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# Wellington Improvements



Artist impression

## Delivering faster and more reliable state highway journeys to drive economic growth

Having an efficient and reliable state highway network is critical to the Wellington region. It provides people from across the region with access to business, employment and education hubs in central Wellington, as well as the Wellington International Airport and Wellington Hospital.

Currently, State Highway 1 (SH1) through Wellington is heavily congested at peak times, causing delays and unpredictable journey times and increasing traffic on local roads as people seek alternative routes. Without investment, as the regional population grows, travel times and reliability will worsen, hampering productivity and restricting economic growth.

The proposed design for the SH1 Wellington Improvements Roads of National Significance project will alleviate Wellington's longstanding bottlenecks with the construction of a second Terrace Tunnel, a second Mt Victoria Tunnel, and a major roading upgrade at the Basin Reserve. It will also include supporting improvements to the remaining state highway corridor through Wellington city, Hataitai and Kilbirnie. It will allow people and businesses to get where they need to go faster and more reliably, while unlocking productivity and regional economic growth.

The total investment envelope to design, consent, acquire land and construct the project is expected to be \$2.9 to \$3.8 billion. This investment envelope includes escalation, contingency and funding risk.

In August 2025, the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) Board endorsed the investment case for the project and approved funding for the next phase of its development.

This project is being developed in partnership between NZTA and Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira. NZTA is also working closely with Wellington City Council (WCC) and Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC).

## Community engagement

A number of previous projects have looked at ways to address the problems along SH1 through Wellington. In developing the proposed design, we have canvassed these previous investigations and previous community feedback and made refinements to align with the Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024 and the investment objective endorsed by the NZTA Board in October 2024. We're now inviting further feedback from our stakeholders and the community.

Engagement will be open from Monday 17 November for 4 weeks until Sunday 14 December 2025.

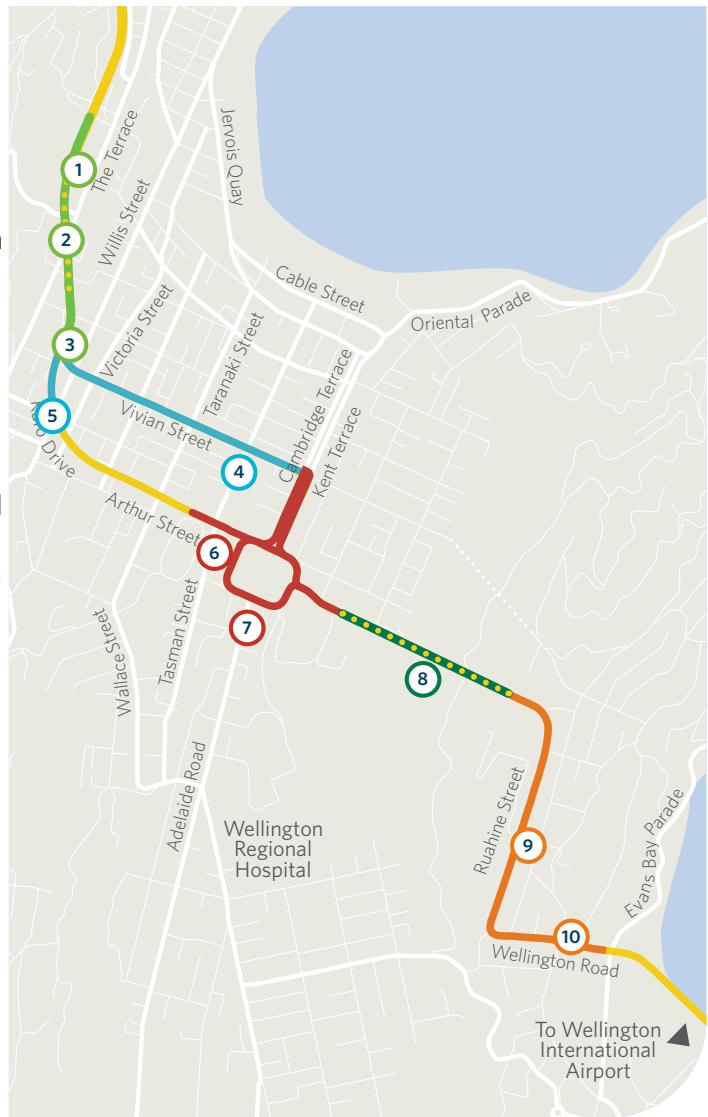
Information will be available on the project webpage and at information days during this period. Come and meet with the project team then complete the feedback survey online. We'll publish a summary of what we heard from the community in February next year and consider your feedback as we continue to refine the project design.

