



# Te Mahere Waka Tūmatanui ā-rohe Regional Public Transport Plan

2022 - 2032

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# Ngā ihirangi

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# He kupu nā te tiamana

## Chair's message



As Chair of the Horizons Passenger Transport Committee, I am pleased to present to you Horizons Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-2032 (RPTP or the Plan). This Plan is our strategic document that guides the planning and delivery of public transport services and infrastructure in the Horizons Region.

We have a vision to enable more people to move around our towns and cities using public transport rather than private vehicles. We have a vision where it is a viable option to not need a car for many of the daily trips people take within our communities.

Communities thrive when everyone has equitable access to transport mobility. Our region's public transport network has a critical purpose: connecting people, places, and opportunity. Done well, public transport will help our communities and our region thrive by making those connections convenient, quick, and safe.

Along with connecting people, public transport improves road safety and helps reduce carbon emissions from our communities, both of which are important priorities.

Many of our towns and cities in the Horizons Region are growing, increasing the movement of people between our communities, and to and from our neighbouring regions. We have relatively high transport poverty rates, made worse by increasing housing costs, and rising inequality.

While preparing this Plan we have listened to our community, feedback has been clear, and as a result we have enhanced our Plan in the following areas through the consultation process:

- Increased our focus on rail opportunities and reflected the strong desire for frequent and reliable passenger rail services to return to our region;
- Included public transport connections with Wairarapa and New Plymouth communities in the list of potential future services;
- Incorporated feedback from the Manawātū community about enhanced rural services and square to square connections with Palmerston North;
- Raised our target for patronage to increase by 300%;

- Strengthened our approach to undertaking a full region-wide review of transport needs and opportunities;
- Incorporated more bike and micro mobility integration with our transport network; and
- Ensured comfort is a key part of delivering quality services.

This Regional Public Transport Plan isn't just about buses and trains, it's about people. The Plan lists the activities and communities where we will invest in over the next 10 years. It lays out our goals and creates a map and a timetable to get there.

If we are able to achieve the outcomes defined in this Plan then many of our towns and cities will have a range of public transport connections available to a significant number of residents. The outcomes in this Plan have the ability to redefine our transport options for the betterment of our communities and our people.

We are offering you a vision for connection. A vision to connect people, places and opportunity throughout the region. Enabling people to use public transport to get where they want to go, when they want to go. Evenings, weekends, work hours, the middle of the day, and holidays.

My sincere thanks to all members of the Passenger Transport Committee for investing their time to inform this Plan. My thanks to the team at Horizons, who have helped harness our energy to represent that thinking on paper. And my thanks to the community and partner organisations that have provided input along the way.



Sam Ferguson  
Chair – Passenger Transport Committee  
(Horizons Regional Council)

# He whakarāpopototanga matua

## Executive summary

The Horizons Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) guides the design and delivery of public transport services, information and infrastructure in the Manawatū-Whanganui (Horizons) region. The RPTP has a ten-year strategic focus with particular attention to the coming three-yearly operational cycle. This RPTP focuses on the period from mid-2022 to 2032.

A well-used public transport system is fundamental to the success of our region. It is critical that we have a plan to identify public transport needs and opportunities and set out the means to deliver those.

This draft RPTP includes our vision for public transport in the region and the six objectives that will guide implementation of this Plan. These objectives will help achieve the vision, whilst reflecting the issues which have been identified through consultation and wider national, regional, and local policy context. The

objectives form the basis of the policies, which are described in section 5 of this Plan.

Much has been achieved since the last RPTP was adopted, however the focus and expectations surrounding the function and nature of public transport has changed significantly, both at a central and local government level. This Plan strives to understand the problems and challenges facing public transport in the region and responds by improving the services offered as well as reducing the impacts from carbon emissions on the environment. This is guided by the vision and objectives as outlined below.

If successful, we hope to deliver public transport services that meet our community's needs, are transformative, reduce environmental impacts from carbon emissions and enhance the wellbeing of our region.

### Vision:

An attractive, integrated and convenient public transport system that connects us, enhances our wellbeing and environment, and becomes the preferred mode of transport in and between urban areas.

### Objectives

1. Provide a simple, connected and convenient public transport network with wide appeal that attracts and retains customers, and encourages mode shift.
2. Provide high quality, safe and accessible public transport infrastructure and information that supports an efficient and connected transport network, and multi-modal travel.
3. Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport and improved air quality through increased use of public transport and decarbonising the public transport fleet.
4. Pursue improved, equitable access to public transport across the region.
5. Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.
6. Undertake an approach to procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.

# He kupu whakataki

## Introduction

This Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP or the Plan), prepared by Horizons Regional Council<sup>2</sup> (the Council), is a strategic document that sets the objectives and policies for public transport in the Horizons Region, and contains details of the current and proposed future public transport network for the next 10 years (2022-2032).

It is an instrument for engaging with the public and stakeholders on the design and operation of the public transport network, and a statement of:

- a. The public transport services that are integral to the public transport network;
- b. The policies and procedures that apply to those services; and
- c. The information and infrastructure that support those services.

This RPTP has been developed on behalf of Horizons Regional Council by the Passenger Transport Committee, which includes six Horizons Regional Councillors plus advisory members from each of the City/District Councils in the Horizons Region.

This Plan replaces the Regional Public Transport Plan 2015-2025.

<sup>2</sup> Horizons Regional Council is the trading name of Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council

# Te pūtake mō te whakahou i te Mahere Waka Whenua Tūmatanui

## 1. Background and reasons for updating the Regional Public Transport Plan

In 2015, Horizons Regional Council adopted and published its RPTP. The 2015-25 RPTP has not been updated since adoption, although consideration of its adequacy was undertaken following the 2018 review of the Regional Land Transport Plan and review of the RPTP at that point was not considered necessary.

This RPTP has been prepared by the Horizons Passenger Transport Committee in collaboration with regional transport partners and key stakeholders from the defence force, education, health and access, government housing and communities, and mobility sectors. The development of this RPTP has followed the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (hereafter referred to as Waka Kotahi) Business Case process to identify the core problems relevant to public transport in the region, and the potential benefits of addressing them. The identification of problems and benefits provides the strategic context for public transport in our region which then guides the vision, objectives and policies contained in this Plan.

This RPTP has been updated to:

**1**

Meet the statutory requirements of the Land Transport Management Act.

**2**

Align with updated policy and strategy documents, specifically,  
a. the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (2021);  
b. the newly adopted Horizons Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31.

**3**

Meet Government's target of complete decarbonisation of the public bus fleet by 2035 and likely changes to Waka Kotahi's Requirements for Urban Buses (RUB) to disestablish carbon fuelled buses and replace with alternative technologies such as electric and hydrogen energy sources.

**4**

Embrace the evolution of transport technology that has led to a number of exciting opportunities. These are improving our ability to plan and operate public transport as well as improving the overall customer experience. We have already seen this implemented in our region, most recently through the rollout of the BeeCard ticketing system.

**5**

Take into consideration the impacts and opportunities due to COVID-19.

**6**

Take into consideration changed community expectations to do with regional connectivity, access to public transport services (frequency and coverage), affordability and climate change.

These changes present an opportunity to refresh the strategic direction and policies of our Plan to ensure it is helping us to deliver the kind of public transport network that our customers need.

## 2. Te whāinga me ngā mātāpono Purpose and principles

The Regional Public Transport Plan provides guidance and policies that direct the investment in public transport across the Manawatū-Whanganui (Horizons) Region. It encourages councils and public transport operators to work together in developing public transport services and infrastructure.

The Plan is guided by policy and strategy set within the national context by the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and within the Horizons region by the Regional Land Transport Plan. These documents provide clear direction for investment and policy setting within the public transport context across the region.

### 2.1 Te horopaki ā-ture Statutory context

The RPTP is required by the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA) 2003. The LTMA defines the **purpose** of an RPTP is to:

1. Describe the public transport services that are integral to the public transport network;
2. Define the policies and procedures that apply to those public transport services;
3. Identify the information and infrastructure that support public transport services.

The LTMA **principles** guiding the delivery of public transport services are described as follows:

1. The regional council, Waka Kotahi, and public transport operators should work in partnership and collaborate with territorial authorities to deliver the regional public transport services and infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of passengers;
2. The provision of public transport services should be coordinated to achieve the levels of integration, reliability, frequency, and overage necessary to encourage passenger growth;
3. Competitors should have access to regional public transport markets to increase confidence that public transport services are priced efficiently;
4. Incentives should exist to reduce reliance on public subsidies to cover the cost of providing public transport services;
5. The planning and procurement of public transport services should be transparent.

Under the LTMA, all Councils that provide public transport services must prepare and implement a Regional Public Transport Plan. This Plan must be held for not less than three years but no more than 10 years. It must also be reviewed as soon as practical after changes are made to the public transport components of a Regional Land Transport Plan.

The most recent Regional Land Transport Plan for the Horizons Region was approved in June 2021. The previous 2015-25 Regional Public Transport Plan was therefore due for review and update. This Plan is the result of that review.



## 2.2

# Te Horopaki ā-Kaupapa, ā-Whakamahere Policy and planning context

Notwithstanding the requirements of the LTMA, Regional Public Transport Plans are also guided by several policies and strategic documents, both at the national and regional levels. These documents provide clear direction for investment and policy setting for public transport across the region. The diagram below shows how the Regional Public Transport Plan fits into the wider legislative picture.

