

Northland



OVERVIEW

Northland is a sub-tropical and mostly rural peninsula, where rich soils and plenty of rain provide the basis for the rural economy. Dairying, farming, forestry and horticulture are key activities. Northland also has a strong industrial base and its location close to Auckland and key ports offers significant opportunities for growth.

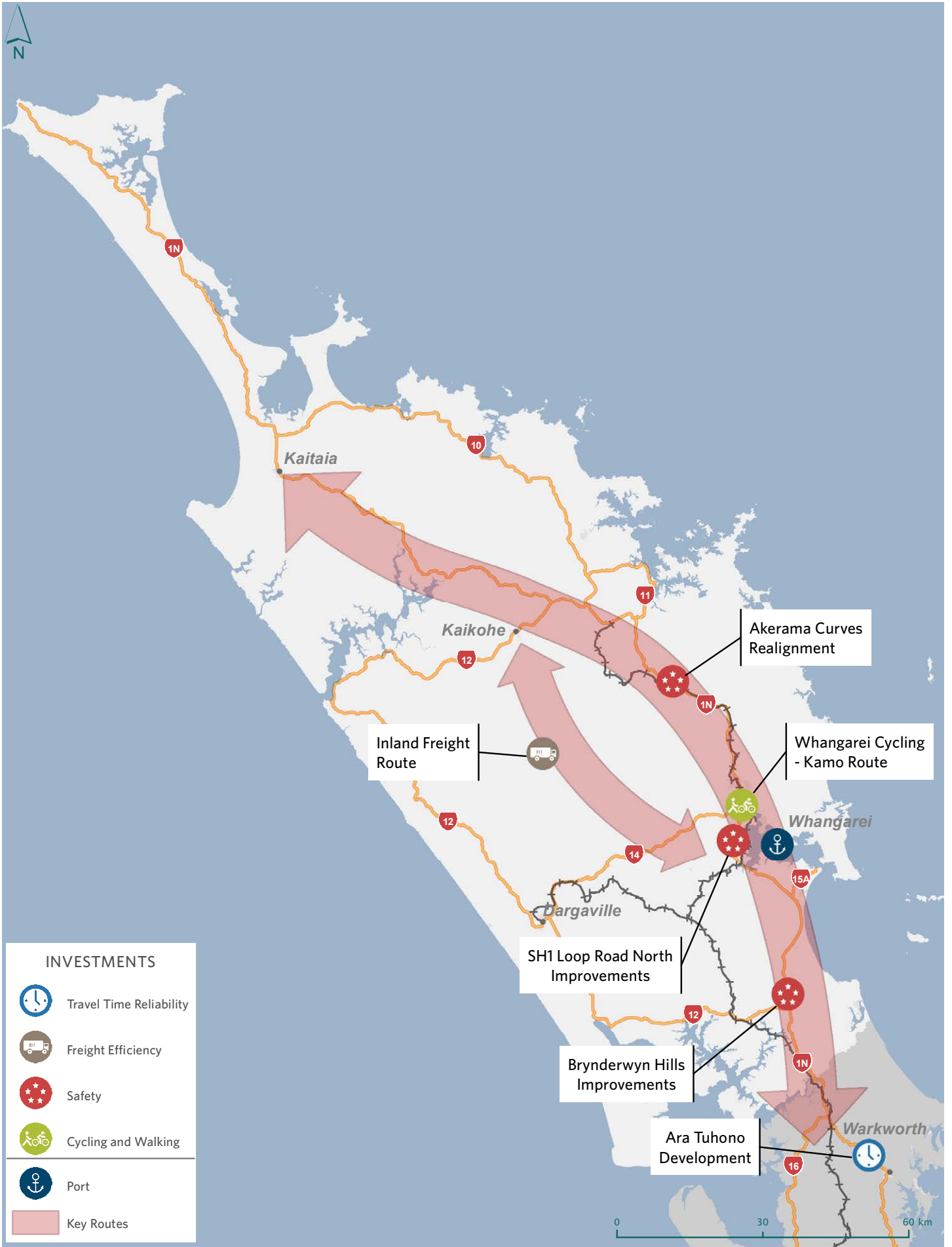
Tourism is also a major economic driver for Northland. The area's unique heritage and stunning coastlines are a draw for thousands of tourists and visitors each year.

To take advantage of these opportunities, Northland requires a reliable, resilient and safe transport network, within the region and beyond. Although Northland has a significant port, three airports and an extensive road network, its rail and road links

to Auckland and the rest of New Zealand are weak in parts. The region's challenging topography, difficult geology and high impact seasonal rainfall present particular challenges for the maintenance and operation of road and rail networks.

