

Top of the South Regional Update

August 2020

Overview

Population growth is putting pressure on the Nelson and Tasman urban transport network.

Our focus is on delivering better transport choices in Nelson and Richmond with improvements to both cycling and the public transport network.

A key piece of this work is the Nelson Future Access project detailed business case. Broadly, this work will look at the Rocks Road and Waimea Road corridors and the ability to get people and freight in and out of Nelson safely and efficiently. The business case will also look to improve the land transport network links with Nelson Port, ensure safer and more accessible walking and cycling facilities, and review public transport improvements to maximise the transport network's efficiency.

Work continues managing the growth around Richmond and Stoke to use the existing network more efficiently.

We will focus on safety improvements to the transport links between Richmond and Mapua and Nelson and Blenheim.

Nelson

The Nelson City Council plans to substantially complete its cycleway, linking the network from Tahunanui to the city centre.

The Council is also focused on improving its public transport service, with a new Stoke loop route to improve accessibility within the Stoke area and connections to the growth area in Saxton. It is also planning to introduce electronic bus ticketing to make it easier for people to use the service.

The Nelson Future Access project is considering opportunities to better link the transport network between Nelson Port and Annesbrook for all transport modes, including the Rocks Road shared pathway.

Investment in public transport in Nelson and Richmond will improve services both within and between Nelson and Richmond, while extension of the Nelson cycleway network between Annesbrook and Tahunanui will provide better access for those who cycle.

In the last 18 months

- Stage 1 of the Tahunanui shared pathway was completed in July 2019, in conjunction with Nelson City Council. Work on stage 2 began early 2020.
- The replacement Saltwater Creek bridge was completed in September 2019, in conjunction with Nelson City Council.

Underway or about to start

- The Nelson Future Access project is underway, looking at ways to develop a multi-modal transport system, a thriving CBD; a world-class waterfront; and a safer, more accessible and resilient transport system. Community engagement began in June 2020, following extensive stakeholder engagement.
- SH6 Blenheim to Nelson speed and short-term safety review is underway. Formal consultation on safer speed limits has been completed, with a formal decision on safer speed limits yet to be announced.

Tasman

Managing growth, improving safety and developing alternative transport choices, particularly cycling and public transport facilities, are the focus for the Tasman district.

A detailed business case is being completed for Motueka's Town Centre, to enable it can be considered for funding in the next National Land Transport Programme.

In the last 18 months

- Emergency repair works on SH60 Takaka Hill, following damage caused by Cyclone Gita in February 2018, are ongoing. The first 10 sites were completed in mid-2019, with work now underway on the five remaining major sites. This project has a budget of \$20m and is expected to be completed in 2021.

Underway or about to start:

- The SH6 Hope to Wakefield speed review is underway, following community advocacy to have safer speed limits introduced. Engagement has been completed, and preparations are underway for formal consultation.
- The SH60 Upper Takaka to Takaka speed review is underway, following community advocacy to have safer speed limits introduced. Engagement has been completed, and preparations are underway for formal consultation.
- Construction of the shared pathway for walking and cycling between Takaka and Paines Ford is underway. This project is in response to community concerns about walking and cycling along SH60 and is expected to be completed by late 2020.

Marlborough

Construction of the new \$21 million bridge over the Ōpaoa River began in 2019. The new, wider bridge will ensure better access for heavy vehicles, improve safety for users, offer greater seismic resilience, and allow for improved walking and cycling facilities. This is a critical transport link between Picton and Christchurch, particularly for freight, and for people in Marlborough to access Blenheim. The new bridge will make SH1 more resilient and secure as New Zealand's key strategic road freight route.

The purchase of new ferries by KiwiRail and subsequent Picton Ferry Terminal redevelopment brings opportunities to better connect the ferry precinct with the town, re-think the transport networks, and take advantage of new investment in KiwiRail's Cook Strait operations. This work is being done in conjunction with Marlborough District Council, KiwiRail and Ports of Marlborough.

Underway or about to start

- Construction of a new bridge on SH1 over the Ōpaoa River is expected to be completed by late 2020.
- Alongside the new SH1 Ōpaoa River bridge, work is underway to convert the historic SH1 bridge into a safe, separated walking and cycling facility.
- Community and stakeholder engagement on Picton Port Access and redevelopment is underway, in conjunction with KiwiRail, Marlborough District Council and Ports of Marlborough.

Safety

Together with our partners, we are improving safety for all road users, including visiting drivers, in the Top of the South.

The SH6 Blenheim to Nelson safety review will create a safer network, reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries along this stretch of state highway. This review includes the introduction of safer speed limits between Blenheim and Nelson.

Speed reviews for SH6 Hope to Wakefield and SH60 Upper Takaka to Takaka were brought forward to address community concerns about having safer and more appropriate speeds on state highways.

A speed review of Marlborough local roads took place in late 2019.

Underway or about to start

- The SH6 Blenheim to Nelson speed and short-term safety improvement review is underway.
- The SH6 Hope to Wakefield speed review is underway.
- The SH60 Upper Takaka to Takaka speed review is underway.
- Construction of a shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists on SH60 Paines Ford to Takaka is underway.

Regional development

Keeping the land transport system well-maintained is a large part of the annual investment from the National Land Transport Fund in the Top of the South area. This money ensures the transport system is safer, more reliable and easier to use, helps keep communities connected and supports economic growth.

The Picton Ferry Terminal redevelopment brings opportunities to better connect the ferry precinct connection with the town, re-think the transport networks, and take advantage of new investment in KiwiRail's Cook Strait operations. This project represents a transformational investment in critical infrastructure that is expected to generate significant tourism, economic and environmental benefits.

The Nelson Future Access project is considering how to get people and freight, safely and efficiently, in and out of Nelson. It will also look to improve land transport links with Nelson Port, ensure safer and more accessible walking and cycling facilities, and review public transport to maximise network efficiency.

Waka Kotahi continues to work with Nelson City and Tasman District councils to identify how to use the transport network more efficiently, in response to concerns about increasing congestion around growth areas, such as Richmond. The development of the Richmond Network Operating Framework will signal any requirement for intervention and whether the designation for a future Hope bypass should be retained. This framework will provide greater clarity before the Hope Bypass designation expires in 2023.

Construction of the new bridge over the Ōpaoa River in Blenheim will make SH1 more resilient and secure as New Zealand's key strategic north-south road freight route.

The Kaikoura rebuild, led by North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery (NCTIR) alliance, is expected to be completed on 15 December 2020. More than 7,500 people from 350 organisations have helped to restore the transport corridor along the Kaikōura coastline.

Environment

Climate change is affecting the resilience of the region's land transport system as a freight corridor and in providing reliable connectivity of its communities.

On Takaka Hill, work to repair damage caused by Cyclone Gita continues, with the project scheduled to be completed in 2021. This \$20m project is improving the resilience of the infrastructure, such as retaining walls and drainage, and by using up-to-date construction techniques and technology.

Continued investment in walking, cycling and public transport across the Top of the South is helping to provide alternative transport options, and therefore, contribute to improved environmental outcomes.

Investment in the Top of the South

NLTP	2015–18	2018–21
Forecast total investment	\$290 million	\$315 million
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$170 million	\$207 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$5 million	\$7.5 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$2 million	\$6.2 million
Regional network improvements	\$100 million	\$87 million

Overview map

