WAITAHA CANTERBURY

AT A GLANCE
Our focus in Canterbury is to help create a safer, more resilient transport system, that supports the movement of people and goods. In Greater Christchurch, we will work with our partners to ensure future growth and the land transport system are better integrated to support changing community needs and delivery of the step changes.

IMPROVE URBAN FORM
Christchurch Partnership are working towards general intensification of Christchurch over the next 30 years from a 50:50 split to a 60:40 split in Christchurch City. The Central City Residential Programme aims to increase the population of central Christchurch from 6000 in 2018 to 20,000 in 2028.

TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY
Growth in Greater Christchurch will place increasing demand on land transport networks. Approximately 22,000 workers commute into Christchurch daily from the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts, largely in private vehicles.

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMS
Canterbury has a poor road safety record. Crashes in the region highlight the need to focus on the Christchurch urban area and surroundings townships, SH1 between Christchurch and Timaru and high-risk rural roads. Particular issues exist around speeding on high-risk roads, not wearing seatbelts, crashes at intersections and crashes involving vulnerable users.

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE
Some transport networks are at risk from sea level rise, coastal flooding and extreme weather events. Without intervention, growth in and around Christchurch and the wider Canterbury region will result in continued travel by private vehicles resulting in increased carbon emissions.

Significance of Step Change to Region 2021–31
CANTERBURY TODAY

CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND’S LARGEST REGION BY LAND AREA, DOMINATES THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUTH ISLAND AND IS HOME TO JUST OVER HALF OF ITS POPULATION.

The region produces 57% of the South Island’s GDP. Construction and specialist manufacturing industries, primary production and food processing are the main contributors to the economy.

Christchurch is the region’s largest urban area and the South Island’s main manufacturing and freight distribution centre. Christchurch airport is a major gateway into the South Island for international visitors.

Almost 22,000 workers commute into Christchurch daily from the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts, predominantly in single occupancy vehicles. In the central city, there’s increasing use of more active options such as cycling and e-scooters, with consistent, but low levels of public transport use.

Christchurch’s high transport carbon emissions reflect the size of the population, high use of private vehicles and the number of vehicles travelling into or through the region.

The Greater Christchurch Partnership, of which Waka Kotahi is a member, is working to encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling options within the Greater Christchurch area, particularly Christchurch city. The Christchurch City Spatial Plan will also ensure place-based initiatives are implemented to improve quality of life within the areas of greatest opportunity.

Post-quake regeneration has stimulated multi-agency responses to land-use and transport planning with common goals. Waka Kotahi, Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury are jointly leading the Public Transport Futures programme which will set out the case for future public transport investment in Greater Christchurch. The Public Transport Futures Foundations Business Case commenced in 2020. Waimakariri and Selwyn District Councils are also involved.

The safety record of Canterbury’s transport system is poor in terms of total deaths and serious injuries (DSIs). The location of DSI crashes within the region highlights the need to focus on the Christchurch urban area and surrounding townships, SH1 between Christchurch and Timaru and high-risk rural roads. The number of cycle crashes is high and growing – they currently make up 9% of all fatal and injury crashes. In terms of capacity, Canterbury’s transport system is generally fit for purpose, although there are pressure points in and around Christchurch.

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Population growth is projected for most of the region with the highest growth forecast in Greater Christchurch, including surrounding townships in the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts. The continuation of residential growth on the edges of Christchurch and surrounding communities, risks locking residents into increased dependence on private vehicles to access employment and essential services.

Dairy, sheep and crop farming along with food processing are likely to remain important contributors to the regional economy. The expected transition to a low-emissions economy may result in land-use changes, particularly dairying, with flow on effects for freight movement. International tourism will continue to grow in the short-term, making secure access to key destinations important. Employment in the construction and service industries will continue to make significant contributions, along with manufacturing and health.

While Christchurch will remain the primary South Island freight hub, the Port of Timaru will play a greater role in the freight system. Maintaining strong freight connections to the West Coast will be critical for its communities and economy.

Sea level rise, flooding and storms are predicted to intensify over the next 30 years, increasing the risk to communities and the road and rail networks that support them. Hotter, drier summers will increase the risks of drought and wild fires. The parts of the land transport system impacted by flooding will increase significantly during the next decade and beyond.

Like other regions, technological changes expected during the next decade will offer choices to reduce carbon emissions and reliance on private vehicles. These include the increased use of alternative fuels, shared transport, on-call services and micro-mobility options, such as e-scooters.

Regional and rural communities will look for improved connections to Greater Christchurch for people to access education and work. The percentage of people aged 65 years and over is projected to be slightly higher than the national average in 2043, so providing good connections for older people to access social activities, health and social services will be important.

