outcomes, particularly the reduction of harmful emissions, will primarily be through initiatives that target other step changes, including improved urban form, increasing access to and use of public transport, walking and cycling, and efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

We will support future pandemic planning by drawing on our COVID-19 experience and initiative such as low-cost and temporary street calming and active transport projects that enable social distance while bringing health benefits from increased physical activity and reduced air emissions.

We will also continue to work to ensure that the noise impacts of transport are appropriately managed through a mix of land-use planning and mitigation works.

