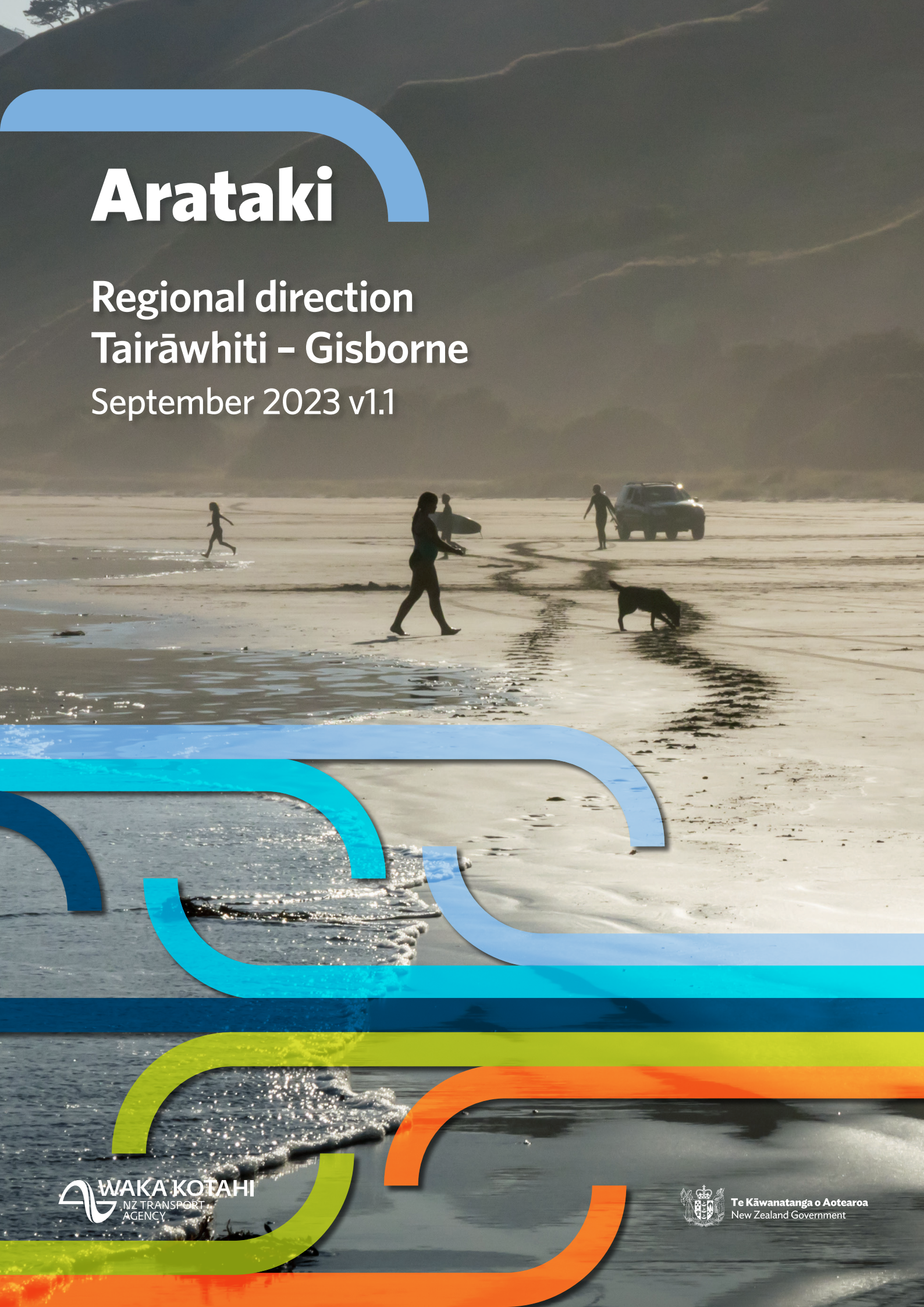
Arataki

Regional direction
Tairāwhiti – Gisborne

September 2023 v1.1



WAKA KOTAHI
NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

At a glance

Tairāwhiti Gisborne is one of the most remote regions in Aotearoa New Zealand and home to about 1% of the country's population.[1] The economy is largely based on primary production, forestry, fishing, sheep and beef farming, horticulture, and viticulture.

