

TRANSPORT FOR THE FUTURE



Transport for the Future

Under the next National-led government, infrastructure will be a priority. Our comprehensive transport programme will see significant investment made into key connections so Kiwis can get where they want to go faster and safer. National's nationwide Transport for the Future programme will cut congestion, provide more low emission transport options, and create a more productive and resilient transport network that drives economic growth to boost incomes and unlock land for thousands of houses.

1. Roads of National Significance

- Initial stages of National's long-term vision of four lanes from Whangārei to Tauranga, driving growth in the upper North Island economic zone.
- Projects to tackle congestion and reduce travel times, including Mill Road in Auckland, a second Mt Victoria Tunnel in Wellington, the Hope Bypass in Tasman, and the Woodend Bypass north of Christchurch
- Roads to unlock urban housing growth including Southern Links in Hamilton, Petone to Grenada and the Cross Valley Link in Wellington and the Hutt Valley, and the North West Alternative State Highway in Auckland.

2. Better public transport

- A rapid transit network for Auckland, with public transport corridors in the North West, Airport to Botany, and completion of the Eastern Busway.
- Improvements to increase capacity and reliability on Lower North Island train services for passengers and freight.

3. Rebuilding regions and improving resilience

- Priority projects to reconstruct transport infrastructure damaged during recent floods and Cyclone Gabrielle, enhancing long-term resilience in flood-affected regions.
- Upgrades to existing transport infrastructure in Ashburton, Queenstown, Otago, and Southland.

National has a strong track record of funding, consenting, and delivering major infrastructure projects such as the Auckland City Rail Link, the Waterview Tunnel, the Waikato Expressway, Transmission Gully, and the recently completed Puhoi to Warkworth motorway.

However, in the last six years, infrastructure delivery in New Zealand has stalled. Labour cancelled the pipeline of infrastructure projects National had underway and replaced it with working groups and ever-changing funding priorities, with hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars wasted on phantom projects like Light Rail and the Auckland bike bridge.

Under Labour, transport policy has been about slowing New Zealanders down and making it harder to get around. National will issue a new Government Policy Statement on Land Transport in our first six months in office which will prioritise reducing travel times, creating a more efficient and safer transport network, increasing productivity, delivering housing growth, and building resilience.

One of the reasons Labour has failed to deliver any significant transport projects for the last six years is their hostility to utilising private funding sources. In contrast, National will accelerate investment in modern, world-class transport infrastructure by using a range of funding sources, including additional government investment, value capture and cost recovery tools, toll roads where appropriate, and equity financing from entities like the Super Fund, KiwiSaver funds, or global investors. This approach will reduce the burden on taxpayers while leveraging the expertise of experienced global infrastructure investors.

To facilitate this new approach, our new National Infrastructure Agency will collaborate with NZTA to secure these funding deals, especially to deliver roads which unlock housing growth and for transformative public transport projects.

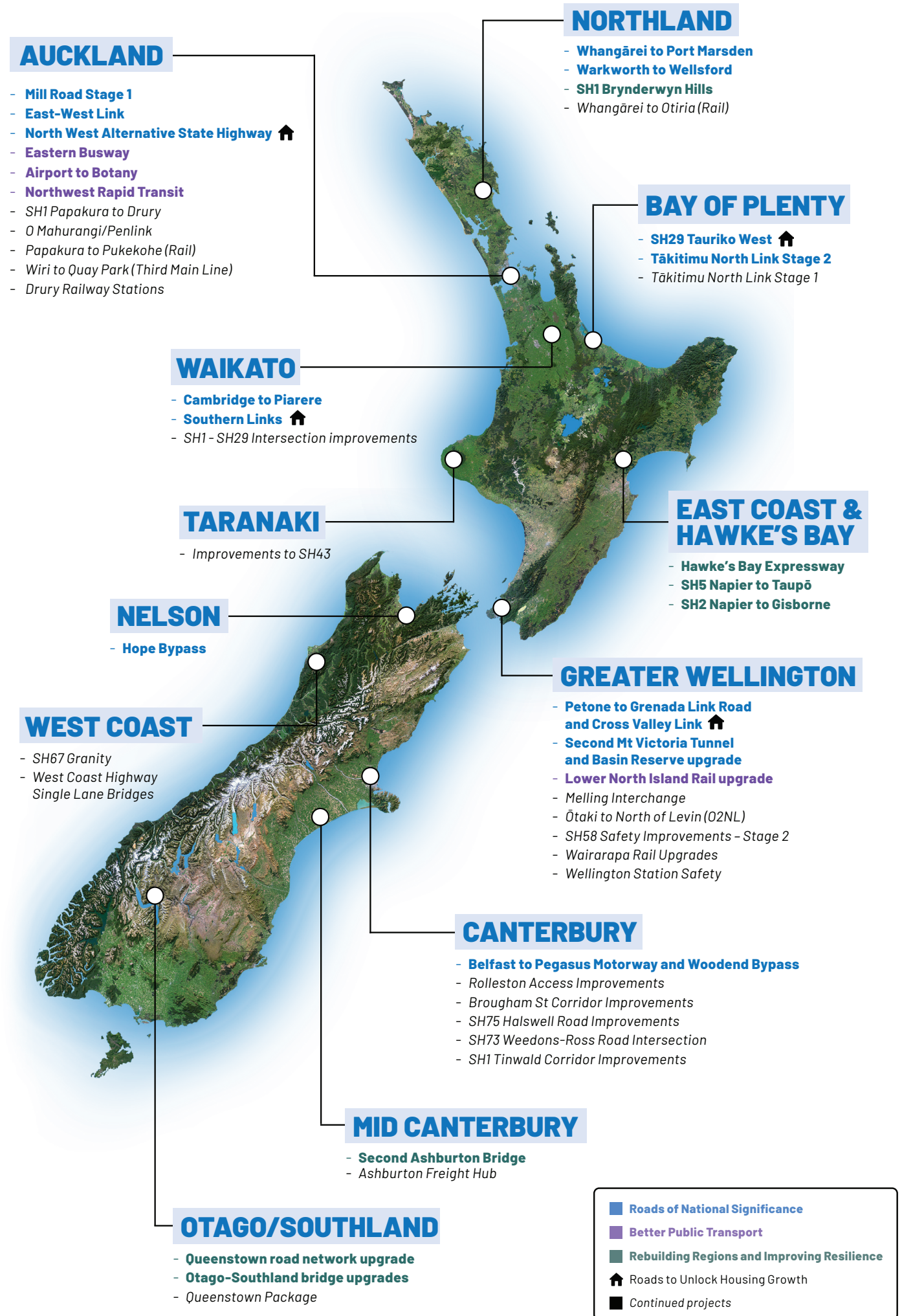
National will also introduce congestion charging as a new tool to help reduce travel times in our congested cities.

Transport for the Future will also support New Zealand's efforts to reduce emissions in support of our climate change goals by providing more public transport options in Auckland and better rail services in Greater Wellington. But meeting our climate goals doesn't mean forcing New Zealanders out of their cars by allowing our roading infrastructure to decay. Over the coming decades, what we drive might change as more New Zealanders make the switch to electric vehicles, but we will still need modern, fast, high-quality roads to drive on.

National also believes the Government has a role in ensuring projects are delivered faster. New Zealand's planning system creates unnecessary and expensive delays for essential infrastructure projects. It needs urgent reform. National's previously announced Infrastructure for the Future policy will introduce a new fast-track consents process to make it easier to build the infrastructure New Zealand needs for the future. This will support the delivery of the Transport for the Future infrastructure pipeline.

National recognises the crucial role of transport networks in enhancing our quality of life and unlocking New Zealand's economic potential. We also understand the importance of maintaining fiscal discipline and delivering value for every taxpayer dollar we invest. That's why we are proposing a carefully sequenced, long-term programme of investments to deliver the infrastructure New Zealand needs within the fiscal constraints the country finds itself in.

