

Wellington Regional Update

August 2020

Overview

The Wellington region relies on two key north-south road and rail corridors connecting Wellington city with Porirua and Kāpiti to the west, and Hutt Valley and Wairarapa to the east. The Wellington Northern Corridor projects on SH1 will provide an alternative route that is safer, reliable and more resilient. These projects include Transmission Gully, the Peka Peka to Ōtaki expressway, and the future Ōtaki to north of Levin highway. Along the Hutt Valley/Wairarapa corridor Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is investing in rail upgrades to create a more reliable service.

Waka Kotahi is investing in walking and cycling paths throughout Wellington and Lower Hutt, including the link between Ngauranga and Petone.

With more than 82,000 people travelling to Wellington's central city every day, congestion is a big issue. The \$6.4 billion Let's Get Wellington Moving package will integrate modern rapid transit and public transport into the existing network, helping make city streets safe and attractive for pedestrians and cyclists. By offering congestion-free options like walking, cycling and rapid transit, more people will leave their car at home, freeing up the roads for those who need to drive.

In January 2020 the NZ Upgrade Programme announced a \$1.35 billion investment in projects across the greater Wellington region: Ōtaki to north of Levin SH58 safety improvements, Melling interchange, and regional rail improvements.

Wellington City and Hutt Valley

In 2019, the Government announced a \$6.4 billion indicative package for Let's Get Wellington Moving to address transport issues between Ngauranga and Wellington Airport. This is a substantial investment in Wellington over the next 20 years. Work has begun on early improvements while major projects are investigated and designed.

The NZ Upgrade Programme is investing \$258 million to build a new Melling intersection that improves safety, replaces the road bridge over the river, and improves access to walking, cycling and public transport. It is also investing \$211 million in infrastructure upgrades to increase line capacity and support an increased frequency of Metlink and Capital Connection services.

Waka Kotahi continues to work in partnership with Greater Wellington Regional Council and Hutt City Council on RiverLink, the partnership that aims to improve flood protection, urban design, and multi-modal transport access to central Lower Hutt.

In the last 18 months

- Hutt Road cycling improvements, including Kaiwharawhara Bridge, were completed. These were delivered by Wellington City Council in partnership with the Government and Waka Kotahi. The project cost \$6.8 million, with \$4.9 million invested by the Waka Kotahi (National Land Transport Fund and Urban Cycleways Fund).
- The final stage of Wainuiomata Hill Shared Path was completed and opened in May 2019, delivered by Hutt City Council in partnership with the Government and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency. The overall project cost \$14.8 million, with \$9 million invested by the Waka Kotahi through the National Land Transport Fund and Urban Cycleways Fund.
- Waka Kotahi has supported investment in upgrading Wellington's bus fleet – bringing double-decker and electric buses to the region.

Underway or about to start

- Some of the early components of Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) have begun, including work on bus priority improvements in the central city. Safer central city speeds will soon be introduced, and work continues on proposals for safer speeds on SH1 east of Mount Victoria tunnel, and options for a crossing on Cobham Drive.

- Two Indicative Business Cases - Mass Rapid Transit, and Strategic Highway Improvements – are underway for the major components of LGWM.
- Work is underway on the Melling Transport Improvements project as part of the RiverLink partnership. Public engagement will start in late 2020, with consent applications expected to be lodged in early 2021.
- The Petone to Melling section of Te Ara Tupua, the shared pathway linking Wellington with Hutt Valley, is underway and expected to be completed in early 2021. In June 2020 the Government announced that the Ngauranga to Petone section of Te Ara Tupua would be included within a fast-track consenting process as part of the post-COVID economic stimulus package. Both sections of Te Ara Tupua are being delivered by Waka Kotahi, in partnership with Wellington City Council, Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council.
- Construction on the northern and central sections of Lower Hutt's Beltway cycleway, from Waterloo Station to the Hutt River at Taita, is expected to begin in July 2020. This is a \$7 million project being delivered by Hutt City Council in partnership with the Government and Waka Kotahi.
- Construction on the Oriental Parade to Evans Bay section of the Tahitai bike path started in April 2019. This is a \$10 million project being delivered by Wellington City Council in partnership with the Government and Waka Kotahi.
- Work continues on the Cobham Drive section of the Tahitai pathway, with construction expected to be completed in 2020. This section is being delivered by Wellington City Council in partnership with the Government and Waka Kotahi.
- The NZ Upgrade Programme package is investing \$15 million to refurbish rolling stock and maintain the Capital Connection, from Wellington up the Kāpiti Coast to Palmerston North, until new rolling stock is bought later this decade, and \$70 million of safety and capacity improvements to the Wellington Railway Station junction. This work is expected to start in late 2020.
- Stage one of SH58 safety improvement works, from the Haywards interchange to Mt Cecil Road, is underway. This work, which involves widening the road and sealed shoulders, installing median safety barriers and curve easing, is expected to be completed in 2021. The NZ Upgrade Programme is investing \$59 million to complete stage two. This work, which involves 5.5km of improvements from Mount Cecil Road through to the interchange with Transmission Gully at Pāuatahanui, is expected to start late 2020.