### Legislative Context

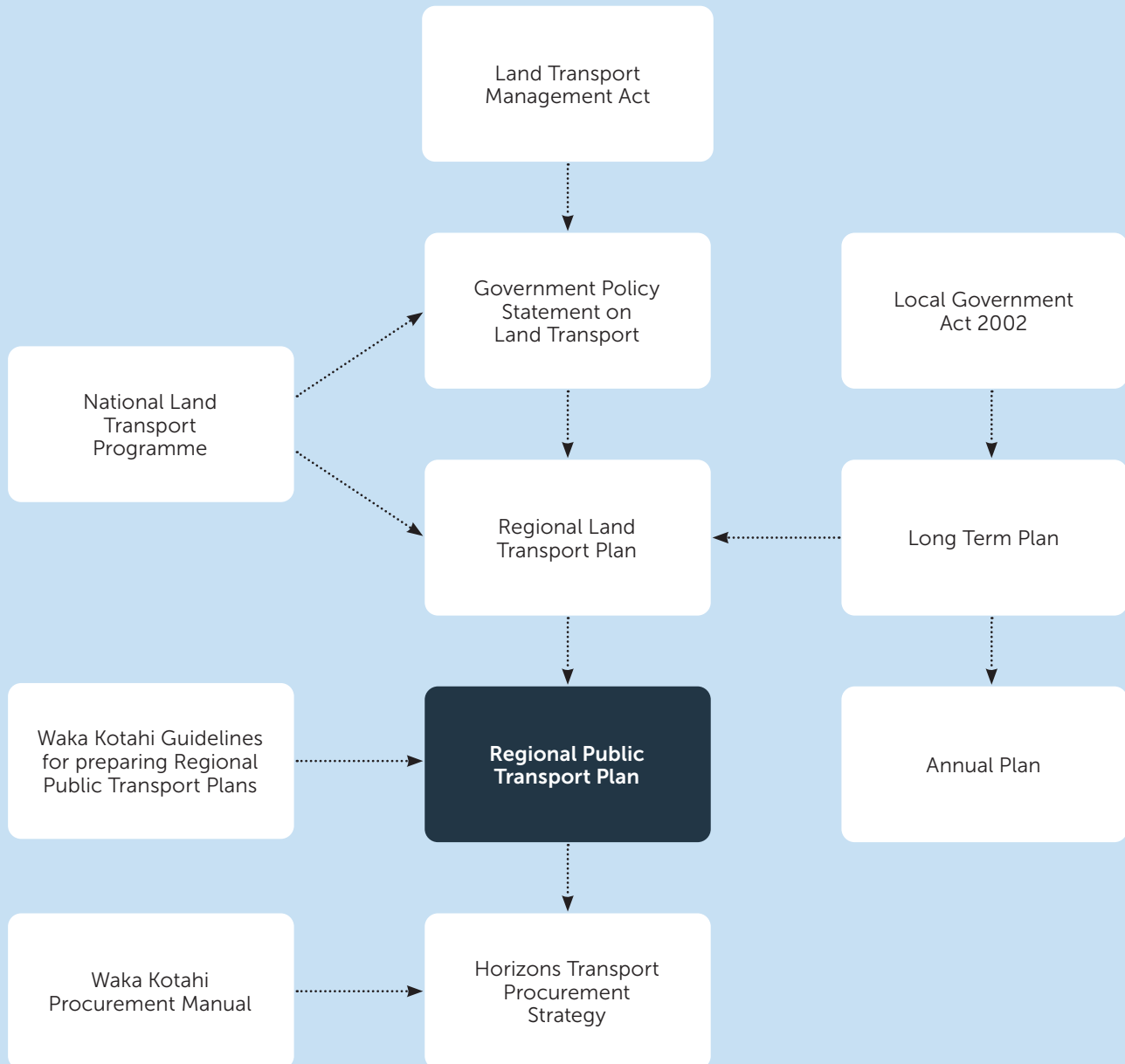


Figure 1: Public Transport Plan role and connection to other key transport legislation

The Regional Land Transport Plan is a high-level strategic plan guiding integrated transport planning and investment within the Horizons Region. It sets out the strategic direction for all forms of land transport over 10 years to direct investment into the transport network. Within the Regional Land Transport Plan is a long-term vision, a suite of objectives and headline targets. Some of these provisions relate directly to public transport.

The current Regional Land Transport Plan came into effect in June 2021. The vision, objectives and headline targets from the current plan are outlined below:



Figure 2: Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31 strategic direction

Public transport has a role to play in achieving the objectives outlined in the Regional Land Transport Plan, most specifically in providing travel choice (Objective 1), providing a safe transport network (Objective 3) reducing the impacts of transport on the environment (Objective 4), and integration between the land use and transport system (Objective 5). Of the headline targets, Mode Share and Carbon emissions are the most relevant and where public transport is most likely to be able to contribute significantly to helping the region meet these targets.

This RPTP takes into account and is consistent with the direction of the Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31.

The Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) sets out the Government's priorities for expenditure from the National Land Transport Fund over 10 years and outlines how land transport funding should be allocated. Regional Land Transport Plans must be consistent with the GPS, and Waka Kotahi must give effect to it with regards to land transport planning and funding. The current GPS took effect on 1 July 2021. The GPS strategic priorities are safety, better travel options, climate change and improving freight connections.

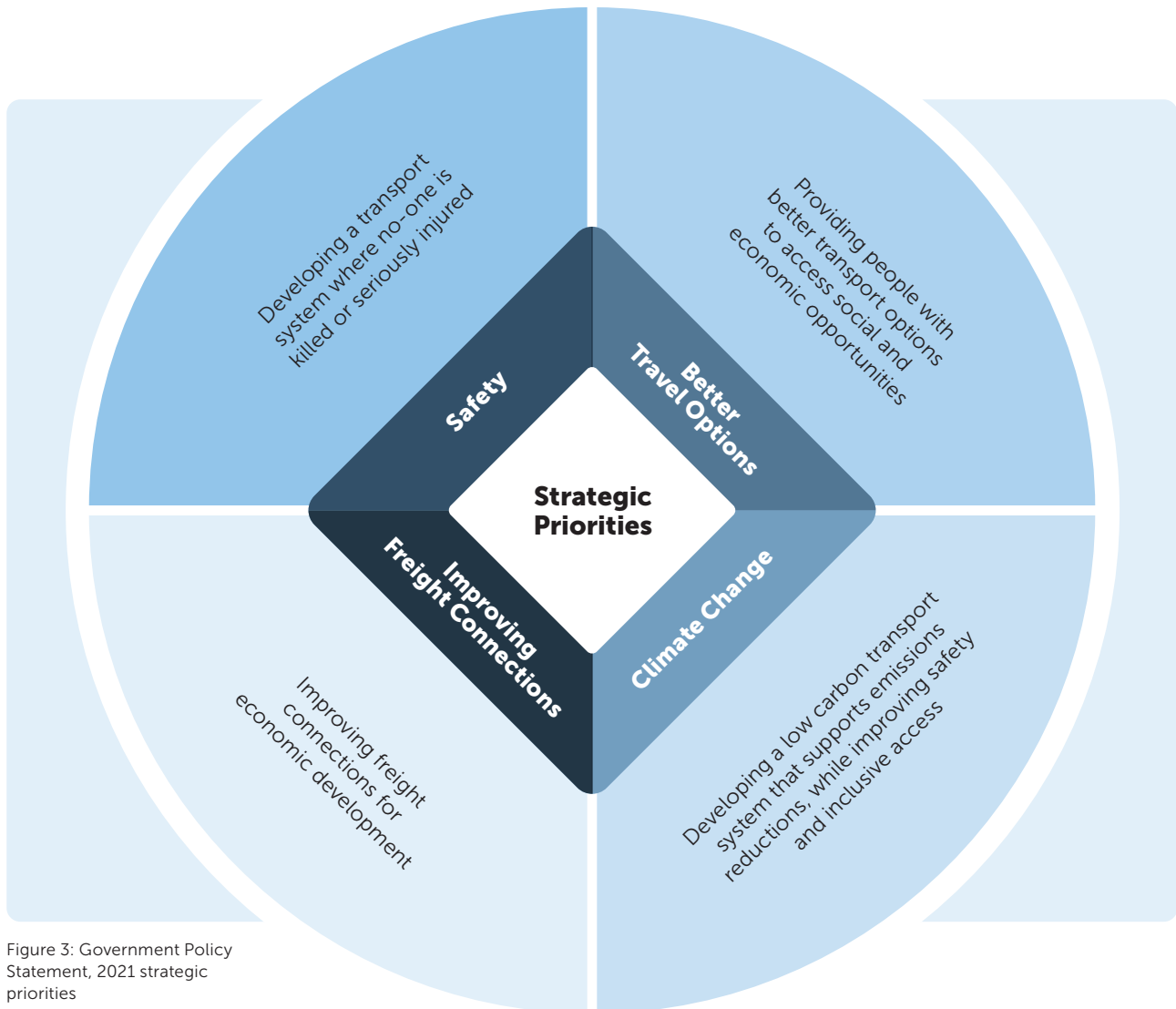


Figure 3: Government Policy Statement, 2021 strategic priorities

The GPS guides how Council develops and implements this RPTP. The Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31 has taken account of the current GPS direction and priorities, particularly concerning the identification of its short to medium-term transport investment priorities and regional programme. By being consistent with the Regional Land Transport Plan, this RPTP also serves to achieve the government's goals concerning public transport.

### 2.2.3

## Tā Horizons Mahere Roa Horizons Long-term Plan

Every three years, Council creates a Long-term Plan (LTP) which outlines what we will do over the next 10 years, how much it will cost, and who will pay for it. Public Transport, including services, infrastructure, and total mobility, accounts for approximately 85% of the total annual transport expenditure in the Long-term Plan.

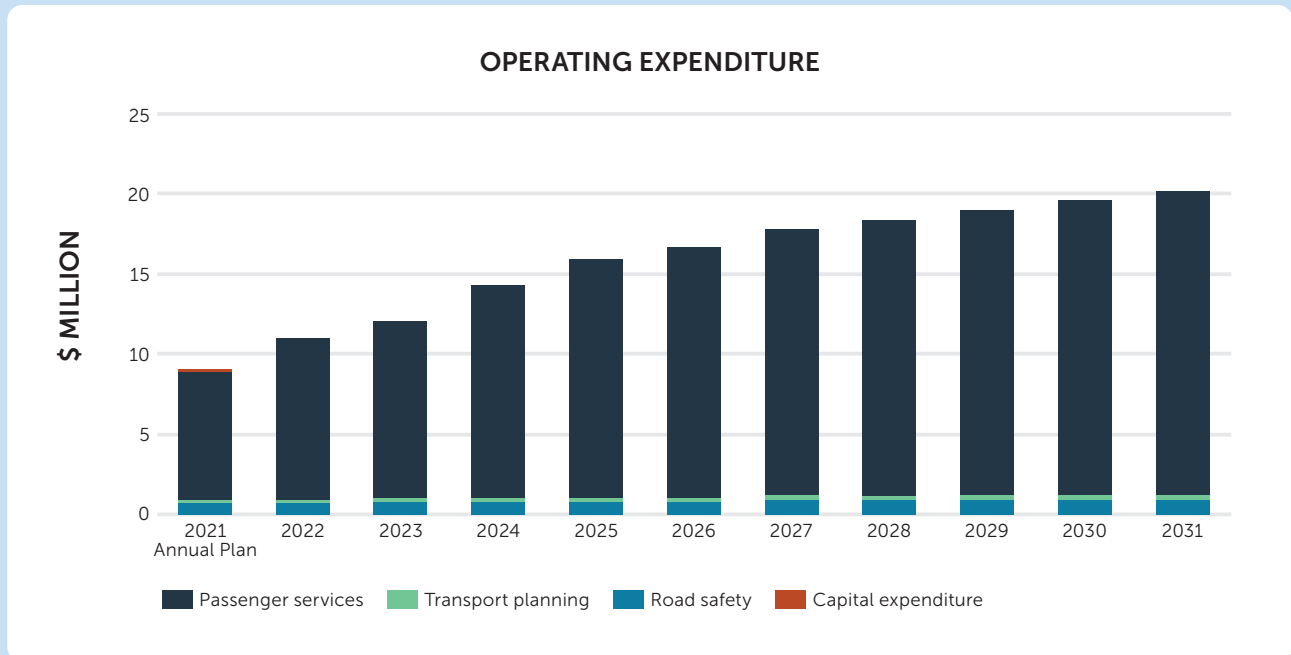


Figure 4: Horizons Long-term Plan. 2021-31 Transport Operating Expenditure<sup>3</sup>.

The 2021-31 Long-term Plan specifies community outcomes of which one is “Our region has effective transport networks”. It then identifies four strategic priorities, including climate change. Under the ‘Effective Transport Network’ community outcome, the LTP highlights the role public transport has to play in achieving an effective transport network and reducing carbon emissions. To plan and budget for 10 years, Horizons must make assumptions around several factors such as:

- Population and demographic changes;
- The economy;
- Climate change and natural hazards;
- Technology changes; and
- Legislative and governance changes.

