

Waitematā Harbour Connections



Waitematā Harbour Connections

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency and partners, Auckland Council, Auckland Transport and Ngā Iwi Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau are embarking on a crucial phase in the planning of Aotearoa New Zealand's most significant city shaping project, Waitematā Harbour Connections.

A well connected, sustainable, resilient, and reliable transport system gives people more choices, helps tackle harmful pollution, encourages quality growth, and supports a productive economy.

The project team acknowledge the ancestral connection and significance of Te Waitematā to Ngā Iwi Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau. Working in partnership, Mana Whenua values to uphold and protect the status of Te Waitematā as a taonga (treasure) will be reflected throughout the project planning.

The Waitematā Harbour Connections project will provide for a fully multi-modal solution for people wanting to walk, cycle, take the bus, travel by light rail, drive, or transport freight across the Waitematā Harbour, connecting people to transport options across the region and beyond.



Project background, need and purpose

- There is a long history of planning work for improvements to cross-harbour transport connections, with at least ten major studies conducted over the past 30 years.
- This is a nationally significant, high-volume, strategic corridor providing substantial local, regional, and national benefits and a key route for the nation's freight network, which relies heavily on the existing Auckland Harbour Bridge and wider network to transport goods across the country.
- The current Auckland Harbour Bridge structure is coming under increasing operational pressure, affecting the resilience of the bridge and the wider network. These pressures are forecast to increase further as population, employment and freight needs continues to grow.
- We're facing significant growth predictions, with an additional population the size of Hamilton (NZ's fourth largest city) to be added to Auckland's North Shore in the next 25 years.
- There is an existing gap across the harbour for people on foot and bikes so this project will investigate future long-term links to tie into the wider walking and cycling network.
- Ongoing climate change issues are affecting the network with rising sea levels and an increasing focus on reducing carbon emissions. The Waitematā Harbour is a taonga/treasure with significant cultural, historical and environmental values.
- The Northern Busway is working well, and Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi continue to undertake improvements to cater for more passengers, however even with those improvements, a second rapid transit connection is needed.



Overseas example of rapid transit in action

The planning of Waitematā Harbour Connections

A planning process called an Indicative Business Case (IBC) is underway.

Planning work will look at how all modes need to cross the harbour in the future, what new infrastructure is needed to cater for these modes, where it will go, and how we make the best use of our existing infrastructure including the Auckland Harbour Bridge to create a more resilient network.

The team is working closely with Auckland Light Rail and other major projects to ensure the people of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland have a fully integrated future network, creating more transport options across the region and beyond.

The IBC will build on previous work and explore all modes of transport to reach a recommended way forward by mid-2023.

Waitematā Harbour Connections will look at how we develop new connections and use existing infrastructure to cross the harbour between the North Shore and city centre, however benefits will have a far wider reach for people travelling within Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and throughout the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand.

ALBANY

MAIRANGI
BAY

ROSEDALE

UNSWORTH
HEIGHTS

FORREST
HILL

GLENFIELD

TAKAPUNA

BIRKDALE

BIRKENHEAD

NORTHCOTE

DEVONPORT

PONSONBY

AUCKLAND
CENTRAL

A key part of Auckland's growing rapid transit network



Likely Mode

- Light Rail █
- Heavy Rail █
- Bus Rapid Transit █
- Ferry █
- To Be Determined ●●

Findings from previous work

Previous planning work identified that an additional rapid transit connection should directly link the city centre with Takapuna and Smales Farm and is likely to extend to Albany. These areas are growing residential, commercial, social and employment hubs. Finalising route options for this new rapid transit connection will be undertaken during this current planning phase in 2022-2023.

What is rapid transit?

Rapid transit is fast, frequent and reliable public transport that carries large numbers of people, on dedicated corridors separated from other traffic, providing more reliable, seamless journeys. Large cities around the world are highly reliant on rapid transit to sustainably and efficiently move large volumes of people in a way that's unaffected by congestion.

Benefits of Waitematā Harbour Connections



Connecting the rapid transit network



Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland will significantly expand and upgrade its rapid transit network over the coming decades to support and shape the city's growth. This will be the most substantial investment in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's transport system in over 30 years.

High capacity, quality rapid transit is critical to developing a modern, connected city, providing people with faster, safer and more reliable trips and reducing carbon emissions.

Getting the most value out of Auckland's rapid transit system will require excellent integration with the rest of the transport system, including Auckland Light Rail. This will enable the greatest number of people possible to have access to quality congestion free transport, as well as realising the wider benefits to help shape the way Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland grows over time.

Auckland's rapid transit network currently includes the existing heavy rail lines, the Northern Busway, and the Eastern Busway. Rapid transit barely existed in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland 15 years ago but has already proven highly successful with more than 26 million trips a year taken prior to the global pandemic.

Waitematā Harbour Connections is a key part in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's rapid transit journey, unlocking even more benefits for the region by using rapid transit to move people across the harbour. A new light rail connection will supplement the existing Northern Busway, integrating effectively with the wider public transport network to keep up with growing passenger demand.

It will connect with the Auckland Light Rail project and rapid transit to the Northwest (currently being investigated) to provide seamless travel options from the North Shore to the south and northwest. Planning across all rapid transit projects will be coordinated to ensure the people of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland have a fully integrated transport network and access to quality, sustainable and reliable transport options.

