

Bay of Plenty regional transport update – August 2019

Overview

The Western Bay of Plenty is one of the fastest growing regions in New Zealand and this growth is set to continue for the next 30 years. The challenge is to make sure urban development and transport infrastructure meets the needs of our local communities.

Safety is a major issue in the region, particularly along its key state highway routes, such as SH2 and SH29, and within urban areas such as Tauranga to ensure safe, reliable access. One example of where there is significant investment is the \$107 million safety upgrades currently being rolled out on SH2 between Waihi and Omokoroa - a stretch of road rated the 14th worst corridor in New Zealand in terms of the frequency of fatal and serious crashes. Construction is also underway to add safety improvements to SH33 to address the issues from the Te Ngae Junction, near Rotorua, to Paengaroa.

We're investing more than ever before in public transport and walking and cycling in the region to give people real choices, which will mean some people will leave the car at home, freeing up the roads for those that have to drive. In Tauranga, we are completing the strategic urban network of cycleways connecting the suburbs to the CBD, as well as helping to roll out the Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint network. We're also completing the urban Rotorua Cycleway and have finished the SH2 Woodlands Ōpōtiki Shared Path, meaning students getting off the school bus no longer have to cross the busy intersection

Roads are a vital part of the region's transport network. Work is being done on the Bay Link road, which will help traffic by separating state highway and local road users. \$14.4 million will be invested in SH30 which will see improvements to Te Ngae Road to make it safer and easier to navigate. An additional \$51 million is also being spent to maintain the region's roads, supporting a safe and reliable transport network to help with growth in the region.

Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty

In the Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty sub-region we've jointly established the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI), a partnership between Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, tangata whenua and the Transport Agency. Together, we have committed to developing a refreshed, coordinated and aligned approach to key issues across the sub-region – finding answers for housing capacity, intensification, multi-modal transport and network capacity.

In the last 18 months

- The new Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint network was launched in December 2018 providing higher frequency services based around key routes, more direct services from key origins and destinations, and extended operating hours.
- The Poike Road overbridge and shared path, north of the SH29A and Poike Road roundabout, have been completed. The overbridge provides a safe crossing over the busy four-lane

highway. The 45.5m-long bridge spans the entire width of the state highway and was funded as part of the Maungatapu Underpass project.

- We completed the \$45 million Maungatapu Underpass on SH29A in June 2018. The underpass created a two-lane link underneath the Maungatapu roundabout, allowing SH29A traffic to travel above the Welcome Bay traffic wanting to go to the city.
- The SH29 Whakapaewaka shared overbridge opened last year over SH29 Takitimu Drive, connecting Bethlehem and Gate Pa and creating a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. It was partly funded by the Transport Agency's Urban Cycleways fund.
- An 18-month trial is underway for new roundabout metering at the SH29A Barke's Corner and SH2 Elizabeth St roundabouts. Early indications are positive for both areas, with an average 80% reduction in travel time for morning travellers using the Takitimu Drive southbound approach.
- In June 2019, the Paengaroa to Rotoiti cycle trail was opened, providing a safe off-road link for cyclists who no longer need to ride along a busy stretch of SH33. The project was a collaborative effort between the community, local councils and the Transport Agency.
- We funded 51% of the Kopurererua cycle path upgrade, which opened last month. A 5km rough gravel path through the Kopurererua Valley was upgraded and sealed to create a safer and easier route that will allow more people to travel by bike between The Lakes and the central city. The cycle path upgrade is included in Tauranga City Council's Low Cost/Low Risk programme.
- We spent \$6.7 million improving safety and active mode access along Omokoroa Road as Stage 1 of the Omokoroa Road Corridor Improvements project.
- We've funded 51% of the SH36 overbridge which will make it safer for people to walk and bike between the Lakes and Tauranga Crossing. The overbridge opened in July 2019.