The LTP forecasts ongoing impacts on the public transport system from climate change and natural hazards. Increased size and nature of weather events will drive increased transport infrastructure repair costs, increased insurance costs, and the need for increased capital expenditure. These changes will require increased adaptation for our assets and services including putting resilience measures in place for our road and rail transport networks in response to sea-level rise and storms.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Long-term Plan 2021-31, Horizons Regional Council.

## Te Tauira Whakahaere Waka Tūmatanui Public Transport Operating Model

Waka Kotahi's Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) seeks to build commercially based partnerships between regional councils and public transport operators by creating an environment of aligned goals and objectives through collaborative planning, joint investment and risk and reward sharing.

Council has adhered to the PTOM for the planning and procurement of services in the region, as required by the LTMA. This allows us to work with operators, suppliers and funders to develop PTOM units and to incorporate the risk/reward model into new unit contracts to ensure there is shared responsibility for growing the business.

At the time of writing this Plan the PTOM was under review. Changes proposed to PTOM include:

- New objectives as follows:
  - Competitors have access to public transport markets;
  - Public transport is an attractive transport option;
  - Public Transport services are sustainable, including a sustainable workforce;
  - Public transport services reduce the environmental and health impacts of land transport.
- Additional provision for enabling decarbonisation of the public transport system;
- Consideration of the labour market and how bus drivers' wages and conditions can be protected when councils contract services;
- Review of the existing roles, responsibilities and relationships and whether there is the opportunity for improvement;
- Reconsideration of exempt public transport services and whether they are still appropriate;
- Consideration of new technology and innovation, such as on-demand transport, and how it should be treated in PTOM.

Where possible, these concepts of the reviewed PTOM have been considered in the development of this Plan. The finalised PTOM is not expected to be available until early 2023.

## Ngā paearu mahi mō ngā Pahi Tāone i Aotearoa Requirements for Urban Buses in New Zealand

The Requirements for Urban Buses in New Zealand (RUB), is a document created and administered by Waka Kotahi. Its purpose is to standardise urban bus requirements across regional councils to create efficiencies and improve the usability, accessibility and environmental quality of buses for all users. Since the RUB was first issued in 2008, it has been reviewed twice and updated in 2013. Most recently, in early 2022, the RUB was updated to improve accessibility, safety, and efficiency in operations. This recent update also includes the mandate to start moving to a fully zero emission fleet from 2025 and includes charging specifications for electric buses. For clarity, this does not apply to small passenger services used to deliver the Total Mobility Scheme.

Waka Kotahi expects that all Regional Public Transport Plans include a policy covering use of the RUB for vehicle quality standards, and all public transport contracts incorporate the RUB requirements as they come into effect.

This Plan has been created to align with the RUB and includes policies requiring buses under new public transport contracts to comply with the vehicle quality standards outlined in the RUB.

Apart from the GPS and Regional Land Transport Plan, the RTP 2022-32 also considers and gives effect to a wide range of other national and regional policies and strategies.

**Central Government**

- Te hau mārohi ki anamata, towards a productive, sustainable and inclusive economy: Aotearoa New Zealand's first Emissions Reduction Plan;
- New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy;
- The National Policy Statement on Urban Design;
- Waka Kotahi's Keeping Cities Moving: A Plan for Mode Shift;
- The Ministry of Transport's 2016, The Accessibility of Public Transport for those with a Disability;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by New Zealand in 2018);
- Hīkina te Kohupara – Kia mauri ora ai te iwi / Transport Emissions: Pathway to Net Zero by 2050;
- Ināia tonu nei: a low emissions future for Aotearoa; and
- Toitū te Taiao – Our Sustainability Action Plan.

**Regional**

- The Wellington Regional Growth Framework (as it relates to the Horowhenua District);
- The Manawatū-Whanganui Climate Change Action Plan Towards a Climate-Resilient Region;
- The Accelerate25 Economic Action Plan;
- The Horizons One Plan, Regional Policy Statement; and
- District/City Plans and strategies for all territorial authorities within the Horizons Region.





## Te horopaki ā-rautaki

# Strategic context

This section seeks to outline key information about the region and how it operates currently, particularly concerning the public transport services that are offered.

# 3. Tirohanga Whānui ā-Rohe

## Regional Overview

The Horizons Region lies in the lower central North Island and because of its central location, it has important land and air transport connections to the rest of New Zealand. The region extends over 22,000km<sup>2</sup> from Ruapehu in the north and Horowhenua in the south to Whanganui in the west and Tararua in the east.

The region is bordered by the Greater Wellington, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Waikato regions. The Horizons Region is made up of seven territorial authorities – Horowhenua District Council, Tararua District Council, Palmerston North City Council, Manawatū District Council, Rangitikei District Council, Whanganui District Council and Ruapehu District Council. A small portion of the Stratford, Waitomo and Taupō Districts also fall within the Horizons Region.

The region is home to approximately 5.1 per cent of New Zealand’s population with 254,300 people in June 2020. The Horizons Region has several small urban areas<sup>4</sup> such as Taumarunui and Dannevirke, two medium urban areas (Levin and Feilding) and two large urban centres (Palmerston North and Whanganui). All districts within the region are growing with the highest growth projected to occur in the Manawatū, Ruapehu and Palmerston North districts as shown in Table 1.

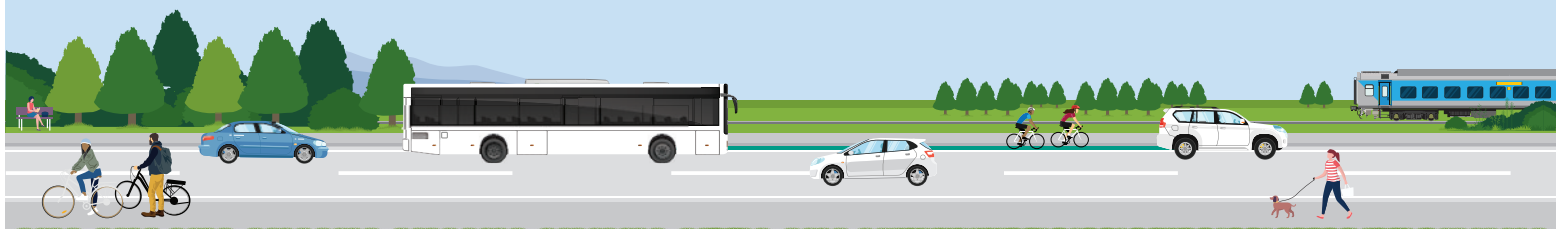
District/Region	Population	Projected population growth
	As at 30 June 2020 <sup>5</sup>	2018-2053 <sup>6</sup>
Ruapehu	12,800	37%
Whanganui	48,100	19%
Rangitikei	15,750	22%
Manawatū	32,100	49%
Palmerston North	90,400	35%
Tararua	18,900	9%
Horowhenua	36,100	17%
Manawatū - Whanganui	254,300	29%
New Zealand	5,084,300	

Table 1: Regional population statistics for the Horizons Region

<sup>4</sup>Urban areas and their scale/size have been defined according to Statistics New Zealand, which defines small areas (1,000-9,999 residents), medium areas (10,000-29,999 residents) and large areas (30,000-99,999 residents)

<sup>5</sup>Statistics NZ

<sup>6</sup>Projected population growth by district based on a medium growth scenario, Infometrics report 2020

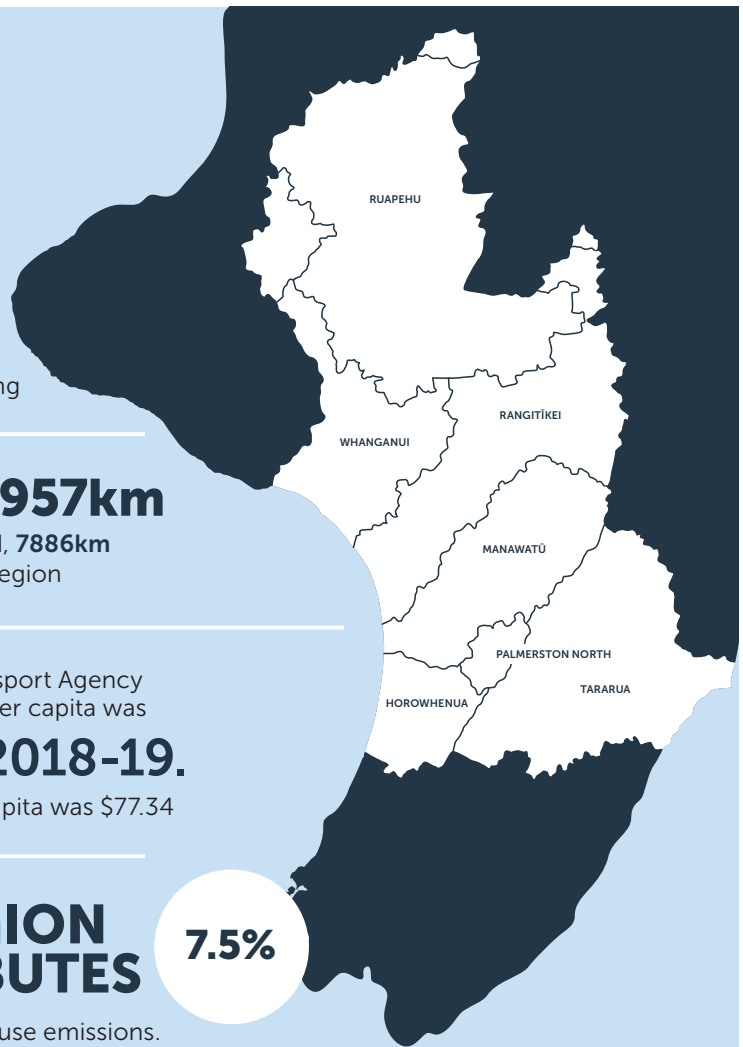




# Making the Horizons Region a great place to live, work and play

## THE TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME

operates in five towns and cities in our region  
Palmerston North | Whanganui | Levin | Marton | Feilding



Around  
**250,000**  
PEOPLE  
call it home  
(approximately 5% of  
New Zealand's population)

**WE HAVE 957km**  
of state highways and, **7886km**  
of local roads in the region

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency  
spend in the region per capita was  
**\$10.19 in 2018-19.**  
National spend per capita was \$77.34

**WE HAVE SEVEN**  
DISTRICTS  
and approximately  
**89%**  
of our ratepayers  
live in urban centres

**OUR REGION CONTRIBUTES** **7.5%**  
of NZ's total greenhouse emissions.  
**25%** of these emissions come from transport

The average public  
transport boardings  
per capita is  
**5.4 IN THE**  
**HORIZONS**  
**REGION,**  
compared to the  
national average  
which is 34.

