

Waikato Regional Update

August 2020

Our focus in Waikato is to support a productive and growing regional economy. One that creates stronger communities with good access to employment, education and essential services, and manages increasing impacts of climate change. Delivering safe and reliable inter-regional journeys that enable the movement of people and freight to key destinations.

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 (under construction) will reduce travel times between Auckland and Tirau by 35 minutes and significantly reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes along this corridor. Strong residential, tourism and economic growth has put pressure on the region's transport system.

Safety is a key concern across the region; Waikato has one of the country's highest rates of deaths and serious injuries resulting from crashes. Significant investment through the Safe Network Programme will help reduce deaths and serious injuries in the region and an additional \$74 million is being spent maintaining the region's roads.

Waka Kotahi is working with partners to take a more integrated approach of how we plan for growth supporting transport infrastructure and wider system responses. We are a key partner of the Hamilton and Auckland partnership where central and local government are working in partnership with iwi to deliver the actions established from the integrated spatial plan for this growth corridor. The development of the Hamilton-Waikato Metro Spatial Plan focuses on the longer-term strategic direction and approach for the area while the Mode Shift Plan for the Hamilton metro area incorporates responses for the short to medium term. It aims to increase community wellbeing by growing the share of travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

Completed, underway and about to start

Waikato Expressway:

- The \$409 million 15km Huntly Section of the Waikato Expressway opened in February 2020. It now takes SH1 over the Taupiri Range to the east of Huntly.
- An official opening and iwi led blessing was held in December 2019 at the Horsham Downs Road bridge, the final local road bridge to open over the expressway.
- The \$96 million 5.9km Longswamp Section of the Waikato Expressway will be completed later this year. This project has involved widening this stretch of SH1 to four lanes at 'Expressway standard', while managing the 20,000-plus vehicles a day through the site.
- The \$637 million Hamilton Section of the Waikato Expressway is the final section to be completed. A 21.8km bypass to re-route SH1 to the east of Hamilton city is Waikato's biggest roading project with 17 bridges and five interchanges. The completion date is scheduled for late 2021.

Other capital improvement projects

- Construction of the \$37.5 million Awakino Tunnel bypass project started in October 2019. Part of the SH3 safety and resilience improvements from Awakino Gorge to Mt Messenger, the 2.3 km project involves building two new bridges over the Awakino River as well as a passing lane and realigning a section of highway north of the tunnel. Further safety and resilience works are underway along this corridor and include the installation of flexible safety median and side barriers, line markings and rumble strips.

- \$13 million is being invested to improve 12km of the East Taupō Arterial. The project consists of widening road shoulders, installing flexible median safety barriers and roadside safety barriers where hazards can't be removed, such as power poles, trees and deep ditches. This aligns with additional safety and resilience work occurring around the greater Taupō region, including the construction of retaining walls at Bulli Point, south of the lake.
- The existing Kopaki Bridge on SH30 is aging and work on a new bridge is expected to start in late 2020. This will be funded under emergency works at an estimated \$8 million.
- Waka Kotahi has provided funding to construct two stock effluent disposal sites in the Waikato; the first site was opened at the foot of the Kaimai Ranges in February 2020. The second proposed site is Taupō with construction planned for late 2020.
- The 20km Te Awa path between Cambridge and Hamilton is the last link in providing a continuous 60km cycling and walking route from Karapiro to Ngaruawahia. \$10.5 million has been allocated to fund construction of the Waka Kotahi section of the Cambridge to Hamilton shared path (now complete) and a safe crossing (underpass) of SH21. Construction of the remaining three sections is expected to get underway late 2020, with full path completion by 2021. Construction of the SH21 underpass will begin late 2020.
- Hamilton City Council is developing the Peacocke area to the south of the city. To enable this, the Council has received a \$180.3 million, 10-year interest free loan from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund and \$110.1 million of Waka Kotahi subsidies for transport infrastructure, including a new bridge over the Waikato River. Construction of the new bridge is set to start later this year expected to be completed in 2023.
- Construction on the extension of the Hamilton ring road and interchange at the intersection of Wairere Drive and Cobham Drive (SH1) continues. Waka Kotahi contributed \$44 million to this project. The project completion is expected in early to mid-2022.

