

Manawatu-Whanganui



OVERVIEW

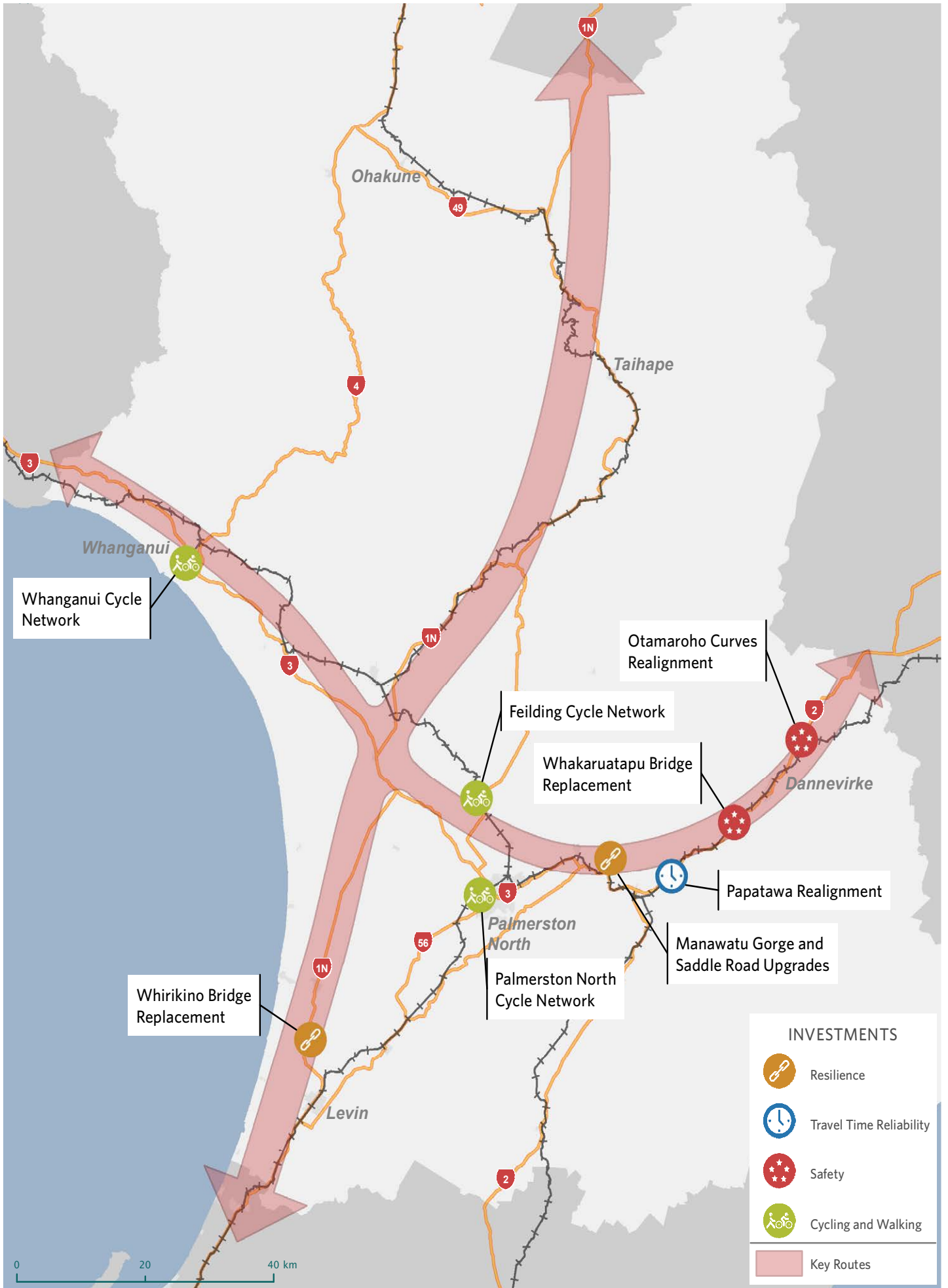
The Manawatu-Whanganui region's position at the axis of the main north to south and east to west routes in the North Island mean it is ideally positioned to be a significant distribution hub. Its economy is heavily reliant on transport of produce to market, resulting in high volumes of freight traffic in and beyond the region. Investment in the Manawatu-Whanganui region from the 2015-18 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) is primarily focused on developing and maintaining a resilient transport network that supports getting this produce to market.