Approximately  
**109,000**  
RATEPAYERS  
contribute to the region's  
work programmes

**5.7%**  
**INCREASE IN**  
**FILLED JOBS**  
**FROM 2019**

The Whanganui and  
Palmerston North Urban  
Bus Services run  
24 buses providing

**323**  
TRIPS

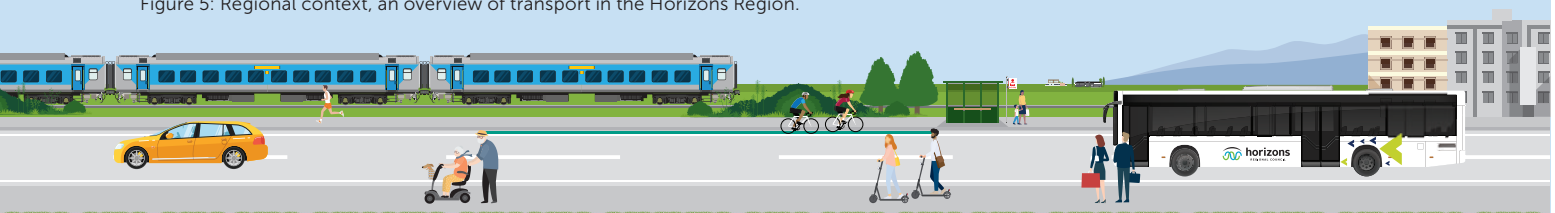
each workday  
between them

**61%**  
of people use  
**PRIVATE VEHICLES**  
to travel to work

**58% OF**  
**KILOMETRES**  
travelled in our region  
are on state highways and  
**42% OF**  
**KILOMETRES**  
on local roads

**WE HAVE**  
**46 BUSES**  
in our public transport fleet,  
including **one** electric bus.

Figure 5: Regional context, an overview of transport in the Horizons Region.



# Tō tātou kōtuitui Waka Tūmatanuime ngā whanaketanga o nā noa nei

## 4.

## Our public transport network and recent developments

This section outlines the current transport network in the Horizons Region and what we have achieved over the lifetime of the 2015-25 RPTP.

There are many public transport services operating in the region, ranging from bus services to community van trusts and total mobility services for those with long-term disabilities. Urban bus services operate in Palmerston North, Whanganui and Feilding.

Urban services are currently based on a coverage model with alternative loops and lower frequencies. The value and appropriateness of this model has been tested through the Palmerston North urban service review. The review is nearing completion, with cross-town routes and higher frequencies being proposed. A trial of a cross-town route with higher frequencies is also being developed in Whanganui.

In addition to the urban services, another seven commuter services are operating around the region. A portion of these are focused on providing weekday, and in some cases, weekend commuter trips from smaller centres to Palmerston North. Three of the seven services are designed to provide access from smaller, more rural areas to various urban centres for social and health purposes. These run less regularly and tend to be best patronised by SuperGold cardholders.

The Feilding service has traditionally been a regional service connecting the Feilding, Bunnythorpe, and Palmerston North communities. However, a recent mid-term review found there was community demand for a service around the Feilding township. A new urban service around Feilding commenced in early 2022.

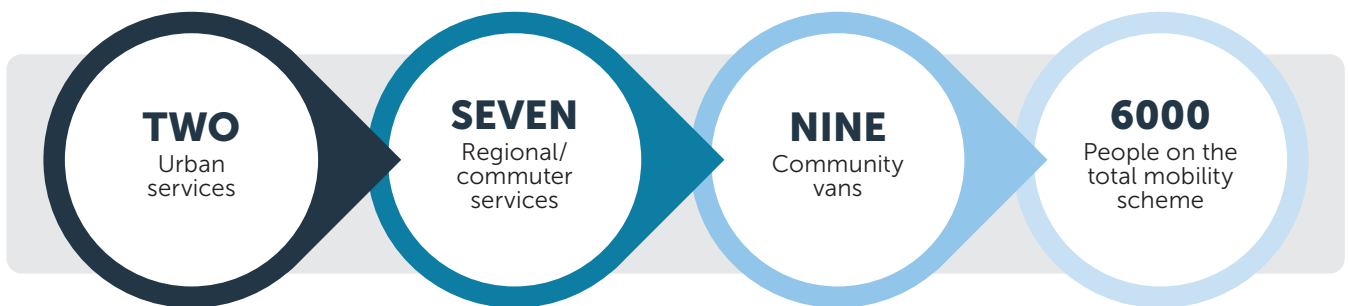


Figure 6: Snapshot of current services offered in Horizons Region as of January 2022



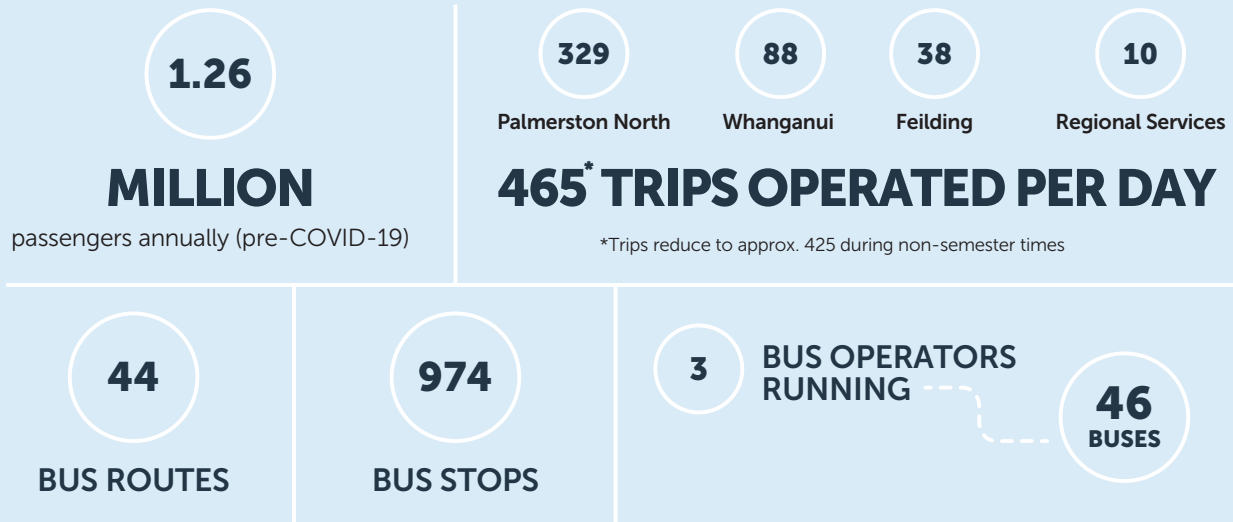
## 4.1

# Ngā Wāhi Waka Tūmatanui Public Transport Units

### 4.1.1

## Tirohanga whānui o te kōtuitui o āiane Overview of the current network

The Horizons Public Transport network is currently grouped into 11 public transport units<sup>7</sup>. These units include urban services and regional/connector services operating from satellite communities in the region. The majority of public transport in the region is provided via buses.



### ANNUAL PASSENGER TRENDS (ALL SERVICES)

Horizons Public Transport Network Patronage (2015-16 / 2021-22)

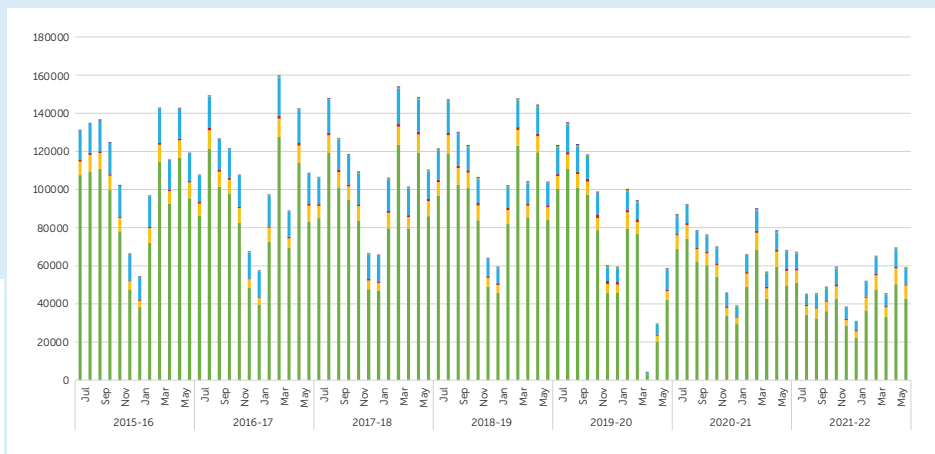


Figure 7: Overview of key public transport service information in the Horizons Region

A summary of each of the units provided in the region is outlined in the following sub-sections. More detail on the current and proposed units is provided in Appendix 1 – Public Transport Services integral to the network.

The map below provides a regional overview of the transport services funded through Horizons ranging from public transport bus services to health shuttles and community vans to total mobility services. Public transport bus services are grouped into public transport

units as outlined above and are contracted by Council. Health shuttles and community vans operate differently. They are generally organised and run via community groups and seek funding support from Council through the Long-term Plan process to assist with running costs. Total mobility is a scheme administered and funded through Council to enable a transport option for people with disabilities. Further discussion on health shuttles and total mobility is provided later in this chapter.

<sup>7</sup>A unit is a group of routes contracted to one operator and contains all of the timetabled services applying to the route(s) within that unit. Definition source: Passenger Transport Operating Model (PTOM).

