

# Bay of Plenty



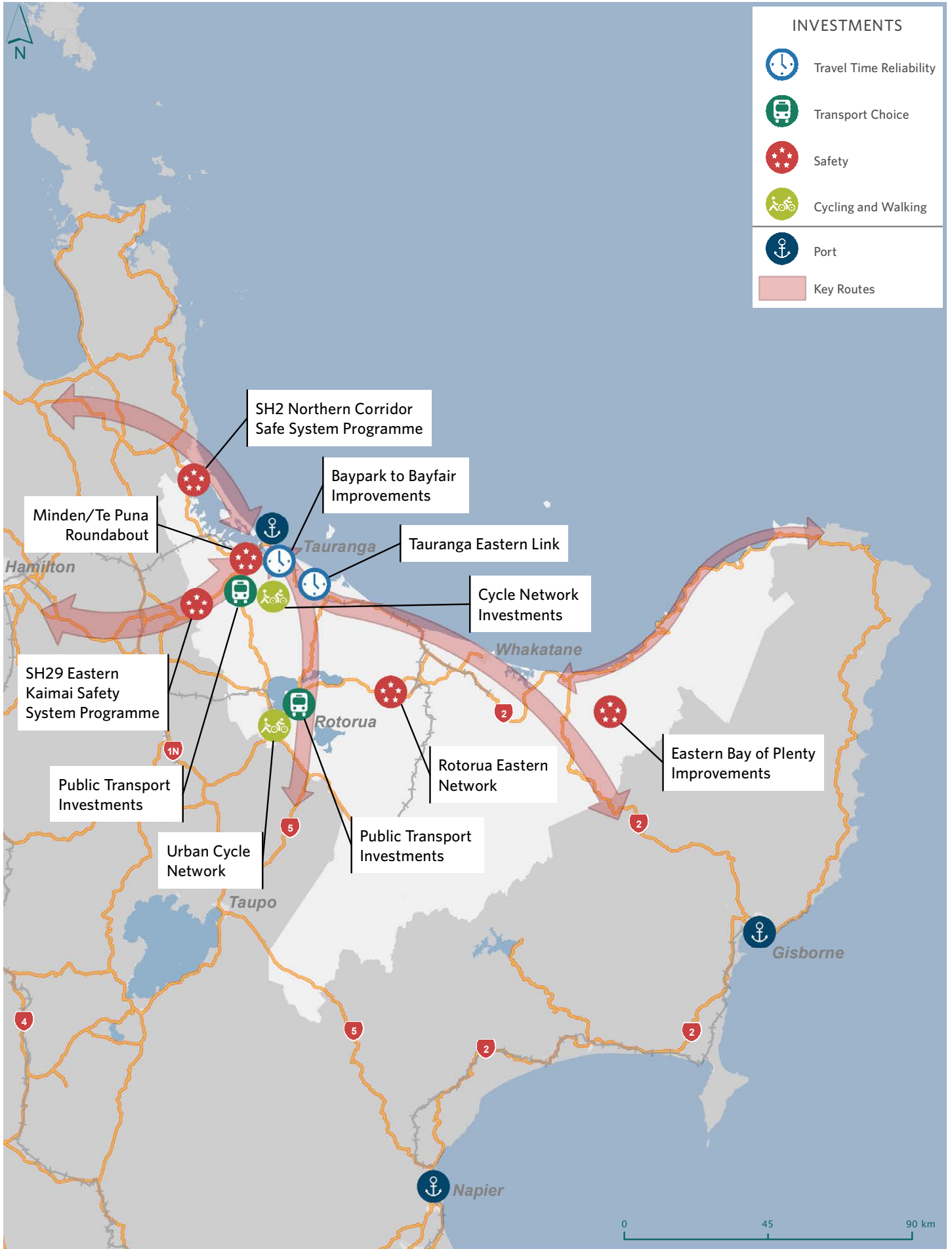
## OVERVIEW

Transport investment in the Bay of Plenty is targeted to support significant residential growth, new industrial land development and jobs, while also ensuring efficient freight movement and access to the Port of Tauranga. The region is a key part of the upper North Island, which is home to over half of New Zealand's population, employment and GDP. Over 50% of New Zealand goods either originate in, or are transported to, the upper North Island, and this is expected to keep growing significantly. An efficient, reliable and safe transport system is needed to support this growing population, and the movement of goods, and to ensure the region can maintain its significant contribution to New Zealand as a whole.

