Our focus in Taranaki is to help create a safer, more resilient transport system that supports economic and regional growth, encourages increased use of public transport, walking and cycling in New Plymouth and provides appropriate levels of service across all transport networks.

**IMPROVE URBAN FORM**

With the sea to the north and challenging terrain to the west and south, most of New Plymouth’s residential growth will be in the east of the city leading to pressure on the transport system.

**SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARM**

Serious crashes in the region are largely in and around New Plymouth and Hāwera, SH3 that connects these two centres and on high-risk rural roads. Head-on and run off road crashes, high-risk intersections, crashes involving vulnerable users and driver behaviour are primary contributors.

**TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY**

Taranaki is highly dependent on private vehicles – they make up 92% of journeys to work.

**TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE**

More intense storms are likely to increase erosion and landslide risks in the east of the region.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF STEP CHANGE TO REGION 2021-31**
TARANAKI TODAY

TARANAKI IS HOME TO APPROXIMATELY 118,000 PEOPLE, OR 2.5% OF NEW ZEALAND’S POPULATION.
NEW PLYMOUTH, THE PRIMARY URBAN AREA, IS HOME TO NEARLY 70% OF THE REGION’S POPULATION.17

Taranaki has the second-highest productivity in New Zealand, contributing 2.9% of New Zealand’s GDP from just 2.5% of the country’s population.17 The region’s economic performance is underpinned by two high-income, export-oriented sectors: dairy farming and processing, and the oil and gas industries.

However, both sectors have experienced relatively low commodity prices since 2014 and the region faces a challenge to diversify as part of the transition to a low-emissions economy. Make Way for Taranaki, the Taranaki Regional Economic Development Strategy, is led by a team consisting of central government, local councils, iwi and business representatives. An Action Plan was developed out of this strategy and was launched by regional leaders and ministers in April 2018. The region is home to pilot projects for introducing hydrogen powered transport technologies.

The region relies heavily on road and rail connections to the rest of the North Island for the movement of people, freight and visitors. SH3 provides the main northern connection linking Taranaki to the Waikato and upper North Island.

SH3 south provides a connection between New Plymouth and Palmerston North. It is critical to supporting the dairy industry as it connects the dairy production centre in Hāwera to distribution centres in Palmerston North.

Currently heavy vehicles travel 75 million kilometres on Taranaki roads every year,48 driven by the oil and gas, dairying and forestry sectors. This has a significant impact on local roads in particular. New Plymouth’s transport networks are generally well connected and fit for purpose, with capacity to accommodate projected traffic volumes in most areas. The key area of pressure on the transport system is the link between New Plymouth city centre and the residential and business growth areas to the east of the city.

KILOMETRES OF NETWORK IN REGION 2016/1729–30

PERCENTAGE OF KILOMETRES TRAVELLED 2016/1729

92% PRIVATE VEHICLE NEW PLYMOUTH

45% 30-64 YRS

21% 0-14 YRS

17% 15-29 YRS

7% WALKING & CYCLING NEW PLYMOUTH

0.6% PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEW PLYMOUTH

13.4% MANUFACTURING

12.5% GOVERNMENT, ARTS, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES

12.1% HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

9.2% MINING, ELECTRICITY, GAS, WATER, WASTE SERVICES & CONSTRUCTION

9.8% RETAIL TRADE

TOP 5 EMPLOYMENT SECTORS YEAR END MARCH 201841

MODE SHARE (JOURNEY TO WORK) 201840

POPULATION AGE PROFILE 201817
TARANAKI TOMORROW

Taranaki’s population is forecast to grow 11.3% by 2043 to 130,800 with the majority of that growth expected to be located in New Plymouth. The remainder of people live in the smaller urban areas and rural parts of New Plymouth, South Taranaki and Stratford districts. Low growth or declining populations are projected for these areas. New Plymouth district will have a higher number of people aged 65 years and over, so ensuring good access for senior residents will be important to ensure they remain socially connected, active and able to participate in their communities.

Increased rain and storm intensity, coastal and soil erosion, sea level rise, flooding, slips and storm surges are predicted over the next 30 years, increasing risk to the road and rail network. As the oil and gas centre of New Zealand, the region is exploring alternative energy options in response to climate change.

While employment in service industries is growing in the New Plymouth urban area, manufacturing continues to be important. Expanded forestry harvesting over the next decade will increase freight movement in the south and east of the region. Domestic and international tourism growth is forecast to continue in the short-term, which will influence the nature and location of trips occurring on the network.

The nature and direction of freight movement will change because of these employment and land-use changes as we transition to a low-emissions economy. Reliable inter-regional connections will continue to be important.

Rural communities will look for improved connections to New Plymouth and Whanganui for access to education, employment and essential services. Younger people living in the New Plymouth urban area will have a growing expectation to plan, book and pay for transport across a range of modes on one digital platform.