Underway or about to start

- Strategy development and planning is underway for the Urban Form and Transport Initiative, with a draft Foundation Report expected in August and a final report by December 2019. We are funding 43% of this work.
- We are replacing the street lighting network with LEDs to increase safety and significantly reduce energy use and on-going maintenance costs. \$8.2 million is being spent replacing Tauranga's street lighting network, and further funding in the Western Bay District. We are funding 85% of this work.
- Progress continues on the \$120 million upgrade to the Baypark to Bayfair Link. 'Bay Link' provides improvements to the SH2/SH29A Te Maunga intersection and to the SH2 Maunganui Road/Girven Road intersection, and when finished will complete the eastern corridor for the Bay of Plenty. The key features include two flyovers and improvements to the SH29A Baypark and Truman Lane roundabout, and the SH2 Bayfair roundabout. Completion is estimated to be mid-2021.
- 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.

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

Eastern Bay of Plenty

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.

In the last 18 months

- The new SH2 Woodlands Ōpōtiki Shared Path provides a path for pedestrians and cyclists under the Waioeka Bridge in Opotiki. Students getting off the school bus no longer have to cross the busy SH2 Woodlands Road intersection.

Underway or about to start

- Road and roadside safety improvements totalling \$32.6 million are proposed from the outskirts of Ōhope, along Wainui Road and SH2 to near Ōpōtiki. This road has been identified as a high risk rural road, and these safety improvements are part of the nationwide Safe Roads and Roadsides Programme.
- Minor works are planned to improve pedestrian safety on SH2 through Taneatua's town centre through the Low Cost Low Risk programme.

Rotorua

Rotorua's eastern corridor is a key transport route, serving both inter-regional and local traffic. The Transport Agency and Rotorua Lakes Council have been looking at the best way to future-proof the city's transport network and are working closely with Council on a programme of work called Connect Rotorua.

In the last 18 months

- We completed construction of the new \$7.3 million Hemo Roundabout in early 2018 to replace the SH30/SH5 intersection in Rotorua which was ranked as the fourth riskiest intersection in the country. The new Hemo roundabout boosts safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians and will feature a 12-metre-high 3D printed sculpture to be installed in the centre of the roundabout.
- Improvements to the Owhata Roundabout on SH30 were completed in June 2019. The project increases safety for all users and improves traffic flow at peak times due to the construction of a straight-through lane for city-bound traffic.

Underway or about to start

- We are in the tender phase for the \$14.4 million SH30 Eastern Corridor Stage 1 project which will see safety, access and multi-modal improvements to a section of Te Ngae Road between Iles and Sala streets. This work is expected to begin mid-late 2019.
- Funding in the National Land Transport Programme will see the completion of the urban Rotorua Cycleway.
- A Network Operating Plan is also underway for the wider Rotorua region. This is looking at how the region's transport network works together now so we can accurately plan ahead for the future.

Safety

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. Together with our partners, we're working to improve safety for all road users.

In the last 18 months

- Funding has been put towards side barriers, new line markings and rumble strips along two high-risk stretches of road in the Bay of Plenty – making SH30 from Te Teko to Awakeri and the highway from the intersection at SH33/SH34 to Kawerau safer for all users. Since the project was completed there have been several strikes on the installed barriers due to accidents, showing the worth of their installation.

Underway or about to start

- We've invested significantly in safety along SH2 between Waihi and Omokoroa as part of the Transport Agency's Safe Network Programme. A five-year \$107 million programme of work on the Waihi to Omokoroa section of the corridor began in early 2019. This work is focused on preventing head-on and run-off crashes and providing safer connections for the local community.
- Construction is also underway to add safety improvements to SH33, from the Te Ngae Junction, near Rotorua, to Paengaroa. This project is near the half way mark of the three-year build, with sections already complete south of Mourea and near Paengaroa.
- More generally, the Transport Agency is continuing to address areas where speed limit management would dramatically improve the safety on key corridors.

Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) investment in Bay of Plenty

- PGF transport investment in the Bay of Plenty is focused in Kawerau, investigating rail freight opportunities, including the creation of an inland hub to connect exports from Murarpara and Kawerau to rail. The other focus is the construction of roading and related infrastructure at the Kawerau Putauaki Industrial Hub.

Investment in Bay of Plenty

NLTP	2015-18	2018-21
Forecast Total investment	\$647 million	\$801 million
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$277 million	\$328 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$44 million	\$71 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$10 million	\$33 million
Regional network improvements	\$302 million	\$358 million
Total Provincial Growth Fund		\$2 million