

Northland regional transport update – August 2019

Overview

Northland's challenging geology and weather means the road network is not as resilient as it could be compared with other parts of the country and this makes access a challenge in parts of the region. There are high risk areas of State Highway 1 where safety improvements, especially in speed reduction, will help improve access.

The focus in Northland is on creating a transport system that is safer, has stronger community connections, provides better access to economic and employment opportunities and is resilient to withstand extreme weather events. We are working closely with partners from local government, iwi, other agencies and communities to support a growing and successful region.

Investment during this NLTP 2018-21 period will target maintaining and improving the transport system, as well as working with local government, and NZ Police to improve safety at high-risk locations.

Construction is almost complete to replace three one lane bridges, at Taipā and Matakōhe, and work is underway at the SH1/Loop Road intersection to make journeys safer in the region.

Northland's appeal as a tourist destination will be boosted by additional investment from the Provincial Growth Fund, to progress the Twin Coast Discovery Route connecting the east and west coasts through several business cases that are already in development.

Safety

Road safety is a priority in Northland, with investment in the following:

- As part of the Safe Network Programme, short-term safety improvements between Whāngarei and Port Marsden Highway (SH15) are planned, such as roadside barriers, median barriers, centre line widening and improved road marking
- A single lane roundabout at Loop Road (North) and improvements to the Portland Road intersection started construction in March 2019 to improve safety at these high-risk intersections south of Whangarei
- Intersection speed warning signs have been installed at two high risk intersections south of Whangarei – Shoemaker Road (Waipu) and Mangapai Road (Oakleigh)
- Whangarei to Port Marsden Highway (SH15) is identified as one of 10 sections of state highway where targeted Police enforcement will deliver the greatest safety benefits due to the crash history on this high-volume route
- After a recent fatality near Kaiwaka, freight industry representatives have raised concerns about heavy vehicle safety through road works. We have met with representatives to listen to these concerns and are working on improvements

- Speed management reviews will be undertaken on three corridors in the Far North in the coming months. These include:
 - SH10 Awanui to Pukewhai Road
 - SH11 Haruru to Puketona
 - SH1 Moerewa to Kawakawa
- The Transport Agency will work with local roading authorities to progress the region's speed management plan, focusing on high-benefit opportunities
- Work will continue to identify and improve high-risk safety areas on the network, as well as monitoring use by visitors, communities and freight
- A road safety workshop has been held with the Regional Transport Committee and other key Northland Agencies to co-design a road safety approach for Northland, which we can all own.

Increasing access to opportunity

Northland's transport system provides the means for businesses to operate successfully in the region. The port at Marsden Point is crucial to the Northland and the safety improvements outlined above will help to support the safe and efficient movement of freight to and from the port.

The growth of forestry in the region means that strategic routes can change over time. The maintenance and renewals programme will respond to these changes, supporting industry and economic development. The Transport Agency continues to work with industry, communities and local government to develop and improve the region's High Productivity Motor Vehicle (HPMV) routes, and to prioritise projects addressing dust caused by increased traffic on unsealed roads.

Economic development

Tourism in Northland thrives in locations such as the Bay of Islands, Te Reringa Wairua (Cape Reinga), Opononi/Omapere, Waipoua Forest and Matakoho. Strategic investment in the transport system is vital to broaden Northland's destination appeal and increase visitor numbers. The Provincial Growth Fund has committed an initial \$6.2 million to fund seven business cases along the Twin Coast Discovery Route, with the aim of attracting more visitors and improving investment, employment and incomes across the region.

There will be improvements to regional connections and public transport services, as well as driver licensing to improve community access to education, employment and training opportunities.

Improving walking and cycling

Walking and cycling opportunities will continue to grow especially with the Northland Regional Walking and Cycling strategy, providing a great way to boost tourism and promote healthy communities. The Transport Agency has been working with local government to identify how investment in walking and cycling infrastructure can boost the number of people walking and cycling.

Positive results are already being seen on the completed sections of the Onerahi Shared Path and Kamo Shared Path in Whāngārei, including use by families at weekends and daily commuters.