Benefits of Waitematā Harbour Connections



Resilient connections



This corridor is the busiest part of New Zealand's transport network with the Auckland Harbour Bridge carrying over 254,000 people per day, 184,000 vehicles per day and 35,000 bus trips per day. Unexpected incidents such as crashes and high wind events mean the Auckland Harbour Bridge and wider network are increasingly compromised, causing widespread disruption for all users of the bridge.

Any new or improved existing infrastructure will be future proofed to cater for increasing natural environmental events. It's already apparent that sea level rise is affecting the section of Northern Motorway from Esmonde Road to the bridge and flooding will continue to worsen due to the effects of climate change.

The Auckland Harbour Bridge is also a key connector for most major services and utilities, such as power, telecommunications and water. This work will look at how these services are integrated into any new or existing infrastructure to continue to support these essential connections.

Previous studies have assessed both tunnel and bridge options for additional connections across the Waitematā Harbour. Earlier studies concluded that a tunnel was preferred for a number of reasons, including less disruption, better connectivity, and accessibility to the rapid transit network. During the current planning phase, previous work will be revisited and reviewed in light of policy, funding and environmental changes, and will be updated as necessary.

Benefits of Waitematā Harbour Connections



Improving the freight network



This is a nationally significant, high-volume, strategic corridor for the nation's freight industry, providing substantial local, regional, and national benefits. On average, the Auckland Harbour Bridge carries over 12,000 freight trips per day.

Efficient, reliable, safe and resilient freight transport within cities, between regions and to ports is vital for a thriving economy.

Many freight trips are intra-regional which means freight drivers only travel within the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland region. However, 40% of travel through this corridor is not Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland-bound. It is a key route to move goods and services through Auckland to the rest of New Zealand and this project will provide greater connection for the whole Upper North Island and unlock significant value for the entire country.



Urban development opportunities



An essential part of this project will be to recommend ways to integrate transport improvements with quality urban development. The places this project will pass through will become even more vibrant, diverse centres and neighbourhoods, focused on quality transport routes, enabling people to have more choice in housing, employment, education, and other services.

Waitematā Harbour Connections will consider how we support high quality compact urban growth along the corridor and around key nodes that provides more housing to people and creates a low-carbon transport future by avoiding the need for emissions. People who are able to live next to great transport connections to get to education, work and other opportunities will be able to live more sustainable lifestyles with real transport choice.

Benefits of Waitematā Harbour Connections



Sustainable transport choice



Waitematā Harbour Connections is about providing real transport choice to everyone to support the Government's vision to achieve significant mode shift and a lower carbon transport system.

Since 1990 the transport sector has seen its emissions grow by 90%, a greater increase than any other sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. This project will provide more transport choice to encourage more sustainable transport modes like walking and cycling, and mass rapid transit.

More transport choice and reducing reliance on private vehicles will help the Government and Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. Work will align with the Government's Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP), which describes how we are going to meet emissions budgets and make progress towards meeting the 2050 target. This includes reduced carbon emissions, reduced embodied carbon emissions and ways to build resilience in the transport network. The approach will also be supported by the Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway (TERP), which has been developed by Auckland Council and Auckland Transport (AT) in response to te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri Auckland's Climate Plan and sets out what needs to happen for the region to reduce its transport emissions by 64 per cent by 2030.

To provide more transport choice for people wanting to walk or cycle across the harbour, this project will investigate future long-term active mode connections to tie into the wider walking and cycling network and the overall transport system. This will be a fully integrated approach and walking and cycling will be considered along with all other modes to assess how to make the most of the existing and new infrastructure.

Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri takes a deeply cultural narrative that is embedded in this place, Tāmaki Makaurau. The narrative speaks to the struggles of Tāwhiri-mātea, the primal ancestor associated with weather. Tied to the Māori creation narratives of the universe and the world, Tāwhiri-mātea is seen to be influencing our climate and accelerating the change in our climate in response to human induced climate change. The narrative calls for a change in our response to climate change, re-framing, re-imagining and re-setting the current system, and a shift from a human-centred approach to an ecological-centred approach given our symbiotic relationships with the natural environment.

Community engagement is key to this transformative project's success.

- 1.** We are asking for feedback to understand people's vision for this city-shaping transport programme and the future of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.
- 2.** Next year, we will share more information and ask for feedback on specific options to help shape the project as it moves forward.
- 3.** A recommendation will be delivered mid 2023 to outline the way forward for the project.
- 4.** The long-term solutions are likely to require significant investment and involve complex, large-scale construction, anticipated to take more than 15 years of design and build.
- 5.** Although the long-term solutions may take time to deliver, Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi are already progressing enhancements to the Northern Busway to help keep up with growing bus patronage and ease pressure on the transport system.



Auckland Harbour Bridge – A key transport connection

254,000

people per day



184,000

vehicles per day



35,000

bus trips per day



12,000

freight trips per day



**Share your thoughts on
the Waitematā Harbour
Connections here**



How to contact us

Website : nzta.govt.nz/awhc

Email : awhc@nzta.govt.nz