TRANSPORT FOR THE FUTURE - PROJECT OVERVIEW



1. ROADS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

National has a proud track record of building high-quality roading infrastructure, including projects like the Kāpiti Expressway, Transmission Gully, Christchurch Motorways, the Waikato Expressway, and Puhoi to Warkworth. This commitment to invest in our roading network for safe and efficient transport connections will continue under the next National Government.

1.1. Four lanes from Whangārei to Tauranga

National's long-term vision is to connect major cities in the upper North Island – Whangārei, Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga – with modern, high-quality four-lane highways. This will reduce travel times, boost freight capacity, and support economic development, especially in Northland. Transport for the Future includes the first four stages of this vision:

- Whangārei to Port Marsden Highway
- Warkworth to Wellsford Expressway
- Cambridge to Piarere Expressway
- Tauriko West State Highway 29

The final stages of the Whangārei to Tauranga vision includes approximately 50km between Port Marsden and Wellsford including an alternative route for the Brynderwyns, and the 50km between Piarere and Tauriko in Tauranga which will require a new route across the Kaimai Range. Planning for these stages will begin in our first term.

Whangārei to Port Marsden Highway

A 22km four-lane highway between Whangārei and the Port Marsden Highway (State Highway 15), with an upgraded intersection at State Highways 1 and 15. This will see a continuous four-lane state highway for general traffic, with separation between traffic travelling in opposite directions. It will include wide lanes and sealed shoulders and will provide safe roadsides clear of obstacles.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Faster and more reliable connections for the approximately two million tonnes of freight that moves between Northland and Auckland each year and the \$1 billion of Northland tourism.¹
- Reduced travel times for the 8,800 vehicles that travel on this highway every day.²
- Safety improvements on Northland's busiest and deadliest road.³

Current project status	Business case
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$1.3 billion

¹ [NZTA media release](#)

² [WPO 34574](#)

³ [Stuff](#)

Warkworth to Wellsford Expressway

A 26km four-lane expressway between the existing Puhoi to Warkworth Expressway and State Highway 1 north of Wellsford at Te Hana. This will see a continuous four-lane state highway with separation between traffic travelling in opposite directions. It will include wide lanes and sealed shoulders and will provide safe roadsides clear of obstacles.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Improved resilience through a reliable alternative route between Warkworth and Wellsford.
- Approximately seven-minute reduction in travel time for the 11,300 vehicles that travel between Warkworth and Wellsford each day, with additional savings for heavy vehicles.⁴
- Removes the need for vehicles to travel through the Dome Valley, a dangerous and unreliable stretch of road which is often closed due to landslides and slippages.⁵

Current project status	Business case
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$2.2 billion

⁴ [WPO 19847](#) and [WPO 19843](#)

⁵ [Detailed Business Case for Ara Tūhono - NZTA](#)

Cambridge to Piarere Expressway

A 16km four-lane expressway between the existing southern end of the Cambridge section of the Waikato Expressway to the intersection of State Highways 1 and 29 at Piarere. This extension of the Waikato Expressway will see a continuous four-lane state highway with separation between traffic travelling in opposite directions. It will include wide lanes and sealed shoulders and will provide safe roadsides clear of obstacles.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Safer and faster commuter and freight connections south of Cambridge, part of a crucial transport corridor between Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga.
- Reduction in travel times for through traffic, including freight, moving between Cambridge and Piarere.
- Increased safety through a reduction in crashes causing serious injury or death.

Current project status	Business case
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$721 million

Tauriko West State Highway 29

An upgraded State Highway 29 in the western corridor of Tauranga, with four lanes at specific growth trigger points and side road access limited to improve through-put, with rationalised and grade separated intersections. Given the significant new housing opportunities this road will enable, National will fund it using value capture and cost recovery tools in partnership with Tauranga City Council.

Indicative route



Benefits⁶

- Unlocking development opportunities for up to 18,500 houses, 60,000 square metres of retail and 310 hectares of industrial development.
- More efficient and resilient road freight route between the Port of Tauranga and the Auckland and Waikato regions.
- Improved safety compared to the existing state highway through Tauriko, which suffers from sharp curves, poor visibility and challenging gradients.

Current project status	Detailed business case
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$1.9 billion

⁶ Tauriko Network Programme Business Case

1.2. Auckland roads

Congestion is an ongoing and growing problem in Auckland that reduces productivity, robs people of their time, and reduces quality of life. If we want to make it easier for people to move around our biggest city, we need to complete Auckland's roading network while also investing in better public transport options (see Section 2).

Mill Road Stage 1

The full Mill Road development will be a 21.5km highway between Manukau and Drury that will run parallel to the east of State Highway 1. After committing to the project in 2020, the Government backed out in 2021. National believes that decision was short-sighted, and we are committed to the original vision of a four-lane alternative to State Highway 1 in South Auckland. Transport for the Future will include the first stage of the full Mill Road project, extending approximately 7.5 km from Manukau to Alfriston. National will also progress designation of the corridor from Alfriston to Drury.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Travel time reductions of approximately five minutes for public transport and nine minutes for general traffic.⁷
- Improved resilience for Auckland's roading network and faster commuter connections between Manukau and Papakura.
- Significant opportunities for housing growth in South Auckland to be unlocked.

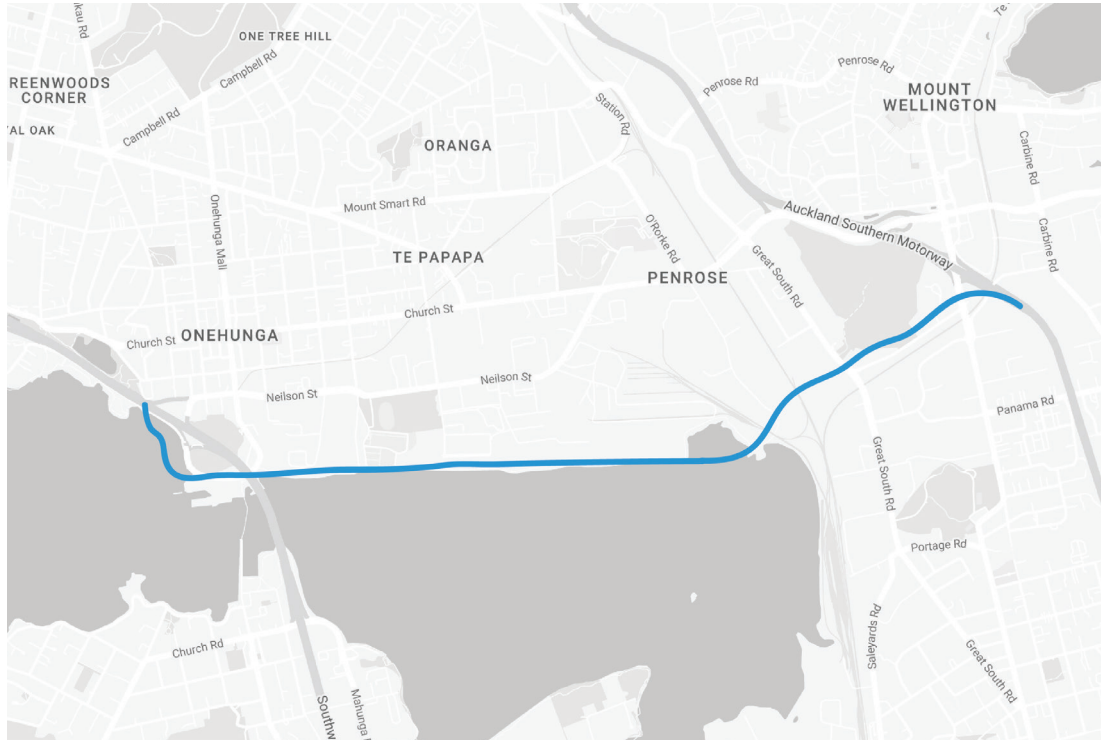
Current project status	Business case in development
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$1.3 billion