The region is highly dependent on SH35 and SH2. Both highways have resilience challenges with no alternate routes. The reliability of these corridors is critical.

The region's population is forecast to grow from 49,500 to about 55,000 by 2048.[2] Transport can support regional development by:

- improving access to employment, education, training, and essential services for remote East Cape communities
- enabling the movement of goods to Eastland Port and access to visitor destinations
- ensuring safe and reliable connections to neighbouring regions.

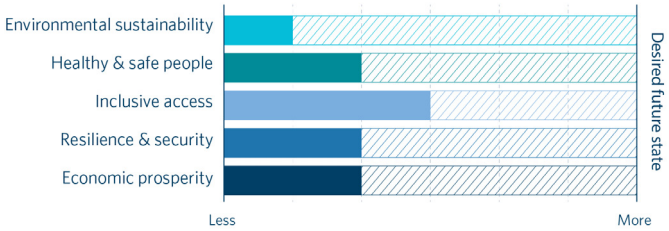
Challenging terrain and long distances result in relatively long travel times. Of the region's 1,889kms of local roads, 37% are unsealed.[3]

Tairāwhiti has limited public transport services. Around 90% of trips to work are by private vehicle.[4] Active modes are likely the best way to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled, along with increasing the share of freight moved by coastal shipping. The region has higher than average rates of walking and cycling, but numbers are declining. Investment in safe and easy ways to access facilities can help shift more people to active modes.

The region's social and economic opportunities are dependent on connections north to Te Moana a Toi-te-Huatahi Bay of Plenty and south to Te Matau-a-Māui Hawke's Bay, and other regions. These routes support key industries, move goods to market, provide access to specialist services, and allow communities to thrive.

Other critical transport challenges facing Tairāwhiti over the next three decades include safety, resilience, and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Scale of effort to deliver outcomes in Tairāwhiti – Gisborne



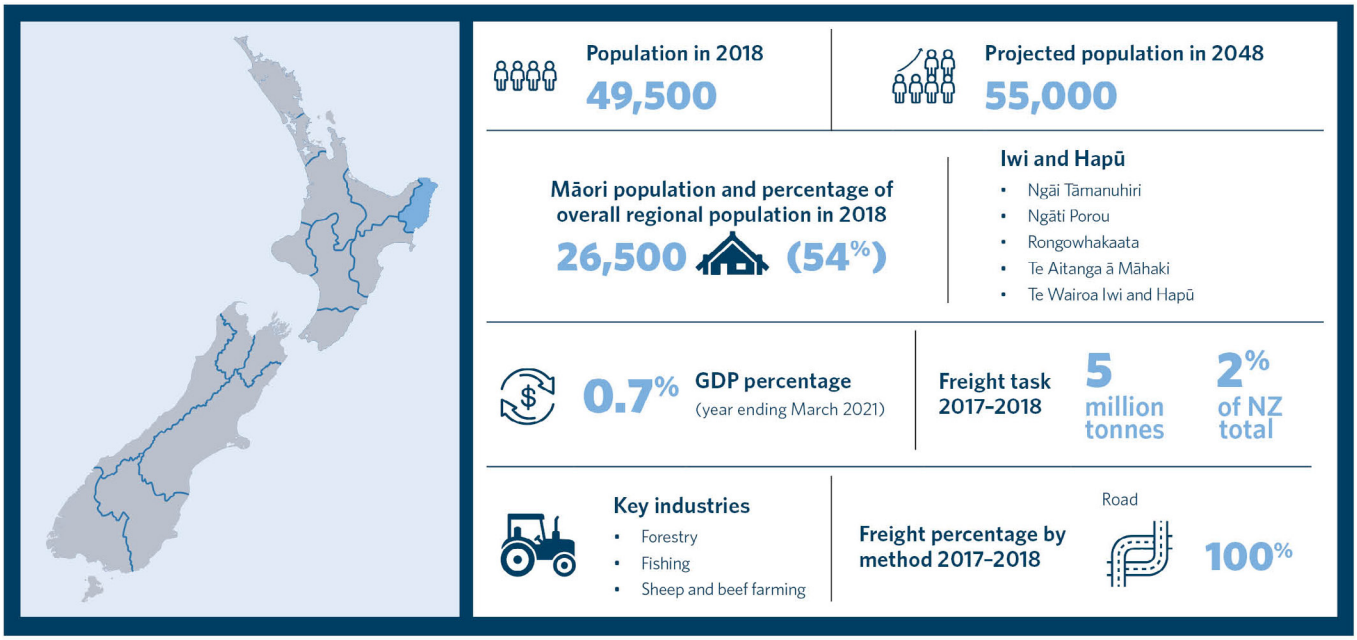
The regional ratings show how Waka Kotahi has assessed the potential scale of effort required in each region to achieve the future desired state for each outcome over the next 10 years. The ratings in each region indicate where effort can be best focused and inform conversations with partners about priority outcomes in each region.