Share your feedback via the online survey from Monday 17 November to Sunday 14 December 2025



## Proposed design

- **Second Terrace Tunnel** with 2 lanes southbound. Reconfigured existing tunnel for 2 northbound lanes and improved safety **2**. Upgrades to the northern and southern tunnel approaches **1** **3**.
- **Te Aro improvements** 3 lanes on Vivian Street with upgrades to traffic signals to reduce congestion **4**. 3 through lanes on Karo Drive at the Willis Street intersection to improve traffic flow into the Terrace Tunnel **5**.
- **Basin Reserve upgrades** grade separating state highway and local traffic to enable state highway traffic to travel directly from the Mt Victoria Tunnel to the Arras Tunnel. New green link from Pukeahu National War Memorial Park to Cambridge Terrace **6**. Public transport and walking and cycling connections around the Basin **7**.
- **Second Mt Victoria Tunnel** with 2 lanes eastbound and a 3.6-metre-wide walking and cycling shared path separated from traffic. Retrofit of existing tunnel to create 2 lanes westbound, removing the existing shared path to allow improved safety and wider lanes **8**.
- **Widening of Ruahine Street and Wellington Road** to provide 2 lanes in each direction **9** **10**. New Hataitai Park Bridge over SH1 to improve access. Existing footbridge to Hataitai Park replaced and widened for walking and cycling **9** **10**.
- **Tolling** The investment case also proposes tolling to support the construction and maintenance of the project. Once NZTA has completed further planning and design, the next step is to seek approval from the Minister of Transport to proceed to public consultation on tolling. If approved, public consultation will occur once construction funding is confirmed.



## Project benefits

Travel on SH1 through the city will be faster and more reliable, encouraging less traffic on local roads. Less traffic on local roads enables opportunities for greater use by public transport and other modes.

Collectively, these improvements will increase productivity and drive economic growth.

**Increased state highway capacity and efficiency**

**Up to 10-minutes travel time savings at peak times**

+

**Up to 40% improvement in travel time reliability**

+

**Less traffic on local roads at busy times (as a result of providing a more efficient state highway)**

+

**Increased active modes (as a result of improved walking and cycling facilities through the Mt Victoria Tunnel)**

**Improved productivity and economic growth**

## Travel time savings

The proposed design will enable state highway traffic to enter and exit the city smoothly, improving access to and from the wider region as well as the eastern suburbs and Wellington International Airport. It will also improve access to Wellington Regional Hospital in Newtown.

Increasing the capacity on the state highway from north of the Terrace Tunnel to Cobham Drive will see improved travel times during the weekday peaks, as well as during busy weekend periods when people are trying to get to sports and other recreational activities.

Current modeling forecasts travel time savings of up to 10 minutes on key state highway journeys at peak times.

## Travel time reliability

People and businesses need to have certainty about how long it will take them to get where they need to go. Currently, journey times in Wellington can vary significantly from hour to hour and day to day. This means if people need to get somewhere on time, they must leave extra early, or risk missing their hospital appointment, flight or client meeting.

Current modeling forecasts travel time reliability will improve by up to 40% on key state highway journeys in peak time.

Travel time reliability has been assessed by measuring the difference between travel times in free-flowing traffic and the travel times experienced at peak times.

## Reduced traffic on local roads

Improving travel times and reliability on SH1 will encourage traffic through the tunnels, reducing traffic on key local roads. Increased use of the Mt Victoria Tunnels will reduce traffic on Evans Bay and Oriental Parade, which are highly valued as recreational and public spaces, as well as reducing traffic at the currently congested intersections at Cable Street, Kent Terrace and Wakefield Street.

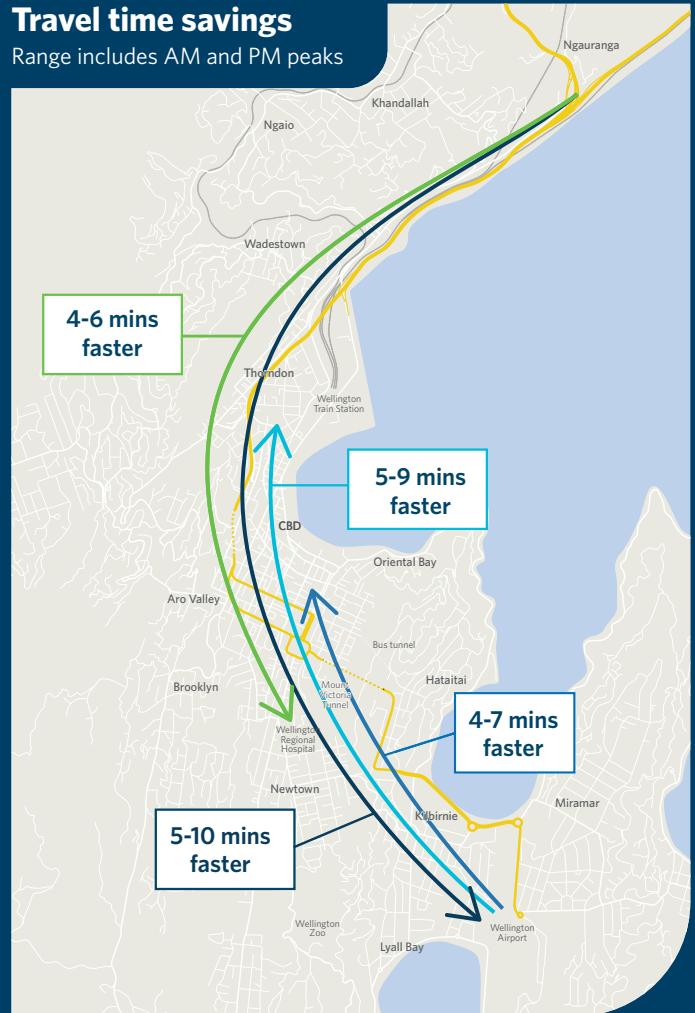
A freer flowing Terrace Tunnel will see a reduction on the Harbour Quays of up to 20% in the morning peak hour, enabling opportunities for improved public transport and local access.

