

# Bay of Plenty Regional Update

## August 2020

Our focus in the Bay of Plenty is to create a safer, more resilient transport system to provide communities with access to employment, education and essential services as well as managing the increasing impacts of climate change. We are working with partners to ensure development, infrastructure and transport options meet the different needs of the local communities.

In assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on the Bay of Plenty's transport system, there is expected to be an easing of growth in the short term, because of slower population growth impacts. Waka Kotahi will continue to ensure effective integration of land use and transport remains a priority, to support mode-shift and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, provide safer and more reliable connections to the Port of Tauranga which is critical to supporting national recovery efforts, and provide access to employment and essential services for vulnerable communities.

### Overview

The opportunities to address development and growth across the Bay of Plenty differ by sub-region. The Western Bay of Plenty sub-region is one of the fastest growing areas in New Zealand and the challenge is to make sure urban development and transport infrastructure is planned and delivered to meet those needs. Addressing access to a safe and reliable transport system is key to supporting the Eastern Bay of Plenty partners to unlock opportunities for growth and tourism.

Safety is being addressed along key State highway routes, such as SH2 and SH29, and within urban areas such as Tauranga and Rotorua. One example of significant investment is the \$101 million safety upgrade for SH2 between Waihi and Ōmokoroa - a stretch of road rated the 14th worst corridor in New Zealand in terms of the frequency of fatal and serious crashes. Construction of safety improvements on SH33 is also underway to address the issues from Te Ngae Junction, near Rotorua, to Paengaroa.

Waka Kotahi is investing more than ever before in public transport and walking and cycling in the region to give people real travel choices, encouraging them to leave the car at home, and free up the roads for those who must drive. Regional partners are developing the Mode Shift Plan for the Bay of Plenty with the aim of bringing together a targeted system response to increase the wellbeing of the community by making public transport, walking and cycling more accessible. The Western Bay of Plenty plan is in the final stages, with the focus moving to Rotorua and Eastern Bay of Plenty sections.

Roads are a vital part of the region's transport network. Once completed, the Bay Link project will separate local and State highway traffic and the project scope now includes an underpass for pedestrians and cyclists. Construction has begun on stage one of Rotorua's Eastern Corridor, SH30/Te Ngae Road, to make it safer and easier to travel, and funding is being sourced for improvements to the SH30A Central Corridor.

The Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) Final Report was completed on 1 July 2020, following 12 months of robust research, analysis and evaluation undertaken by the UFTI partners (SmartGrowth and Waka Kotahi, involving Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, iwi and community leaders) in consultation with stakeholders. UFTI will shape how people live and move around the region and connect to the upper North Island in the future.

2019/2020 was the biggest maintenance programme Waka Kotahi has undertaken. In the Bay of Plenty, Waka Kotahi spent \$39.8 million across 150km of road, meaning improved and safer journeys for everyone.

### The NZ Upgrade Programme

The NZ Upgrade Programme for Bay of Plenty will deliver improved safety and support continued growth of the area.

\$478 million has been funded for constructing the Tauranga Northern Link connecting State Highway 29 (SH29) Takitimu Drive through to SH2 near Loop Road, west of Te Puna. The priority

with the new four-lane corridor will be public transport and vehicles carrying multiple people. A separated walking and cycling path will run adjacent to the new 7km corridor, providing travel choice for residents in the area, where nearly 90% of daily commutes are by private vehicle.

\$455 million has been funded for the Ōmokoroa to Te Puna section, a 7km, four-lane divided highway with a separated, off-road shared path. It extends the Tauranga Northern Link to respond to growth which extends to Ōmokoroa and beyond.

This new corridor will help save lives and provide travel choice to reduce reliance on private vehicles. Public transport will be prioritised, along with vehicles carrying multiple people, and walking and cycling will be promoted with a new separated shared path.

Announced in February 2020, the regional package of NZ Upgrade Programme investment will help address safety risks, resilience, accessibility and travel time reliability as well as support regional economic development. The Bay of Plenty project totalling \$14m is SH5 Tarukenga to Ngongotahā improvements, including the SH36 and SH5 Roundabout.

## **Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty**

Together with key partners, Waka Kotahi has committed to developing a refreshed, coordinated and aligned approach to key issues across the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region – finding answers for housing capacity, intensification, multi-modal transport and network capacity.