The rating assessments are based on evidence using system-levels metrics. Further details are captured in the methodology document.

The September 2023 v1.1 release of *Arataki* includes updates to reflect the severe weather events of 2023 and correct minor errors. Most sections of the *Regional direction Tairāwhiti – Gisborne* have climate-related updates.

Context

Tairāwhiti – Gisborne



The population of Tairāwhiti Gisborne is projected to grow from 49,500 to about 55,000 by 2048, or 1% of the country's population.[5] Growth will be heavily focused in the Tairāwhiti urban area, which is home to 75% of the region's population and the key hub for employment and services.[6]

Communities in the north of the region are small, relatively isolated, and highly reliant on a single road transport connection. These communities have high levels of deprivation and populations that are expected to decline.[7] The population is largely young people and seniors, with a comparatively small working-age population. If current settlement trends continue, there could be an increase in private vehicle reliance and longer journey times longer.

In 2018, 26,500 Māori lived in Tairāwhiti, making up 54% of the region's population.[8] This is over three times higher than the national rate of 16.5%.[9]

The iwi and hapū in the Tairāwhiti region are Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Ngāti Porou, Rongowhakaata, Te Aitanga ā Māhaki, and Te Wairoa Iwi and Hapū.[10]

Te Ōhanga Māori - The Māori Economy 2018 includes information for the Tairāwhiti rohe, which relates to the region. It notes the asset base in the rohe is valued at $3.0 billion.[11] It is dominated by the primary sector.[12] Tairāwhiti is one of three regions with the highest proportion of Māori deaths and serious injuries related to traffic incidents.[13]