⁷ WPQ 19884

East West Link

The East West Link will be a four-lane highway connecting State Highway 20 at Onehunga and State Highway 1 and Mt Wellington. This will significantly reduce travel times through this critical freight and industrial hub which currently sees thousands of truck movements each day.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Significant reduction in congestion and a reduction in travel time of up to 18 minutes.⁸
- Improve travel times between the Onehunga – Penrose industrial area and State Highways 1 and 20, where the number of freight movements are expected to double by 2035.⁹
- Increase in the availability of public transport services supporting the up to 6,300 bus passengers per day accessing Onehunga via the East West Link.¹⁰
- Reduction in vehicle movements on local roads, with Onehunga Town Centre benefiting from the removal of through-traffic on Neilson Street which currently has an average daily traffic volume of 30,000 vehicles and is reaching capacity.¹¹

Current project status	Design stage
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$1.9 billion

⁸ [East West Link Technical Report 1 Traffic and Transport Assessment – NZTA](#)

⁹ [NZTA](#)

¹⁰ [WPO 31810](#)

¹¹ [Auckland Transport](#)

1.3. Roads to unlock housing growth

New Zealand does not have enough houses, but a broken planning and infrastructure funding system artificially constrains housing growth. National will enable our urban areas to grow and make housing growth a priority for transport funding through NZTA.

We will also enable greater use of value capture and cost recovery tools as a way to fund major state highway projects specifically identified to unlock tens of thousands of new homes in some of New Zealand's fastest growing cities.

In addition to funding Tauriko West State Highway 29 (part of the four lanes from Whangārei to Tauranga project) with these tools, National will also use them to fund:

- Southern Links (Hamilton)
- Petone to Grenada Link Road & the Cross Valley Link (Wellington & Lower Hutt)
- North West Alternative State Highway (Auckland)

Southern Links

This will involve the construction of 21km of state highway, three new bridges and 11km of urban arterial roads inside Hamilton's Peacocke growth area. The Southern Links project will also allow for a future connection to the Waikato Expressway.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Support for growth and development in the Peacocke, Tamahere and Hamilton Airport areas, including at least 8,000 projected new homes in Peacocke alone.¹²
- Reduced congestion and improved safety on State Highway 1 and State Highway 3 in the Hillcrest and Melville suburbs of Hamilton.
- Improved freight and traffic flows as part of the city's urban arterial network.
- Complement to the Waikato Expressway by providing a new southern access route linking Hamilton City and the expressway.

Current project status	Route investigation
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$600 million

¹² [Hamilton City Council](#)

Petone to Grenada Link Road & The Cross Valley Link

A new four-lane route between Tawa and the Hutt Valley, to provide improved access and reduced travel times for motorists travelling between State Highway 1 and State Highway 2, alongside a new west-east connection across the Hutt Valley. The 2019 Wellington Lifelines Study said that Petone to Grenada was crucial to improving resilience in the Wellington region. The Cross Valley Link in Lower Hutt will deliver additional capacity from west to east, reducing pressure on the Esplanade which has over 25,000 vehicles per day, and is a key priority of the Hutt City Council.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Supporting green field development opportunities for up to 5,200 new homes.¹³
- Reduction in commuter time between Porirua and the Hutt Valley of around 30 minutes return journey per day in peak travel.¹⁴
- A new interchange at Petone, a key bottleneck, making journeys smoother and faster along State Highway 2 and the Petone Esplanade.
- Allows new public transport between the Hutt Valley and Wellington's northern suburbs.
- Improved access from the eastern Hutt Valley to State Highway 2.

Current project status	Design phase
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$1.8 billion

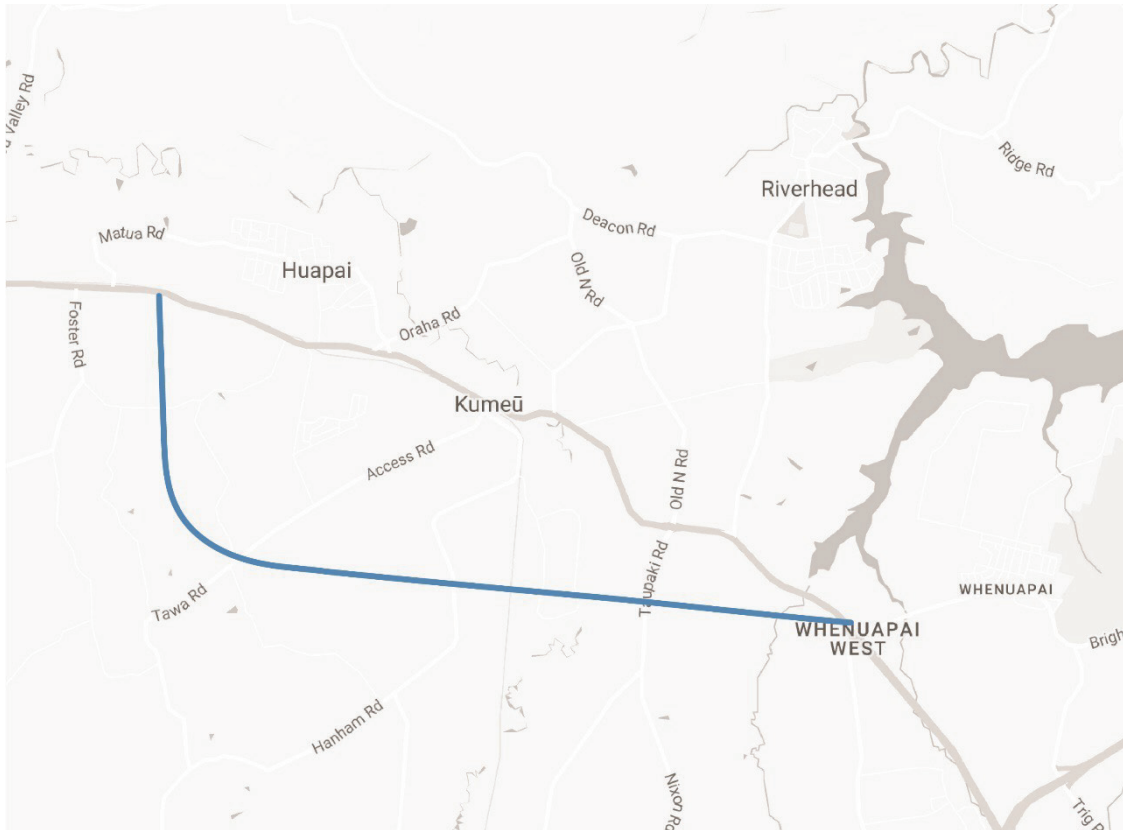
¹³ Stuff

¹⁴ NZTA media release

North West Alternative State Highway

A new four lane road running from State Highway 16 between Huapai and Waimauku, south and east to bypass Kumeū, and reconnecting with State Highway 16 at the Brigham Creek roundabout.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Key component to unlocking urban growth in Auckland's North West, supporting projected growth of 107,000 additional people, 44,300 new houses and 21,600 new jobs.¹⁵
- Removal of existing state highway traffic out of the Kumeū-Huapai town centre.
- Reduced congestion, allowing for improved freight access to the surrounding area and off the existing State Highway corridor through Kumeū-Huapai.

Current project status	Detailed business case
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$2.3 billion

¹⁵ North West Detailed Business Base - NZTA

1.4 Other major roads

Tākitimu Northern Link Stage Two

Stage Two of the Tākitimu North Link project will extend the new State Highway 2 onward from Te Puna to Ōmokoroa. It will be a 7km four-lane highway with median and side barriers.

Indicative route



Benefits

- More reliable travel times for locals, and for regional freight to the Port of Tauranga from Western Bay of Plenty and Coromandel.
- Support for economic development and population growth in the fast-growing Western Bay of Plenty.
- Improved safety, fewer crashes, and a reduction in deaths and serious injuries.

