



National's Wellington and Hutt Valley Transport Package

Overview

The Wellington region has argued about transport for far too long, to the region's obvious and demonstrable detriment. While the rest of the country, notably Auckland, has been working with central Government to unlock investment in world-class expressways and high quality public transport, Wellington has been going backwards.

Congestion chokes the city on major transport corridors (SH1 and 2) and on major regional arterial roads like the Petone Esplanade. The region is vulnerable to major natural disasters (and even minor disruptions like rock falls), with a real lack of resilience in the network. Forecasts suggest that by 2025, commuters will be packed like "sardines" on trains without significant new investment. In 2018, Wellington's popular and effective bus network experienced a "lasagne of failure", with residents losing confidence in the service after months of disruption.

Safety is a significant issue at a number of major intersections on SH2. A failure to build new transport infrastructure has contributed to a housing shortage, which has caused record house price and rent increases, a record social housing waiting list, and real homelessness across the region.

National's transport plan for the Wellington region is ambitious and comprehensive. It builds on the Let's Get Wellington Moving programme adopted by the current Government, but crucially, it also funds important multimodal state highway projects that Wellingtonians have been demanding for years – projects that the Let's Get Wellington Moving programme actually recommended but were removed or delayed by the Labour Government. We will deliver the full Let's Get Wellington Moving programme.

Our package also funds rapid transit as a complement to major roading projects, to spur urban regeneration, decrease congestion,

and increase walking and cycling links. We are sceptical that light rail is the right mode for rapid transit, and more confident that bus rapid transit can be deployed more quickly and flexibly to deliver the high quality rapid transit system Wellington needs.

National's package contains significant investment into the metro rail network for more trains, greater reliability, and an expanded commuter network to Ōtaki (and in time, Levin). We will prioritise the roll-out of integrated ticketing on Wellington buses and trains. It is absurd that in the 2020s people can still buy train tickets using cash that are unusable on buses.

We are deliberately taking a regional approach, recognising the significant and growing commuter and freight linkages between the northern suburbs of Wellington, the city itself, and the Hutt Valley. On the critical SH2 corridor stretching from the city to Te Marua, our aim is to eliminate all sets of traffic lights by 2030, to allow traffic to flow more freely, and to increase safety.

A new governance structure will be required to execute our plan, which National will establish quickly upon forming office.

National's Wellington and Hutt Valley Transport Package will reduce congestion, improve resilience, increase safety, improve public transport, and facilitate new housing through greater densification on greenfield sites. It will help make Wellington into the modern city and region it can and should be. In short, it will actually get Wellington moving.



Let's Get Wellington Moving – what went wrong?

The Let's Get Wellington Moving project (LGWM) was commenced with good intentions in 2016 by the previous National-led Government alongside local government in Wellington. The aim was to let bygones be bygones, figure out what Wellingtonians wanted, gain as much consensus as possible amongst key agencies, and design an integrated package that looked at the needs of the city as a whole rather than on a project-by-project basis.

LGWM was finally released to the public in May 2019. However, the package announced by the Government differed markedly from the Recommended Programme of Investment (RPI), dated October 2018, which was devised by the LGWM working group after extensive work and consultation.

The most notable omissions were two critical state highway projects – a second Terrace Tunnel, and undergrounding SH1 at Te Aro. Both were recommended in the RPI, but were absent from the announced package.

Furthermore, the package purported to contain a second Mt Victoria Tunnel (which was recommended in the RPI), but it was obvious Ministers were lukewarm on the prospect. Later, it was revealed that the second Mt Victoria Tunnel had essentially been pushed back to 2029 or later at the behest of Associate Minister of Transport (and Green Party Transport Spokesperson) Julie-Anne Genter by way of still-unreleased “secret letter” to Minister of Transport Phil Twyford. The letter has never been released, but both Twyford and Genter have all but admitted it was her pressure that led to the tunnel being pushed back.

There are three further problems with Let's Get Wellington Moving:

- It did not look at the whole region, only at the area from Ngauranga through to the airport. The Hutt Valley and northern suburbs were left completely out of the package.
- How the programme will actually be delivered is unclear. Accountability for delivery of the programme is opaque, and projects announced as being committed to by Government are, in reality, not assured of funding through NZTA.
- The cost split between local government and central government has never been satisfactorily resolved. Local government is expected to pay for state highway projects (traditionally the responsibility of central government), with very limited funding tools available to them.