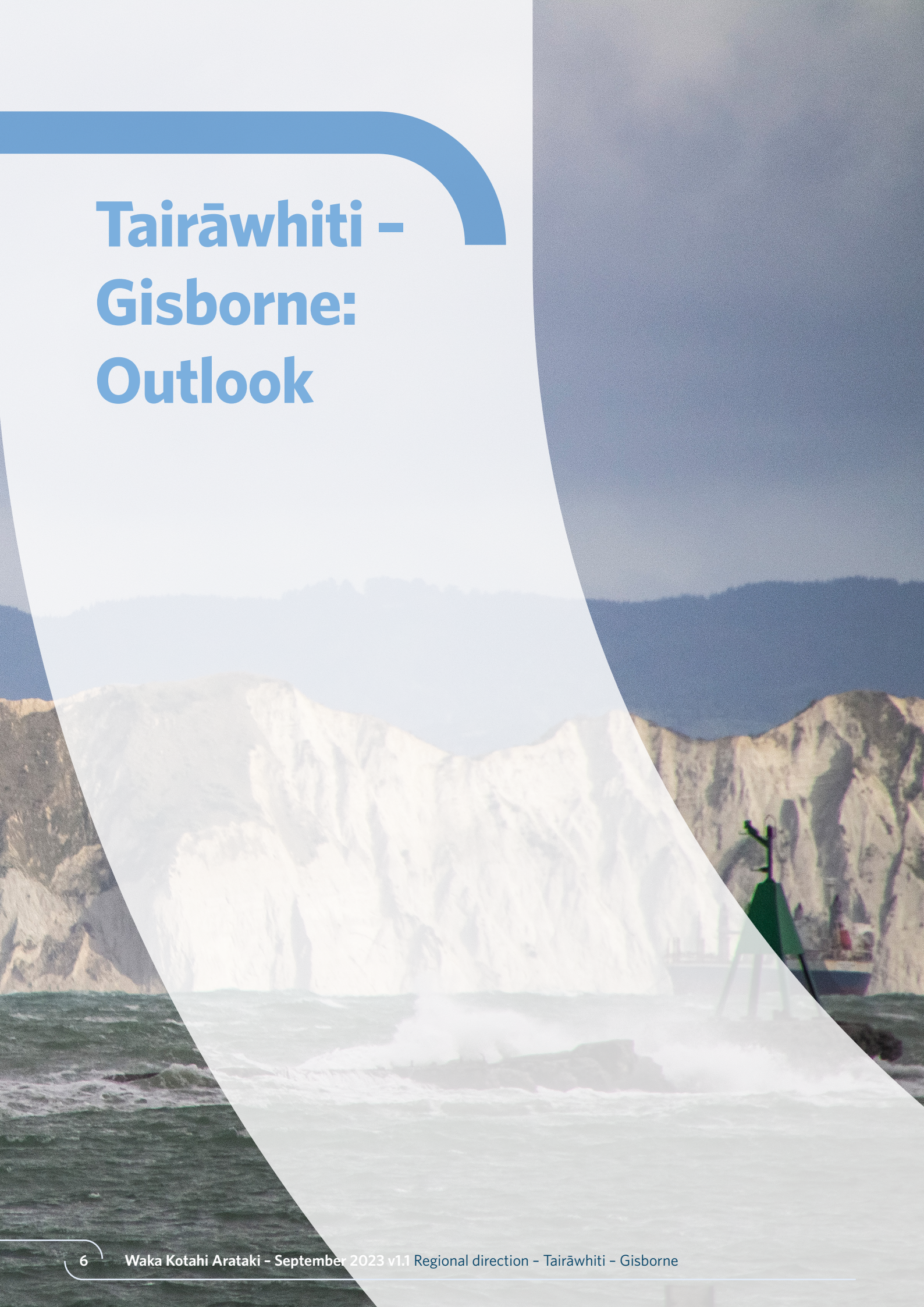
The economy of Tairāwhiti has lagged behind other parts of the country. The *Tairāwhiti Regional Economic Action Plan, He Huarahi Hei Whai Oranga* was launched in February 2017.[14] The plan focuses on freight, tourism, and efficiency.

Tairāwhiti has received government funding to address access to social and economic opportunities, and to help diversify the economy.

Severe weather events are already affecting the land transport system of Tairāwhiti. In February 2023, Cyclone Gabrielle caused flooding and landslips, resulting in road closures on SH2 between Gisborne and Wairoa and multiple sites along SH35. There are several years of rebuild ahead for these parts of the network.

The freight task in Tairāwhiti in 2017–2018 was 5 million tonnes, or about 2% of the Aotearoa total.[15] One hundred percent of the freight task tonnage was moved by road.[16]

Tairāwhiti – Gisborne: Outlook



Around 90% of trips to work in the region are by private vehicle.[17] Recent decades have seen limited public transport services and a decline in people walking and cycling.[18]

The urban road network is well connected, with capacity to manage projected volumes in most areas. There is some pressure around freight growth, particularly export log volumes to Eastland Port and other sites. Growing traffic volumes on a few key urban routes also raise issues.

The rail line from Ahuriri Napier to Wairoa was reopened for log freight in 2020. However, the section from Wairoa to Tairāwhiti remains mothballed following a land slip in 2012. It was further damaged by a larger land slip in November 2021.

As the region's population grows 11% over the next 30 years, its economy and transport system will need to adapt as Aotearoa transitions to a low carbon future.

The most significant changes to the region's transport system over the next three decades include:

- recovering and rebuilding after Cyclone Gabrielle
- supporting emissions reduction
- improving safety
- managing resilience
- encouraging more walking and cycling in the Tairāwhiti urban area.

In light of increased extreme weather events, the next 30 years will present long-term resilience challenges as the likelihood of damaged roads and rail networks grows. It will be necessary to work with communities to:

- understand climate adaptation
- identify and prioritise responses in high-risk areas
- identify sections of the network prone to closure
- plan to avoid infrastructure and development in high-risk areas.

Tairāwhiti faces long-term challenges, such as high unemployment and low incomes.[19] The number of people on a fixed income will likely place pressure on the region's council to:

- maintain existing networks
- fund new infrastructure
- provide appropriate services.