Current project status	Notice of requirement process underway
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$627 million

Second Mt Victoria Tunnel & Basin Reserve upgrade

Wellington has argued about a second Mt Victoria Tunnel to provide better access to the east of the city and the airport for far too long. Labour's Let's Get Wellington Moving programme has accomplished little in six years other than building a set of traffic lights on State Highway 1. It has lost its social licence. Wellingtonians are sick of the dithering and just want decisions and progress on better access to the east and better public transport into and through the city. The existing tunnel was built in 1931 and services over 37,000 vehicle movements per day. It should have been upgraded years ago.

National will build a second, wider tunnel in parallel to the existing one. The second tunnel will provide two lanes for traffic travelling towards the airport, while the original tunnel will have two lanes for traffic travelling into the city.

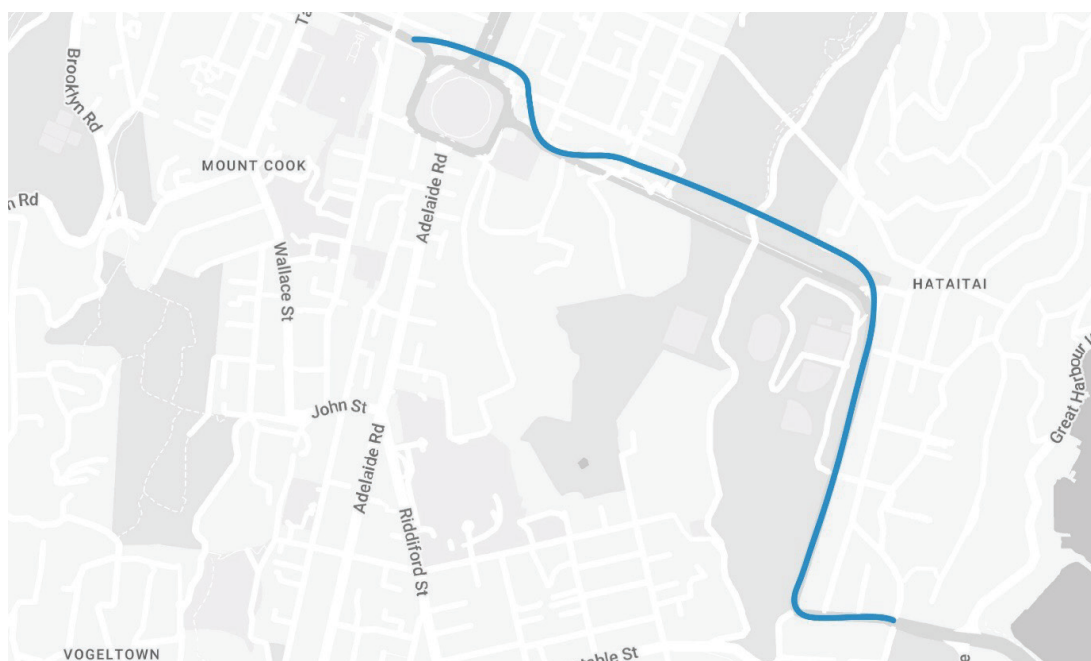
The project will also see upgrades around the Basin Reserve to remove north-south State Highway traffic from the roundabout, and the widening and upgrading of Ruahine St (and surrounds) to provide for "Four Lanes to the Planes". A new walking and cycling connection will be constructed to provide for active transport in the new tunnel, located above the road and separated from traffic.

National will not continue with the Let's Get Wellington Moving governance and funding structure set up by Labour. National's plan will deliver upgrades to the Basin Reserve and Mt Victoria Tunnel, fully funded as State Highway projects. National's second Mt Victoria Tunnel will be cheaper than the current proposal for a diagonal tunnel, which delivers no additional lanes for private cars and preserves the existing tunnel as a large walkway.

National supports bus rapid transit and bus priority lanes for Wellington to make it easier to get into and around the city. A duplicate Mt Victoria Tunnel will allow for greater bus access to the east, bus priority lanes on the roads leading to the tunnels, and much more free-flowing traffic through the tunnels, including for buses.

Cost savings delivered by adopting National's duplicate tunnel plan will be available for joint co-investment with the Wellington City and Regional Councils for bus rapid transit and priority improvements in Wellington. There are a range of cost-effective and sensible projects which should be being advanced as priorities to get the city moving, rather than expensive vanity projects like light rail.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Increased accessibility to the CBD for residents from Wellington's eastern suburbs.
- More reliable travel times between the CBD, the airport and the eastern suburbs.
- Reduced traffic volumes for alternative routes into the CBD, including Evans Bay Parade and Oriental Parade and Newtown.

Current project status	Detailed investigation phase
Expected commencement	3-5 years
Cost	\$2.2 billion

Hope Bypass

The Hope Bypass will create a new route for traffic travelling on State Highway 6 through Richmond (south of Nelson), bypassing the current stretch of State Highway on Gladstone Road. The new route will have four-lanes with separation between traffic travelling in opposite directions. Gladstone Road (the existing state highway) will become a local road. This new route will bypass some of the most congested parts of Richmond, meaning reduced travel times, and allowing for additional housing growth to be accommodated around Hope.

Indicative route



Benefits

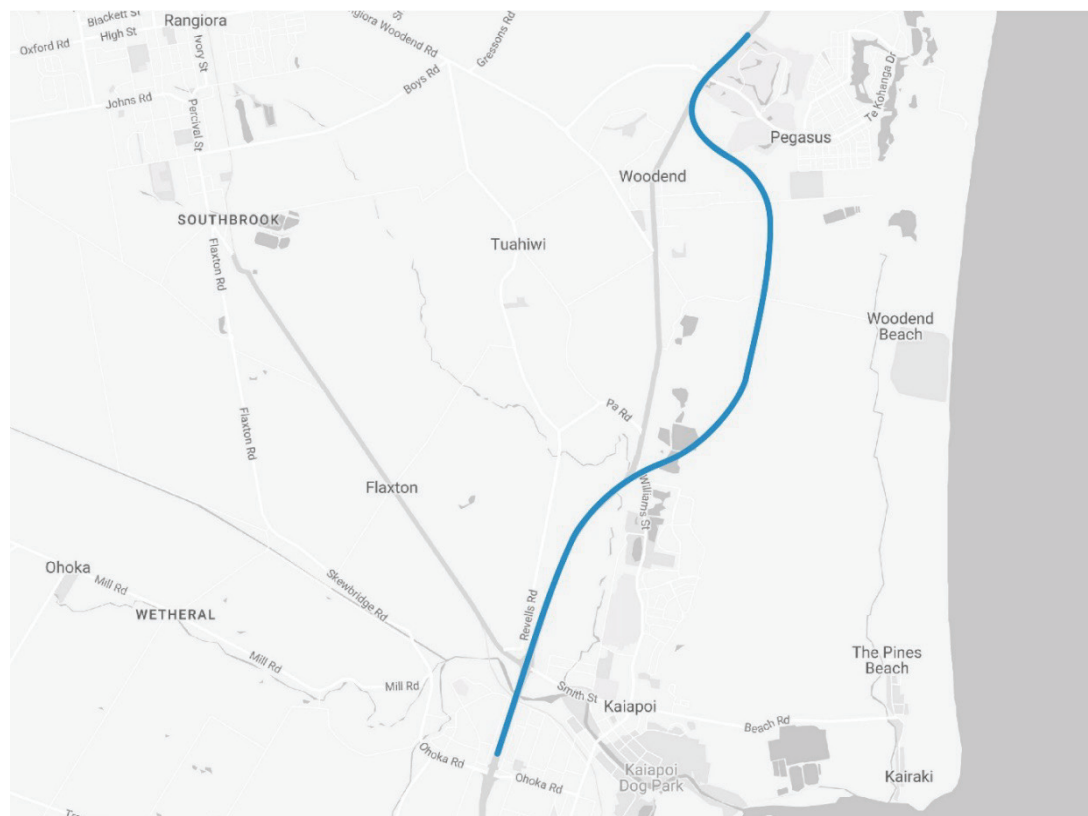
- Improved resilience for the Tasman Region's wider roading network.
- Reduced congestion in Richmond.
- Reduced travel times for motorists passing through Richmond on State Highway 6.

