



TE ARA HAUĀURU NORTHWEST RAPID TRANSIT

PART 3: PROJECT BENEFITS

NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY WAKA KOTAHİ

15 DECEMBER 2025

Contents

Contents	ii
Acronyms, definitions and abbreviations	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Economic benefits.....	1
3. Regionally and nationally significant infrastructure and associated social benefits	2
3.1 Improved accessibility for northwest Auckland	2
3.2 Attractive and efficient public transport	3
3.3 Support urban development and growth.....	3
3.4 Benefits to the wider strategic transport network	4
4. Priority project.....	4
4.1 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34	4
4.2 Auckland Regional Transport Plan 2024-34	4
4.3 Auckland Rapid Transit Pathway	5
4.4 Auckland Plan 2050	5

Acronyms, definitions and abbreviations

Term	Definition
ARTP	Auckland Rapid Transit Pathway
ASH	North West Alternative State Highway project
AUP	Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in part)
CRL	City Rail Link
FTAA	Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
GPS	Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34
IBC	Indicative Business Case
Indicative Design	The indicative design of the Project within the Project Area as shown on the Indicative Design drawings in Part 6 that will be confirmed during detailed design
km	kilometres
km/h	kilometres/hour
MBCM	Monetised Benefits and Costs Manual
NLTF	National Land Transport Fund
NZTA	New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
Project	Te Ara Hauāuru Northwest Rapid Transit
Project Area	The Proposed Designation and the extent of the coastal occupation permits sought
Proposed Designation	The area defined by the Proposed Designation boundary as shown on the Proposed Designation Plans in Part 6
RLTP	Regional Land Transport Plan
RoNS	Roads of National Significance
RTN	Rapid Transit Network
SH16	State Highway 16
SH18	State Highway 18
WX1	Western Express

1. Introduction

Te Ara Hauāuru Northwest Rapid Transit (the Project) is described in Part 2 of this application. This part (Part 3) of the application outlines the Project's significant regional and national benefits.

The Project represents a significant investment in a key corridor to address an existing gap in Auckland's long-term rapid transit network, which is critical for supporting forecast growth in northwest Auckland. There is insufficient capacity across the existing transport network to support the additional growth that is projected for northwest Auckland and along the State Highway 16 (SH16) corridor. Without further investment, the level of accessibility to areas of employment, education and social opportunities will only decrease as this residential growth occurs.

The Project integrates with the wider strategic transport network, maximising investment in other key transport projects such as City Rail Link (CRL) and the designated Roads of National Significance (RoNS) North West Alternative State Highway (ASH). The Project will help to unlock Auckland's economic growth and productivity by improving the capacity of the SH16 corridor and accessibility to and from the one of Auckland's largest growth areas.

The Project therefore meets the overarching purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA), by facilitating the delivery of an infrastructure project with significant regional and national benefits.

The Project:

- Will deliver significant economic benefits (refer to Section 2).
- Will deliver new regionally and nationally significant infrastructure and associated social benefits by providing rapid transit to one of Auckland's largest growth areas. It will improve the accessibility, attractiveness and efficiency of public transport to the northwest and will support Auckland's forecast growth and development (refer to Section 3).
- Has been identified as a priority project in the Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport 2024-34, the Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) and in the Auckland Rapid Transit Pathway (ARTP). The Project also aligns with the objectives of the Auckland Plan 2050 (refer to Section 4).

2. Economic benefits

The Project will deliver the following economic benefits:

- Public transport travel time benefits;
- Vehicle travel time benefits;
- Congestion benefits;
- Vehicle operating cost savings;
- Environmental benefits;
- Reliability benefits;
- Active transport benefits; and
- Reduced crash costs.

In addition to the transport benefits, the Project will deliver:

- **Wider economic benefits:**

The Project will support a thriving and dynamic Auckland regional economy. Improving the efficiency of the movement of people and goods/freight across Auckland will increase productivity and generate agglomeration benefits. Improved accessibility and connectivity across the region enable increased employment densities (more businesses, services and workers in closer proximity to each other), employment impacts and improved competition.

- **Land value uplift benefits:**

Public transport delivers a range of economic, social and environmental benefits and the perceived value of these benefits can be reflected in increased property values near rapid transit stations. Investment in

rapid transit has the potential for localised and intense economic impacts as customers utilise rapid transit by active modes with higher density access than other modes of transport (for example, private vehicle).

- **Social value outcome benefits:**

The Project will also deliver social benefits such as improved outcomes for human health, access to opportunities, community cohesion, amenity values, heritage values, cultural values and townscape that can be quantified economically. Some of the social benefits delivered by the Project are summarised qualitatively in Section 3.