## Walking and cycling

SH1 Wellington Improvements has been designed with consideration of other active transport modes. The proposed design will retain existing connectivity and, in some cases, provide improvements. A key improvement is a 3.6m-wide walking and cycling shared path through the second Mt Victoria Tunnel, which will be separated from traffic and replace the substandard path in the existing tunnel.

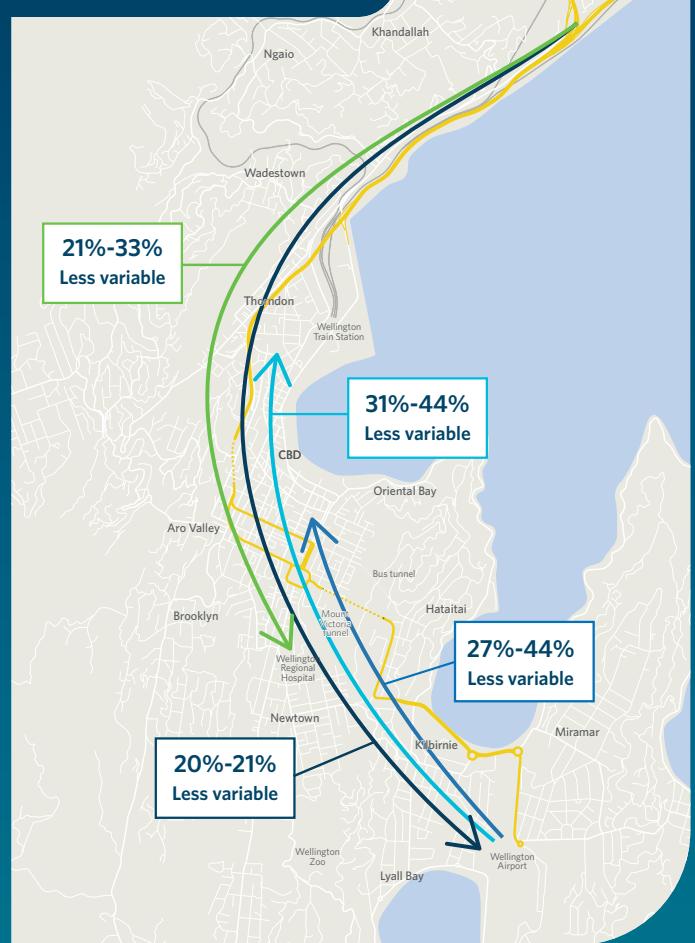
## Travel time savings

Range includes AM and PM peaks



## Reliability improvements

Range includes AM and PM peaks



## Increased productivity and economic growth

Having an efficient and reliable state highway transport system plays a vital role in boosting productivity and economic growth by enabling the efficient movement of people, goods and services.

This project is forecast to deliver in the order of \$1.6–\$2.9 billion of economic benefits over the next 60 years. This is comprised of:

- \$1.6 billion of direct transport benefits – those resulting directly from measures like travel time savings and improved reliability, resilience and walking and cycling.
- \$1.3 billion of wider economic benefits – these are the flow-on benefits experienced across the wider economy as a result of the project.
- One of the key drivers of these wider economic benefits for this project is that faster and more reliable transport links encourage more businesses to locate near each other. This helps them share ideas, services and talent, which drives innovation, productivity, and growth. This then has a ripple effect on the surrounding economy, including for the retail, hospitality, and service sectors.

## Public transport improvements

SH1 Wellington Improvements unlocks significant opportunities for improvements for public transport. Two examples of this include:

- Increasing the capacity and efficiency of the state highway will reduce traffic on the harbour quays, which unlocks opportunities for future public transport improvements in this area.
- Increasing capacity and efficiency on the state highway through Kilbirnie, Hataitai and the Mt Victoria Tunnel, unlocks opportunities for travel time savings on key bus routes from the eastern suburbs and airport, if they were rerouted through the Mt Victoria Tunnel. These bus routes currently travel through the Hataitai Bus Tunnel, which is also nearing capacity.

Decisions about future bus routes are the responsibility of GWRC as the Public Transport Authority. NZTA will continue to explore these and other opportunities for public transport improvements with GWRC and WCC.