Current project status	Business case
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$250 million

Belfast to Pegasus Motorway and Woodend Bypass

This extension to the Canterbury Northern Motorway will begin at Belfast, where it joins with the Western Belfast bypass and the Northern Corridor motorways, and will go through to Pegasus, bypassing Woodend. This will be a four-lane state highway with separation between traffic travelling in opposite directions. It will include wide lanes and sealed shoulders and will provide safe roadsides clear of obstacles.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Improved resilience in the Northern Canterbury region's roading network.
- Reduction in congestion through Woodend and an estimated five minutes in reduced travel times from bypassing the Woodend township.¹⁶
- Reduced fatalities on State Highway 1 between Belfast and Pegasus, currently one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the South Island.¹⁷

Current project status	Route designation
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$270 million

¹⁶ [WPO 32202](#)

¹⁷ [AA](#)

2. BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Effective public transport provides commuters with more choice, helping to reduce congestion and travel times. Better public transport options, particularly in Auckland, our biggest city, will also contribute to New Zealand reducing transport emissions in support of our international climate change commitments. National will deliver a world-class rapid transit network in Auckland, including through the use of equity finance, along with investments in the Lower North Island rail system.

2.1. Auckland Rapid Transit System

Auckland needs a modern rapid transit system to increase public transport choices, unlock housing growth, and build on the investment already made in the City Rail Link. Labour has wasted the past six years talking about Light Rail but failing to deliver a single metre of track. National will deliver better public transport for Auckland through three key transport corridors:

- North West Rapid Transit
- Airport to Botany Busway
- Eastern Busway

North West Rapid Transit

National will run a competitive tender process for the delivery of a rapid transit solution to Auckland's fast-growing North West using an equity financing model. Key decisions about the design of the rapid transit solution, including route and mode (i.e., rail or busway) will be made as part of this process. The National Infrastructure Agency will be responsible for soliciting bids to deliver this major project.

Indicative route



Benefits

- More reliable journeys for commuters travelling between Auckland's North West and CBD.
- Better access to jobs for Aucklanders living along the North West corridor.
- Reduction in road congestion in and around North West Auckland.
- Increased development and housing growth opportunities along the rapid transit corridor.

Current project status	To be tendered
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$2.9 billion

Equity funding model

Labour has failed to deliver major transport projects in part due to its hostility to utilising private funding sources. National believes that if we want to deliver a world-class, modern transport system as soon as possible, we should be willing to embrace private funding with models that have worked well around the world.

National's previously announced Infrastructure for the Future policy includes the establishment of a new National Infrastructure Agency. One of the first tasks this agency will be given is to seek and assess proposals from local and international investors to deliver rapid transit in Auckland's North West on an equity financing model, which could include some or all of:

- Long term rights to build, own and operate the network.
- Value capture and cost recovery tools, including development rights, to enable investors to recover the cost of building the rapid transit corridor.
- Public transport subsidies in line with those given to existing public transport services.
- Farebox revenue collection from the operation of the services.
- Priority consenting to ensure these projects can proceed at pace.

This model is becoming increasingly common around the world to deliver modern, world-class infrastructure projects faster and at lower risk to taxpayers, for example:

The Canada Line (Vancouver)¹⁸

A 19km rapid transit line with 15 stations in Greater Vancouver, Canada. Construction began in 2005 and was opened four years later in 2009. The line was built as an equity financed partnership between InTransitBC (which designed, built, joint-financed and now operates the line) and Translink, a British Columbia statutory authority. InTransitBC is under contract to operate the line for its first 35 years.¹⁹

Montreal REM (Réseau express métropolitain)²⁰

A 67km automated metro line with 26 stations linking downtown Montréal with the airport and Greater Montréal area. The project uses an equity finance model with CDPQ, a major Canadian pension fund, providing the majority of upfront construction costs in exchange for revenues generated from operating the network. Construction commenced in 2018, with the first stations scheduled to open this year.

¹⁸ [The Canada Line](#)

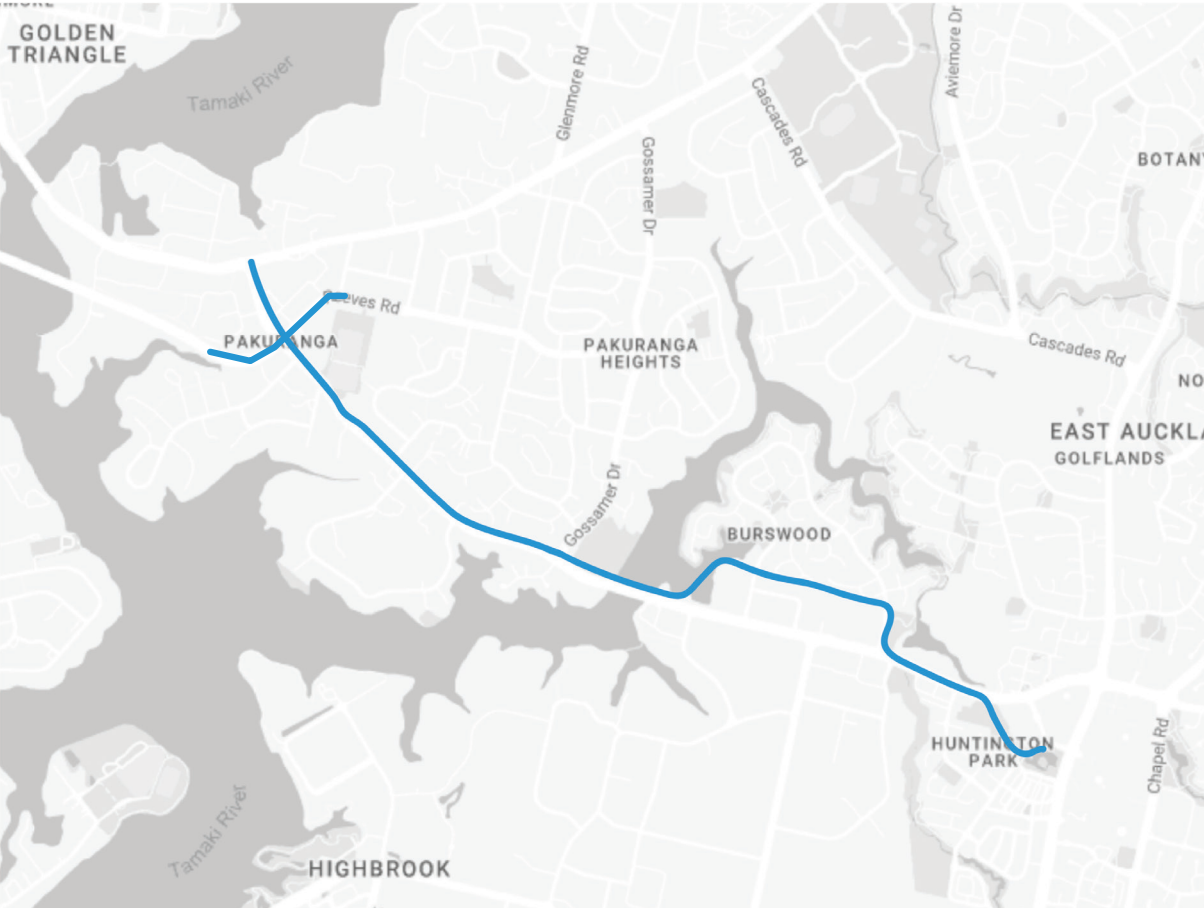
¹⁹ [Infrastructure BC](#)

²⁰ [CDPQ Infra](#)

Eastern Busway

The Eastern Busway creates separate lanes for high-frequency bus services to connect people in the eastern suburbs with the rail network in Panmure. The original plan was for the busway to extend all the way to Botany, but the final stage has not been funded, with the current project only funded to Burswood. National will complete the busway to Botany, including construction of the Reeves Road flyover.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Increased capacity for Auckland Transport to operate reliable 40-minute bus journeys between Botany and Britomart, saving 20 minutes.²¹
- Reduced congestion through the construction of the Reeves Road flyover.
- Increased safety and reduction in deaths and serious injuries.