3. Regionally and nationally significant infrastructure and associated social benefits

The NZTA's Investment Case for the Project and the 2018 Indicative Business Case (IBC) have identified the following key issues relating to the existing SH16 corridor and public transport infrastructure and services which provide a connection between Brigham Creek in northwest Auckland and the Auckland city centre:

- Lack of travel options;
- Long and unreliable travel times to and from northwest Auckland;
- Unattractive public transport options;
- Poor access to employment opportunities; and
- Forecast population growth is not adequately supported by the existing public transport network.

The anticipated benefits of delivering the Project include:

- A more productive and reliable SH16 corridor that improves access for people in northwest Auckland;
- More attractive and efficient public transport; and
- Supporting growth and urban development.

3.1 Improved accessibility for northwest Auckland

The Indicative Design (the indicative design of the Project within the Project Area as shown on the Indicative Design drawings in Part 6 that will be confirmed during detailed design), provides a separated, bi-directional busway between Brigham Creek and the Whau River, and between Waterview and Ian McKinnon Drive in the Auckland city centre. Rapid Transit Network (RTN) bus services will be able to travel fully separated from general vehicles and uninterrupted by traffic congestion alongside the SH16 motorway, at a design speed of up to 80km/h between stations. Along the causeway section between the Whau River and Waterview, RTN buses are able to run on enhanced motorway shoulders during peak times or congested periods, which provides a level of priority for bus operations over general traffic.

Through the provision of a new separated busway, the Project will significantly decrease bus travel times for passengers travelling between northwest Auckland and the city centre. Bus travel times between Westgate Te Waiarohia station and Karanga-a-Hape station (delivered as part of the CRL project) in the city centre are expected to reduce to 22 minutes, saving up to 15 minutes compared to the existing Western Express (WX1) bus service.

By providing continuous bus priority measures along busway sections, minimising interactions with general traffic and minimising exposure to delays at intersections, the Project will significantly improve travel time reliability for RTN bus operations. Bus travel times between Westgate and the city centre can vary up to 18 minutes during the morning peak which is forecast to reduce to four minutes. Bus passengers will be able to better plan their journeys with a higher degree of confidence that their bus will arrive at their origin and destination on time. Passengers will not need to factor in additional time allowances when planning their journey with improved travel time reliability, and this time can instead be used for productive or social activities. Bus travel time and reliability benefits will be experienced during the typical peak periods (including weekday morning and evening peaks and weekend midday peak times), as well as during special events and unplanned events or traffic incidents on the state highway or local road network.

These benefits extend beyond bus operations, with improved travel times and reliability benefits for general traffic and freight. The Project provides a genuine transport alternative to travelling by private vehicle, and

the resulting mode shift to public transport will ease congestion on SH16. Less traffic congestion will result in reduced vehicle operating costs and travel time savings (particularly during peak times) for the moment of goods/freight and for general traffic (including people who need to drive), increasing the productivity of the SH16 corridor and improvements in competitiveness for businesses in the wider Project Area (the Proposed Designation and the extent of the coastal occupation permits sought).

The reduced travel times and reliability benefits delivered by the Project will improve accessibility for people in northwest Auckland to employment, education and social opportunities by removing a key barrier to travelling along the Project corridor.

3.2 Attractive and efficient public transport

The Project will significantly improve the attractiveness of travelling by public transport as a result of improving efficiency and user experience.

In addition to the travel time and reliability benefits (refer to Section 3.1), user experience will be improved by delivering high-quality bus stations located to serve key residential catchments and local activity centres. The proposed bus interchange stations will adopt ‘universal design standards’ which take into account the needs and accessibility requirements of all users, making stations safer, more accessible and convenient as compared to the existing interim bus interchanges along SH16. The new interchange stations will be secure, safe spaces which provide shelter, information, services and facilities, with improved amenity for customers.

By providing a separated busway with minimal interactions with general traffic, the Project enables a high frequency bus service to reliably operate along the busway at consistent headways compared to the existing shoulder running along SH16. The Project will improve the efficiency of the movement of people and overall throughput of the SH16 corridor. The busway is able to carry approximately 9,000 passengers/hour in the peak direction which is equivalent to the theoretical capacity of four motorway lanes of general traffic, assuming a typical peak car passenger occupancy.

Efficiency benefits extend beyond passengers travelling along the busway to passengers with trip origins and destinations within the wider Project Area. The proposed busway stations co-locate local bus stops and RTN bus platforms, enabling efficient bus interchanges for passengers needing to make transfers between services to travel to their destination. The integration of local and RTN bus stops minimises walking distances and wait times for transferring passengers.