A total of around \$444 million will be invested in the region's transport network during the 2015-18 NLTP period. This is an increase of \$34m compared with the last period, with the commencement of the region's portion of the Wellington Road of National Significance (RONS) allocation being a significant factor.






A shared focus in the region among transport partners and industry is boosting economic growth through a collaborative effort to better connect the region. A priority is to improve connectivity between the road network and key rail and port links, making it easier and more efficient to bring people, goods and markets together. Examples of this approach in action include Mainfreight and Icepack locating their distribution centres at rail yards.

Public transport is also a focus for Horizons Regional Council and the Transport Agency, with a total of \$19.3m being invested over the next three years. This investment, mainly targeted at services in Whanganui and Palmerston North, is expected to result in a 10% growth in passenger numbers over the next three years.





INVESTMENTS

-  Resilience
-  Travel Time Reliability
-  Safety
-  Cycling and Walking
-  Key Routes

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

IMPROVING NETWORK RESILIENCE

The effects of severe weather events are the main cause of resilience issues in the Manawatu-Whanganui region, particularly through the Central Plateau area and the Manawatu Gorge.

State Highway 1 runs the full length of the region. It is the North Island's key route between Auckland and Wellington and is of significant importance to the distribution of products through the Manawatu-Whanganui region. The key issue with this journey is winter closures of State Highway 1 in the Central Plateau due to snow fall.

To minimise delays due to severe weather, investment will continue to be made in improving the Manawatu Gorge, but also in upgrading the alternative Saddle Road route. Investment of \$5m to upgrade this route will increase east to west transport resilience.

State Highway 3 runs through the region and provides east to west access to ports in Taranaki and the Hawke's Bay. It is one of the country's key journeys due to the freight movement between the Taranaki, Manawatu-Whanganui and Hawke's Bay regions. Resilience of this journey is being improved through the Manawatu Gorge Alternative Route project, to provide more efficient east to west connectivity during Manawatu Gorge closures.

The region has developed a comprehensive programme to address other resilience challenges and provide certainty for transport efficiency for freight routes to the north, east and south.

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 Manawatu-Whanganui Region. Over the 2015-18 NLTP period, local roads will receive about \$196m, and state highways around \$76m, for maintenance.

Investors in the transport network are working to agree levels of service to deliver the different needs of the network. Given the pressure to achieve value for money on 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.



Whanganui District Council has realised efficiencies and savings in its maintenance activities through taking an alliance approach to maintenance. Horowhenua District Council has improved its asset management practices, enabling it to clearly demonstrate its need for additional maintenance investment.

INVESTING IN FREIGHT EFFICIENCY

The region's ageing bridges, particularly on rural roads, will require significant investment to meet the freight demand and maintain economic sustainability. The Transport Agency will partner with each council, to ensure they can provide critical lifelines to their communities, through \$6.5m of proposed investment on structures including Mangateitei Road, Waitewhena Road and Ruapehu Road Rail Overbridge replacements and the Dublin Street Bridge strategic case development.

To allow wider access to freight across the region, investment of \$2.5m is planned in High Productivity Motor Vehicles (HPMV) routes and the replacement of the Whirokino Trestle Bridge at \$53.5m. This bridge is on a national strategic state highway and an important freight route.

The Manawatu-Whanganui region has HPMV routes on all north to south and east to west journeys, covering both state highways and local roads. HPMV routes enable trucks to weigh up to 62 tonnes, meaning more freight can be carried on fewer trucks.

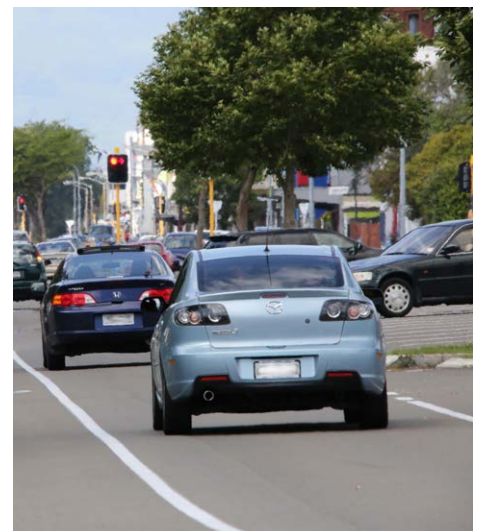
With the growing distribution industry in the region, access to ports is increasingly important for external and domestic markets. Product is transported inter-regionally by road and rail. Key journeys are through the region, from Hawera to Napier Port and from the region to the rest of New Zealand.