## Project programme

SH1 Wellington Improvements is now in the pre-implementation stage, which is expected to take approximately 3 years. During this stage, NZTA will continue to develop project designs, further investigate options for tolling, purchase the property required for the project and secure necessary consents and approvals through the Fast-track Approvals Act (2024).



## Respecting environmental and cultural values

The SH1 Wellington Improvements project is being developed in partnership between NZTA and Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

The project is committed to respecting the cultural integrity, landscape and ecology of the area. Preliminary assessments indicate that numerous sites of

significance to mana whenua are located within and adjacent to the alignment, these assessments continue. NZTA is committed to working in partnership with Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira to protect and advance the cultural integrity of the project.

# Second Terrace Tunnel

A second Terrace Tunnel with 2 southbound lanes into the city



The Terrace Tunnel is a major gateway into and out of the city. In peak traffic, it also becomes a bottleneck. The proposed design will help address this long-standing issue by introducing a second Terrace Tunnel.

A second Terrace Tunnel will have 2 southbound lanes (into the city) and the existing tunnel will carry 2 northbound lanes (out of the city) with wider lanes and improved safety.

The second tunnel will be located on the east (city) side of the existing tunnel. Nearby, the Ghuznee Street Bridge will be extended or replaced to allow the widening of SH1.

A new approach to the second tunnel will also be added.

## Key benefits

Two southbound lanes through the (new) tunnel will alleviate the current 2-lane to 1-lane bottleneck coming into the city. By making state highway journeys faster and more reliable more people will choose this route. This will result in a reduction in traffic on local roads like the harbour quays, which unlocks opportunities for future public transport improvements.

Refer also to the whole-of-project benefits on pages 2 to 4.

## Potential impacts

The recreational track on the east side of SH1 (from Kumutoto Lane to the grassed area above the tunnel) will need to be removed to accommodate the widening for the second tunnel.

Up to 17 parking spaces will be removed underneath the Boulcott Street and Everton Terrace bridges to accommodate the widening for the second tunnel.



## Second Terrace Tunnel

### Fast facts

- New tunnel will be approximately 460m long
- Two southbound lanes through the new tunnel
- Alleviate the current 2-lane to 1-lane bottleneck into the city
- Two northbound lanes in the existing tunnel, with wider lanes and improved safety
- Ghuznee Street Bridge extended or replaced

### Key

- Road
- Other landscaping/surfacing

# Te Aro improvements

Three lanes on Vivian Street and 3 lanes on Karo Drive across Willis Street, with optimised traffic signals to enhance state highway efficiency and reliability



Vivian Street and Karo Drive carry state highway traffic through the central city for access to key business, education and cultural hubs as well as through traffic to eastern suburbs, the regional hospital and international airport.

The current 2 through lanes are often at or near capacity. The proposed design will help address this by adding an extra lane and optimising the traffic signals.

## Vivian Street

The proposed design sees Vivian Street becoming 3 lanes eastbound. Changes to traffic signal timing will enhance the flow of state highway traffic while still providing safe crossings for local traffic. All pedestrian crossings will be retained.

## Karo Drive

Karo Drive will become 3 westbound through lanes across the Willis Street intersection to improve throughput (currently 2 through lanes), before merging back to 2 lanes before the Terrace Tunnel.

## Key benefits

Improving the flow of traffic will improve travel time and journey time reliability – for local and state highway traffic. The Karo Drive improvements will support traffic flowing through Te Aro and into the Terrace Tunnel for northbound traffic to exit the city easily. The Vivian Street improvements will support traffic flowing into the city and to the new 2-lane Mt Victoria tunnel.

