

# Northland Regional Update

## August 2020

### Overview

Our focus in Northland is on creating a transport system that is safer, has stronger community connections, provides better access to economic and employment opportunities and is resilient enough to withstand extreme weather events.

We are working closely with partners from local government, iwi, other agencies and communities to support a growing and successful region.

Northland's appeal as a tourist destination will be boosted by additional investment from the Provincial Growth Fund and the regional package of the NZ Upgrade Programme to improve key intersections on the Twin Coast Discovery Route.

Bridge replacement projects on the Twin Coast Discovery Route at Taipā and Matakohe have been completed and work is expected to get underway this year to replace the one-lane bridge at Kaeo.

Access to Northland's key port will be improved by works at Loop Road and Portland Road and by a \$692 million investment through the NZ Upgrade Programme to create a 22km four-lane corridor between Whangārei and Port Marsden Highway.

### Safety

Northland has a poor road safety record; speeding, impairment, not wearing seat belts and fatigue are primary contributors. Road safety is a priority and work will continue to identify and improve high-risk safety areas on the network.

As part of the Safe Network Programme, planning is underway for online safety improvements between Whangārei and Wellsford, such as roadside barriers, median barriers, centre line widening and improved road marking.

There are currently three speed management reviews underway in Northland: SH1 Moerewa to Kawakawa, SH10 Awanui to Kaingaroa, and SH11 Puketona to Paihia.

Construction of a roundabout at Loop Road (north) and improvements to the Portland Road intersection, which started in March 2019, will improve safety at these high-risk intersections south of Whangārei.

A single-lane roundabout under construction at Puketona Junction will improve safety at this notorious intersection, connecting SH10 to Waitangi and the Bay of Islands.

### Increasing access to opportunity

Almost 70% of Northland's population live in rural communities. This dispersed population means there is a high dependence on private vehicle use to access employment and education opportunities. Northland's social and economic opportunities are also dependent on its connections south to Auckland and the rest of the country to support key industries, enable visitors and allow communities to thrive.

Key transport routes, such as state highways, are critical in connecting Northland's towns and communities, making the Waka Kotahi maintenance and capital works programme in the region an essential enabler for access to opportunity and economic growth.

This will continue as access along the corridor north of Auckland is improved, making Northland an even more attractive region in which to live, work and visit.

The growth of forestry in the region means that strategic routes can change over time. The maintenance and renewals programme will respond to these changes, supporting industry and economic development. Waka Kotahi continues to work with industry, communities and local government to develop and improve the region's High Productivity Motor Vehicle routes, and to prioritise projects addressing dust caused by increased traffic on unsealed roads.

## **Economic development**

Northland's transport system provides the means for businesses to operate successfully in the region.

The port at Marsden Point is crucial to Northland; the improvements at Loop Road and Portland Road will help to support the safer and more efficient movement of people and freight to and from the port.

The Whangārei to Port Marsden Highway, a NZ Upgrade Programme project, is a four-lane corridor that will strengthen the region's transport links with Auckland, supporting the annual movement of two million tonnes of freight between Northland and Auckland.

Tourism in Northland thrives in locations such as the Bay of Islands, Te Reringa Wairua (Cape Reinga), Opononi/Omapere, Waipoua Forest and Matakoho. Strategic investment in the transport system is vital to broaden Northland's destination appeal and increase visitor numbers.

Three intersection improvement projects identified in the Twin Coast Discovery Route business cases, funded by the Provincial Growth Fund, progress into construction this year at Kawakawa, Puketona and Rawene. These intersections are being funded through the NZ Upgrade Programme regional package and will deliver safer and more efficient connections at key tourist locations in the Far North.

Completed and planned bridge replacement projects on the Twin Coast Discovery Route at Taipā, Matakoho and Kaeo will improve the experience of visitors to the region and make transporting freight easier and safer.

The SH10 Waipapa Corridor Improvements project will provide a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of SH10 and Waipapa Road, as well as local road and walking and cycling improvements, making it safer for traffic to make turns across the state highway and supporting Waipapa's growth.

## **Improving walking and cycling**

Walking and cycling opportunities will continue to grow through the Northland Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy, providing a great way to boost tourism and promote healthy communities.

Waka Kotahi is continuing to work with local government to identify the most effective way to invest in walking and cycling infrastructure, to grow the number of people walking and cycling. This NLTP also supports the delivery of shared paths in Whangārei that link suburbs with schools, recreation areas and the city centre.

The Whangārei to Port Marsden Highway upgrade will provide safer walking and cycling connections with the inclusion of a separated shared path.

The intersection improvements at SH1/Tarewa Road will improve safety for those walking and cycling to and from Whangārei Hospital, Northland Polytechnic and central Whangārei, with a shared path under a new bridge and pedestrian crossings at the intersection.