Rail

- The Hamilton to Auckland passenger rail service, Te Huia, will be operational from November 2020. Waka Kotahi is co-investing with council partners \$96.9m in the programme, which includes capital spending in stations and upgrading carriages of \$67.6m (with \$58.5m from Waka Kotahi and \$9.1m from local authorities).
- The total cost of the four and half years operating trial, including the service operated by KiwiRail, is estimated at \$29.3m and includes a \$22.1m investment from Waka Kotahi.

Safety

We know that safety is a major issue across the region, which is why we've committed to improving 162km of the land transport system, when all projects have been completed, with 90kms of new barriers and 311kms of rumble strips and new line markings.

Four intersection speed zones were installed in the region as part of the Boost Safety Programme at these sites:

- SH25/Hauraki Rd intersection, south of Thames
- SH27/Horrell Rd intersection at Te Puinga
- SH29/Hopkins Rd intersection, south of Matamata
- SH1/SH29 intersection at Piarere

This brings the total number of intersection speed zones in the region to six.

There are currently three speed management reviews underway in Waikato; Hamilton City (SH1, SH3 and SH26), West Waikato (SH23, SH31 and SH39) and Taupō to Turangi (SH1).

\$1.3 million has been approved to replace a pedestrian rail overbridge in Te Kuiti, traversing the railway lines at Te Kuiti and connecting the western side of town to the town centre. The new bridge will replace the current 1950s footbridge.

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

- SH1 from Cambridge to Piarere
- SH23 from Waitetuna to Raglan – stage one complete
- SH5 between Wairakei and SH38

Waka Kotahi 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. Funding has been provided for 10 sites across the Waikato; six are complete and work continues at four sites - SH27 Pohlen Road, SH24 Broadway Morrinsville, SH27 Waitoa Road, and SH26 Morrinsville Road.

Standard Safety Improvement funding

\$4.1 million Standard Safety Improvement (SSI) funding has been approved for improvements on local roads.

- Completed January 2020, \$1.4 million* was provided for the Anglesea and Bryce Street intersection upgrade. This is one of the country's first Safe Network Programme funded activities for a local authority under the new SSI funding model.
- \$1.2 million* has been approved for a roundabout at one of Hamilton city's highest incident intersections, Bankwood and Comries roads. The work is scheduled to start late 2020.
- \$1.5 million* has been approved for construction of a roundabout at Horotiu Bridge-River Road intersection in Waikato District Council's area.

**Total costs indicated include local Council contribution*

Innovating Streets

Hamilton City, Waipa District, Waikato District and Thames Coromandel District councils have all received a portion of the \$13.95 million investment from round one of our Innovating Streets pilot fund aimed at making streets more people-friendly and vibrant. The nominated projects are expected to begin early 2021 and be completed by June 2021.

Annual Maintenance

About 430.7km of State highway repairs and renewals maintenance was completed in the Waikato as part of the 2019/20 summer work programme. This comprised a total of 559 sites in the region on SH1 between Tirau and Tokoroa; SH1 between Taupō and Waiouru; SH25 and SH25A around the Coromandel Peninsula; and Hamilton urban area.

**Lane kilometres refers to the total length of lanes to be resealed – i.e. resealing both lanes of five kilometres stretch of two-lane highway equals ten lane kilometres.*

Investment in Waikato

NLTP	2015–18	2018–21
Forecast total investment	\$1.6 billion	\$2 billion
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$580 million	\$662 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$51 million	\$88 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$14 million	\$31 million
Regional network improvements	\$952 million	\$1 billion

Overview map