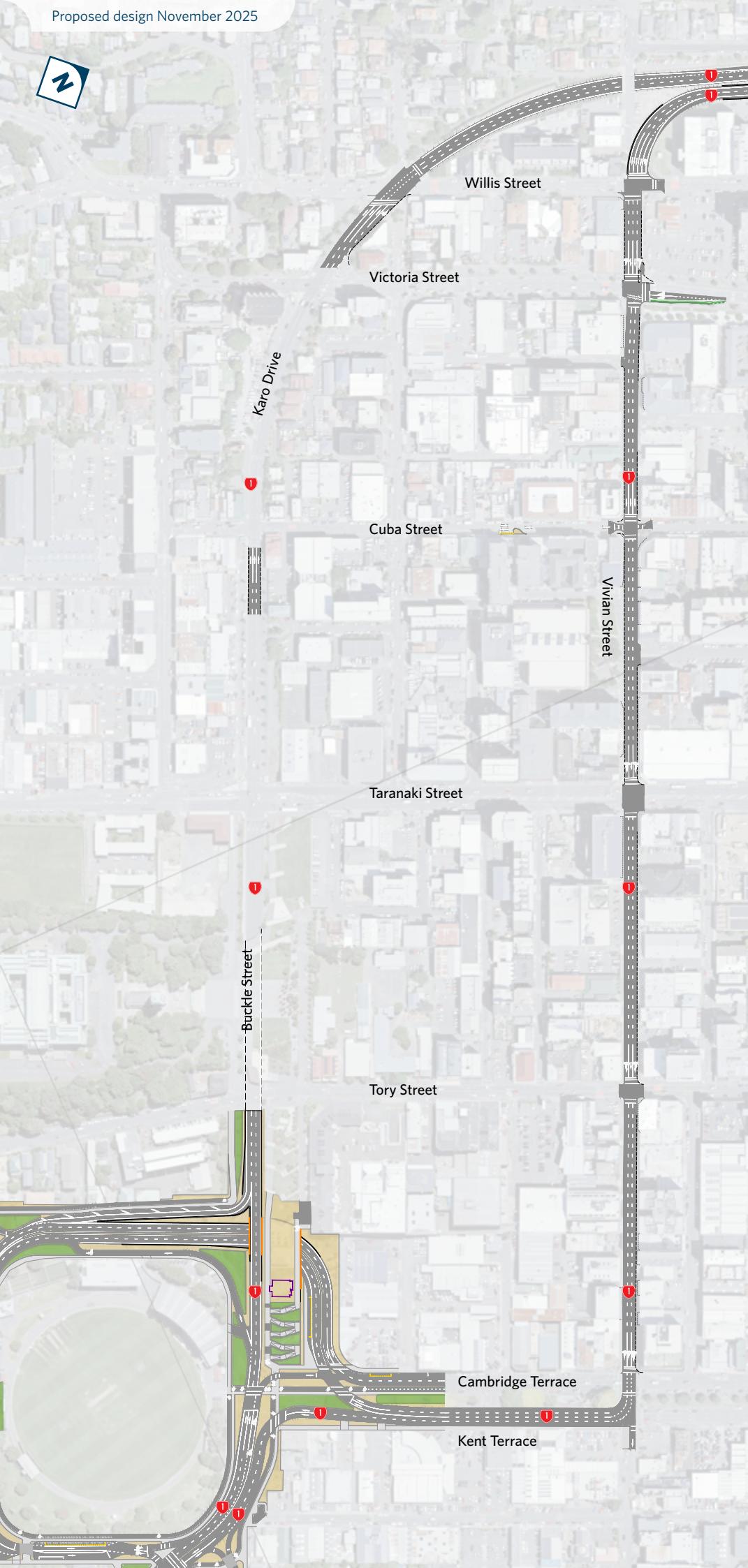
Refer also to the whole-of-project benefits on pages 2 to 4.

## Potential impacts

To support state highway efficiency in Te Aro, vehicle access to Cuba Street from both Karo Drive and Vivian Street will be closed. Cuba Street through traffic will still be able to cross over Karo Drive and Vivian Street to continue their journey. Access out of Pirie Street will also be closed.

Up to 75 parking spaces and 6 taxi stands will be removed along Vivian Street (between Victoria Street and Cambridge Terrace).

Some kerb changes will be necessary to achieve appropriate lane widths. A minimum footpath width of 2.4m will be maintained.



## Te Aro improvements

### Fast facts

- Vivian Street to increase from 2 eastbound lanes to 3 eastbound lanes
- Karo Drive to increase from 2 westbound lanes to 3 westbound lanes across Willis Street
- Traffic will continue to flow eastbound on Vivian Street and westbound on Karo Drive
- Pedestrian crossings retained
- Access changes to Cuba Street and Pirie Street

### Key

- Road
- Vegetation
- Other landscaping/surfacing
- Paths

# Basin Reserve upgrades

State highway traffic travels directly from Mt Victoria Tunnel to Arras Tunnel, and upgrades to create 2-way local traffic around the Basin

Artist impression



The Basin is a main thoroughfare for local and state highway traffic, including public transport, emergency vehicles and school commutes.

The cultural, historical and recreational significance of this area is also acknowledged.

The longstanding congestion issues around the Basin Reserve are well-documented.

## State highway traffic

Instead of travelling around the Basin, the proposed design proposes westbound SH1 traffic travels directly from the Mt Victoria Tunnel to the Arras Tunnel, and state highway eastbound traffic travels to the Mt Victoria Tunnel in a similar way to the existing arrangement:

- Westbound SH1 traffic from the Mt Victoria Tunnel travels around the north side of the Basin Reserve (Buckle Street),

passing over a short, trenched section of Sussex Street – separate from local traffic

- Eastbound SH1 traffic from Kent Terrace travels to the Mt Victoria tunnel via the existing left turn at the Basin Reserve.

## Local traffic

Local traffic, including public transport, will move around the Basin in both directions.

This is with the exception of Dufferin Street (east side of the Basin) which will become one-way northbound. Dufferin Street will include school bus stops and a separated pick-up / drop-off lane for students.

Rugby Street near Adelaide Road (south side) will become 2-way.

Sussex Street (west side) will become 2 lanes in both directions flowing under Buckle Street, with

new southbound lanes for traffic from Kent Terrace heading towards Newtown via Adelaide Road. Northbound traffic on Sussex Street will continue to travel directly to the Arras Tunnel and Cambridge Terrace.