The Transport Agency will continue to support initiatives, such as the Twin Coast Cycle Trail, which offer tourists and locals a unique way to travel between the region's coasts.

This NLTP will also continue to support urban shared paths in and around Whāngārei, including the delivery of sections of the Kamo and Raumanga routes which link with schools, recreation areas and the city centre.

An investigation will be carried out into pedestrian safety improvements in Whāngārei, and a programme of cycle skills education will be delivered in schools to capitalise on the new infrastructure.

Resilience

Work will continue with local roading authorities and communities to be vigilant about the condition of the transport network and target areas of low resilience. The Far North District Council has a significant resilience programme underway for the 2018-21 period.

Improvements will strengthen the resilience of the transport network, particularly on the Auckland–Whāngārei corridor, Twin Coast Discovery Route (including Opononi) and Kaitaia to Cape Reinga.

This will include the potential impacts of climate change and sea level rise on communities and infrastructure in coastal areas. With freight across the region increasing, there will be an investigation into options to strengthen alternate routes, including local roads, to deliver service in the event of network disruption.

This year has seen the highest investment in maintenance of the state highway network in Northland at \$28.6 million.

The Transport Agency will continue to support road controlling authorities and the Northland Transportation Alliance in their collaboration on procurement, asset management and implementation of maintenance activities, to ensure best practice and value for money.

Underway or about to start

- The SH12 Matakohe bridges project is due for completion in August 2019. This \$26 million, 2.5km project improves safety for all road users with two new two-lane bridges, a realignment of the state highway to remove the tight bends approaching the bridges, a new and improved intersection for the Matakohe township and the iconic Kauri Museum and a shared path that incorporates the two old bridges.
- The SH10 Taipa bridge project is due for completion in October 2019. This \$18 million project replaces a busy, single lane bridge and narrow footpath with a two-lane bridge and 3m wide shared path and provides the local community with safer, more reliable travel options including improved walking and cycling facilities. The project supports tourism and removes delays and safety concerns during the peak visitor season. SH10 plays an important role as an alternative route for SH1 is closed.

- SH1 Loop Road - \$27 million safety improvements project on SH1 south of Whangarei, which include construction of a roundabout at Loop Road (North) and intersection improvements at the SH1/Portland Road intersection. Construction commenced in March 2019 and aims to be completed during summer of 2020-21.
- The SH1 Tarewa Road Intersection Safety Improvements is a \$17 million project that is due for completion early next year and is the last of six projects within the Whāngārei Improvements package. The aim is to improve the state highway through Whāngārei by easing bottlenecks and congestion and improving traffic flow and safety. The project will improve safety for those walking and cycling to and from Whāngārei Hospital, Northland Polytechnic and the CBD with a shared path under the new bridge complete with pedestrian crossings. Traffic lights are being installed at the intersection to make it safer to turn right into Tarewa Road.
- The SH1 Dome Valley Safety Improvements project is under construction and includes both median and shoulder flexible safety barriers, widened shoulders, right turn bays and improved signage to address the safety issues within this section of SH1.
- The SH12 Opononi Seawall project started in April 2019 and is due for completion in late August 2019. This project is repairing the seawall that has suffered recent erosion and is threatening the state highway at six locations. These works are much needed and will make the seawall more resilient and protect the state highway from further erosion.
- Whāngārei District Council's Tarewa Rd/Porowini Ave intersection improvements were completed in March 2019. The upgrade of the intersection was required to address existing capacity issues due to rapid growth.
- SH10 Waipapa corridor improvements - Construction of this \$9 million project is planned to start in October 2019 and will provide a single lane roundabout at the intersection of SH10/Waipapa Loop Road and Waipapa Road. This will make it safer for traffic to make turns across the state highway and reduce peak time congestion and vehicle queuing on SH10.
- Funding will be allocated to the advancement of Whāngārei's urban cycling routes, continuing to create a connected network of shared paths for walking and cycling between residential areas, education, recreation and shops.
- There will be substantial investment in regionally prioritised, lower value activities to improve local roads and access to communities, such as traffic measures, street lighting and cycling facilities.
- There will be a \$6.2 million investment in the Northland Regional Council Public Transport Programme, operating bus and mobility assistance services, giving people better travel choices.
- The Twin Coast Discovery Programme Business Case 2017 recommended a range of projects and initiatives to address the existing safety and resilience problems across the Twin Coast Discovery Route, as well as gaps in expected levels of service. On 1 June 2018 Ministers announced Provincial Growth Fund funding for seven business cases along the Twin Coast Discovery Route, totalling up to \$6.25 million. These business cases will investigate network improvements to make travel for visitors and locals safer and easier, as well as enabling future growth and development of the region. The project commenced in November 2018 and will be completed at the end of 2019.

