

# Waikato

Waikato plays a critical role in the export of New Zealand's primary products. An efficient, safe and resilient transport network is vital for the country's economic prosperity.

Forming part of the golden triangle – with Auckland and Bay of Plenty – 32 percent of the nation's freight movements go into, out of, and through the region. SH1, SH29 and the East Coast Main Trunk Lines between Auckland and Tauranga are some of New Zealand's busiest and most important freight corridors.

Road safety remains a high priority for the region with more than 20 percent of New Zealand's annual deaths and serious injuries happening on the Waikato transport network.

About 50 percent of New Zealand's population lives in the golden triangle and Waikato's population alone is expected to grow from about 500,000 to 615,000 by 2048. With this forecasted growth, investment in safe and efficient transport connections are our greatest priority.

## Economic growth and productivity

SH1 Waikato Expressway is a key strategic transport corridor for the region – improving economic growth and productivity by moving people and freight more efficiently. Significant infrastructure projects ensuring reliable access into the region include an extension of the Waikato Expressway from Cambridge to Piarere and the Hamilton Southern Links project.

## Roads of National Significance (RoNS)

Two new RoNS, **SH1 Cambridge to Piarere** and **Hamilton Southern Links**, will be prioritised for the region to:

- reduce congestion
- improve safety
- boost economic growth
- provide a more resilient roading network.

The **SH1 Cambridge to Piarere** project will improve journeys by providing more reliable travel times for people and freight from the southern end of the Waikato Expressway, connecting to the new SH1/SH29 roundabout at Piarere. It will also increase the resilience of our primary state highway by moving it away from the vulnerabilities on the current route alongside Lake Karapiro.



**\$1.9 billion**

Forecast total investment

**\$403 million**

Forecast maintenance operations

**\$802 million**

Forecast pothole prevention

**\$562 million**

Forecast improvements

**\$138 million**

Forecast public transport

**Hamilton Southern Links** is a major transport network providing vital connections to enable future growth in the southern Hamilton area, including Tamahere, the airport and the new Peacocke development. It will support economic growth in the Waikato by providing better transport connections and reducing congestion in and around Hamilton.

## Roads of Regional Significance (RoRS)

The **SH1/SH29 Piarere intersection improvements** is a RoRS that will improve efficiency, connectivity and safety on a high-volume route, which is one of New Zealand's most critical corridors. A new roundabout will be completed to allow connection with the future expressway between Cambridge and Piarere.

## Other activities

- **SH1 Taupō to the Desert Road.** We'll continue to work on a long-term plan for this crucial corridor, understanding what improvements are needed to support the forecast growth in freight alongside physical constraints and safety issues.
- **The Eastern Transport Corridor** in Hamilton will help unlock the full development of the Ruakura growth area. \$2 million has been allocated to progress this project.

## Increased maintenance and resilience

### Maintenance

Increased funding to maintain and operate the state highway and local road networks will enable significant road and drainage renewal programmes to be done. Maintenance of existing assets ensures roads are safe and accessible for everyone to drive on.

### State highways

- \$190 million will be invested this NLTP period maintaining state highway assets and responding to emergency call-outs.
- \$413 million is ringfenced for state highway pothole prevention.

This \$603 million investment includes almost 796 lane kilometres of works:

- 567kms of chipseal.
- 164kms of rehabilitation.
- 5kms of structural asphalt.
- 60kms of asphalt resurfacing.

### Local roads

With road controlling authorities in Waikato we'll invest a total of \$601 million over this NLTP period:

- \$213 million will be invested in operations.
- \$389 million is ringfenced for local road pothole prevention.

### Resilience

The state highway network is a lifeline for communities, particularly in rural areas. Waikato is vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather events, and we need to ensure communities stay connected as these become more frequent and damaging.

- We'll prioritise and build resilience into the network by improving drainage and stabilising slips at high-risk locations, especially in the Thames, Coromandel and Hauraki districts.

- Resilience work at **SH1 Te Poporo near Bulli Point on Lake Taupō** will make it safer and easier for trucks to pass each other.
- Resilience work will improve drainage and stabilise slips at several locations in the region, including **SH41 Waihī Hill, near Tokaanu**.

## Bridges

There are several bridges in the Waikato that have been connecting rural communities for well over 3 decades. These valuable assets are being prioritised for maintenance upgrades or replacement to ensure we continue to have a reliable, resilient and safe state highway network. This also improves freight connections by removing weight or other restrictions. For some bridges, replacement is the more cost-effective option than continuing to maintain the existing structure. We'll rebuild:

- **SH25 Pepe Stream Bridge**
- **SH25 Ramarama Stream Bridge**
- **SH27 Ohinekaua Stream Bridge.**

## Rail

Rail network investment in this NLTP will be targeted to parts of the rail network where the most significant economic benefits and opportunities for boosting the productivity of freight movement exist such as the triangle of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga.