- From the Mt Victoria Tunnel:
  - Northbound traffic travels along the north side of Basin Reserve and via a new slip road from Buckle Street to Cambridge Terrace
  - Southbound traffic from the Mount Victoria Tunnel travels anticlockwise around the Basin via a new slip road from Buckle Street onto Sussex Street then on to Adelaide Road or to Dufferin Street to access schools.



- From Kent Terrace:
  - Eastbound traffic travels to the Mt Victoria tunnel via the existing left turn
  - Westbound traffic travels anticlockwise around the Basin and joins SH1 at Dufferin Street
  - Southbound traffic travels anticlockwise via Sussex Street to Adelaide Road
- From Adelaide Road
  - Eastbound traffic travels to the Mt Victoria tunnel via Dufferin Street
  - Northbound traffic travels around the Basin via Sussex Street
  - Westbound traffic continues to travel via Sussex Street to the Arras Tunnel

Hania Street will become a cul-de-sac, and Ellice Street will become left-in left-out access from/to SH1.

## A new green link from Pukeahu to the Basin

A green link extending from Pukeahu National War Memorial Park to Cambridge Terrace is proposed next to the extension over Sussex Street, as a separate structure.

The new public space extends from Pukeahu National Memorial Park and includes a walking and cycling connection to Cambridge Terrace, and the opportunity to extend the landscaping towards the Basin Reserve.

## Walking and cycling

The existing walking connectivity around (and through) the Basin will be maintained.

Existing cycling infrastructure on Cambridge Terrace and Adelaide Road will be connected, including via some new walking and cycling paths. The width of the paths will be confirmed following further design:

- East side: widened path with a new signalised crossing across SH1 north of the Basin
- West side: widened path and a shared path section at Rugby Street
- North side: shared path between Pukeahu National War Memorial Park and Cambridge Terrace
- North-east corner: shared paths connecting Kent Terrace to the second Mt Victoria Tunnel, Kent Terrace and Dufferin Street, and Dufferin Street and the second Mt Victoria Tunnel shared path.

## Key benefits

The proposed design for the Basin area will separate state highway and local traffic to alleviate congestion.

Safer and more efficient travel around the Basin includes public transport and school journeys, and improved walking and cycling connections.

A new green link will connect Pukeahu National Memorial Park with the Basin and Cambridge Terrace.

Refer also to the whole-of-project benefits on pages 2 to 4.

## Potential impacts

Up to 70 parking spaces will be removed along SH1 (Kent Terrace, Ellice Street, Rugby Street and Sussex Street). Changes to parking spaces may be required on local roads particularly around intersections.

The Home of Compassion Creche currently located within Pukeahu War Memorial Park will need to be relocated – one option under consideration is slightly to the east, within the new green link. Hania becomes a cul-de-sac, and Ellice Street has a new left-in left-out access to/from SH1.



## Basin reserve upgrades

### Fast facts

- SH1 traffic separated from local traffic
- SH1 traffic travels directly from Mt Victoria Tunnel to Arras Tunnel instead of around the Basin
- Sussex Street and Rugby Street become 2 lanes in both directions for local traffic including public transport
- Direct access from Dufferin Street to the Mt Victoria tunnels
- New green link extending from Pukeahu National War Memorial Park provides a green connection to the Basin and access to Cambridge Terrace
- Improved walking and cycling connections

### Key

- Road
- Vegetation
- Other landscaping/surfacing
- Paths
- Shared paths
- Separated paths

# Second Mt Victoria Tunnel

A second Mt Victoria Tunnel with 2 lanes eastbound and separated walking and cycling shared path



Artist impression

The Mt Victoria Tunnel is the key connection between the city and eastern suburbs and is a major gateway for visitors arriving via Wellington International Airport. In peak traffic, including weekends, the tunnel creates a well-known bottleneck in both directions. The proposed design will help address this long-standing issue by introducing a second tunnel.

The proposed design is for a second tunnel providing 2 eastbound lanes (towards Kilbirnie and the airport) and the existing tunnel becomes 2 westbound lanes (towards the city).

The new tunnel will be located on the north side of the existing tunnel and includes a 3.6m wide walking and cycling shared path, fully separated from road traffic providing improved safety, more space and better air quality. The shared path in the existing tunnel will then be removed to allow wider lanes and improved safety.

## Key benefits

Two lanes in each direction through the Mt Victoria tunnels will alleviate the current bottlenecks in both directions (supported by 2 proposed lanes in each direction on Ruahine Street).

Making state highway journeys faster and more reliable stimulates addition growth in the eastern suburbs with more people using the state highway and reduced traffic on local roads.

The shared walking and cycling path through the new tunnel, separated from traffic, will make journeys safer and more pleasant.

Refer also to the whole-of-project benefits on pages 2 to 4.

## Potential impacts

Changes to parking spaces may be required on local roads particularly around intersections.

The proposed design for the Mt Victoria Tunnel will affect some land in the Town Belt which is managed by Wellington City Council in partnership with mana whenua.