The region's population is expected to grow at around 1% each year, with more people moving into urban areas in Tauranga and the Western Bay of Plenty. Road freight across the upper North Island is forecast to increase by over 59% in the next 30 years, bringing with it increasing pressure on the key road and rail journeys to and from the Port of Tauranga.

The region is also a popular tourist destination, with Rotorua one of the country's top five tourist attractions. It is important that the region's transport network provides safe and reliable journeys for the growing number of visitors to the region, as well as for those who travel beyond it.





## KEY STRATEGIC RESPONSES

### TAKING A JOINED-UP APPROACH TO TRANSPORT INVESTMENT

Many individuals, businesses and government invest in the region's transport system and shape its performance, costs, and experiences of all who use it. The NZ Transport Agency, councils, KiwiRail and NZ Police work closely to ensure a joined-up transport system.

During the next three years around \$591 million will be invested in the Bay of Plenty, including \$244m in local road and state highway maintenance, operations and renewals; \$45m in public transport service and infrastructure in Tauranga and Rotorua; \$9m in cycling and walking, including \$5.3m of Urban Cycleways funding; \$4.9m in road safety promotion; \$255m in local road and state highway improvements; and \$30m in regional improvements (including crown funds). Of the local road and state highway improvement programme around 55% will target safety improvements while 45% will target travel time benefits. This investment also delivers wider social, environmental and economic benefits to the region.

Transport investment will help support planned growth in the region's cities particularly in the Western Bay of Plenty, while also ensuring efficient access to the Port of Tauranga and to outer areas for those living rurally. It also supports access of produce from the more rural areas like Eastern Bay of Plenty to the Port. The Transport Agency is continuing to work with councils to ensure that the local road and state highway networks function in an integrated way to deliver this growth, for example through integrating future land use and transport networks in Tauranga's growing eastern suburbs.

Investing in key supply chain routes across the region and inter-regionally is important for the region's economic growth and productivity. Areas of focus will be: building on the recent investment in Tauranga's eastern corridor including the Tauranga Eastern Link; investing in the Baypark to Bayfair intersection improvement; and looking at the future needs in the approaches to Rotorua and Tauranga.

### INVESTING IN FREIGHT EFFICIENCY

Tauranga City is home to the Port of Tauranga, one of New Zealand's major freight gateways to the world. It plays a central role in both national and international supply chains. It is the country's largest export port by volume (mainly kiwifruit, forestry and dairy products) and second largest container port. Its business sees 8.6% of GDP and almost a quarter of the country's imports and exports.

The key journey from Tauranga to Auckland via the Waikato is a nationally important high volume freight route. The Transport Agency's focus is on having an efficient route for freight, plus providing a safe, predictable and reliable journey.

### MAKING JOURNEYS SAFER

Across New Zealand around \$1.2 billion is expected to be invested in the transport network over the next three years to deliver improved safety outcomes. Most of this expenditure will be directed at infrastructure improvements through the capital works programme, often where safety is one of the outcomes, along with congestion relief and travel time improvements. A proportion of this investment targets specific safety improvements, including high-risk intersections, pedestrian and cycling safety initiatives, speed management and education programmes.

Improving road safety across the Bay of Plenty remains important, although the region's road safety record is trending downwards with a falling number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads. Delivering 'Safer Journeys' will be an area of focus for the 2015-18 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) period, including work with the NZ Police to better target their activity in the region and wider Police district to areas of greatest risk.

Through the regional road safety programme administered by councils, around \$4.9m will be invested in road safety promotion activities targeting key regional issues and complementing national campaigns.

Some of the programmes include road safety along the Tauranga to Pokeno via Waihi key journey and the rural safety focused Eastern Bay of Plenty signature project.

Working with NZ Police and investing together in road policing and road safety promotion is at the heart of the region's investment. Together through targeted programmes the Transport Agency and partners will work to address the factors contributing to crash-related deaths and serious injuries in the Bay of Plenty. These factors include speed, drink and drug driving, not wearing restraints, dangerous and careless driving, and high-risk drivers.