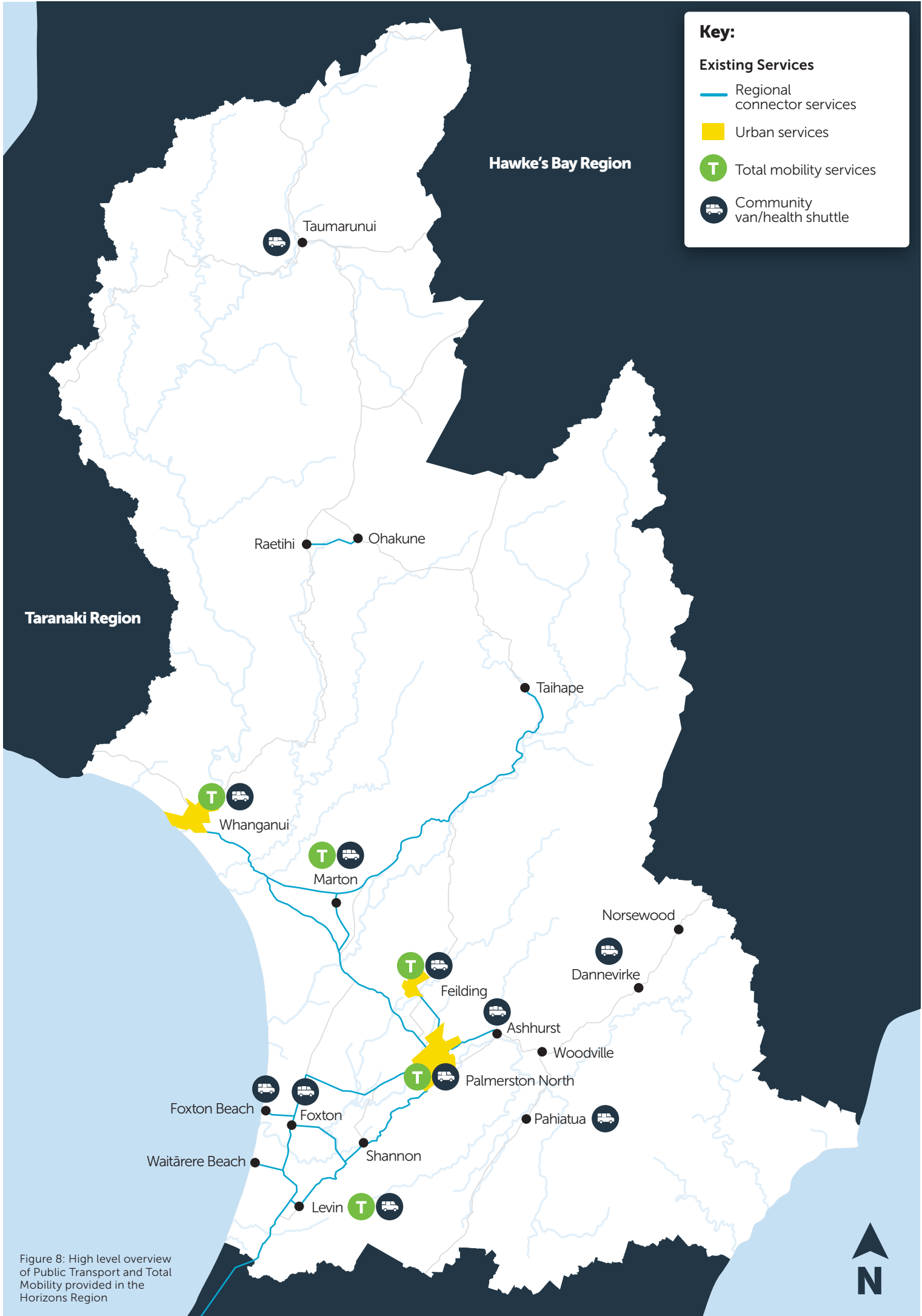


Figure 8: High level overview of Public Transport and Total Mobility provided in the Horizons Region

The following graphs outline high level patronage and user type for all services in the Horizons Region since the 2015-25 RTP came into effect. Trends are fairly consistent across all years until April 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic reached New Zealand. While some individual services have recovered since the initial lockdown in 2020, on the whole patronage of our services has not recovered. This is evident in the overall decline in passenger numbers which can be seen from 2019-20 onwards in the graph below.

### Horizons Public Transport Network Patronage (2015-16 / 2021-22)

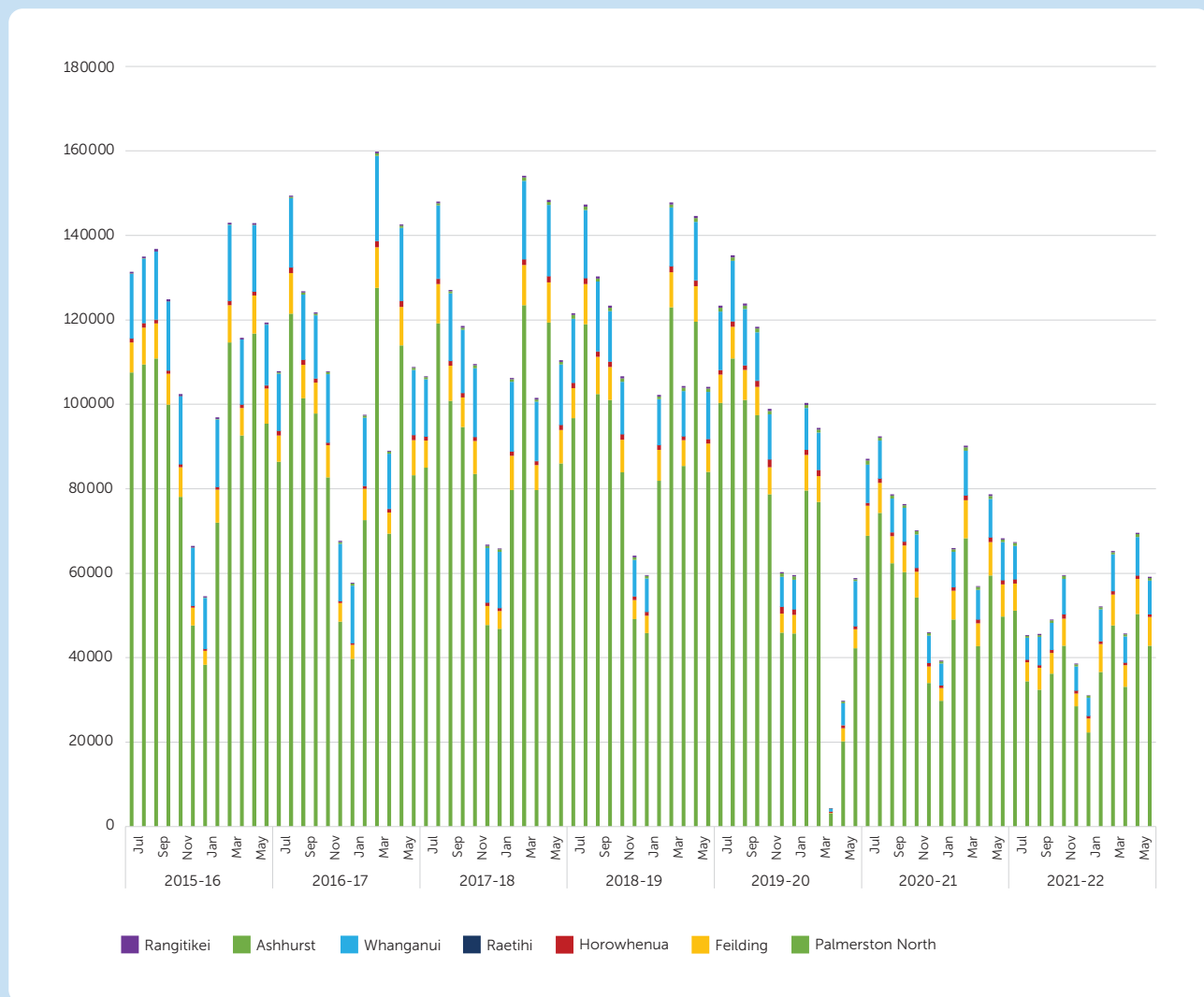


Figure 9: Overview of patronage on all Horizons public transport services 2015-2022

Understanding the demographics of public transport users in the region is also important. It tells us who uses the services helping us tailor services for those users, as well as identifying potential groups not using the services which can prompt investigations into why and how this could be changed. The graph below shows patronage levels for each of the user groups in the region.

Infant/promo is the ‘free fares’ applied to under-fives and is also used if a promotional event (e.g. free bus day) is run meaning fares are waived. The UAS refers to the Unlimited Access Scheme currently run via various

tertiary education institutes, providing free fares to staff and students. The UAS users account for a large proportion of the users, followed by school-aged children.

The impacts of COVID-19 are evident with a large decrease in Unlimited Access Scheme users as studies were moved online. Beneficiary users have also decreased overall since March 2020. A greater proportion of ‘promo’ fares were recorded from March-September 2020 due to the free or reduced fares applied over this time.

## Horizons Region Public Transport User Demographics (2020-21/ 2021-22)

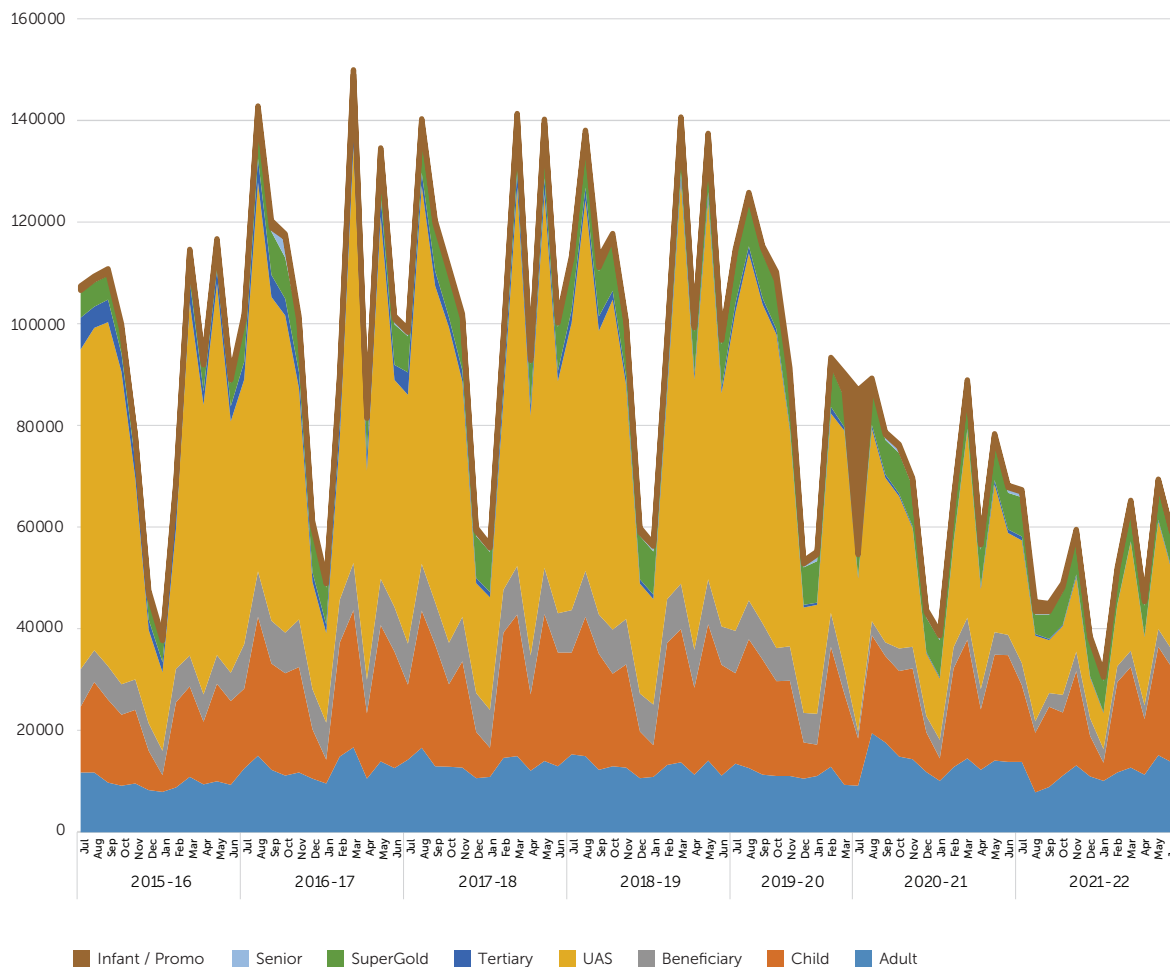


Figure 10: Public transport user demographics for all Horizons public transport services 2015-2022

### 4.1.2 Ngā ratonga tāone o Te Papaioea Palmerston North urban services

In Palmerston North, we are responsible for planning and tendering the bus services, marketing, providing information on these services to the public, and funding new infrastructure (such as bus stops, ticketing equipment and bus shelters). Palmerston North City Council is responsible for providing and maintaining the bus stops and shelters that line the city's streets.

The public transport network in Palmerston North, including Massey University, is the largest contracted service in the Horizons Region.