- Maunu Road/Porowini Avenue intersection improvements in Whāngārei started in June 2019. These improvements aim to address existing capacity issues due to rapid growth.

Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) investment in Northland

The Northland transport network has had significant investment from the PGF through the Twin Coast Discovery Route Package and the Kaipara Package. Both of these investments will help to drive economic growth, increase tourism and improve access for communities to key services. In addition, there has been investment in the North Auckland Line and into a roundabout at Waipapa to improve the safety of the SH10 and Waipapa Road intersection.

Project name	Description	Project type	Total funding	PGF funding	NLTF Funding	Contingency PGF funding
(Kaipara Kickstart) 50MAX High Productivity Motor Vehicle (HPMV)	Upgrading structures to be 50MAX/HPMV capable on local road routes to allow trucks to be more productive for current and future economic activity.	Local Road	\$3.16m	\$0.23m	\$1.93m	
(Kaipara Kickstart) Pouto Road Phase 1	Design then physical works to seal 10km.	Local Road				\$5.05m
(Kaipara Kickstart) Pouto Road Phase 2	Business case to extend the above seal to Pouto Point followed by physical works	Local Road	\$0.33m	\$0.33m		\$2.8m
(Kaipara Kickstart) Road re-metalling	Improving the quality of existing road surfaces.	Local Road	\$8.06m	\$3.15m		
(Kaipara Kickstart) Waipoua River Road	Physical works to widen and seal 1.5km from State Highway 12 to the Waipoua Visitor Information Centre.	Local Road	\$0.13m	\$0.12m	\$0.01m	\$1.48m
(Twin Coast Package) Integrated Cycle Plan	Business case with recommended investment programme	State Highway	\$0.25m	\$0.25m		
(Twin Coast Package) Passing and Overtaking Opportunities	Business case with recommended investment programme	State Highway	\$0.6m	\$0.6m		
(Twin Coast Package) Rest Area Strategy and Implementation Plan	Strategy and implementation plan for rest areas	State Highway	\$0.5m	\$0.5m		
(Twin Coast Package) SH11 Kawakawa to SH10 Puketona	Business case with recommended investment programme	State Highway	\$1.5m	\$1.5m		
(Twin Coast Package) SH12 Rawene to Waipoua	Business case with recommended investment programme	State Highway	\$0.4m	\$0.4m		
(Twin Coast Package) Twin Coast Discovery Route Wayfinding Signage	Business case with recommended investment programme	State Highway	\$0.2m	\$0.2m		

(Twin Coast Package) Township Plans (up to 12 plans)	Urban design plans for selected Northland townships	State Highway	\$1.8m	\$1.8m		
SH10 Waipapa Intersection Improvement	Physical works to construct a roundabout at the intersection of State Highway 10 and Waipapa Road	State Highway	\$9m	\$9m		
Development Phase Project to Support Northland Rail Business Case	Five deliverable areas (in 13 reports) covering Engineering and geotechnical investigation of the existing NAL, the tunnels and the alignment to Marsden Point to inform the NAL business case.	Rail	\$2.3m	\$2.3m		
North Auckland Line business case	Single-stage business case on a proposed upgrade of the North Auckland Line (NAL)	Rail	\$0.5m	\$0.5m		
Total			\$28.73m	\$20.88m	\$1.01m	\$9.33m

Investment in Northland

NLTP	2015-18	2018-21
Forecast total investment	\$509 million	\$607 million
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$345 million	\$280 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$6 million	\$9 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$7 million	\$9 million
Regional network improvements	\$130 million	\$220 million
Provincial Growth Fund		\$21 million