National's Transport Package will address these issues, as detailed below.



Overview of National's commitments

Funding

National's \$31 billion transport infrastructure package, over and above what the current Government is spending, is the biggest infrastructure package in New Zealand history.

From the \$31 billion in extra funding, we have allocated \$3.9 billion to the Wellington region. This is in addition to the funding track of the current Government through Let's Get Wellington Moving, the National Land Transport Programme and NZ Upgrade Programme. It will result in a massive boost to transport spending in the Wellington region. It will bring estimated transport spending in the Wellington region over the next 20 years to at least \$12 billion.

Our package is designed as a 20-year vision for the city and region. We will proceed with:

- All of the current Let's Get Wellington Moving projects committed to by the current Government.
- All of the NZ Upgrade Programme projects for Wellington (Melling Interchange, rail upgrades north of Wellington, SH58 safety improvements).
- All of the existing National Land Transport Programme projects (for example, Te Ara Tupua – the Hutt Valley to Wellington Walking and Cycling Link).

We will also fund additional projects detailed below.

Central/Local Government cost share

LGWM was announced by the Government as a \$6.4 billion package over 20 years, with funding assigned to Wellington from the National Land Transport Fund. Sixty per cent of the package was to be paid for by Government (\$3.8 billion), and \$2.6 billion from local government.

The package reverses the long-standing policy, for no good reason, that central Government pays for state highways while

local government pays for local roads and other improvements.

National will fully fund the state highway projects in our Wellington package from central Government through the National Land Transport Fund.

Rapid Transit will continue. We have worked on the basis that \$2.2 billion (the government's numbers) over 20 years will be spent on the project. Our preference for bus priority and bus rapid transit means we expect to make savings in this area. Any savings as routes and business cases are developed will be reallocated to other projects in future years.

Our move to make the Government pay for state highway projects (Fixing the Basin, Mt Vic, Terrace Tunnel, trenching under Te Aro) relieves ratepayers of the burden of paying for central Government state highway projects. This will save Wellington ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Governance Changes

Transport governance in Wellington is fragmented and opaque. The regional council has responsibility for the operation of public transport (buses and trains) while four territorial local authorities (Wellington City, Hutt City, Upper Hutt City, Porirua City) are responsible for local roads.

National believes there is a strong case for the creation of a dedicated agency to plan, fund, and manage transport across the Wellington region.

National will:

- Create a stand-alone agency to deliver National's redesigned and improved Let's Get Wellington Moving package.
- In time, this agency will transition into Wellington Transport, which will take over the planning, funding and management of transport in Wellington.



Committed projects

Project	Description	Cost (\$m)	Funding	Timeframe
Melling Interchange	National successfully pressured the Government into progressing the Melling Interchange, which was delayed until 2028 or later. The project is now funded and will include replacing the road bridge over the river, improving access to walking, cycling and public transport and adding to the resilience of the transport route between Hutt Valley and the wider Wellington region.	258	NZ Upgrade	2022-2026
Rail upgrades north of Wellington	Improving rail network capacity and safety through extra tracks, level crossing upgrades and removals, and the introduction of a modern safety system.	211	NZ Upgrade	2022-2025
SH58 Safety Improvements (Stage 2)	This project will finally see upgrades to one of the region's most dangerous stretches of road. The project will include widening the road, installing roadside and median safety barriers, installing two new roundabouts, and bridge widening improvements.	59	NZ Upgrade	2020-2023
A walkable city	Accessibility and amenity improvements, setting safer speeds for vehicles, and walking improvements.	95	Current LGWM	2020-2024
Connected cycleways	Cycleways on Featherston Street, Thorndon Quay, Courtenay Place, Dixon Street, Taranaki Street, Willis Street, Victoria Street, Kent and Cambridge Terraces and Bowen Street.	40	Current LGWM	2020-2024
Public transport (city and north)	Dual public transport spine through the central city on the Golden Mile and Waterfront Quays, rail network improvements and bus priority on Thorndon Quay and Hutt Road.	360	Current LGWM	2020-2024
Smarter transport network	Full integrated ticketing, transition to integrated transport network operating systems, travel demand management measures including Mobility as a Service, parking policy improvements and education and engagement.	80	Current LGWM	2020-2024