Climate change will make this even harder.

Steps to make sure transport outcomes are delivered in a more efficient and cost-effective way include:

- renewing the focus on small-scale projects and getting more from existing infrastructure
- encouraging active modes by reallocating existing road space and making temporary or low-cost improvements
- applying adaptive management techniques to transport assets, to help manage risks and uncertainty, and support communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

This section uses the *Transport Outcomes Framework* from Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport to support a 'decide and provide' approach to proactively plan the desired future state we want to achieve. Key challenges and opportunities are identified and discussed. Then we highlight the most important actions to be taken to make progress on each outcome.

Environmental sustainability

Challenges and opportunities

Tairāwhiti Gisborne will need to make a modest contribution to reducing transport emissions, to reach the 2035 targets set in the government's *Emissions Reduction Plan* and net-zero emissions by 2050.[20]

To support national emissions targets, there will need to be significant change in Tairāwhiti Gisborne to how people travel in a district focused on private car travel.

Care is required to ensure efforts to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) don't unfairly impact specific communities or groups.

We need to reduce freight transport carbon through:

- adopting lower-emitting fuels
- increasing mode share for rail and coastal shipping.

We must also reduce the impact of the region's transport system on the local environment, especially its impacts on air pollution, waterways, and ecological systems. Contaminated stormwater runoff from roads must be treated before entering waterways. The impact of new and improved transport infrastructure on the natural environment must be appropriately managed.

Making progress

Key actions over the next 10 years to make progress on this outcome are:

- ensuring appropriate standards, policies, and regulations are in place to reduce the impact of the region's transport system on the local environment
- identifying opportunities for smaller projects, including making the most of the existing network, that can improve system outcomes
- engaging in local planning processes to ensure development, planning, and investment focuses on reducing emissions, private vehicle travel, and average trip length
- enabling and increasing mode shift through rapid and extensive changes to the allocation of space on existing roads and streets to accelerate delivery of public transport plus walking and cycling networks
- continuing to improve public transport service quality, including exploring use of technology to help deliver better services at a lower cost.

To support national emissions targets, there will need to be significant change in Tairāwhiti Gisborne to how people travel in a district focused on private car travel.

Healthy and safe people

Challenges and opportunities

Serious crashes are concentrated in the Tairāwhiti Gisborne urban area and on high-risk rural roads.[21] Safety improvements should focus on addressing:

- high-risk intersections
- run-off road crashes
- vulnerable users
- driver behaviour.[22]

Efforts to improve road safety are guided by the *Road to Zero: New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy 2020–2030* and associated *Action Plan 2020–2022*, plus regional safety strategies.[23]

Undeveloped networks contribute to low and declining rates of walking and cycling in Tairāwhiti. These levels have declined substantially over recent decades, contributing to a lack of physical activity and subsequent health problems. These health issues, like obesity and diabetes, disproportionately impact some demographics.[24] The harmful impacts of vehicle tailpipe pollutants on health, especially on the respiratory systems of our youngest, oldest, and most vulnerable, are much greater than previously realised.[25]

Significant progress on the healthy and safe people outcome will support environmental sustainability and inclusive access. Providing extensive networks of safe walking and cycling facilities will encourage more people to use these healthy and sustainable travel options. Similarly, a focus on reducing deaths and serious injuries for vulnerable road users will also encourage more people to walk and cycle.

Making progress

Continuing to realise safety plans and supporting changes to encourage walking and cycling in the city of Tairāwhiti Gisborne will help the region. New approaches to planning, design, and delivery, along with significant investment, are needed to accelerate progress.

Key actions over the next 10 years to make progress on this outcome are:

- continuing safety improvements that target high-risk intersections, run-off road crashes, high-volume roads, and head-on crashes on high-risk rural roads, especially on SH2 and SH35
- rapidly rolling out well-connected, separated cycling networks in Tairāwhiti Gisborne and other regional towns through the reallocation of existing street space
- requiring high-quality active mode infrastructure to be part of new developments
- encouraging and implementing regulatory changes that reduce harmful vehicle emissions and encourage use of zero-emissions vehicles
- continuing to manage transport system noise through planning and mitigation
- targeting road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on alcohol and drug impairment, speeding, and people not wearing seatbelts
- managing safe and appropriate speeds on high-risk rural roads – this includes targeted use of safety cameras to reduce speeding
- advocating for robust mobile network coverage in rural and regional areas.