The Palmerston North services:

- Operate between 6:30am to 6:50pm on weekdays running at a frequency of 45 minutes during peak times and 90 minutes during off-peak;
- Operate between 8:00am to 6:50pm on Saturdays every 90 minutes;

- Operate between 8:00am and 6:00pm on Sundays and public holidays, every two hours.

Massey University services (including IPU (Institute of the Pacific United)):

- Operate between 7:15am to 9:30pm on weekdays (during semester);
- Operate between 7:15am to 7:10pm on weekdays (non-semester);
- Operate between 8:00am and 6:30pm on weekends (semester and non-semester times);
- Consist of 10 different routes encompassing various parts of Palmerston North City;
- During peak times run as regularly as every 20 minutes on the direct route from Main Street Terminal (MST) to Massey (route 150).

The urban services (excluding Summerhill) run to a pulse system, where all services depart MST at the same time with transfers between services being coordinated at the Main Street Terminal.

Under the current timetable, 325 trips are operated per weekday across all Palmerston North and Massey services and 125 on weekends.

The maps that follow show the current urban routes for the Palmerston North and Massey services.

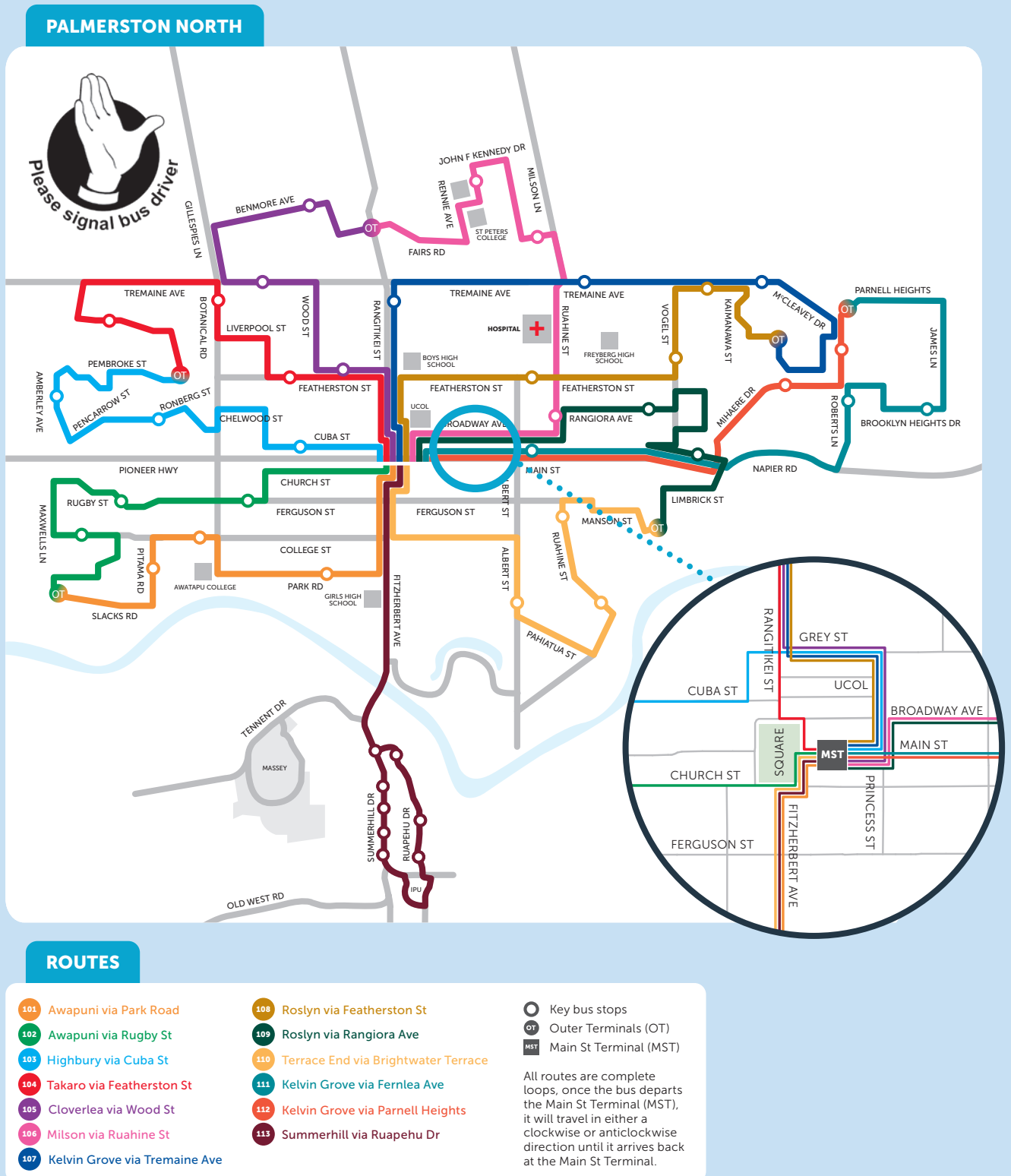
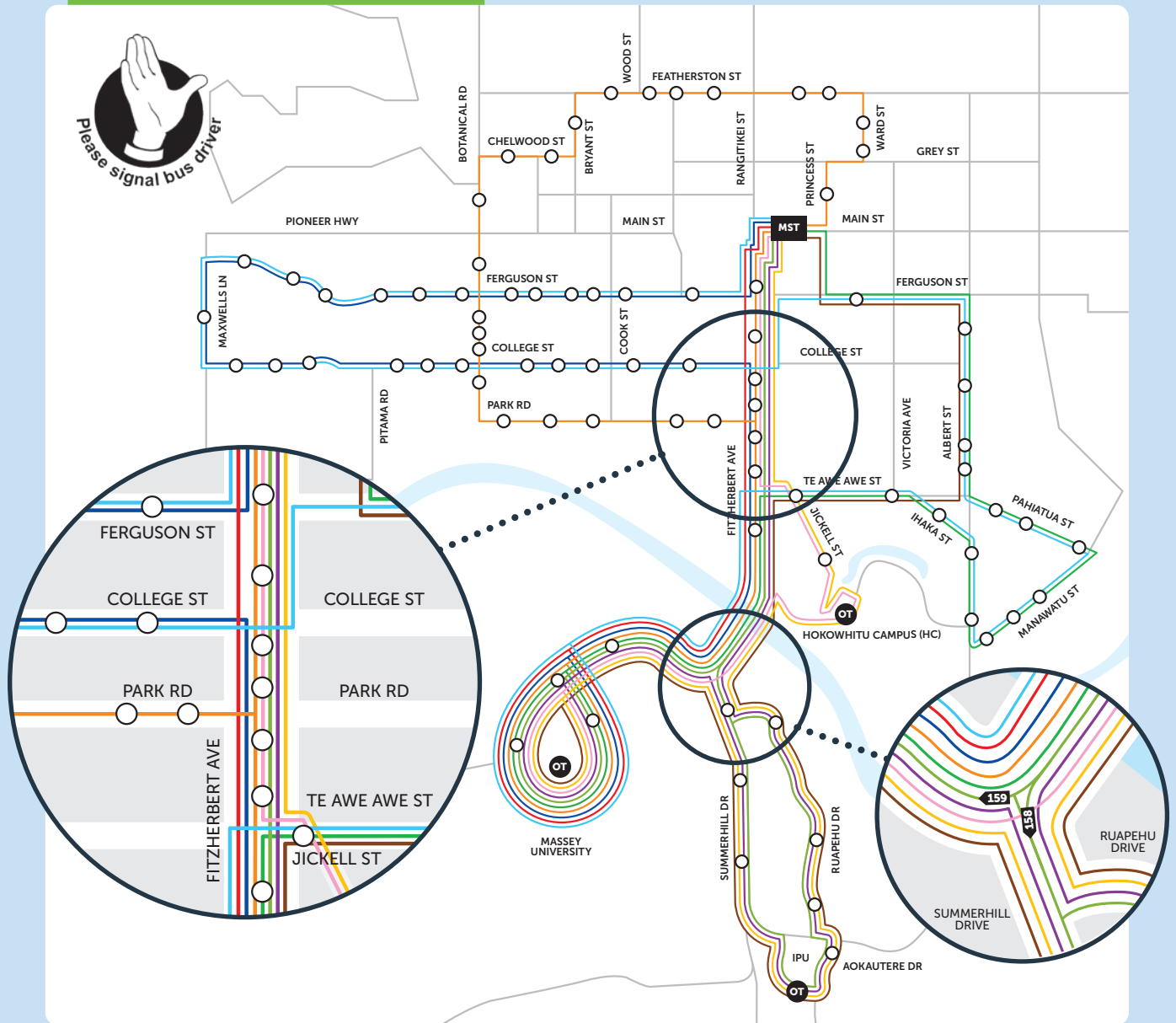


Figure 11: Palmerston North Urban service routes

## PALMERSTON NORTH - MASSEY - IPU



### ROUTES AND KEY

- |                                |                                |                                    |   |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>150</b> Massey              | <b>153</b> Massey via Chelwood | <b>156</b> Massey via HC & IPU     | <b>160</b> City via Albert & Maxwells                   |
| <b>150x</b> Massey via Atawhai | <b>154</b> IPU                 | <b>157</b> Massey via Albert & IPU | <b>MST</b> Main St Terminal (MST)                       |
| <b>151</b> Massey via Albert   | <b>154x</b> City via Atawhai   | <b>158</b> IPU-Massey-City         | Bus Stops   |
| <b>152</b> Massey via Maxwells | <b>155</b> Massey via HC       | <b>159</b> Massey-IPU-City         | Outer Terminals (OT) (Massey, Hokowhitu Campus and IPU) |

All routes are complete loops, once the bus departs the Main St Terminal (MST), it will travel in either a clockwise or anticlockwise direction until it arrives back at the Main St Terminal.

Figure 12: Massey University / IPU urban service routes



## Patronage

Patronage on the Palmerston North services has remained fairly consistent since 2014, with the highest usage generally seen in March to September. This correlates with university semesters and school terms. Before the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Massey University students and staff made up a significant portion of the patronage. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, changes to Massey University with a higher proportion of off-campus study and work, has meant patronage on the Palmerston North services has dropped significantly.

The graph below provides an overview of patronage across the Palmerston North urban network since 2015.