Project	Description	Cost (\$m)	Funding	Timeframe
Unblocking the Basin Reserve	<p>Package of minor at-grade changes to improve reliable access for all modes, Basin Reserve grade separation between north-south movements, east-west movements and any rapid transit corridors.</p> <p>National will fully fund this project, rather than cost-share with local government.</p>	190	Current LGWM	2020-2024
Second Mt Victoria Tunnel and widening of Ruahine Street	<p>Extra Mount Victoria Tunnel and widening of Ruahine Street/ Wellington Road to improve access for buses and dedicated walking and cycling facilities.</p> <p>National will fully fund this project, rather than cost-share with local government.</p>	700	Current LGWM	2023/4 onwards
Rapid transit	<p>Provide rapid transit as part of the wider public transport network from the railway station to Newtown, and Newtown to the airport.</p>	2,200	Current LGWM	2024 onwards
Second Terrace Tunnel	<p>Duplicating the Terrace Tunnel to bolster capacity for traffic through the Wellington CBD, enabling less through traffic on waterfront quays, improving safety and amenity in the CBD, and improving access to the port from the north.</p> <p>National will fully fund this project, rather than cost-share with local government.</p>	400	NEW Funding	2027/8
Undergrounding SH1 through Te Aro	<p>Undergrounding in Te Aro will provide for a more efficient flow of traffic through the Wellington CBD, ensuring reliable travel times through the city to the Airport and from the CBD to the urban motorway.</p>	1,100	NEW Funding	2029/30
Petone to Grenada Link Road (part of new Seaview to Grenada Link Rd)	<p>Constructing a new route between Petone and Grenada will provide a critical link connecting the Hutt Valley with the wider Wellington region. This will add resilience to the transport network, improve travel times, particularly on the Petone to Ngauranga section of SH2, and support growth in the region. It will allow for direct public transport between Petone and Porirua.</p>	900	NEW Funding	2025/6



Project	Description	Cost (\$m)	Funding	Timeframe
Cross Valley Link (part of new Seaview to Grenada Link Rd)	The Cross Valley Link in the Hutt Valley has been discussed since the 1960s. National will declare the corridor a state highway and fully fund the project as part of the new Seaview to Grenada Link Road. The project will improve network resilience, improve transport choices, improve accessibility and support development and urban growth. The new corridor will feature new and upgraded road connections to Seaview/Gracefield, bus priority routes, and new and upgraded active mode connections.	160	NEW Funding	2021/2 onwards
Kennedy Good (Kelson) Interchange	The SH2 intersection at Kelson and Kennedy Good bridge, connecting SH2 and Kelson with the valley floor, is a notorious choke point and safety risk. Housing growth in the western hill suburbs and on the valley floor means a new grade-separated interchange should be fast-tracked.	50	NEW Funding	2026/7
Four-laning Silverstream to Whakatiki St including a new Moonshine Bridge	The section of SH2 from Whakatiki Street to Silverstream (known as the River Road) is a notorious safety risk, particularly the Moonshine Bridge. National will four lane the road and replace the dangerous bridge. In time, we will look to extend four-laning from Silverstream to Te Marua, and we will grade separate the Silverstream intersection.	100	NEW Funding	2022 onwards
Wellington Metro Rail Upgrade	The Wellington commuter rail network is growing strongly, and new trains are required from 2025 onwards. In particular the Wairarapa and Manawatū areas are experiencing strong growth. National will fund the Greater Wellington Regional Council's investment proposal for new trains, to replace existing longer-distance rail rolling stock with a fleet of four-car DMUs or DMMUs. The new rolling stock will operate services in the Wairarapa and Manawatū, which will run at improved frequencies to provide better access and capacity between Masterton/Palmerston North and Wellington, including much needed additional capacity at key stations within the electrified area.	300	NEW Funding	2025/6



Project	Description	Cost (\$m)	Funding	Timeframe
Te Ara Tupua (Hutt Valley to Wellington Walking/ Cycling)	The Hutt Valley to Wellington Walking and Cycling Link will deliver a safe and efficient route between Wellington and the Hutt Valley for cyclists and pedestrians, and connect with local paths. National kick-started this project through its Urban Cycleways Funding when last in office and we will seek to fast-track construction of the Petone to Ngauranga section. We will also seek to fast-track the Eastern Bays Shared Path in the Hutt.	130	NLTF	2020

Projects to be investigated and considered for funding in future years:

- Extension of Melling train line to Kelson/Belmont.
- Second access into Wainuiomata.
- Silverstream Interchange upgrade.
- Haywards to Stokes Valley Connector Project.
- Four-laning of SH58.