### **In the last 18 months**

- The UFTI Final Report delivers a programme business case setting out an optimal land use and transport programme for the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region over the next 50 years and beyond. UFTI also delivers the key foundations for inclusion in the SmartGrowth partnership's Joint Spatial Plan. The programme will see more homes built in existing and new growth areas, increased higher frequency bus services, and improved walking and cycling connections. Waka Kotahi is the delivery partner for the UFTI programme and has funded 49% of the project.
- The Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint network, launched in December 2018, is providing higher frequency services based around key routes, more direct services from key origins and destinations, and extended operating hours.
- Waka Kotahi completed improvements around the SH29A Maungatapu and Hairini roundabouts to further improve safety and travel times through the area, building on the benefits of the \$45 million Maungatapu Underpass, which opened in June 2018.
- The SH36 pedestrian and cycle overbridge between The Lakes and Tauranga Crossing opened in July 2019, creating a safe connection across the state highway. This work follows the installation of the Whakapaiwaka overbridge built in 2018 over SH29/Takitimu Drive, connecting Bethlehem and Gate Pa.
- 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 Waka Kotahi.
- Waka Kotahi funded 51% of the Kopurererua cycle path upgrade, which opened in July 2019. A 5km section of gravel path through the Kopurererua Valley was sealed to create a safer and easier route that allows more people to travel by bike between The Lakes and the CBD. The cycle path upgrade was included in Tauranga City Council's Low Cost/Low Risk programme.
- Stage 1 of the Ōmokoroa Road Corridor Improvements project, enabled a \$6.7 million investment to improve safety and active mode access along Ōmokoroa Road.
- In May 2020, the \$805,000 upgrade to parking at Pyes Pa School on SH36 was completed to improve safety for students during pick up and drop off. The improvements include a dedicated bus stop and drop-off/pick-up zone, a turn-around facility, visitor parking and time-restricted parking as well as a pedestrian crossing, safety barriers, new footpaths and

widening of the road shoulder. The project was co-funded by Waka Kotahi and Ministry of Education.

### **Underway or about to start**

- A \$1.35 million project is underway to expand and restore two wetlands in the Hairini area as part of a collaboration between Waka Kotahi and local hapū. More than 60,000 plants will be planted over the next five years – both to restore the current wetlands and expand the wetlands by an additional 12,000m<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the wetlands work, three pou are to be installed on the Maungatapu roundabout and a waharoa entranceway at the Te Pahou urupa.
- Replacement of the street lighting network with LEDs will increase safety and significantly reduce energy use and on-going maintenance costs. Waka Kotahi is funding 85% of the \$8.2 million being spent replacing Tauranga's street lighting network; further funding will be spent in the Western Bay District.
- 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. When finished, it 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 SH2 Bayfair roundabout, and a pedestrian and cycle underpass is now included in the project design.
- In Tauranga, completion of the strategic urban network of cycleways – connecting suburbs to the CBD and providing links from residential areas to education, employment and social opportunities is progressing.
- Funding is also being used to promote walking and cycling, as well as cycle skills education, in schools.
- Stage 2 of the Ōmokoroa Road Improvements project is expected to begin late 2020; Waka Kotahi will fund 51% of this project as a delivery partner.
- The Ngatai Road cycleway will improve safety for children cycling to schools in the Tauranga suburbs of Matua and Otumoetai. Construction is expected to be completed this month. Waka Kotahi will fund 51% of this project as a delivery partner.
- The Domain Road Upgrade project in Papamoa will improve connections for walking and cycling and public transport users. Construction is underway, with completion estimated for early 2022. Waka Kotahi will fund 51% of this project as a delivery partner.
- The Maunganui Road Walking and Cycling Improvements project, to improve pedestrian and cyclist access to economic and social opportunities in the area (including safer access for children to schools in the area), is set to begin mid-2020 with completion expected early 2022. Waka Kotahi will fund 51% of this project as a delivery partner.
- The Tauranga System Plan will supplement UFTI by identifying how the strategic function can be achieved at key places, corridors or parts of the network, to deliver appropriate levels of service for all transport modes. Waka Kotahi will fund 68% of this project as a delivery partner.
- The detailed business case for Tauriko's (SH29) transport network is progressing. This will identify future initiatives for a transport system that increases the attractiveness of public transport and walking, cycling and other active modes, connecting residential housing to wider Tauranga.
- Waka Kotahi continues to support the development of the Te Papa Spatial Framework Indicative Business Case, which identifies mode shift and intensification opportunities for Tauranga's CBD and inner-city suburbs of Greerton and Gate Pā.
- The SH5 Tarukenga to Ngongotahā Improvements including SH36 and SH5 Roundabout project, funded by the regional package of the NZ Upgrade Programme is scheduled to start construction in Spring 2020.

## **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 already important tourism locations, are the focus of investigations to understand future opportunities. This work is progressing collaboratively with Ngāi Tūhoe, the Whakatāne and Wairoa district councils and Waka Kotahi.