### Palmerston North Public Transport Network Patronage (2015-16 / 2021-22)

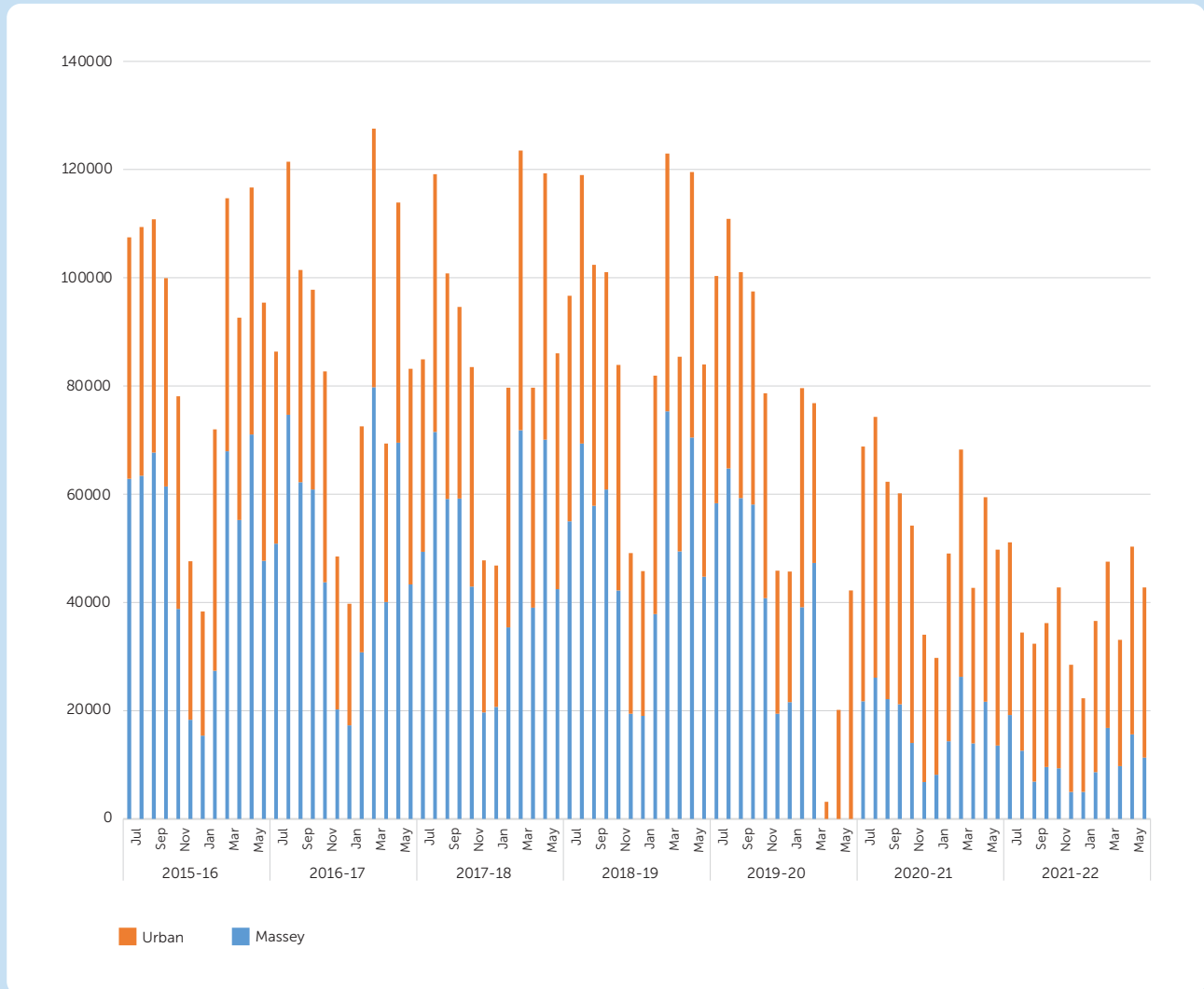


Figure 13: Patronage on the Palmerston North urban (including Massey) services 2015-2022

## Changes since 2015

Since the adoption of the 2015-25 RPTP, several changes have been made to the Palmerston North and Massey Services. These changes include:

- Making the Kelvin Grove via Fernlea and Parnell Heights services a permanent part of the contract;
- Enhancements to services provided in the Summerhill area and making these a permanent service following a successful trial period;
- Trial of later evening services and greater peak frequency on various Palmerston North services. Uptake of the new services was slow and the late-night options were not made permanent;
- Introduction of bike racks on all services;
- Introduction of one electric bus to the Palmerston North urban service fleet;
- Implementation of the BeeCard ticketing system; and
- Changes to the timetable in response to the Employment Relations Amendment Act (ERAA) to ensure services comply with driver break requirements.

The key change since the 2015-25 RPTP is the recent Palmerston North Urban services review. This review has involved a comprehensive evaluation of the current Palmerston North, Massey and Ashhurst services with a 'greenfields' approach taken, and new networks designed to meet the changing demands and needs of the Palmerston North community. The new, proposed Palmerston North Urban Network is shown in Figure 14.

The Ashhurst services will be tendered and included under the new Palmerston North urban contract. The route however will remain the same.

### PALMERSTON NORTH URBAN NETWORK

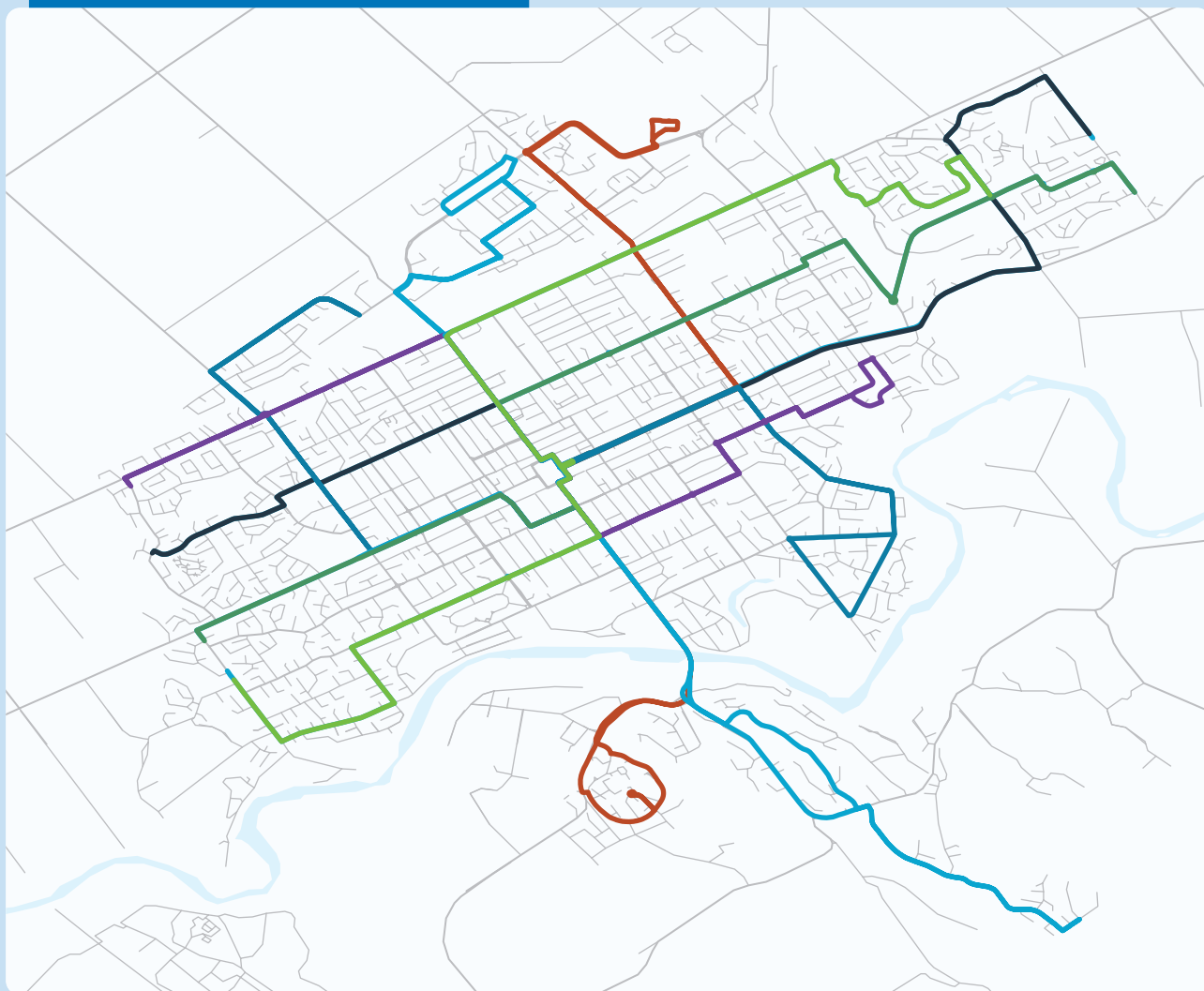


Figure 14: New Palmerston North Urban services due to be implemented in late 2023.

### 4.1.3 Ngā ratonga tāone o Whanganui Whanganui Urban services

In Whanganui, Horizons Regional Council is responsible for planning and tendering the bus services, marketing, providing information on these services to the public, and funding new infrastructure (such as bus stops, ticketing equipment and bus shelters). Whanganui District Council is responsible for providing and maintaining the bus stops and shelters that line the City's streets.

The Whanganui urban services:

- Operate between 7:00am to 6:05pm on weekdays running at a frequency of approximately 90 minutes during peak times and two-three hourly during off-peak;
- Operate between 8:25am to 4:35pm on Saturdays and public holidays at a frequency of approximately two to three hourly;
- Under the current timetable, 63 trips are operated per weekday across all Whanganui services.

Figure 15 below shows the current urban routes for the Whanganui services.

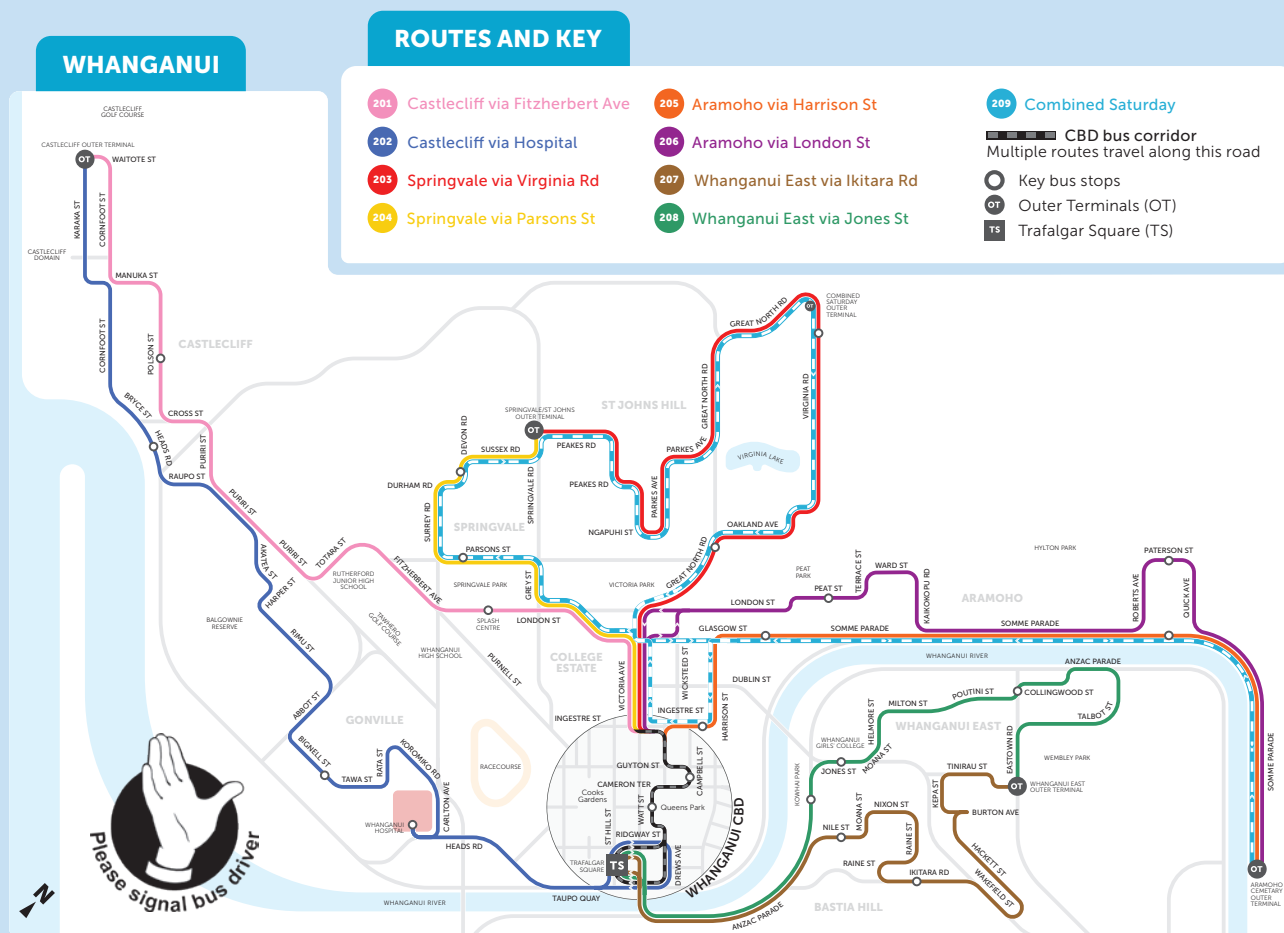


Figure 15: Whanganui urban public transport services as of January 2022.