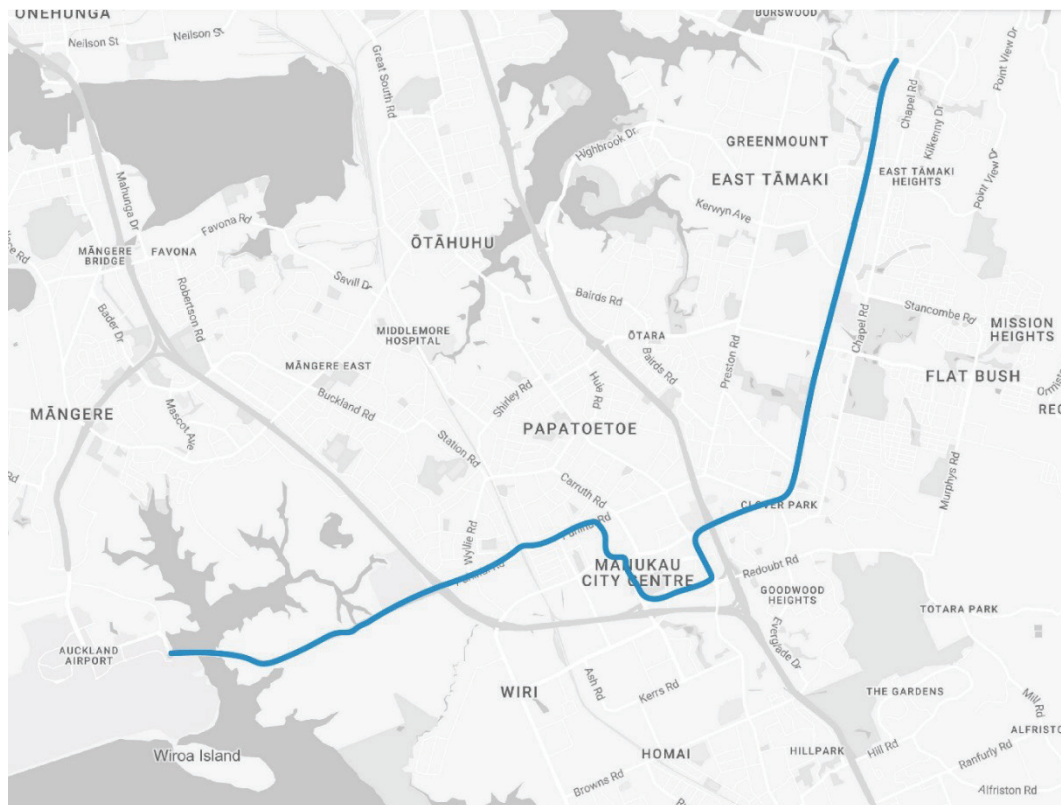
Current project status	Partially complete
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$717 million

²¹ [Auckland Transport](#)

Airport to Botany Busway

The Airport to Botany Busway will deliver a new 18km dedicated rapid transit public transport route between Auckland Airport, Manukau and Botany. This will connect to the Auckland rail network at Puhinui Station and will connect to the Eastern Busway at a new Botany interchange.

Indicative route



Benefits

- Increased capacity for Auckland Transport to operate reliable 35 to 40-minute bus journeys between Botany and Auckland Airport.²²
- Improved access to major employment centres, including the Airport and Manukau City.²³
- From 2038, it is expected that 31,100 passengers will use the Botany to Airport bus rapid transit every day.²⁴

Current project status	Notice of requirement lodged
Expected commencement	4-10 years
Cost	\$2.1 billion
Crown contribution ²⁵	\$1.1 billion

²² [Auckland Transport](#)

²³ [Auckland Transport](#)

²⁴ [Airport to Botany - Assessment of Transport Effects](#)

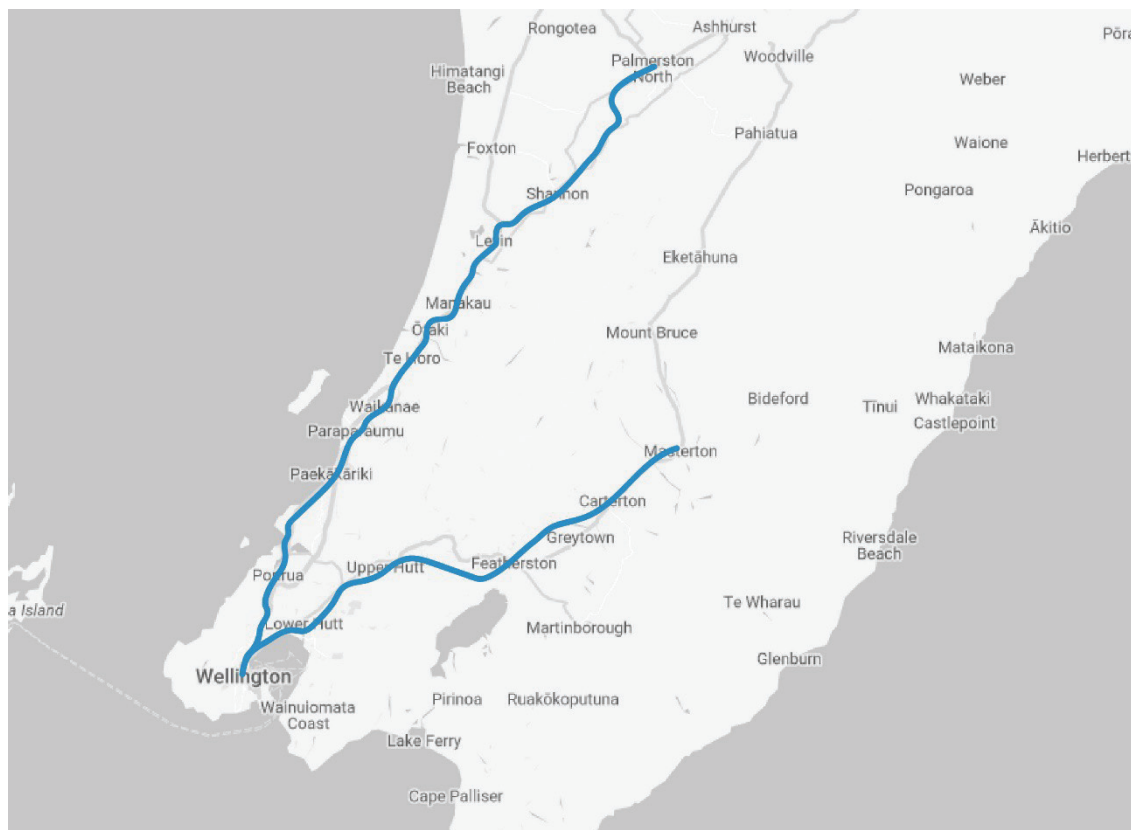
²⁵ This represents as 51%-49% funding split between the Government and Auckland Council

2.2. Lower North Island Rail upgrade

A range of upgrades to the lower North Island train services, including 22 new four-car tri-mode units, infrastructure upgrades to train stations, a new maintenance depot in Masterton, new stabling facilities for rolling stock in Wellington, Masterton and Palmerston North, and additional track maintenance work across the lower North Island network.

Rail has received significant investment in recent Budgets but isn't performing, with freight volumes decreasing. National will continue to support rail as a critical part of our supply chain but will have very clear outcome targets that we expect KiwiRail to deliver against to maximise these investments.