Porirua, Kāpiti and the SH1 Northern Corridor

Work continues on the SH1 Northern corridor, which includes the Transmission Gully, Peka Peka to Ōtaki, and Ōtaki to north of Levin projects.

At the time of writing, negotiations regarding a settlement agreement as a result of COVID-19 and Alert Level 4 lockdown were continuing between Waka Kotahi, Wellington Gateway Partnership (the contractor) and CPB HEB JV (the builder). A settlement agreement will include a new completion date and is likely to include a financial relief package. The new completion date and any final cost will be announced once an agreement has been reached. In the meantime, small changes are being implemented to help ensure safer and more reliable journeys along SH1. These include limited closures of Paekakariki Hill Road, metered signals at Paremata Roundabout and revising the Mana Esplanade clearway times.

The \$330m Peka Peka to Ōtaki (PP2Ō) section of the Kāpiti Expressway is under construction. Before COVID-19, the completion of PP2Ō was expected to be in 2021. At the time of writing, any change to the completion date or final cost was yet to be confirmed. A separated shared pathway will extend the length of the corridor.

At the same time, planning and delivery continues for the revocation of Kāpiti's two historical SH1 routes, with construction on the Mackays to Peka Peka section and preliminary designs for the PP2Ō section both underway. These projects will ensure that the corridors are more accessible for all modes, can serve as an alternative if the expressway is closed, connect communities, and

create safer journeys. Responsibility for both roads will be transferred to the Kāpiti Coast District Council on completion.

The NZ Upgrade Programme is investing \$817 million in the Ōtaki to north of Levin project, with construction expected to begin in 2025. A preferred corridor for the new route has been announced, and design of the road within that corridor is progressing, with public engagement underway. In the meantime, further safety improvements are planned for SH1 and SH57.

In the last 18 months

- Paekakariki Hill Road closures were put in place on Friday afternoons to improve northbound journey times and safety on SH1. These followed a successful trial and will remain in place for as long as they are beneficial.
- At Paremata Roundabout, metered lights were installed to stagger northbound traffic through the roundabout, reducing southbound queues and making it easier for motorists to exit the Paremata park and ride car park. This has resulted in an average five minutes reduction to journey times for southbound traffic, and no impact for northbound traffic.
- Mana Esplanade clearway times were adjusted in response to changing traffic volumes and behaviour. These changes will improve traffic flow and reduce congestion on weekdays and weekends.
- Initial safety improvements were introduced to SH1 between Ōtaki and Levin.

Underway or about to start

- At the time of writing, construction on Transmission Gully had partially restarted following a pause during Level 4 lockdown, and negotiations with WGP and CPB HEB JV were continuing. A \$14 million payment was made by Waka Kotahi in May to ensure work continues during negotiations and this payment is advanced from any financial settlement agreement. A further \$5 million payment was made in June to extend the winter work programme into August.
- Construction of the \$330 million PP2Ō expressway is progressing well, including activity on bridge works, earthworks and pavements. PP2Ō was the first major project in the country to be given the all clear to re-mobilise back to site following lockdown. At the time of writing any impact of lockdown-related delays on a final completion date or project cost was yet to be confirmed.
- Mackays to Peka Peka revocation work (the process of making the former State highway into a local road) is underway. It includes cycling and walking improvements, upgrading drainage, and making the corridor more appropriate through town centres. Designs for the PP2Ō revocation project are being refined and will be presented to the wider community as engagement continues.

Wairarapa

Work in Wairarapa is focused on safety improvements, including a review of safer speed limits, and improved maintenance of SH2, including the vital link over the Remutaka Hill.

The NZ Upgrade Programme investment in regional rail improvements will enable faster and more frequent rail services for the Wairarapa. This work includes new passing infrastructure at Carterton and Maymorn, a second platform at Featherston, reducing the number of level crossings and upgrading others, and building a new storage facility for train carriages in Masterton.

In the last 18 months

- We have completed a significant amount of maintenance work on SH2 over the Remutaka Hill during blocks of overnight closures, which have significantly reduced the expected number of daytime works under stop-go lane closures.

Underway or about to start

- Community engagement is planned for safer speed limits and safety improvements on SH2 between Masterton and Carterton.
- Construction on the Wellington Metro Rail Upgrade is expected to start in late 2020, with phased completion between 2022 and 2025.

Investment in Wellington

| NLTP | 2015–18 | 2018–21 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Forecast total investment | \$1.6 billion | \$2.4 billion |
| Forecast maintenance and operations | \$358 million | \$437 million |
| Forecast public transport investment | \$450 million | \$600 million |
| Forecast walking and cycling | \$13 million | \$124 million |
| Regional network improvements | \$688 million | \$1 billion |

Overview map