GROWING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Manawatu-Whanganui public transport services operate mainly in Whanganui and Palmerston North. These are well supported, with improvements being identified as part of the recent service review. A total of \$19.3m is being invested over the next three years and is expected to result in a 10% growth in passenger numbers. Over the 2015-18 NLTP period it is forecast that over 1.76 million passenger trips will be made in Manawatu-Whanganui every year.

Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Council and the Transport Agency have partnered to provide residents with viable alternative transport options. This has proved successful with growth in public transport patronage. Continued investment is planned to consolidate the improvements in the overall service to the public through better facilities and integration with other transport modes.

Palmerston North bus services are going through a major review in order to better serve public transport customers in and around the city. The findings of the review will start to be implemented during the 2015-18 NLTP, with the Regional Council and Transport Agency co-investing in the improvements determined by the review findings.



ENCOURAGING CYCLING AND WALKING

With a regional goal of being 'the best place to ride a bike', significant cycling investment is planned in Palmerston North over the next three years. This will enable completion of key connections on the cycling network, including a new bridge that would link the main residential area and CBD with a large employment area and Massey University, south of the Manawatu River.

Other proposed projects include Summer Hill Drive safety improvements and the completion of on-road cycle lanes on Main Street East and Main Street West. Any infrastructure improvements will be supported by the Bikes in Schools programme, in partnership with NZ Police and Sport Manawatu.

A comprehensive urban cycling network and programme has been developed to increase the number of people who cycle in Whanganui, especially for short-distance trips to work, to school or to the shops. With 80% of Whanganui residents living within 4 kilometres of the city centre, the city has good potential to achieve this goal.

In Whanganui two projects that are expected to receive investment over the next three years from the Urban Cycleways Fund are the Te Tuaiwi ('The Spine') Shared Pathway and the City to North Mole Shared Pathway. This is the final section of the Mountains to Sea cycle trail.

Most of the planned cycleways include high-quality shared paths that will also benefit pedestrians.

It is expected that the total cycling and walking investment in the Whanganui and Palmerston North areas in the 2015-18 NLTP period will be \$7m. This includes \$4.3m of Urban Cycleways funding.

MAKING JOURNEYS SAFER

Across New Zealand around \$3.2 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.

Working with the 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 NZ police will work to address the factors contributing to crash-related deaths and serious injuries. These factors include speed, drink and drug driving, not wearing restraints, dangerous and careless driving, and high-risk drivers.

INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of \$19.3m dollars is being invested in public transport in Manawatu-Whanganui over the next three years, which is expected to result in a 10% growth in passenger numbers.
- The total cycling and walking investment in the Whanganui and Palmerston North areas in the 2015-18 NLTP period is expected to be \$7m. This includes \$4.3m of Urban Cycleways funding.
- One of New Zealand's key journeys runs through the Manawatu-Whanganui Region, along State Highway 1 to Wellington. Improvements over the length of this journey are targeted towards reducing travel time.
- The Wellington RONS will provide increased connectivity, improving freight efficiency and economic growth. The RONS investment of \$2.5bn will deliver travel time savings of up to 40 minutes between Levin and Wellington Airport when completed. This includes the section through the Horowhenua District, which will drive urban growth around Levin.
- The Saddle Road upgrade, to provide additional resilience for the State Highway 3, east to west corridor, will ease the impact of any future Manawatu Gorge closures on customer journeys by providing a safer, more efficient alternative route.
- Customers travelling on State Highway 2 will benefit from the significant increase in investment between Woodville and Hawke's Bay. Proposed investment of \$21m in projects along this route, such as the Otamaroho curves realignment and Whakaruatapu Bridge replacement, will provide increased freight efficiency while helping to keep road users safe.
- The proposed replacement of the State Highway 1 Whirokino Trestle Bridge will reduce freight costs, completing the HPMV route between Wellington and Auckland (subject to programming).
- The Sanson South passing Lane project is underway. A future investigation will seek to identify new passing opportunities on State Highway 1 between Foxton and Waiouru. This will lead to improved journey times, while enhancing safety and easing driver frustration on a nationally strategic state highway.

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

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