Second Mt Victoria Tunnel

Context

The existing Mt Victoria Tunnel, connecting Wellington to the eastern suburbs, was built in 1931 making the tunnel 89 years old.

A duplicate or second Mt Victoria tunnel has been part of Wellington's transport planning for decades. It was first proposed in the 1963 de Leuw Cather report as part of the "Foothills Motorway" from Ngauranga to Mt Victoria.

About 45,000 cars travel through the Mt Victoria tunnel every day and it is a major congestion choke point.

Let's Get Wellington Moving – Recommended Programme of Investment

The Recommended Programme of Investment from October 2018 for Let's Get Wellington Moving recommended a second Mt Victoria tunnel by 2024.

The endorsed package by Ministers contains a second Mt Victoria tunnel after 2029 but only once "the earlier components including public transport, walking and cycling, and rapid transit have been delivered or are underway."

Benefits of a new tunnel

The LGWM Programme Business Case outlines the case for a second Mt Victoria tunnel:

- The Mt Victoria tunnel operates at or near capacity for much of the day. It acts as a gate that restricts the number of vehicles entering the central city from the east during peak times. It also operates, in conjunction with the transport network around the Basin Reserve, to meter the amount of traffic that is released from the central city towards the east. This function results in queuing traffic, creating unreliable journeys to the regionally significant destinations of the central city and the airport, and causing some traffic to divert along less suitable routes such as around the bays or through Newtown.

- This issue will become more critical as the available capacity on these other routes is increasingly prioritised away from cars to other modes, including mass transit. An additional Mt Victoria tunnel will enable the transport system to cater for growth and improve journey reliability on this corridor. To align with the LGWM strategic approach of moving more people without more vehicles, the additional capacity would need to be managed to give priority to walking, cycling, public transport, and high occupancy vehicles, and reduce traffic on alternative routes, such as Oriental/Evans Bay Parade and Constable Street in Newtown. This could increase the person-carrying capacity of the corridor while minimising the increase in vehicles.
- Although the existing Mt Victoria tunnel includes a walking and cycling connection, it is of poor quality due to its sub-standard width and proximity to vehicles, resulting in noise and air quality pollution issues and conflict between users. A new facility could encourage more people to walk and cycle between the eastern suburbs and the central city.

A second Mt Victoria tunnel is critical to the delivery of wider LGWM goals

Official advice to Phil Twyford from the Ministry of Transport noted that the additional Mt Victoria tunnel improvements are likely to:

- Deliver more reliable travel times between the CBD and Wellington's eastern suburbs/airport.
- Deliver more reliable travel times between the rest of the region, eastern suburbs and the airport.
- Reduce traffic volumes on Evans Bay Parade and Oriental Parade.
- Enable rapid transit to be delivered by reducing traffic in Newtown.
- Improve walking/cycling connections to the eastern suburbs.



A second Mt Victoria tunnel is critical for mass transit

The official advice to Phil Twyford also outlines the benefits that an additional Mt Victoria tunnel would deliver during construction of rapid transit, including the following:

- Providing a discretionary route for general traffic to the east (currently using Constable Street, Riddiford Street and Adelaide Road) which would be constrained.
- Providing an alternative temporary prioritised route for buses to the east (currently using Constable Street, Riddiford Street and Adelaide Road).
- Delivering improved bus services to Kilbirnie, Miramar, and the airport in advance of rapid transit completion to the east.

Problems with delaying a new tunnel

Official advice to Phil Twyford also reveals the problems with delaying the second tunnel.

