

Waikato



OVERVIEW

The Waikato region forms a key part of the upper North Island, home to over half of New Zealand's population, employment and GDP. It also accounts for around 50% of the total freight volume and movement. An efficient, safe transport system is needed to support the increasing population and movement of goods to ensure the region can continue its significant contribution to the nation's economy and growth. Transport investment in the Waikato region is targeted to support significant residential growth, new industrial development and jobs, while also ensuring efficient freight movement and access to markets across New Zealand as well as the export ports of Tauranga and Auckland.

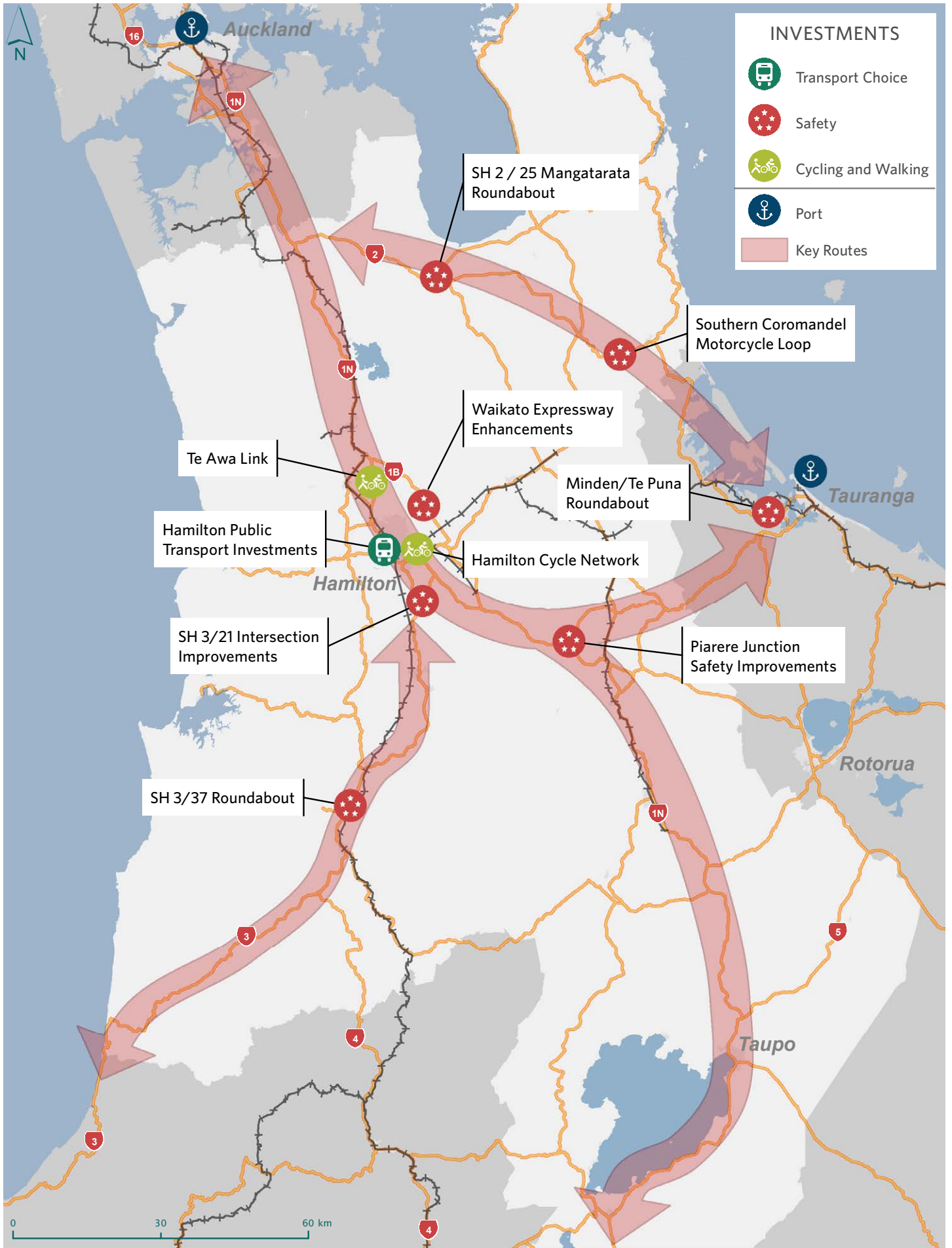
The population in and around Hamilton is projected to grow by 1.3% per annum, and in the North Waikato villages of Tuakau, Pokeno and Te Kauwhata similar growth rates are also predicted. This growth will put pressure on the capacity of the transport systems.

Land use intensification and change in use from forestry and dry stock to dairy in the South Waikato, and dairy to horticulture in the Hauraki Plains is bringing increased freight movement between farm, factory and ports.