Lower North Island train lines



Benefits

- Enhanced regional connectivity and improved rail service quality, with a more resilient transport network for the Lower North Island.
- Doubling of patronage on the Wairarapa and Manawatu Lines over the next 30 years, reducing emissions and reducing traffic congestion on the Lower North Island state highway network.²⁶

Current project status	Detailed business case
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$874 million

²⁶ [WPQ 14640](#)

3. REBUILDING REGIONS AND IMPROVING RESILIENCE

3.1 South Island resilience

Second Ashburton Bridge

There are currently two options under consideration – replacing the existing bridge on State Highway 1 or building a new bridge on Chalmers Avenue to the East of Tinwald. National will instruct NZTA to engage with the Ashburton community and council to determine the best option and ensure construction is underway within three years.

Indicative Route (two options)



Benefits

- Reduction in disruption caused to motorists when the existing bridge is inaccessible due to flooding.
- Improved resilience of the roading network with an alternative route into and out of Ashburton.

Current project status	Business case and land designation
Expected commencement	1-3 years
Cost	\$113 million

Queenstown road network upgrade

According to the last Census, the Queenstown-Lakes District is the fastest growing region in New Zealand.²⁷ It is also one of the country's most significant tourism destinations. In 2019, Queenstown Airport recorded more than 2.3 million passenger movements with international tourists bringing well over a billion dollars into the local economy.²⁸

With population growth expected to continue at pace, and pre-pandemic visitor numbers forecast to return by 2025, the region will face increasing pressure on its roading network.

Significant investment is required to ensure Queenstown's transport infrastructure can accommodate anticipated growth in population and visitor numbers.

To meet this demand, National will allocate \$100 million over ten years to the region from the Transport for the Future programme to deliver roading improvements and upgrades.

National will work with the Queenstown-Lakes District Council, local residents and tourism operators throughout the region to identify priority projects for this funding.

Otago-Southland bridge upgrades

The roading network in the Otago and Southland regions contain well over 1,000 bridges, many of which were built prior to 1970. Many of these bridges are regularly subject to speed or weight restrictions because of their deteriorating condition, damage caused by overloading, or where they were originally designed for lower load limits than is commonplace today (these are known as "posted bridges").

Bridge postings can be applied for short periods to enable repairs or strengthening to be completed, or for long periods of time where the bridge still meets the current needs of the network. Such limitations restrict freight, frustrate local farmers, and impede the ability of locals to move around their region.

To address this, National will allocate \$100 million over ten years to progressively upgrade or replace bridges across the Otago and Southland roading network, to improve the resilience of the roading network and enable Kiwis and tourists to better move around the Deep South of New Zealand.

²⁷ [ODT](#)

²⁸ [RNZ](#)

3.2 Cyclone and flood rebuild priorities

National is committed to rebuilding the regions affected by the recent Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabrielle and will honour commitments the Government makes to rebuilding damaged infrastructure in these regions. But we believe this should also be an opportunity to invest in greater resilience for these regions. Resilient infrastructure will become increasingly important as the effects of climate change increase and extreme weather events become more common.

Budget 2023 allocated \$6 billion over ten years to the National Resilience Fund to enhance long-term resilience in flood-affected regions. While specific projects and funding remain undisclosed, National has identified four key priorities for funding from this existing allocation.

1. Hawke's Bay Expressway

The critical link between Napier and Hastings, the 24km Hawke's Bay Expressway endured significant damage during Cyclone Gabrielle. Upgrading it from two lanes to four, a project considered since 2017, promises substantial benefits. Increased capacity will reduce congestion, travel times, and enhance overall roading network resilience in Hawke's Bay.

2. State Highway 1 – Brynderwyn Hills

Approximately halfway between Whangārei and Warkworth, the State Highway 1 Brynderwyn Hills section suffered severe damage during the recent flooding events, leading to intermittent closures for at least 80 days due to ongoing slips.²⁹ This route is vital for communities and freight, connecting Whangārei and Auckland. Funding a new bypass, identified in NZTA's 2018 Programme Business Case, should be a priority to improve efficiency and resilience, supporting economic growth.³⁰

3. State Highway 5 – Napier to Taupō

As a vital artery for freight transportation and tourism, State Highway 5 is a crucial link between Napier and Taupō. Urgent upgrades are required to address inadequate road surface quality, limited passing lanes, and dangerous corners. The cyclone rebuild programme should address these issues, helping drive regional recovery and ensuring future-proofed infrastructure.

4. State Highway 2 – Napier to Gisborne

Cyclone Gabrielle severely damaged the road connecting Napier with Gisborne via Wairoa, isolating vulnerable communities for over three months. Restoring and upgrading State Highway 2 is vital to enhance accessibility and resilience. Improved quality reduced dangerous corners, and enhanced protections will support regional economic growth and provide crucial lifelines during crises.

²⁹ [WPQ 14305](#)

³⁰ [WPQ 885](#)

Commitment to existing projects

National is reconfirming its commitment to delivering three critical transport projects for which funding has been allocated, but have been beset by delays and doubts for the several years under the current Government. Labour has a cynical track record of committing to transport projects when politically expedient, only to later delay or cancel them.

Under National, there will be no doubt these projects will be delivered.

O Mahurangi – Penlink

A new 7km two-lane road between the Whangaparāoa Peninsula and State Highway 1 at Redvale. It will include south-facing ramps to State Highway 1, local road connections at Whangaparāoa Road and Stillwater township, additional connections for future developments at Ara Wēiti Road and East Coast Road and a new bridge crossing the Wēiti River. It will also feature a separated shared path for walking and cycling between Whangaparāoa Road and East Coast Road.

Labour has made a short-sighted decision to only build this road with one lane in each direction despite designing it for four lanes.³¹ In Government National will investigate the cost of expanding this to a four-lane road.

Ōtaki to north of Levin

A new 24km, four-lane divided highway to improve the safety and resilience of the Ōtaki to north of Levin transport corridor and accommodate the area's growing population. The existing State Highway 1 between Ōtaki and Levin is a dangerous stretch of state highway which has tragically seen 61 deaths and serious injuries between 2016 and 2022.³²

The Ōtaki to north of Levin expressway is an important roading corridor which National committed to in 2017 but the incoming Labour Government cancelled in 2018. The project was re-announced by Labour in 2020 during the election campaign but funding was only allocated this year. National is fully committed to delivering the Ōtaki to north of Levin Expressway, with construction to begin in our first term.

Melling Interchange

The Melling Interchange is critical for the Hutt Valley – it will reduce congestion, increase safety, improve flood protection, and make walking, cycling and taking the train easier. The project will deliver a new safer grade separated interchange, road and pedestrian bridges over Te Awa Kairangi Hutt River, relocation of the Melling train station to a new integrated public transport hub, plus additional shared pathways. Connecting directly to Queens Drive, it will help improve access during peak travel times and build greater resilience into the transport system. National will ensure this critical project goes ahead.

³¹ [WPQ 14764](#)

³² [WPQ 32189](#)

Commitment to future projects

Second Waitematā Harbour crossing

National has long advocated for progress on a second crossing for Auckland's Waitematā Harbour to reduce congestion, provide additional options for commuters on both sides of the harbour, and reduce capacity pressures on the aging Auckland Harbour Bridge.

There is now widespread agreement on this vision, with NZTA recently initiating the process of identifying and analysing potential routes, including both bridge and tunnel options, with a view to beginning construction by the end of this decade. National is committed to the current timeframe, and to delivering a second crossing that at a minimum provides for additional road connections between Auckland's North Shore and the CBD.

National will seek to reduce the upfront cost of this project to taxpayers by tasking the National Infrastructure Agency with identifying options for private funding, including through equity financing and value capture mechanisms.