- Poor quality walking and cycling connections between the Basin Reserve and eastern suburbs.
- Unreliable general traffic times between the Wellington CBD and the eastern suburbs/airport.
- Lack of opportunity to prioritise high occupancy vehicles through dedicated high occupancy vehicle lanes.
- The continued rerouting of traffic away from the desired state highway route to the eastern suburbs (through Mt Victoria tunnel) to the alternative waterfront route (the waterfront quays and 'around the bays') and Adelaide Road/Newtown, resulting in the following impacts:
 - Poorer amenity and levels of service for people walking and cycling on the waterfront route.
 - Increased congestion through Newtown/Adelaide Road, affecting accessibility/amenity and potentially affecting rapid transit reliability.

- Delaying or removing the additional Mt Victoria tunnel would remove several benefits associated with pressures arising during the construction of rapid transit through Newtown and between Newtown and the Airport.

National's Commitment

National believes Wellingtonians have waited too long for a second Mt Victoria tunnel.

National will:

- Build a second Mount Victoria Tunnel, and widen SH1 along Ruahine Street and Wellington Road.
- The extra Mt Victoria tunnel and widened Ruahine St and Wellington Rd will contain new dedicated and separated walking and cycling connections to create a higher quality and more reliable connection for all modes.

National will fully fund this project rather than cost-share with local government.

If necessary, we will legislate for the tunnel to be constructed.

Funding and timeframe

National will start this work as soon as possible upon coming to government, aiming for work to begin in 2023/4.





Second Terrace Tunnel

Context

The duplication of the Terrace Tunnel is an important project to enhance the transport network in Wellington and build a resilient transport link from the airport, through the CBD, and to the wider Wellington region.

The tunnel duplication was recommended as part of the Let's Get Wellington Moving Recommended Programme of Investment (RPI) but was removed from the final LGWM government package.

Benefits of a new tunnel

The duplication of the Terrace Tunnel will provide greater reliability and efficient travel times through the Wellington CBD.

It will enhance the route between the airport and the urban motorway, helping to connect Wellington city to the wider region. NZTA has also identified the benefit of facilitating the reallocation of road space in the CBD for public transport and pedestrians.

National's Commitment

National will build a second Terrace Tunnel.

National will fully fund this project, rather than cost-share with local government.

If necessary, we will legislate for the tunnel to be constructed.

Funding and timeframe

The project has been estimated to cost \$400 million.

National will start construction of the project by 2029 as per the Recommended Programme of Investment sequencing.





Undergrounding SH1 through Te Aro

Context

The Let's Get Wellington Moving project identified Te Aro as one of the fastest growing areas of Wellington.

With increased projected growth in the area and current high levels of traffic flow through the CBD to the airport and from the CBD to the urban motorway, investing in the resilience of the transport network through the city is important to support commutes through the CBD. Currently, State Highway 1 runs right through the centre of Wellington. Various proposals to trench SH1 have been part of Wellington's transport planning for decades.

Undergrounding through Te Aro was recommended as part of the Let's Get Wellington Moving Recommended Programme of Investment (RPI) but was removed from the final LGWM government package.

Benefits of a new tunnel

With an estimated 28,000 vehicles traveling on Karo Drive and 22,000 vehicles traveling on Vivian Street per day, it is key for making sure reliable travel times through the city are reliable.

Guaranteeing steady and efficient journey times through the CBD are a vital part of the city's transport network, as traffic flows through the CBD to the airport and from the CBD to the urban motorway.

Undergrounding the state highway and the addition of a park will remove traffic from Vivian Street and the CBD, and allow a park to be built.

This project will aid urban regeneration and beautification of the inner city, connecting to walking and cycling links.

National's Commitment

National will complete the Te Aro Undergrounding project. If necessary, we will legislate for the project to be constructed.

Funding and timeframe

The project is estimated to cost \$1.1 billion with construction beginning in 2029 as per the Recommended Programme of Investment sequencing.





Seaview to Grenada Link Road, including the Cross Valley Link

Context

The previous National Government was progressing work on the Petone to Grenada Link Road. Following a \$5 billion cut to state highway funding by Labour in 2018, the project was re-evaluated and effectively cancelled, meaning no work has progressed over the past three years.

Despite three years on inaction, the region has continued to grow and the need for a new route between SH2 and SH1 to add resilience and connect the wider Wellington region with robust transport links has only become more necessary.

The Petone to Grenada Link Road was recommended as part of the Wellington Lifelines Resilience study.

Benefits of the Petone to Grenada Link Road

- Make peak morning journeys between the Hutt and Porirua about 10 minutes faster and 7km shorter.