3.3 Support urban development and growth

The Auckland Unitary Plan – Operative in Part (AUP) has enabled significant intensification in existing urban areas as well as large-scale greenfield growth in Future Urban Zone areas such as Huapai, Kumeū, Riverhead, Whenuapai and Redhills. Northwest Auckland’s residential population is forecast to increase by over 100,000 people and over 44,000 new households by approximately 2048. This residential growth will occur regardless of whether a new rapid transit corridor is in place to support the additional travel demands from the increase in population.

Growth areas in northwest Auckland and along the corridor will benefit from improved levels of accessibility, connectivity and mode choice. By delivering a new rapid transit corridor, the Project delivers a transformational step change in public transport quality and provides the required levels of capacity, speed, travel time reliability and service quality to meet the existing and future transport needs of the rapidly growing northwest as well as areas along the corridor.

Rapid transit is critical to achieving quality and compact urban growth for northwest Auckland. Westgate is identified as a key high-density residential and employment growth area critical to accommodating development across the wider Auckland region¹. The Project will provide opportunities for enabling Auckland Council’s urban growth and development aspirations for Westgate as a key node and as a Metropolitan Centre.

¹ Auckland Council (2023) *Tāmaki – Whenua Taurikura Auckland Future Development Strategy 2023-2053* (accessed at <https://new.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/content/dam/ac/docs/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/misc/future-development-strategy.pdf>)

3.4 Benefits to the wider strategic transport network

In addition to the benefits outlined above, the Project will also deliver a number of benefits for Auckland's wider strategic transport network including:

- Addressing an existing gap in Auckland's rapid transit network to serve a large growth area which currently experiences poor access to employment and social opportunities compared to other areas of the Auckland region.
- Maximising the benefits of other rapid transit infrastructure investment including the CRL project (currently under construction and expected to be completed in 2026), by delivering a bus rapid transit connection to CRL stations.
- Potential to complement the designated RoNS Alternative State Highway priority project. The Project provides for mode shift from private vehicle to public transport which will reduce traffic congestion on SH16, improves access for RoNS traffic, and supports growth in Kumeū-Huapai.
- Potential for integrating with the existing Northern Busway corridor, including the through-running of bus services to enable a West-North rapid transit link.
- Potential connection to future rapid transit link along SH18 with the section of the Project between Lincoln Road Wai o Pareira and Westgate Te Waiarohia stations providing a section of the route for the planned Upper Harbour Rapid Transit corridor (Henderson to Constellation Drive as shown in Figure 4-1).
- Potential connection to the designated extension of rapid transit to Kumeū-Huapai which is planned to connect directly to the Project at the Brigham Creek Rarawaru Station.
- Connecting to Auckland Transport's existing and planned key strategic bus corridors within the city centre including Albert Street, Symonds Street, Wellesley Street and Customs Street.

4. Priority project

The Project has been identified as a priority project in a number of regional and national policy documents.

4.1 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34

The GPS on Land Transport 2024-34 identifies the Northwest Rapid Transit Project as a key project under the 'Economic growth and productivity' strategic priority. The Project will contribute to this strategic priority and the objectives of the GPS by:

- Supporting urban development and housing growth and intensification through improved access along the SH16 corridor;
- Enabling the efficient movement of people between northwest Auckland and areas of employment and education by improving public transport travel times and reliability;
- Improving the efficient movement of freight/goods to and from the northwest by reducing general traffic congestion;
- Maximising investment made in the CRL project by improving access to CRL stations and increasing ridership; and
- Maximising investment in the RoNS North West ASH project (a future priority project identified in the GPS), by reducing general traffic and travel times along SH16. The mode shift resulting from the Project from private vehicle to public transport will improve access for ASH general traffic.

4.2 Auckland Regional Transport Plan 2024-34

The Auckland RLTP sets out and prioritises land transport activities for the Auckland region to be funded from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF). The Project is included in this RLTP's proposed programme of investment as a key project to serve growth areas, support mode shift and reduce traffic congestion.

The Project is strongly aligned with the following objectives of the Auckland RLTP:

- Better connect people, places, goods and services;

- Improve the resilience and sustainability of the transport system and significantly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions it generates; and
- Provide and accelerate better travel choices for Aucklanders.

4.3 Auckland Rapid Transit Pathway

The ARTP sets out the rapid transit network corridors required across the Auckland region over the next 30 years and how the RTN could develop over time.