### **In the last 18 months**

- The SH2 Woodlands Ōpōtiki Shared Path which provides a path for pedestrians and cyclists under the Waioeka Bridge in Ōpōtiki as completed in October 2019. Students no longer need to cross the busy SH2 Woodlands Road intersection.
- SH2 Tāneatua safety improvements were completed in April 2020. The improvements included two new pedestrian crossings, a dedicated bus bay outside Tāneatua School, a new flush median through the length of the town and narrowing of the traffic lanes.

### **Underway or about to start**

- Access Whakatāne is a strategic and collaborative approach to provide better transport choice and accessibility to diverse community needs in the short to medium term. This work is being completed alongside Whakatāne District Council through the Network Operating Framework for the district.
- Waka Kotahi is working with Ōpōtiki District Council on the business case for the Snell Road improvements, which supports the Ōpōtiki Harbour Development, which was announced in January 2020 as part of the regional package of the NZ Upgrade Programme. The improvements will provide better public access to the beach, the future wharf and address possible future safety conflicts with the Dunes Trail cycleway.
- Funding of \$7.6 million has been confirmed for safety improvements on SH2, from the SH2/Wainui Road intersection to Ōpōtiki as part of the Safe Network Programme. This stage includes shoulder widening, side barriers at high-risk locations, and edgeline and centreline rumble strips. It also includes the design for the Matekerepu and Waiōtahe Valley Road intersections.
- In July 2019, \$7.1 million was approved for Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki district councils to complete the design and construction of safety improvements for Wainui Road, between SH2 and Ōhope. Construction is expected to get underway late-2020.

## **Rotorua**

Rotorua's eastern corridor is a key transport route, serving both inter-regional and local traffic. Waka Kotahi and Rotorua Lakes Council have been looking at the best ways to future-proof the city's transport network to improve safety, unlock growth and development opportunities, and boost wellbeing within the community.

### **In the last 18 months**

- The Network Operating Framework has been completed for the wider Rotorua region. Taking a strategic and collaborative approach has allowed partners to recognise the diverse needs of customers on the wider transport system and understand where partners should prioritise planning and investment in the future.
- 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 because of the construction of a straight-through lane for city-bound traffic.

- Safety barriers were installed on a section of SH36 in Ngongotahā in June 2020 protecting road users and residents.

### **Underway or about to start**

- Construction on the Eastern Corridor Stage One project started in February 2020 and will take about 18 months to complete. The improvements include the upgrade of the Tarawera roundabout to a signalised intersection, four lanes between Allan Mills and Iles roads, Sala Street intersection improvements, new shared paths, new watermains and undergrounding overhead powerlines.
- Funding in the National Land Transport Programme will see the completion of the urban Rotorua Cycleway during this three-year period.
- Waka Kotahi is close to completing the Eastern Corridor Stage Two detailed business case, which will inform the improvements to be made between Iles Road and Rotorua Airport. This is expected to be finalised later this year.

### **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 and Rotorua. Waka Kotahi is working with our partners to improve safety for all road users.

### **In the last 18 months**

- Speed reviews were completed for rural Rotorua on SH33/SH30 Okere Falls to Rotokawa Road and SH5 Waiotapu, and new speed limits implemented on 29 June and 6 July 2020, respectively.
- Waka Kotahi has invested significantly in safety along SH2 between Waihi and Ōmokoroa as part of our Safe Network Programme. The five-year \$101 million programme of work on SH2 between Waihi and Ōmokoroa began early last year. This work is focused on preventing head-on and run-off crashes and providing safer connections for the local community.

### **Underway or about to start**

- Engagement on speed along Rotorua's SH5/SH30 Old Taupō Road is about to get underway. This will inform the next steps for the speed review process and gauge the community's desire for any change in speed limits.
- The SH33 Te Ngae Junction to Paengaroa safety improvements project is more than halfway through its construction programme, with completion expected in mid-2021. The sections south of Mourea and near Paengaroa are already complete.
- Waka Kotahi is continuing to address areas where speed management would dramatically improve the safety on key corridors and is looking at opportunities on the wider regional network.

## Investment in Bay of Plenty

<b>NLTP</b>	<b>2015–18</b>	<b>2018–21</b>
Forecast total investment	\$647 million	\$857 million
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$277 million	\$331 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$44 million	\$71 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$10 million	\$58 million
Regional network improvements	\$302 million	\$353 million

<b>Crown funding</b>	
NZ Upgrade Programme*	\$947 million

\*Waka Kotahi led projects only

# Overview map