As road freight across the upper North Island increases (forecast to increase by over 59% in the next 30 years), pressure will be placed on the key road and rail journeys that provide access within the region and beyond, particularly to international gateways like Port of Tauranga and Port of Auckland. Transport funders are focusing on investing in these key journeys to ensure safe and efficient freight movement to support the region's continued economic growth.

The Waikato region's road safety record is continuing to improve, with a downward trend in fatal and serious injury crashes. The NZ Transport Agency remains committed to improving the safety of the region's transport network, and will continue to deliver Safer Journeys and work with road safety partners to target areas of greatest risk.





JOINED-UP APPROACH TO TRANSPORT INVESTMENT

The Government, along with many individuals and businesses, invests in the region's transport system and shapes the performance, costs and experiences of people using it. The Transport Agency, KiwiRail, councils and NZ Police work closely together to deliver a consistent, predictable experience for the customer.

During the next three years around \$1,821 million is being invested in the Waikato, including \$542m in local road and state highway maintenance, operations and renewals, \$53m in public transport and \$7m in road safety promotion. Of improvements in the 2015-18 National Land Transport Programme, 56% will target economic productivity, while 32% will target safety outcomes. This investment also delivers social, environmental and resilience benefits to the region.

The investment focuses on supporting planned growth of the region's communities, particularly around Hamilton, while also ensuring efficient access to markets and international gateways for business and rural communities. Investing in key supply chain routes across the region and linking to the upper North Island is important to support economic growth and productivity.

Areas of focus will be: building on the recent investment in the Waikato Expressway, which will, on completion in 2019, bring a total of travel time savings of up to 35 minutes and a predicted reduction in deaths and serious injuries of around 36 over 10 years; additional investment in the completion of the Hamilton Ring Road; extension of Resolution Drive to join the Expressway; and an upgrade at the Hillcrest roundabouts will improve safety and enable significant planned business area growth in Hamilton North, Hautapu and Ruakura.



KEY STRATEGIC RESPONSES

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 improve safety. Most of this will be directed at infrastructure improvements through the capital works programmes, 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 NZ Police and investing together in road policing and road safety promotion is an integral part of the region's safe system approach. During the next three-year period together we will continue to target the factors contributing to fatal and serious injuries in the Waikato, including speed, drink and drug driving, not wearing restraints, high-risk driving, and high-risk drivers.

MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Keeping land transport networks available for people and enabling freight to move easily, reliably and safely are primary objectives of transport investment in the existing road network across the Waikato.

Over the 2015-18 NLTP period, total maintenance and renewals investment in Waikato's 10 councils will be \$320m for local roads and \$222m for state highways. Based on good asset management planning, the level of investment has been agreed to ensure that

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. Recognition is given to the approach of a number of councils in the Waikato where efficiencies in maintenance delivery have been achieved. This has enabled increased investment in other areas where evidence shows there is a need for increased maintenance funding to respond to changing demand on those networks.

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.

GROWING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Transport Agency and Waikato Regional Council investment in the public transport system provides people with travel choices and access to essential services in the Waikato region. The \$53m public transport programme will provide people with travel choice, particularly at busy times of the day.

Across the rest of the region, travel services are aimed at providing access to essential services in larger urban centres for those with limited access to other transport.

Over 4 million passenger trips are forecast to be made each year in Waikato during the 2015-18 NLTP period.

PHOTO CREDIT: WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL



ENCOURAGING CYCLING AND WALKING

Ensuring people have choices about how they get around by having access to good cycling and walking networks is a priority for the region.

This NLTP includes co-investments with the Urban Cycleways Fund and Hamilton City council in Hamilton's Western Rail Trail, a flagship project connecting the south western suburbs into the centre of Hamilton. Under current proposals the next three years will also see the completion of the Te Awa link from Hamilton to Ngaruawahia in partnership with the Urban Cycleways Fund, Waikato District Council and Te Awa River Ride. Other new cycleways are planned along Ohaupo Road (State Highway 3). The completion of these projects will contribute to the delivery of the Hamilton Biking Plan and will be supported by road safety and promotional activities. 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 Waikato in the 2015-18 period will be \$7m. This includes \$4m from the Urban Cycleways Fund.

INVESTING TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

The **Auckland to Tauranga via Hamilton** journey is a high-volume freight route for the country. Our focus is on having an efficient route for freight, with travel time savings where appropriate, plus providing a safe, predictable and reliable journey.

With its partners and stakeholders the Transport Agency will continue to invest in this journey over the next three years. This includes completing and opening more sections of the Waikato Expressway and completing the Hamilton Ring Road. These investments forecast travel time savings of up to 23 minutes, as well as improving safety for customers on the journey.