NZTA recognises the significance of the Wellington Town Belt for mana whenua and Wellingtonians, and the partnership between Wellington City Council and mana whenua in managing the Town Belt. Engagement is underway with both parties to explore mitigation options that uphold the interests of the wider community, while realising the significant benefits this project offers the region.



## Second Mt Victoria Tunnel

### Fast facts

- New tunnel will be approximately 620m long
- Two eastbound lanes through the new tunnel
- Two westbound lanes in the existing tunnel, with wider lanes and improved safety
- Alleviate the current 2-lane to 1-lane bottleneck through the tunnel
- 3.6m wide shared walking and cycling path in the new tunnel, separated from traffic

### Key

- Road
- Vegetation
- Other landscaping/surfacing
- Paths

# Hataitai connections

Widening of Ruahine Street providing 2 lanes in each direction



Artist impression

Ruahine Street and Wellington Road provide the key connection between the city and Wellington International Airport and eastern suburbs, for both local and state highway traffic. There are well-known congestion issues at peak times and at weekends. Access to Hataitai Park and the Wellington Town Belt is often challenging for vehicles as well as cyclists and pedestrians.

The proposed design will alleviate these issues and support future growth in the eastern suburbs.

## Ruahine Street

Ruahine Street will be widened to become 2 lanes in each direction between the Mt Victoria Tunnels and Wellington Road.

A new Hataitai Park Bridge over SH1 near Goa Street will improve access into and out of Hataitai Park and

Hataitai Village. This arrangement includes a new northbound slip lane facilitating access into and out of Hataitai Park from Ruahine Street. This will improve access to this busy recreation area while maintaining the flow of SH1 traffic.

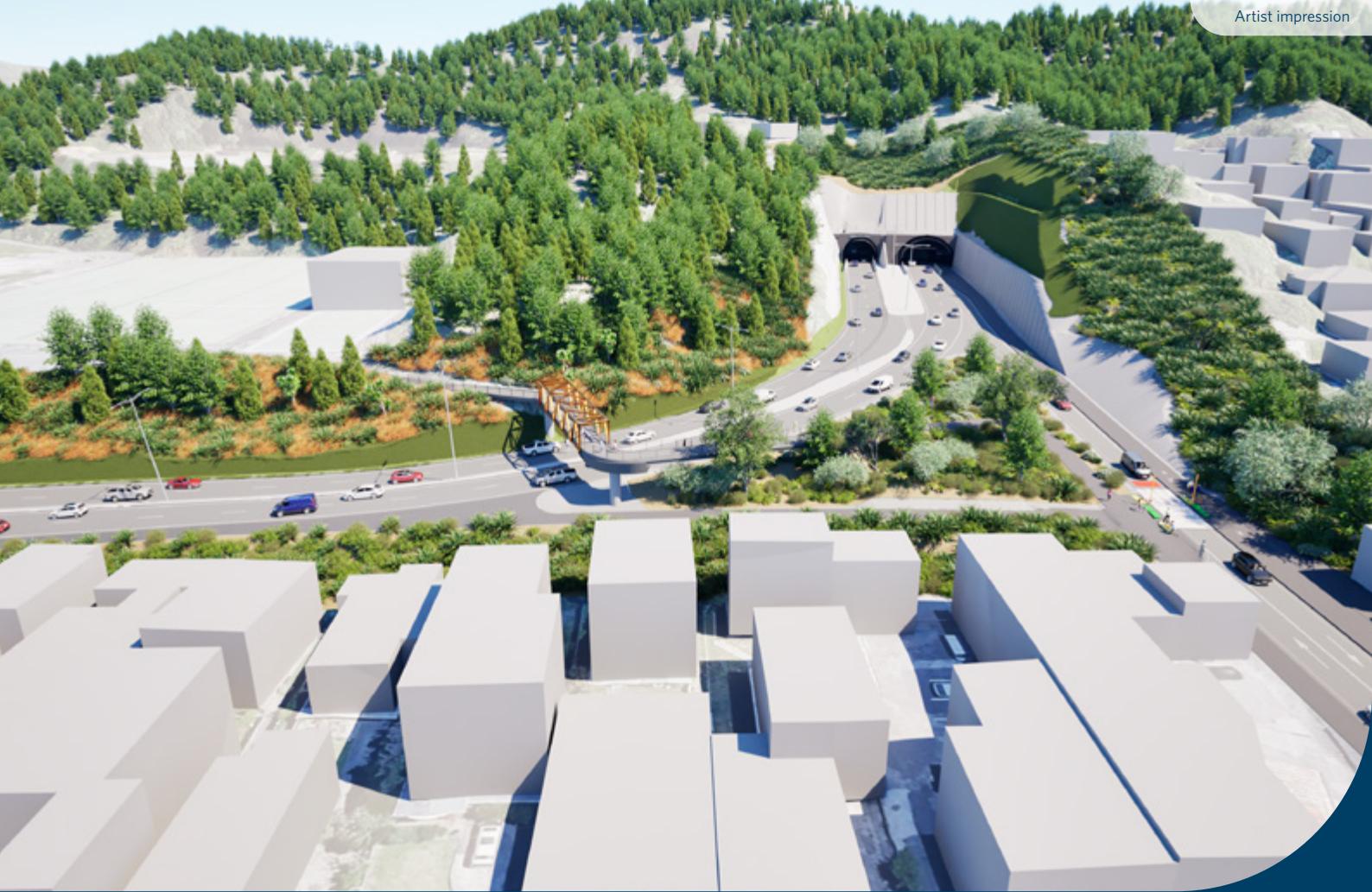
At Taurima Street, the existing left and right-turn exits onto Ruahine Street towards the Mt Victoria Tunnel will be removed and re-routed via the new Hataitai Park Bridge near Goa Street. Although the alternative route will be longer, it will be easier, safer and more reliable. The existing left turn into Taurima Street from the Mt Victoria Tunnel will remain.