The major funding and financing challenge facing the region will be how to fund new infrastructure and services to keep pace with expected growth in Greater Christchurch. Post-earthquake costs and debt present challenges for some councils in the region.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Growth in Greater Christchurch is spread across three districts. While this growth will place greater demand on land transport networks, it will also provide opportunities to increase use of public transport, walking and cycling in urban areas.
- The region’s safety record is poor in terms of DSIs, particularly around Christchurch urban area, SH1 between Christchurch and Timaru, high-risk rural roads and high-risk motorcycle routes.
- Canterbury is vulnerable to climate change in the long-term because of sea level rise, flooding, greater frequency and intensity of storms and wild fires. Seismic risk is also above average because of the region’s location close to the Alpine Fault and other seismic activity across the region.
- There may be growing challenges around maintaining system resilience, including providing suitable alternate routes and managing the increasing impacts of climate change.
- It will be important to maintain safe and reliable road and rail freight access to the Lyttelton Port of Christchurch, PrimePort Timaru and associated connections to the inland port in Rolleston.
FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

The current focus is on investing in safer and more resilient routes to manage growth in freight volumes and tourist numbers, with a particular focus on the Kaikōura Coast. Better access in and around Christchurch is also a key focus, as is providing good access for smaller rural communities to the transport network and port. During this National Land Transport Programme, transport investment in Greater Christchurch will be focused on:

- continued improvements to the public transport network and supporting a shift away from private vehicle use in the main urban areas
- completing construction of the Christchurch Southern Motorway and the Christchurch Northern Corridor to provide more reliable access from the south and north to the city for both commuters and freight including a two-lane overbridge connecting SH1 from Rolleston Drive to Hoskyns Road
- progressing phase two of An Accessible City, including the upgrade of Hereford, High, and Victoria streets to support regeneration of the central city
- safety and reliability access improvements along Brougham Street (SH76)
- expanding major cycleway routes and cycleway connections to the suburbs and local cycleways
- intersections upgrades along SH1 between Burnham and Rolleston
- developing safe stopping areas on SH8, SH79, SH80 MacKenzie Basin to maximise the tourism potential of the MacKenzie Basin.
As there is a significant population within 10km of the Christchurch’s central business district, there is scope for Waka Kotahi and its partners to use appropriate levers to increase focus on:

- improving public transport services by increasing frequency on key routes, implementing bus lanes, signal priority and transitioning to electric buses
- enhancing walking and cycling networks to provide access into and within the central city from surrounding suburbs and to key activity centres, enabling safe journeys to schools, and expanding existing infrastructure to provide connected networks
- working with Christchurch City Council to encourage active management of carparking in the city centre, city fringe area and other key centres to increase uptake of public transport, walking and cycling for trips to these locations
- installing dedicated bus lanes on a high use section of State Highway 75, connecting Christchurch Southern Motorway with Halswell.
- progressing development of the Christchurch Northern Corridor high occupancy vehicle lane.

We will continue to work to understand the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation.

We will focus on:

- engaging in local planning processes to avoid infrastructure and development in areas at increased risk of natural hazards and effects of climate change
- investigating options for alternate routes that are less likely to be subject to disruption, including rail
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and ‘low cost/low risk’ investments
- enabling quick recovery following disruption to the land transport system.

We will focus on:

- working with relevant partners to identify and implement low-carbon transport options, infrastructure and services options
- engaging in local planning processes to ensure urban form and transport planning supports reductions in emissions, private vehicle travel and average trip length
- ensuring network design and operation makes the best use of existing systems to manage demand and reduce emissions by prioritising the movement of public transport and low emission options, and actively managing speed and urban freight.

We will support an integrated, well-designed land use and transport system to make the region a great place to live, work, and play. We will support:

Greater Christchurch:

- Current business case development for Public Transport Futures.
- Support ongoing implementation of An Accessible City and completion of the major cycleway projects and connections.
- Complete and implement the findings of the Brougham Street business case with a focus on ensuring these areas are safer, more liveable and provide better access.

Across the region we will:

- engage in planning to ensure that significant new developments enhance existing communities, making them a better place to work, live and play
- support an increase in active modes, including trips by foot and bike, etc
- reduce the need to travel long distances to access employment and services
- support efforts to create lower emissions per capita
- maintain or improve the safety and efficiency of the transport system.

We will support implementation of the Road to Zero Safety Strategy for New Zealand and associated Action Plan (2020-22), and regional strategies, with an emphasis on:

- intersection improvements at high-risk urban and rural intersections including SH1/ Lagmhor Road in Tinwald, SH1/Walnut Avenue in Ashburton, SH73/Weedons Ross Road in West Melton
- safety treatments on high-risk motorcycle routes
- infrastructure improvements to provide safe walking and cycle trips
- target road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on people wearing seat belts
- speed management to provide safe and appropriate speeds on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h), at high-risk urban intersections, and in urban areas with high numbers of vulnerable users.

Our approach to delivering better health outcomes, particularly the reduction of harmful emissions, will primarily be through initiatives that target other step changes, including improved urban form, increasing access to and use of public transport, walking and cycling, and efforts to reduce carbon emissions. We will also continue to work to ensure that the noise impacts of transport are appropriately managed through a mix of land-use planning and mitigation works.