Projects for further investigation

There are a range of additional transport projects around the country that have been proposed by local communities that are yet to be fully investigated by NZTA or KiwiRail. As part of our long-term plan to deliver a modern transport network that will reduce congestion, drive economic growth and lift incomes, National will task NZTA and KiwiRail to work with local councils to begin or progress investigations into the following transport projects:

- Level crossing removal on Auckland's rail network
- A fourth main rail line for Auckland
- Third bridge over the Waikato River in Cambridge
- Safety and resilience improvements to State Highway 1 between Taupo and Waiouru
- Palmerston North Ring Road
- Second access road into Wainuiomata
- Christchurch rapid transit
- Christchurch to Ashburton four-lane expressway
- Dublin Street bridge replacement in Whanganui
- A Stokes Valley–Haywards connector road on State Highway 2

Maintaining the project pipeline

The delivery of infrastructure in New Zealand has suffered from a lack of long-term planning. The previous National Government aimed to fix this by developing a pipeline of future projects to provide certainty and encourage the development of skills and expertise.

That pipeline was scrapped when Labour took office, meaning infrastructure delivery stalled and critical skills and expertise were lost overseas. National will not repeat that mistake. In addition to the projects listed above, National is also committing to continuing with the following projects that have already been funded:

Project	Region
Road	
SH1 Papkura to Drury	Auckland
Tākitimu North Link Stage 1	Bay of Plenty
SH1-29 Intersection Improvements	Waikato
Improvements to SH43	Taranaki
SH58 Safety Improvements – Stage 2	Wellington
Rolleston Access Improvements	Canterbury
Brougham St Corridor Improvements	Canterbury
SH75 Halswell Road Improvements	Canterbury
SH73 Weedons-Ross Road Intersection	Canterbury
SH1 Tinwald Corridor Improvements	Canterbury
Queenstown Package	Otago
SH67 Granity	West Coast
West Coast Highway Single Lane Bridges	West Coast
Rail	
Whangārei to Otiria	Northland
Papakura to Pukekohe	Auckland
Wiri to Quay Park (Third Main Line)	Auckland
Drury Railway Stations	Auckland
Wairarapa Rail Upgrades	Wairarapa
Wellington Station Safety	Wellington
Ashburton Freight Hub	Canterbury

Ten-year investment summary

Project	Cost (\$M)
Roads of National Significance	
Whangārei to Port Marsden	\$1,310
Warkworth to Wellsford	\$2,200
Cambridge to Piarere	\$721
Tauriko West State Highway 29*	\$1,900
Mill Road Stage 1	\$1,300
East-West Link*	\$1,850
Southern Links - Hamilton*	\$600
Petone to Grenada Link Road & Cross Valley Link*	\$1,800
North West Alternative State Highway	\$2,325
Tākitimu Northern Link Stage 2	\$627
Second Mt Victoria Tunnel and Basin Reserve upgrade	\$2,200
Hope Bypass	\$250
Pegasus to Belfast Motorway and Woodend Bypass	\$270
<i>Total Roads of National Significance</i>	<i>\$17,353</i>
Better Public Transport	
Northwest Rapid Transit*	\$2,900
Eastern Busway	\$717
Airport to Botany	\$1,071
Lower North Island Rail	\$874
<i>Total Better Public Transport</i>	<i>\$5,562</i>
Rebuilding regions and improving resilience	
Second Ashburton Bridge	\$113
Queenstown road network upgrade	\$100
Otago-Southland bridge upgrades	\$100
<i>Total rebuilding regions and improving resilience</i>	<i>\$313</i>
Other	
Future announcements	\$200
10% Crown contingency	\$1,400
<i>Total transport commitment</i>	<i>\$24,828</i>

Funding source	Amount (\$M)
National Land Transport Fund Allocation	\$7,456
New Zealand Upgrade Programme Reallocation	\$1,554
Private funding (equity finance, value capture and cost recovery)	\$9,525
10-year additional crown capital contribution	\$6,293
<i>Total funding</i>	<i>\$24,828</i>

*Projects earmarked for private funding (equity finance, value capture and cost recovery).

Funding information

New Zealand has an infrastructure deficit which will require increased investment over a sustained period to eliminate. To achieve this, we need to utilise a range of funding sources, from reallocations within existing funding and additional Crown capital contributions to more innovative solutions like value capture tools and equity finance. National's Transport for the Future programme will utilise the following funding sources to deliver a modern transport network that will reduce congestion, drive economic growth and lift incomes.

1. National Land Transport Fund reprioritisations

National will allocate \$7.5 billion over ten years from the National Land Transport Fund towards the Transport for the Future programme, including:

- \$3 billion from the Public Transport Infrastructure activity class for specific public transport projects.
- \$1.5 billion reallocated from the Public Transport Infrastructure activity class for Roads of National Significance.
- \$3 billion reallocated from the Road to Zero activity class for Roads of National Significance. Road policing funding will be maintained at existing levels.

National will also shift NZTA's National Land Transport Programme from a three-year to a ten-year investment horizon, to provide more certainty around long-term transport funding commitments. This change will align NZTA transport funding commitments with local councils, which are already required to produce ten-year plans.

2. New Zealand Upgrade Programme reprioritisations

National will reallocate \$1.5 billion from three existing New Zealand Upgrade Programme projects that National's Transport for the Future programme will supersede:

- \$874 million from upgrades to the existing Mill Road corridor (to be replaced with the full Mill Road Stage 1 project).
- \$270 million from safety improvements to the existing Whangārei to Port Marsden highway (to be replaced with a new Whangārei to Port Marsden Expressway).
- \$410 million from the Port Marsden Rail Spur (we will continue to support the designation of the spur as a future option).

3. Equity finance

National's Infrastructure for the Future policy includes the establishment of a new National Infrastructure Agency. One of its roles will be to connect domestic and offshore investors with major New Zealand infrastructure projects, including through the development of equity finance opportunities to support the delivery of the Transport for the Future programme. The equity finance model involves the use of private capital to build infrastructure in exchange for long-term operational, development, and value capture rights that recover the cost of construction. This model is becoming increasingly common around the world to deliver modern, world-class infrastructure projects faster and at lower risk to taxpayers.

Sovereign wealth funds have around \$11 trillion in assets under management globally, which represents an 11-fold growth over the last 20 years.³³ More broadly, global institutional pension fund assets in the 22 largest markets reached a record \$56.6 trillion at the end of 2021.³⁴ These funds are increasingly viewing infrastructure investment as an important and strategic asset category that fits their long-term investment horizons, offers the scale they need for investment, and provides long-term stable yields. Funds of this size can also sustain initial periods of illiquidity which is an advantage in infrastructure projects which can have long lead in times.

As a result, such funds are becoming increasingly central to global infrastructure investment, particularly at a time where governments are dealing with constrained resources and capacity to deliver. This is illustrated by April 2023 World Bank figures showing that private participation in infrastructure (PPI) currently involves US\$91.7 billion of investment commitments and 263 projects (of which \$66.2b and 85 projects are transport related).³⁵ This is despite a Covid slump, which the market is still coming out of.

We know there is interest from both global and local investors in delivering infrastructure through this type of partnership in New Zealand. The most recent example was the unsolicited bid to build and deliver Auckland Light Rail from the NZ Super Fund and CDPQ, a major Canadian pension fund, which was turned down by the Labour Government in 2019.

4. Value capture and cost recovery

For transport projects that unlock significant new housing or commercial development opportunities, there is an opportunity to fund their construction using innovative new funding and financing tools, such as value capture and cost recovery. This means major infrastructure projects can be delivered at less cost to taxpayers by applying levies on newly unlocked developable sites, capturing some of the significant value uplift accruing to major landowners and developers from new growth potential in the area. National will use these mechanisms to deliver parts of the Transport for the Future programme, along with other cost recovery tools, such as tolls, where advice suggests this is appropriate.

The use of value capture and cost recovery tools are particularly effective for accelerating the delivery of projects that unlock major new development opportunities. Refusing to use value capture tools for such projects would see incumbent landowners and developers reap significant windfall gains – with the cost of infrastructure servicing those new developments unfairly met by taxpayers. Instead, National believes the beneficiaries of growth must contribute to the associated costs of that growth.

³³ [Journal of International Business Policy](#)

³⁴ [Global Pension Assets Study 2022](#)

³⁵ [World Bank](#)