

Northland



The Northland package has changed to provide a new rail link to Northport and targeted major safety upgrades to State Highway 1 to help everyone get where they're going safely.

The Government has instructed Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to implement a new option that focuses on safety improvements along the existing state highway, and the construction of a new rail line link to Northport. The current proposal for a new state highway will not continue.

The Government has decided to make the changes to meet climate change and housing objectives, as well as manage debt responsibly following COVID-19.

The changes will support Northland's economic growth, improve supply chain resilience, reduce emissions and improve road safety.

A rail link from Northport to the North Auckland rail line provides increased opportunity for freight transfer to rail from road. Currently, the absence of a rail connection to Northport means any export goods from Whangārei and north must either travel by road to the port, or by road/rail to ports to the south.

This work will be supplemented with further upgrades to the rail line between Otiria and Whangārei, enabling it to carry 18 tonne axle load trains. It builds on existing projects to upgrade and widen tunnels on the rail line between Swanson and Whangārei, and for planned work between Whangārei and Otiria.

Road safety improvements will focus on creating a safe transport system, which requires a mix of solutions to keep people safe. Being considered are installation of centre median barriers, roadside barriers and wide centrelines.

About 1400 direct jobs, including a number in Northland, are expected to be supported by the New Zealand Upgrade Programme investment. Thousands more are expected to be supported through the wider supply chain and economy.



Benefits

- A significant step to improve rail connections in Northland, supporting the transfer of freight from road to rail and reducing transport emissions.
- Improve North Island supply chain resilience, by ensuring Northport is rail connected. It is able to better manage larger freight volumes if flows are disrupted at the ports of Auckland or Tauranga.
- Northport is one of the few New Zealand ports which are not rail connected, and the only one close to Auckland.
- Safety improvements on SH1.
- Support Northland's economic growth.

Scope

- Rail link from the North Auckland rail line to Northport and other enabling rail works.
- Large scale safety improvements on SH1.
- Otiria to Whangārei rail line upgrade to take 18 tonne axle loads.

Next steps

- Continue with land acquisition and further technical work to advance Marsden Point rail link design.
- Complete Marsden Point rail link delivery case.
- Commence the upgrade works between Otiria and Whangārei.
- Large scale safety improvements on SH1.

Cost estimate

The Government is committed to an investment broadly similar to previously announced for Northland - about \$700m. Further investigations are needed to refine project cost estimates.

Timing

- 2021:** Further investigations to develop plans for SH1 safety upgrade.
- 2021:** Continue land acquisition, advance design, commence iwi and stakeholder engagement for Marsden Point rail link.

The delivery case will determine the project timelines. Initial estimates are it will take up to five years from initiation to commissioning.