The emerging long-term RTN for Auckland is shown in Figure 4-1. The Project corridor is a key missing segment of the RTN and is identified as a priority for delivery. The ARTP recommends that the Project is progressed with urgency as part of Phase 1 to address an existing gap in Auckland's RTN and as the transport corridor with the most significant deficiencies.

The Project is in alignment with the overarching guidance of the ARTP on rapid transit, which is defined as a quick, frequent, reliable and high-capacity public transport service that operates on a permanent route (road or rail) that is largely separated from other traffic.

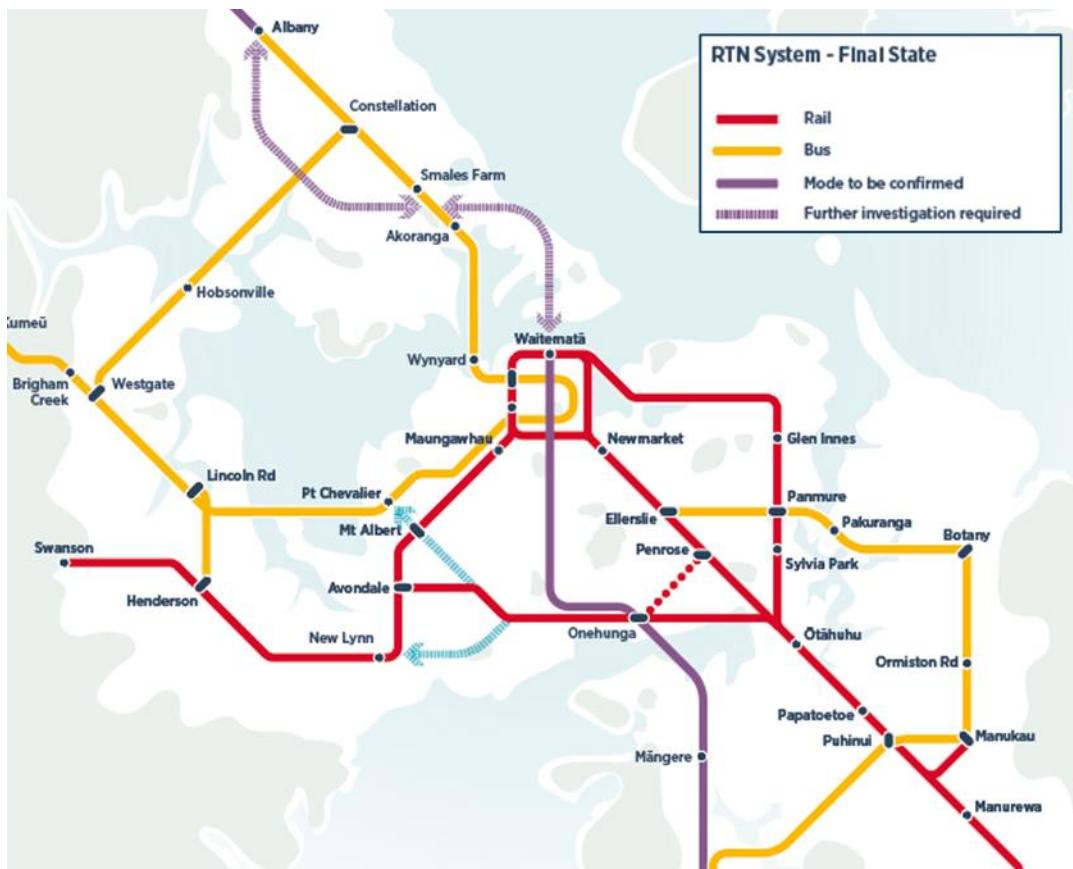


Figure 4-1: Emerging long-term RTN for Auckland and preferred mode for key corridors

4.4 Auckland Plan 2050

The Auckland Plan 2050 sets the high-level strategic direction to 2050 to contribute to Auckland's social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, and to address key challenges including high population growth. The Plan outlines six outcomes required to achieve an Auckland where people want to live, work and visit, which are: Belonging and Participation, Māori Identity and Wellbeing, Homes and Places, Transport and Access, Environment and Cultural Heritage and Opportunity and Prosperity. Under each of the outcomes are key directions and focus areas which set out how the outcomes will be achieved.

Addressing the key focus areas directly contributes to the overall direction of the Auckland Plan. The Project is well aligned with the Transport and Access outcome of the Auckland Plan and will deliver benefits for

Focus Area 4 under that outcome (which is to make walking, cycling and public transport preferred choices for many more Aucklanders) by:

- Addressing a significant gap in the rapid transit network.
- Significantly improving travel reliability, travel times and customer experience.
- Delivering local improvements for bus passengers, pedestrians and cyclists to access proposed busway stations.