- Provide another route to/from the Hutt Valley when SH2 is blocked or Wellington city when SH1 is blocked.
- Create more efficient journeys through a new interchange at Petone.
- Support better public transport access (particularly for buses) to/from Wellington, Porirua and the Hutt Valley by improving traffic flow and creating the opportunity for new route.
- Support more walking and cycling opportunities.
- Make travel times on SH1 and SH2 more reliable.
- Open up future residential or business growth opportunities by making Porirua, Wellington and the Hutt Valley better connected.

National's Commitment

National will construct the Petone to Grenada Link Road as part of the new Seaview to Grenada Link Road project.

Funding and timeframe

The project is estimated to cost \$900 million. Construction is estimated to begin in 2025/26 with work beginning on advancing the project as soon as possible.





Cross Valley Link Road

Context

The Cross Valley Link, connecting the east of the Hutt Valley to SH2, has been talked about for decades. It is a key priority for the Hutt City Council.

Southern Lower Hutt's transport network lacks resilience to major natural events and suffers from regular network interruptions. Congestion from the east of the city to SH2 is getting worse.

Seaview and Gracefield – major industrial hubs – are located in the east of the city, and connected by a single-lane road along the Petone Esplanade. High traffic volumes at peak travel times causes travel time variability for all transport modes. In particular, travel times for buses, heavy commercial vehicles and private motor vehicles is unpredictable.

The Cross Valley Link

Hutt City Council has proposed a new transport corridor that aligns with the Petone to Grenada Link Road, which complements the project. The council's Programme Business Case notes that further benefits beyond those identified below could be expected with Petone to Grenada progressing.

The project consists of:

- A new East/West multi-modal transport corridor on a Wakefield St to Whites Line / Randwick Rd alignment, including an upgraded or replaced Ava rail bridge, new or upgraded road connection to Seaview / Gracefield, connections to Cuba St, connections to the Dowse Interchange / Hutt Road, and bus priority lanes on The Esplanade.
- Active mode improvements on The Esplanade, Hutt Road and Ewen Bridge.
- New active mode connection between Woburn and the new Petone to Melling section of the Hutt Valley to Wellington Walking and Cycling Link.

- Bus priority improvements at key intersections e.g Hutt Road and The Esplanade.
- Train station access plans to improve active mode access.
- Improvements to the existing Gracefield interchange to allow for full movements for road based vehicles.

Benefits of the Cross Valley Link

- Improved walking and cycling links.
- Improved safety, particularly for walkers and cyclists.
- East/West travel time variability improved, particularly for buses.
- Improved travel time efficiency.
- Improved access to Wainuiomata, Seaview, and Eastbourne.
- Hutt City Council estimates the Benefit-Cost Ratio of the project at between 3.6 to 5.3.

National's Commitment

National will fully fund the Cross Valley Link as part of a new state highway: the new Seaview to Grenada Link.

Funding and timeframe

The project is estimated to cost \$160 million.





Wellington Metro Rail

Context

In 2019, Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) presented a case for an upgrade of the rail connections between Wellington, Wairarapa and the Manawatu.

The region is growing faster than forecast outside of Wellington city. This has resulted in increased demand for rail services across the wider region with rail patronage increasing by 6-8 per cent each year.

Additionally, the current longer-distance passenger trains are coming to the end of their life which is resulting in increased maintenance costs and reduced customer satisfaction. Providing for current and future rail patronage is an important priority. Investing now in order to get the process of upgrading the network is important.

The GWRC business case provided a number of options to upgrade the network. National is committed to providing co-funding for the

initiative and will work with the council to determine the best option for the Wellington region.

Benefits of the Wellington Metro Rail Upgrade

- Enhanced regional connectivity.
- Improved rail service quality.
- A more resilient transport network.

National's Commitment

National will build provide \$300 million to kick start investment in the Greater Wellington Regional Metro Rail upgrade and will work with the regional council on delivering an upgrade that meets the current needs of the region and future proofs rail in the region.

Funding and timeframe

National has allocated \$300 million of our \$31 billion transport infrastructure package to this project. We would expect to start discussions with Greater Wellington Regional Council in 2021.





Public Opinion Survey – Let's Get Wellington Moving