The existing footbridge connecting Taurima Street and Hataitai Park will be replaced and widened to provide walking and cycling access across Ruahine Street/SH1.

## Proposed access changes

- Taurima Street exits onto SH1 will be closed, with an alternative route via the new Hataitai Park Bridge
- Goa Street, Moxham Avenue, and Walmer Street direct access to SH1 will be closed, with local service lane access created
- Wellington Road / SH1 Ruahine Street intersection will become left-in left-out only (removing the right turn into Wellington Road towards Newtown and the right turn onto SH1 Wellington Road)

New service lanes along sections of Ruahine Street and Wellington Road will replace direct access to SH1 for some properties.



## Key benefits

The proposed design will provide safer and more efficient journeys.

Significant access changes to Hataitai Village and Hataitai Park will improve traffic flow, replace difficult exits onto the state highway with safer and more reliable alternatives, and alleviate longstanding congestion.

Refer also to the whole-of-project benefits on pages 2 to 4.

## Potential impacts

Some land from the Wellington Town Belt will need to be acquired to accommodate the construction of the second Mt Victoria Tunnel portal and control room building, widening of Ruahine Street, and the construction of the new Hataitai Park Bridge.

Up to 23 parking spaces will be removed along Ruahine Street (SH1). Changes to parking spaces may be required on local roads primarily around intersections.

NZTA recognises the significance of the Wellington Town Belt for mana whenua and Wellingtonians, and the partnership between Wellington City Council and mana whenua in managing the Town Belt. Engagement is underway with both parties to explore mitigation options that uphold the interests of the wider community, while realising the significant benefits this project offers the region.



## Hataitai connections

### Fast facts

- Ruahine Street becomes 2 lanes in each direction (from the 2-laned Mt Victoria tunnels)
- New Hataitai Park Bridge over SH1 for improved access into and out of Hataitai Park and Hataitai Village
- Access and turning changes, including new service lanes
- Existing footbridge into Hataitai Park replaced and widened for walking and cycling

### Key

- Road
- Vegetation
- Other landscaping/surfacing
- Paths
- Service lane

# Kilbirnie connections

Widening of Wellington Road providing 2 lanes in each direction



Ruahine Street and Wellington Road provide the key connection between the city and Wellington International Airport and eastern suburbs, for both local and state highway traffic. There are well-known congestion issues at peak times and at weekends.

The proposed design will alleviate these issues and support future growth in the eastern suburbs.

## Wellington Road

Wellington Road will be widened to become 2 or more lanes in each direction between Ruahine Street

and Cobham Drive. Critically, this will alleviate the 2-lane to 1-lane bottleneck heading to the city at the Kilbirnie Crescent/Hamilton Road intersection at Kilbirnie Park.

### Proposed access changes

- Goa Street, Moxham Avenue, and Walmer Street direct accesses to SH1 will be closed, with local service lane access created
- Wellington Road / SH1 Ruahine Street intersection will become left-in left-out only (removing the right turn from Ruahine

Street into Wellington Road towards Newtown, and removing the right turn from Wellington Road onto SH1 Wellington Road towards the airport)

- Evans Bay Parade / SH1 intersection removes right turns from Evans Bay Parade
- Kilbirnie Crescent / Hamilton Road intersection removes right turns for all approaches.

New service lanes along sections of Ruahine Street and Wellington Road will replace direct access to SH1 for some properties.



## Key benefits

The proposed design will provide safer and more efficient journeys.

Refer also to the whole-of-project benefits on pages 2 to 4.

## Potential impacts

A section of land at the northern end of Kilbirnie Park will need to be acquired to accommodate the widening of Wellington Road.

Up to 32 parking spaces will be removed along Wellington Road (SH1). Changes to parking spaces may be required on local roads around intersections.



## Kilbirnie connections

### Fast facts

- Wellington Road will become 2 or more lanes in each direction
- Alleviate the 2-lane to 1-lane bottleneck heading into the city
- Access and turning changes, including new service lanes
- Changes to the Ruahine Street / Wellington Road intersection

### Key

- Road
- Vegetation
- Other landscaping/surfacing
- Paths
- Service lane