A total of \$460 million will be invested in Northland during the 2015-18 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) period. This will contribute to the region's economic growth, improve transport network resilience and improve accessibility and road safety performance. In addition to funding the road network in Northland, the 2015-18 NLTP provides investment for growing public transport and encouraging cycling and walking.





2015-18 NLTP PRIORITIES

- Delivering improved travel reliability, safety and better quality of travel on the critical Whangarei to Auckland corridor. This investment is part of a long-term strategy to achieve fit-for-purpose levels of service on this key economic and community link to the rest of New Zealand.
- Delivering improved resilience and travel times for the Inland Freight Route from south of Whangarei to Kaikohe that will not only improve strategic linkages across the region, but also improve the resilience of the region's entire strategic road network.
- Investing in improving the resilience of the region's strategic roads through improved alternative routes, improvements to bridges and other structures, and increased investment in preventative works that reduce the risk of slips and surface flooding.
- Reducing deaths and serious injuries through ongoing investment in improvements and maintenance, focusing on the segments of road that have the highest risk.

KEY STRATEGIC RESPONSES

INVESTING IN FREIGHT EFFICIENCY

Given the economic significance of freight in the Upper North Island, transport funders will continue to invest in key freight routes, within the region and between Northland, Auckland and the rest of the Upper North Island.

The continued development of the Ara Tuhono-Puhoi to Wellsford project is a key initiative that will provide a safer and more resilient route for people and freight travelling from Auckland to Northland. \$48m has been approved for further investigations and procurement of the project, anticipated to be delivered via a Public Private Partnership (PPP), with construction beginning in 2016. By 2026 this investment will save up to 17 minutes in travel time between Auckland and Northland.

In recognition of the vital role the route plays in the economy, the NZ Transport Agency has proposed designating the Northland Inland Freight Route as a state highway, and will meet the \$5m per annum maintenance cost fully from the National Land Transport Fund. The 96km stretch, comprised of Te Pua Road, Mangakahia Road, Otaika Valley Road and Loop Road North, is currently a local road co-funded by district councils and the Transport Agency. It provides access between 50,000 hectares of production forest – about 25% of Northland's total – and North Port.

IMPROVING NETWORK RESILIENCE

With few alternative routes in the Far North, the state highways are a vital lifeline not just for the local community but for the economic wellbeing of Northland.

The Transport Agency will continue to deliver its suite of improvements through State Highway 1 in Whangarei to improve safety and journey time reliability. Key improvements such as the investment in the Ara Tuhono-Puhoi to Warkworth upgrade are critical for the economy of the region.

A total of \$13m is being proposed in the 2015-18 NLTP to address resilience issues at known vulnerable locations on the state highway network in Northland.

A number of safety and resilience improvements will be delivered along the State Highway 1 route between Auckland and Northland. Predictions estimate these improvements will result in 10 less serious injuries every 10 years on Northland's roads.

During the 2015-18 NLTP period, transport funders will consider how best to retain the strength and safety of main routes connecting communities. The analysis of the chosen corridors will include technical analysis and engagement with local communities, stakeholders, NZ Police and iwi. The results of the investigation effort will be realised in the 2018-21 NLTP.

The potential routes identified for further analysis include:

- State Highway 1 Whangarei to Bay of Islands
- State Highway 10 Taipa to Kaeo
- State Highway 10 Kerikeri to Waipapa
- State Highway 12 Hokianga Coast
- routes identified in the Kaitaia Growth Plan

The Government has committed to upgrading 10 one-lane bridges on state highways across the Far North. Four of these bridges have been included in the 2015-18 NLTP. Four of the remaining bridges are part of corridor studies and may be considered in future Regional and National Land Transport Plans. The Government may decide on an investment approach outside this funding stream for projects not currently included in the NLTP.





MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Over the 2015-18 NLTP period the proposed local and Transport Agency investment in state highway and local road maintenance, operations and renewals is \$311m.

Investment in maintaining and operating Northland's local road network in the 2015-18 NLTP is 22% higher than the previous three years.

This additional investment recognises the increase in logging freight and its impact on Northland's freight routes.

The proposal to designate Mangakahia Road as a state highway reflects its role as a key freight route. As the Transport Agency is fully responsible for costs associated with state highways, this will free up local authority funding for other priority works.