The SH10 Waipapa Corridor Improvements project will provide safer walking and cycling access to Waipapa by connecting with paths into Kerikeri township.

Waka Kotahi will continue to support initiatives such as the Twin Coast Cycle Trail, which offer tourists and locals a unique way to travel between the region's coasts.

## **Resilience**

Work will continue with local roading authorities and communities to be vigilant about the condition of the transport network and target areas of low resilience. The Far North District Council has a significant resilience programme underway for the 2018-21 period.

The recently completed SH12 Opononi Seawall project saw the repair of a seawall that had suffered erosion and was threatening the State highway at six locations. These works will improve the resilience of the route by protecting the state highway from further erosion.

Waka Kotahi will continue to support road controlling authorities and the Northland Transportation Alliance in their collaboration on procurement, asset management and implementation of maintenance activities, to ensure best practice and value for money.

### **New Zealand Upgrade Programme (NZUP)**

NZUP is a \$6.8 billion investment over the next 10 years in road, rail, public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure. It is aimed at saving lives, getting our cities moving and boosting productivity in the country's growth areas.

Of this, \$692 million will be invested in a 22km four-lane corridor between Whangārei and Port Marsden Highway (SH15) that will support growth in the region's population, tourism and economy. The construction phase of the project has an expected start date of 2023-4, with completion in stages from 2027-8.

Announced in February 2020, the regional package of NZ Upgrade Programme investment will help address safety risks, resilience, accessibility and travel time reliability as well as support regional economic development. The Northland projects totalling \$21.5m are:

- SH1/11 Kawakawa roundabout and resilience
- SH11/10 Intersection Puketona Junction roundabout
- SH12 and Rawene Road intersection improvements.

### **Provincial Growth Fund (PGF)**

The Northland transport network has received significant investment from the PGF which will help to drive economic growth, increase tourism and improve access for communities to key services.

The Northland projects funded by the PGF, totalling \$15.25m are seven Twin Coast Discovery Route business cases (completed) and intersection improvements at SH10 Waipapa.

### **Underway or about to start**

- The SH1 Dome Valley Safety Improvements project is under construction and includes both median and shoulder flexible safety barriers, widened shoulders, right-turn bays and improved signage to address the safety issues within this section of SH1. This road is an important link between Northland and Auckland for commuters, freight and tourists but its unexpected curves, poor visibility and steep slopes make it difficult for people to drive safely. This project is expected to be completed in August 2021.
- The SH1 Loop Road Safety Improvements project south of Whangārei includes construction of a roundabout at Loop Road (north) and intersection improvements at the SH1/Portland Road intersection. In December 2019, additional funding was approved to dual lane the roundabout at Loop Road, add an additional southbound lane and construct a new two-lane bridge over Otaika Stream, bringing the total project cost to \$47 million. The project is expected to be completed during the summer of 2021-22.
- The \$17m SH1 Tarewa Road intersection improvements are expected to be completed in October this year. It is the last of six projects within the Whangārei Improvements package. This project will improve traffic flow and safety with new traffic lights and double lanes for north and southbound traffic.
- The SH10 Waipapa Corridor Improvements project will provide a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of SH10 and Waipapa Road, making it safer for traffic to make turns across the State highway and reducing peak time congestion and vehicle queuing on SH10. Funding for the project is made up of \$9m from the PGF and \$15.5m from the National Land Transport Fund. Construction of this \$24.5 million project, which includes a new local road link and bridge, started in October 2019 and is expected to be completed in April 2021. The roundabout portion of the project will be completed slightly earlier – in December 2020 – before the peak summer season.

- Two of the Northland projects from the regional package of the NZ Upgrade Programme are underway with construction of SH1/SH11 Kawakawa Intersection Improvements and SH10/SH11 Puketona Junction Intersection Improvements project started in June 2020. The SH12/Rawene Road Intersection Improvements project is scheduled to get underway in Spring 2020.
- Replacement of one-lane bridges at Taipā and Matakohe is complete, and work is programmed to start on Kaeo Bridge in October 2020. This \$22.2 million project on the Twin Coast Discovery Route includes a new two-lane bridge and roundabout on SH10. It will improve safety and traffic flow, reducing bottlenecks during the peak tourist season. Construction is due for completion in September 2022.
- There is substantial investment in regionally prioritised, lower value activities to improve local roads and access to communities.

### Investment in Northland

NLTP	2015–18	2018–21
Forecast total investment	\$509 million	\$584 million
Forecast maintenance and operations	\$345 million	\$282 million
Forecast public transport investment	\$6 million	\$9 million
Forecast walking and cycling	\$7 million	\$10 million
Regional network improvements	\$130 million	\$225 million

Crown funding	
NZ Upgrade Programme*	\$713.5 million
Provincial Growth Fund*	\$15.25 million

\*Waka Kotahi led projects only

# Overview map