### GROWING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Transport Agency and Bay of Plenty Regional Council are increasing investment in public transport in Tauranga by \$8.5m to provide school students with public transport choices to get to and from school and to ease congestion for all road users at peak travel times. Investment is also being made in public transport in Rotorua.

Public transport investment in the 2012-15 NLTP period contributed to a 25% increase in passenger trips over the previous three years.

The 2015-18 NLTP public transport investment in Tauranga and Rotorua is estimated to be around \$45m in the 2015-18 period. During this time it is forecast that passenger trips will increase by 29%, meaning over 4 million passenger trips are expected to be made in Rotorua and Tauranga per year for the next three years.



PHOTO CREDIT: BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL

## ENCOURAGING CYCLING AND WALKING

Cycling and walking networks in the main urban centres are seeing increased investment, which will give people more choices about how to get around and help make the most of the existing transport network. In Tauranga, the focus will be on completing key missing network links, while also addressing safety issues particularly at intersections in the urban cycling network. In Rotorua, the investment is targeted to accelerate the 'Cy-Way' programme, which aims to be a catalyst for more people to choose to walk or cycle to work, to school, to shops and for recreation as well as tourism attractions.

It is expected that the total cycling and walking investment in the Bay of Plenty in the 2015-18 NLTP period will be \$9m. This includes \$5.3m from the Urban Cycleways Fund.

## MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Keeping land transport networks available for people to get where they want to go easily, reliably and safely is a primary objective of transport investment within and beyond the Bay of Plenty. Over the 2015-18 NLTP period, local roads will receive \$141m and state highways \$103m for maintenance and renewals. This is an increase of around \$6m for forecast local road expenditure over the last three-year period. The Transport Agency is working with councils in the Bay of Plenty to agree how the transport network will be maintained and operated to deliver the right level of service to meet the different needs on different parts of the network.

Given the pressure to achieve value for money from maintenance activity funding, any maintenance cost savings identified by a council will benefit all stakeholders. Savings can be redirected to councils where the condition of the network warrants an increase in maintenance investment and there is strong evidence to support the increase.



## INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased investment in urban cycling and walking – in Tauranga completing key missing network links, and addressing safety issues particularly at intersections, and in Rotorua, accelerating the 'Cy-Way' programme which aims to get more people to cycle or walk.
- Teaming up with stakeholders in Tauranga to extend the public transport network and transition urban school bus services into an integrated network over the next three years. The aim is to reduce congestion and maintain journey time reliability and improve the effectiveness of the public transport investment in Tauranga. To achieve this, an additional \$22m is planned to be invested over the next 10 years with \$8m in the 2015-18 NLTP period. Benefits are expected for all road users, and it is expected up to 5 minutes travel time may be saved on highways and more than 3 minutes across the wider roading network.
- In recognition of the inter-regional dependence between the Bay of Plenty and Waikato, the Transport Agency, partners and stakeholders will continue to invest in the Tauranga to Auckland via the Waikato key journey in the next three years. This includes introducing electronic tolling to Tauranga's Route K (called Takitimu Drive Toll Road from August) and investigating how to make the journey easier to travel through areas like Tauriko and on the State Highway 29 regional part of the journey generally.
- Recent state highway and local road investments across the entire journey including those in the Waikato Expressway and the Hamilton Ring Road with Hamilton City Council are benefiting the region through delivering greater travel time savings (up to 23 minutes from investment in the 2015-18 NLTP) as well as improving safety for customers on the journey.
- Within this journey, the Waikato Expressway is predicted to deliver a total of 35 minutes when fully complete, noting a portion of this travel time has already been achieved through 2012-15 NLTP investments such as the opening of the Ngaruawahia section in 2013.
- Other planned work within this journey such as the State Highway 29 Eastern Kaimai Safe System programme and improvements to the Pairere intersection will also improve safety. 2015-18 NLTP investment across the whole journey is expected to prevent 36 deaths and serious injuries every 10 years.
- Investigating how the road and rail network can complement each other, the scale and shape of future freight in the Bay of Plenty, and the local growth pressures on to the outskirts of Tauranga is also planned.
- Investment of over \$60m in Route K in 2015, combined with the Pyes Pa Bypass improvements, is a further example of enabling substantial growth in local housing and jobs while also ensuring efficient freight journeys and a travel time saving of up to 10 minutes.