Safety improvements should focus on addressing:

- **high-risk intersections**
- **run-off road crashes**
- **vulnerable users**
- **driver behaviour.**

Inclusive access

Challenges and opportunities

The region's transport system struggles to provide people of all ages, abilities, and income levels with safe, sustainable, and reliable access to a variety of social and economic opportunities.

High reliance on private vehicles creates several access challenges, including:

- creating difficulties for those without easy access to and use of a private vehicle to fully participate in society
- placing significant pressure on household budgets to meet the high costs of car ownership and use
- limiting people's ability to travel in a way that best meets their needs because of poor travel choice.

Rural and remote communities need better connections to the Tairāwhiti Gisborne urban area, where employment, education, and essential services are concentrated. Residents rely on access to Waikato Hospital for a range of specialist medical services. Access improvements should address the barriers of distance, affordability, and network resilience.

Emerging technologies, such as on-demand shuttles, could provide a shared-transport option. These shuttles could help people get around remote communities in the north of the region and improve access to services in the Tairāwhiti urban area. Improved access to high-quality data and information will allow better management of the existing land transport system to get the most out of existing infrastructure.

Making progress

Improving inclusive access will often align with making progress on other outcomes, especially where travel choice is improved and car dependency reduced. However, there may be challenging trade-offs to consider over time, such as balancing increased travel costs to reduce emissions while ensuring lower income families aren't unfairly impacted.

Key actions over the next 10 years to make progress on this outcome are:

- expanding and improving walking and cycling facilities, so these low-cost, sustainable, healthy travel options are safe and attractive for more journeys
- improve public transport services, including on-demand services where appropriate
- exploring opportunities to improve public transport affordability
- ensuring transport infrastructure and services are designed and provided to meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities
- improving access to opportunities for iwi Māori, including access to sites of cultural significance
- exploring opportunities to support the mobile or digital delivery of essential services
- shaping planning rules and urban development decision-making to encourage more people to live in areas with better access to social and economic opportunities.

The region's transport system struggles to provide people of all ages, abilities, and income levels with safe, sustainable, and reliable access to a variety of social and economic opportunities.

Economic prosperity

Challenges and opportunities

He Huarahi Hei Whai Oranga Tairāwhiti Regional Economic Action Plan identifies several transport objectives to support improved economic and social outcomes for the region.[26] These include:

- safety and resilience of the network
- freight efficiency, including safe and reliable connections to the Eastland Port, SH35, and its connecting routes, and SH2 to the rest of the country
- tourism-related upgrades
- efficient routes for both general and heavy traffic
- driver licensing and mentoring to support access to training and jobs.

Over the next three decades, the transition to a low-emissions economy in line with the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act will mean change to the region's economy. Transport has a role to support this change, including for freight.

Transport, including freight, has a role to play in the region's economy.

Making progress

Economic productivity and business competitiveness in Tairāwhiti Gisborne can be improved by a transport system that provides:

- a range of travel options with wide capacity
- reliable journey times
- safe and low-cost ways of getting around.

Key actions over the next 10 years to make progress on this outcome are:

- improving access to social and economic opportunities, especially by low carbon modes in Tairāwhiti and its regional towns
- supporting resilient, reliable, and efficient freight and business travel around key parts of the network, especially around interregional connections, and key freight and industrial hubs
- exploring opportunities to move to a more multimodal freight system with greater use of coastal shipping
- managing increased transport costs in a way that doesn't negatively impact economic activity
- planning and delivering transport infrastructure and services that maximise industry initiatives, like supporting the growth of forestry
- supporting improved accessibility to local and town centres to better enable them to flourish and provide for the day-to-day needs of residents
- planning and delivering transport infrastructure and services that improve economic and social connections, like supporting the Tairāwhiti Roading Package
- supporting improvements in social and economic outcomes in areas of high deprivation, like better access to employment, education, and essential services for isolated communities.