This proposal is subject to Northland's councils entering into a collaborative agreement with the Transport Agency for joint asset management across the Northland road network. This commitment would enable improved journey management, better resilience and emergency responses, consistency in approach and improved cost effectiveness in delivery of road maintenance activities.

The Transport Agency and Northland councils are already working together to improve the asset management and operation of Northland's roads in response to growth in the forestry sector. Through taking a collaborative approach to investigating future forestry trends, the potential impact of logging traffic on Northland's roads is now better understood. This will help to inform future

transport investment decisions and ensure money is spent in the right places, in the right ways and at the right time.

Dust from unsealed roads has been identified as an issue on some Northland roads. While extensive sealing of low volume roads is not a sensible option, the 22% funding increase in local road operating and maintenance investment will enable localised dust mitigation measures.

Given the pressure on achieving value for money from maintenance activity funding, any maintenance cost savings identified by a council will benefit all stakeholders. Some of the 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.

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 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.

Significant projects in Northland that will contribute to safety and journey time improvements include the Akerama Curves

realignment - part of the Government's Accelerated Regional State Highway Package - SH1 Loop Road improvements and the extensive work being undertaken on the northern side of the Brynderwyn Hills.

In 2013/14, the Transport Agency and councils invested over \$1.6m in promoting road safety in Northland following an increased road toll in 2012 and 2013. This was a 26% funding increase on the previous four years and we expect to invest another \$4.8m over the coming three-year period. Although progress is being made and Northland's safety record is improving, more work is needed to raise awareness of the impact that alcohol, drugs and speed are having on Northland's road toll.

Working with the NZ Police and investing together in road policing and road safety promotion is at the heart of the region's investment. Through targeted programmes we 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.

To respond to Northland's road safety concerns some of the initiatives to be undertaken in the 2015-18 NLTP period include:

- physical works at high-risk crash areas to reduce the incidence of deaths and serious injuries
- promotion of road-safety education and advocacy initiatives to reduce the potential for incidents of deaths and serious injuries
- development and promotion of fatigue and rest stops for tourists and truck drivers.

ENCOURAGING CYCLING AND WALKING

Cycling is a significant transport focus for Whangarei, whose vision is to be a district where cycling is easy, safe and enjoyable.

Over the next three years the Urban Cycleways Fund is expected to accelerate the completion of the Kamo Route flagship project, the final corridor in the primary cycle network. Whangarei has a strong focus on improving the safety of children cycling to school and encouraging more cycling amongst the city's youth. The proposed off-road shared path to Kamo will be a particularly important asset for the city as it passes by 14 schools. In partnership with Bike Northland and Bikes in Schools, the infrastructure planned for the next three years will also be supported by investment in cycle training and education.

Under current proposals the Onerahi and Raumanga-Maunu routes will also be completed. If it goes ahead, this cycling programme, which has a major focus on encouraging more children to safely cycle to school, will be supported by investment in cycle training and education.

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 Whangarei in the 2015-18 NLTP period will be \$5m. This includes \$2m of Urban Cycleways funding.

GROWING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Whangarei's CityLink bus patronage has tripled since its inception in 2000. During the 2015-18 NLTP period it is proposed that almost \$6.5m will be invested by the Transport Agency and Northland Regional Council in public transport services and infrastructure. This is expected to result in a 10% increase in passenger trips over this period, amounting to a total of 354,000 passenger trips per year for the next three years.

INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Improving state highways as well as local roads lies at the heart of most of Northland's key programmes. One continued focus is on improving the journey between Auckland and Whangarei to deliver more predictable journey times and address the ongoing safety issues. Key improvements such as the Ara Tuhono-Puhoi to Warkworth upgrade continue to move forward with \$48m allocated to move this project through the procurement phase for delivery as a potential PPP.
- The Transport Agency will continue to complete its suite of improvements through State Highway 1 in Whangarei, totalling \$35m, to make this trip faster, safer and more reliable.
- Maintaining a resilient network that can reliably provide for the transport needs of Northlanders during regular severe weather events continues to be a priority for the region. Over the next three years \$32m is available for low-cost works across Northland's roading authorities and it is expected that this investment will target areas of high resilience and safety risk.
- An extra \$2.9m investment from the Urban Cycleway Fund will allow the Kamo Route to be delivered even sooner than anticipated and provide a safer connection for school children travelling through this suburb into the city centre. In total \$5m in cycling investment will be made in Whangarei.
- Significant projects that contribute to safety and journey time improvements are the Akerama Curves realignment, the SH1 Loop Road improvements (subject to programming), and the extensive work being undertaken on the northern side of the Brynderwyn Hills.



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