

Waikato regional transport update – August 2019

Overview

Waikato's significant contribution to growing New Zealand's social and economic wellbeing underlines the importance of the region having a land transport system that provides good access, is resilient and ensures journeys are safe and reliable.

Forming part of the 'golden triangle' with Auckland and Tauranga, inter-regional transport links are a priority to get transport goods to market and export. The Waikato Expressway, the Hamilton-Auckland rail link and SH29 over the Kaimai range to Tauranga are all critical links for the region. The Waikato Expressway will reduce travel times between Auckland and Tirau by 35 minutes and significantly reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes in the corridor.

Strong residential, tourism and economic growth has put pressure on the region's transport system. Safety is a key concern across the region, with the Waikato having some of the country's most dangerous roads with a high rate of deaths and serious injuries from crashes. Significant investment through the Safe Network Programme will help reduce deaths and serious injuries in the region. Already seven projects have been finished and more are underway to make over 162km of dangerous roads safer.

An additional \$74 million is also being spent maintaining the region's roads.

We are taking a greater role in working with Hamilton City Council and other local authorities in the region, to better plan for growth and ensure there is an integrated transport system to support housing affordability, provide traffic choice and make our cities more liveable. In Hamilton, this is through our partnership with Hamilton City Council on the future-proof strategy, and in the Auckland to Hamilton Start-up Rail project. The service will let workers be productive on their commute with wi-fi and other amenities provided, and give them certainty around their arrival time.

We are also a key partner on an integrated spatial plan for the growth corridor between Hamilton and Auckland with central and local government working in partnership with iwi to plan for growth through providing a diverse transport network.

Completed, underway and about to start

- In December 2017, the \$131 million 4.8km Rangiriri Section of the Waikato Expressway was completed. This included the symbolic reinterpretation of the Rangiriri Pā site – the site of a pivotal battle in the Waikato Wars which was heavily damaged when SH1 was routed through the battle site in 1965.
- The Transport Agency provided funding to build a new intersection at Thomas and Gordonton Roads in the north of the city.
- The \$637 million Hamilton Section of the Waikato Expressway is a 21.8km bypass to take SH1 to the east of Hamilton city. As the region's biggest roading project, it involves 17 bridges and five interchanges. This includes \$7 million funding for Hamilton City for the key Resolution Drive connection. The Hamilton section is currently scheduled to be completed in late 2020, however this date is expected to be pushed back.

- The \$409 million 6km Huntly Section of the Waikato Expressway takes SH1 over the Taupiri Range to the east of Huntly. It is progressing well and on schedule to open in early 2020.
- The \$96 million 5.9km Longswamp Section of the Waikato Expressway is scheduled to be completed at the end of this year. This project has involved widening this stretch of SH1 to four lanes at 'Expressway standard', while managing the 20,000+ vehicles a day through the site.
- The \$37.5 million Awakino Tunnel bypass project is part of the Awakino Tunnel to Mt Messenger SH3 programme, improving the links from Taranaki northwards. Two bridges will be built as part of an 800-metre bypass of the single lane Awakino Tunnel, with construction starting in October 2019. This work links closely to the SH3 Awakino to Mt Messenger safety improvements and the Mt Messenger bypass.
- The \$18 million Kirikiri Stream bridge replacement involves replacing the existing bridge on SH26, which is vulnerable to flooding, and upgrading the nearby SH26/SH25A intersection.
- The existing Kopaki Bridge on SH30 is at the end of its life and work on a new bridge is expected to start in early 2020. This will be funded under emergency works at an estimated \$8 million. The existing bridge is closed for the last week of June 2019 to undergo emergency repairs to enable it to remain open, subject to weight restrictions, until the new bridge is built.
- Later this year construction is expected to begin on the 20km Cambridge to Hamilton shared path, as part of the Te Awa cycleway. This is being built in four sections, by the Transport Agency, Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council and Waipa District Council. We have funded \$7.9 million for our section and are expecting to fund the local share portion of the remaining sections, subject to final approvals.
- We have agreed to fund \$78 million for the Hamilton to Auckland passenger rail service. This includes capital spending in stations and upgrading carriages, as well as operational spending to fund the first five years of service.
- Hamilton City Council is developing the Peacocke area to the south of the city. To assist, Council has received a \$180.3 million, 10-year interest free loan from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund and \$110.1 million of Transport Agency subsidies for infrastructure, including a new bridge over the Waikato River.
- The Transport Agency has funded \$12.5 million to four-lane and extend the Hamilton ring road and build an interchange at the intersection of Wairere Drive and Cobham Drive (SH1). This will be a key link in providing access to the Peacocke Development.
- We've provided funding for upgrading streetlights to LED lighting across the Waikato region and for rail crossing upgrades.
- Construction is about to begin on the Mangawara Stream Bridge to allow safe access to the eastern part of the urupa on Taupiri Maunga. The Transport Agency has funded part of this work.
- We have provided funding to develop and operate an interim regional ticketing solution for public transport across the Waikato.
- Funding has been approved to replace a pedestrian rail overbridge in Te Kuiti.

- The Transport Agency has provided funding for stock effluent disposal sites in the Waikato. One site in the lower Kaimai area is expected to begin construction later this year.

Safety

We know that safety is a major issue across the region, which is why we've committed to improving 162km of dangerous roads with median barriers, side barriers, rumble strips and new line markings.

We're also introducing the following six new speed zones at dangerous intersections through our safety boost programme.

- SH1/29 Piarere Intersection
- SH1B/Taylor Road intersection
- SH29 /Hopkins Road intersection
- SH29/Horrell Road intersection
- SH29 /27 Hinuera intersection
- SH25/Hauraki Road intersection.

The Waikato region is one of the priority regions in the Safe Networks Programme. Additionally, there are several speed management reviews underway.

Adding median barriers, side barriers, new line markings and rumble strips has made seven high-risk stretches of road in the Waikato safer for everyone who uses them:

- SH3 Awakino to Mt Messenger (stage 1 safety and resilience works completed)
- SH1B Taupiri to Gordonton
- SH23 Waitetuna to Raglan (stage 1 completed)
- SH27/26/24
- SH3 Ohaupo to Te Awamutu
- SH3/SH27 to Te Kuiti
- SH1 Bombay to Hampton Downs (stage 1 completed)

Construction is underway to add safety improvements to these Waikato roads:

- SH1 from Cambridge to Piarere
- SH23 from Waitetuna to Raglan
- SH5 between Wairakei and SH38
- SH3 from the Northern end of Awakino Gorge to Mokau (regional boundary with Taranaki)

When all projects have been completed, 162km of dangerous roads will be safer, with 90kms of new barriers and 311kms of rumble strips and new line markings.

The NZ Transport Agency and KiwiRail are working together to deliver a \$26 million programme of level crossing safety upgrades on or near the state highway network to prevent the number of deaths and serious injuries at level crossings. In the Waikato region upgrades are taking place at SH29 Hinuera, SH1 Huntly Bypass, Huntly, and Tregoweth Lane, Huntly (SH1). Other Waikato rail level crossing upgrades are to be scheduled.

Investment in Waikato

NLTP	2015-18	2018-21
Forecast total investment	\$1.6 billion	\$1.7 billion
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$580 million	\$654 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$51 million	\$82 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$14 million	\$23 million
Regional network improvements	\$952 million	\$842 million