Resilience and security

Challenges and opportunities

The next 30 years will see a growing risk of damage to road and rail networks because of increased rain and storm intensity, coastal and soil erosion, sea level rise, flooding, slips, and storm surges.[27]

Maintaining safe and reliable connections to Eastland Port, Te Matau-a-Māui Hawke's Bay, and Te Moana a Toi-te-Huatahi Bay of Plenty remain critical for the region's economy. Closures along Waioeka Gorge, which connects Tairāwhiti Gisborne with Te Moana a Toi-te-Huatahi, isolate communities and impact the time sensitive delivery of food produce to the port and Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Closures will become more common, as will disruption to SH35, north of Tairāwhiti. Devil's Elbow is prone to natural hazards and has the highest risk of land slips. In 2023, these and other sections on the state highway network were closed because of Cyclone Gabrielle. Of the region's 2199kms of local roads, 37% were unsealed as of 2019-2020.[28]

With the expansion of forestry harvesting in the region, upgrading rural roads is a priority to handle the increase in freight vehicles. On SH2 south of Tairāwhiti, the number of high productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs) is growing, but full HPMV access is restricted on many roads.

More than ever, there must be a greater focus on maintaining existing assets at current levels of access and connectivity. There is a major opportunity to progress multiple outcomes by investing in maintenance and renewals, but this requires changes to current practices and increased funding.

To be resilient, the region's transport system must adapt to uncertainty and rapid change. For example, in recent years the popularity of e-scooters and then the need for social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted:

- a need for more adaptable approaches to road space management
- unexpected benefits from past improvements to walking and cycling facilities.

Rapidly fluctuating fuel prices throughout 2022, caused by international events, also emphasised the need to reduce dependency on fossil fuel.

Making progress

To improve resilience in Tairāwhiti Gisborne, the transport system needs an ongoing focus on maintaining existing assets along with targeted improvements to reduce risks. We also need to expand our understanding of resilience in a highly complex urban environment, to ensure planning work is flexible and adaptable to change.

Key actions over the next 10 years to make progress on this outcome are:

- continuing design and planning work to identify and prioritise responses to natural hazards in high-risk areas – this includes working with communities to identify plans for when to defend, accommodate, or retreat
- understanding routes that provide critical connections, the condition of these, the pressures, and the level of investment needed to address impacts – this includes assessments to identify priorities for network resilience
- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and climate change
- seeking continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance, renewals, and 'low cost/low risk' investments
- improving operational responses to events, to support quick recovery following disruption to the land transport system
- shifting to more adaptable 'scenarios-based' planning.

To improve resilience in Tairāwhiti, the transport system needs an ongoing focus on maintaining existing assets along with targeted improvements to reduce risks.

Tairāwhiti – Gisborne: Focusing our efforts

For efficient and effective progress, transport challenges in Tairāwhiti Gisborne must be tackled in a cohesive way. The directions below identify the most important issues to be resolved over the next 10 years to make progress towards transport outcomes.

- Rebuild the network destroyed by Cyclone Gabrielle and improve resilience.
- Enable and support the region's transition to a low-carbon economy.
- Maintain and improve the resilience and efficiency of key connections to the west and south.
- Improve access to social and economic opportunities, especially by public transport, walking, and cycling.
- Begin to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled in a way that's equitable and improves people's quality of life.
- Significantly reduce the harm caused by the region's transport system, especially through improved road safety and reduced pollutants dangerous to health.
- Actively support, enable, and encourage growth and development in areas that already have good travel choices and shorter trip lengths.
- Rapidly accelerate the delivery of walking and cycling networks, predominantly through reshaping existing streets, to make these options safe and attractive.
- Explore new and emerging technologies, such as on-demand services, to improve access to social and economic opportunities.
- Better understand the impact of future economic transformation on travel patterns and freight volumes.
- Explore opportunities to move to a more multimodal freight system with greater use of rail and coastal shipping.
- Confirm how key resilience risks will be addressed over time, and work with communities to identify plans for when to defend, accommodate, or retreat.
- Continue to implement road safety plans and programmes including those focused on iwi Māori.
- Reduce financial and other barriers to iwi Māori getting a driver's licence in areas not well served by public transport.
- Improve or maintain, as appropriate, physical access to marae, papakāinga, wāhi tapu, and wāhi taonga.

These will be updated over time to focus effort on the most critical matters.

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