Within this journey, the Waikato Expressway is predicted to deliver travel time savings of up to 35 minutes when fully complete. A portion of this travel time saving has already been achieved through 2012-15 investments, such as the opening of the Ngaruawahia and Te Rapa sections.

Other work is underway to determine how to make the journey more efficient, even with forecast growth, including in areas such as south Auckland to north Waikato and on the State Highway 1/29 part of the key journey from Hamilton to Tauranga. These investigations are also looking at how the road and rail network can complement each other as freight volumes increase and local growth pressures around Hamilton increase.

In this period safety improvements are also expected to be made on State Highway 1 between Cambridge and Piare (State Highway 1/29 intersection).

Improved safety and more reliable travel times are the focus for the important **Pokeno to Tauranga via Waihi** key journey. Recent improvements have included the Mangatarata State Highway 2/25 roundabout and speed management on some stretches of the journey. Looking ahead, the focus remains on working with partners and stakeholders including the NZ Police to improve road safety for motorists. Improving safety on the Pokeno to Mangatarata and Waihi to Tauranga routes is a focus, where work is being carried out to improve high-risk intersections along the journey, such as the \$7m investment in the Minden Te Puna intersection on State Highway 2 in the Bay of Plenty.

Along the **Hamilton to New Plymouth via Awakino** journey the Transport Agency's focus on reducing deaths and serious injuries and providing predictable travel times remains. Recent investments include the construction of the roundabout at State Highway 3/37 Waitomo to improve safety. Further investment will improve high-risk intersections such as State Highway 3/21 south of Hamilton near the airport. During the next year further investments are expected to be announced that will improve resilience and safety outcomes through the Awakino Gorge.

CASE STUDY

INVESTING IN MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

The 130 kilometre-long Southern Coromandel loop is a magnet for motorcyclists. It combines breath-taking scenery with twisting roads and tight corners.

However, the route has seen a disproportionate number of motorcycle crashes. Between 2009 and 2013, motorcyclists accounted for 42% of the fatal and serious crashes along the route, yet they made up only 2% of road users.

To turn this around, the Transport Agency teamed up with the Motorcycle Safety Advisory Council, ACC, the Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki district councils, Waikato Regional Council, NZ Police and motorcycling user groups.

The Safer Rides team has overseen a range of safety improvements aimed at:

- keeping riders on their bikes with new road markings and upgraded signage around some deceptive corners, improved surface condition as well as work to improve visibility
- creating a more forgiving environment by removing or modifying various roadside hazards to help reduce the severity of potential injuries if riders crash
- getting injured riders access to medical treatment as quickly as possible when crashes do occur

Innovative road markings, known as perceptual countermeasures, were used on five particularly deceptive curves on the route in order to reduce riders' speed on the approach and improve their lane positioning. These markings help signal to riders that the curve ahead is getting tighter and the lane narrower.

Four emergency helicopter landing pads were installed on State Highways 25 and 25A between Kopu and Whangamata, in consultation with the Westpac rescue helicopter service. Improvements in cell phone coverage also ensure that emergency services can be on the scene quickly if crashes do occur.

Other popular motorcycle routes in the region have been earmarked for similar work, including the Northern Coromandel loop and Pokeno to Raglan.

As with the Southern Coromandel Motorcycle Safety Demonstration project, the northern section of the loop will be co-funded by the Transport Agency and MSAC. The Transport Agency investment will be up to \$3.7m and additional costs of specific interventions will be funded by the MSAC.

The Pokeno to Raglan route is primarily on Waikato District Council roads and is used by motorcyclists travelling from the Auckland area and beyond to Raglan. Pokeno to Raglan is also over-represented with motorcycle crashes. Waikato District has a programme of minor improvement works over the next three years to address motorcycle safety. MSAC has also expressed interest in co-investing in this project.

Although it is too early to formally measure the success of the investment, initial feedback from riders of the Southern loop has been positive. Early analysis of the effect of the perceptual countermeasures indicates that riders are reducing their speed and improving their lane position.



RATA - EFFICIENT ROAD MAINTENANCE

In the Waikato, the region's mayors have set up RATA (Road Asset Technical Accord) to save money and work smarter. This agreement between Waikato's councils enables greater co-operation in planning and delivery of road maintenance on the local council roads.

Working under the umbrella of the Waikato Mayoral Forum, RATA is focused on shared services, more advanced procurement procedures and the development of the One Network Road Classification.

Initial work involves reviewing road reconstruction and resealing programmes to assess the merits of each council's approach. Future projects include a shift to LED street lighting, and developing a consistent approach to the maintenance and improvements to unsealed roads and asset management database support.

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