- Improved safety and more reliable travel times are the focus for the key journey between Pokeno and Tauranga via Waihi. The route has the 14th highest-risk state highway stretch in the country with 69 deaths and serious injuries from Waihi to Tauranga in the last five years.
- A further \$12m is being invested in the short term to reduce safety risks. This includes the Minden/Te Puna intersection improvement (\$7m) and work to better understand how to ensure safer and more reliable journeys, especially between Tauranga to Waihi and Mangatarata to Pokeno. The 2015-18 NLTP investment across the entire journey forecasts a prevention of 58 deaths and serious injuries every 10 years.
- The journey from the East to the Port of Tauranga continues to benefit from significant investment in the magnitude of \$750m – including Harbour Link, Hewlett’s Road Flyover, the soon to be completed \$455m Tauranga Eastern Link and Baypark to Bayfair intersection improvement. This investment will enable substantial local residential and industrial development and maintain efficient access to the Port from the Eastern Bay and central North Island. When the Baypark to Bayfair intersection improvements are completed, the whole of journey benefits will include travel time savings of around 14 minutes.
- As part of the Government’s Accelerated Regional State Highway Package the Transport Agency is continuing to work with Rotorua Lakes Council to develop its spatial plan and identify transport implications.

## CASE STUDIES



PHOTO CREDIT: BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL

### TAURANGA BUS SERVICES

Organisations including the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, schools, Ministry of Education and the Transport Agency have teamed up with support from Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty councils to extend the public transport network in Tauranga and transition urban school bus services into an integrated network over the next three years. This is being done as a result of the long-signalled stopping of Tauranga urban school bus services from the end of 2014 by the Ministry of Education.

With the potential for 5,200 students a day on school buses, without a managed transition for these students there could be increased road congestion and overloading of existing services on Tauranga’s transport network.

The aim is to reduce congestion and maintain journey time reliability particularly within Tauranga’s central urban area. It is also to improve the effectiveness of the public transport investment in Tauranga through integrating school and urban bus networks into the city’s transport system. To achieve this, an additional \$22m is planned to be invested over the next 10 years with \$8m in the 2015-18 NLTP period.

Benefits are expected for all road users, not just those using buses. By better managing morning congestion on key parts of the road network it is expected that up to 5 minutes travel time may be saved on highways and more than 3 minutes across the wider road network.

### STATE HIGHWAY 2 SAFETY

Driving on State Highway 2 north of Tauranga requires careful concentration. The road to Katikati is a narrow two-lane rural highway with many direct property and road accesses. There are competing and growing demands from local people who want to make quick trips to and from town, agricultural vehicles that service the horticultural sector, local freight vehicles, and tourists and other road users. The Bay of Plenty is over-represented in centre line and intersection crashes.

The Transport Agency, Tauranga, Western Bay of Plenty, and Waikato District councils and the community are working together to develop a Safe System approach to improve safety on the State Highway 2 Northern Corridor between Tauranga and Pokeno with a particular focus on the corridor between Bethlehem and Omokoroa and on to Waihi. The aim is to understand community perspectives and needs, and implement solutions that reduce the number of crashes and create a more forgiving road environment.

There has been regular investment over time to improve the quality of the road, with the most recent being the removal of a series of sharp curves near Athenree Gorge in 2014.

A further \$12m is being invested in the short term to reduce risks of centre line and intersection crashes and to make the road side more forgiving of driver error. A \$5m investment has seen 70 different sites treated to remove hazards such as trees to make it easier for people to see oncoming vehicles at intersections, and to install wide centre lines to reduce the risk of head-on crashes. Additional sections of guard rail have been installed to prevent run-off-road crashes. The remaining \$7m will provide a roundabout at the intersection of State Highway 2/Te Puna Road and Minden Road, with construction to start later this year.

## DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

The NZ Transport Agency has worked with Regional Transport Committees to support development of their Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs), which inform the development of the NLTP.

RLTPs span six years and are produced in consultation with the community. All submitted activities must contribute to the purpose of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 and be consistent with the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS).



For more information on the NLTP in this region and nationally, go to [www.nzta.govt.nz/nltp](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/nltp)

If you have further queries, call our contact centre on 0800 699 000 or write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 6995, Wellington 6141