Technological changes expected during the next decade will offer new travel choice that will reduce carbon emissions, the reliance on private transport and improve network management. These include the increase of alternative fuels, shared transport, on-demand travel options, micro-mobility such as electric scooters and intelligent transport systems.

An increasing proportion of residents on fixed incomes is likely to put pressure on Taranaki councils’ ability to maintain existing infrastructure, fund new infrastructure, and provide appropriate services to residents.

KEY INSIGHTS

- It’s important that growth in housing and employment in and around New Plymouth, including new facilities like schools and healthcare, is managed in a way that reduces dependency of private vehicles and average journey length.
- Walking and cycling levels are above the national average supported by ongoing investment in infrastructure. Public transport services are limited and focused on access to essential services.
- Taranaki relies on safe and reliable SH3 connection north to Waikato, and the road and rail connections south-east to Manawatū-Whanganui to enable the movement of people and freight. Safe and reliable connections to these neighbouring regions are critical to the region’s social and economic outcomes.
- While Taranaki has relatively low levels of total death and serious injury (DSI) crashes compared to other regions, the location of the crashes indicates increased risk on the networks in and around New Plymouth and Hāwera, SH3 between these two centres, and high-risk rural roads.
- Only a small proportion of Taranaki’s road network is likely to be impacted by sea level rise resulting from climate change. However, networks in the north and east of the region are expected to come under increased pressure from storm intensity combined with relatively unstable terrain.
- Harvesting of forest blocks is forecast to peak over the next decade, increasing freight movements to Port Taranaki and placing pressure on the maintenance of road networks in the south and east of the region.
- We’ll look for ways to support initiatives to diversify the region’s economy as part of a transition to a low-emissions economy.
FOCUS OF EFFORT: 2018-21

We’re supporting a number of specific actions in the Regional Development Action Plan through funding, delivery or advisory services. Among the actions is a series of business case investigations along SH3 and SH43 Forgotten World Highway improvements, to help strengthen Taranaki’s connections to the rest of the country.

We’ll also be engaging with the ‘H2 Taranaki’ Hydrogen Ecosystem Development Centre in its role as land transport regulator, helping guide development of zero emission transport solutions.

We’re progressing options to help improve road safety, reduce crashes and ease congestion on SH3 between Waitara and Bell Block.

SH3 Mt Messenger bypass will take SH3 around the existing problematic steep, narrow and winding section of SH3 at Mt Messenger. There’s also a range of safety, resilience and reliability issues on this route being dealt with through the corridor safety improvements project.
**AREAS OF FOCUS: Taranaki 2021-31**

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**IMPROVE URBAN FORM (MEDIUM)**

While our focus is on multi-agency partnerships in major urban centres, we recognise the potential for growth in and around New Plymouth to support a safe and thriving city, with increased access to public transport, walking and cycling options and reduced carbon emissions. We will engage in planning processes to support a well-integrated and well-designed land-use and transport system that:

- enhances existing communities, making them a better place to work, live and play
- supports an increase in active modes, including trips by foot, bike and e-scooter etc
- reduces the need to travel long distances to access employment and services
- results in lower emissions per capita
- maintains or improves the safety and efficiency of the transport system.

The *Keeping New Plymouth Moving and Growing* business case is intended to consider the strategic responses to growth pressure, which we will continue to support.

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**SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE HARMs (MEDIUM)**

**SAFETY**

Support implementation of the Road to Zero Safety Strategy for New Zealand and associated Action Plan (2020-22), and regional safety strategies, with a particular emphasis on:

- continuing safety interventions targeting high-risk intersections, run-off road, high-volume roads and head-on crashes on high-risk rural roads (rural roads are roads with speed limits >80km/h)
- separated facilities and infrastructure improvements in areas with significant levels of walking and cycling
- targeting road policing and behaviour change programmes with a focus on alcohol and drug impairment, people not wearing seat belts and speeding
- speed management to provide safe and appropriate speeds on high risk rural roads. Targeted use of safety cameras to reduce speeding.

**HEALTH**

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.

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**TRANSFORM URBAN MOBILITY (MEDIUM)**

Projected population growth in Taranaki will increase travel demand on the region’s networks and provides opportunities to support increased use of public transport, walking and cycling. Our focus will be on:

- supporting improvements to walking and cycling networks, with a focus on providing safe and efficient access to and within activity centres and schools
- supporting public transport services, including on-demand, where they provide access to employment and essential services, are a more affordable transport option and/or help shape a more thriving city
- supporting development of the New Plymouth Network Operating Framework as a tool for optimising the transport network performance.

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**TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE (LOW)**

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

**ADAPTATION**

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
- enabling continuous improvement in network resilience through maintenance and renewals, and ‘low cost/low risk’ investments
- enabling quick recovery following disruption of the land transport system.

**MITIGATION**

We will focus on:

- 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 transport systems to manage demand and reduce emissions by prioritising the move to public transport and low emission options, and actively managing speed, urban freight and congestion.