The Rail Network Investment Programme (RNIP) sets out planned network maintenance, management, renewal, and improvement work on the national rail network over a 3-year period. The next RNIP will be approved later in 2024 following further analysis.

## Public transport

Implementation of the **National Ticketing Solution** allowing public transport users to tag on and off with their contactless debit or credit card will be completed within this funding period.

## Safety

Over the 2024-27 NLTP period our focus will be finishing what is currently underway and beginning to look at lower cost, value for money safety retrofits in high-risk corridors and intersections.

Building and upgrading road infrastructure to higher safety standards has a significant impact on improving road safety.

## Commercial Vehicle Regional Safety Centres (CVSC)

By 2027 our CVSC in Taupō will be operational, improving safety as officers carry out thorough inspections, including vehicle weight and road user charges (RUC) payments, logbook accuracy and driver impairment.

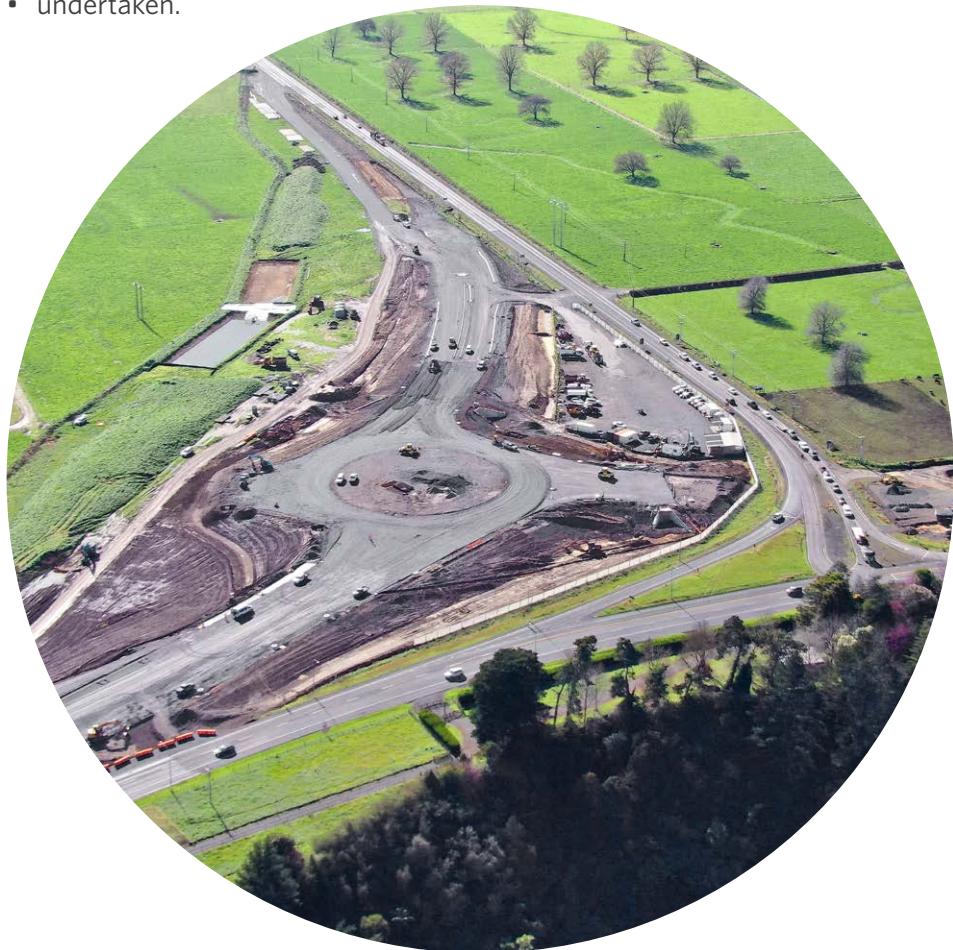
## Value for money

Value for money isn't always about seeking the lowest initial cost for a project - it must also take into consideration the whole of life costs and benefits of a project.

We're taking steps to make sure that all our work this NLTP provides good value for taxpayers. In the Waikato this will include reducing expenditure on temporary traffic management, increased investment in road maintenance and a focus on whole-of-life costs.

We'll improve the productivity of maintenance and improvement works, by considering the way works are:

- scoped
- planned
- procured
- undertaken.



## Key projects 2024-27