## Patronage

Patronage levels on the Whanganui urban services were reasonably steady before the COVID-19 pandemic, however had started to show evidence of decline from around 2017. Patronage levels in Whanganui have not recovered to pre-COVID-19 levels.

The graph below shows patronage for both the Whanganui Urban and commuter service since 2015.

### Whanganui Public Transport Network Patronage (2015-16 / 2021-22)

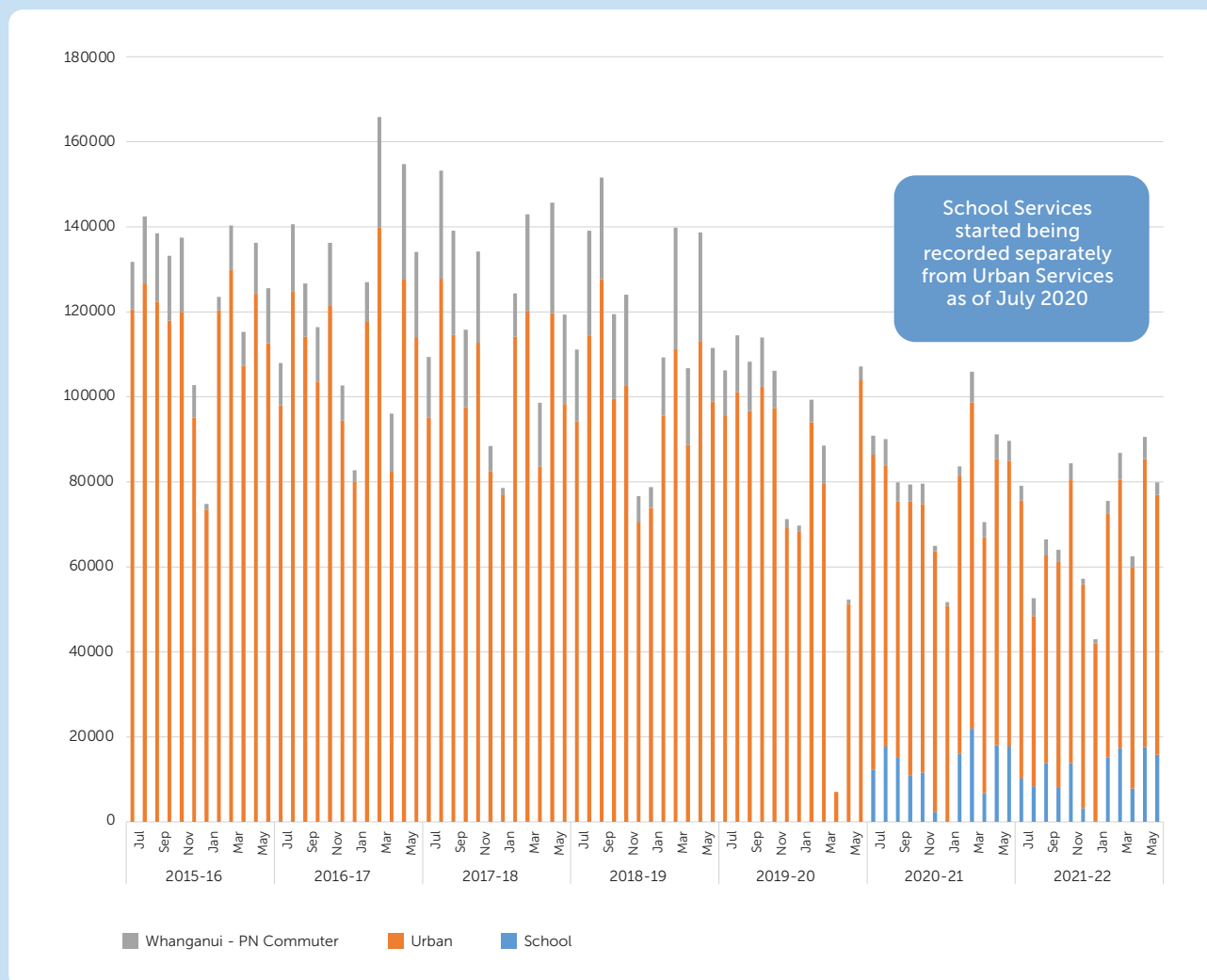


Figure 16: patronage on the Whanganui urban public transport services 2015-2022.

### Changes since 2015

Following the adoption of the 2015-25 RPTP, a review of the Whanganui Urban services was undertaken in 2017, before the expiry of the contract in place at that time. Following the review, several changes were made to the service including:

- Increased frequency on some routes;
- Amendment to some routes to cover more residential areas;
- Addition of public holiday services; and
- Timetable redevelopment.

Further to the improvements implemented through the service review, the following changes have also been made to the service since the last RPTP came into effect in 2015:

- Bike racks on all services;
- Introduction of the BeeCard ticketing system; and
- Changes to the timetable in response to the Employment Relations Amendment Act (ERAA) to ensure services comply with driver break requirements.

### Additional planned improvements to the Whanganui Urban service

Since the implementation of the review changes and new contract (in 2019), the limitations of the current urban service have been discussed further. As a result, a programme of work is underway, following successful allocation of funding through Horizons Long-term Plan, to investigate and implement improvements to the urban service.

These planned changes include the introduction and trial of a connector service along the Castlecliff – Aramoho routes. It will provide a greater service frequency, connectivity and extended operating hours. This new route will run every 20 minutes, 7:00am-7:00pm on weekdays, hourly from 7:00pm to midnight on Fridays, and 9:00am -3:00pm Saturdays, starting early 2023.

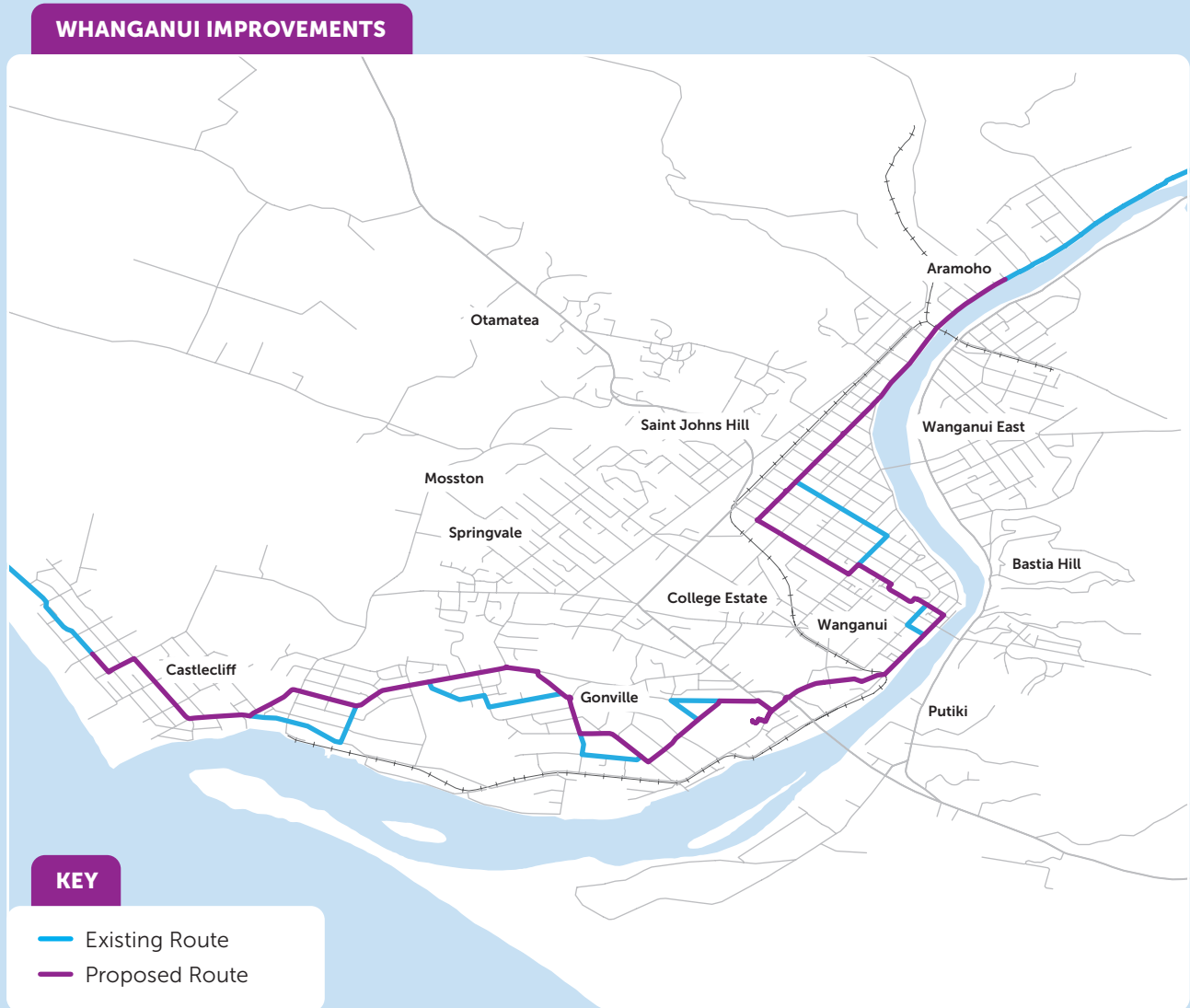


Figure 17: Map and summary of planned service improvements for the Whanganui urban public transport service.

4.1.4

## Ngā ratonga o Aorangi Feilding Services

Services for Feilding include the Feilding to Palmerston North service and the Feilding Orbiter. The Feilding to Palmerston North service is a regional commuter service connecting the Palmerston North and Feilding communities. Since the 2015-25 RTP came into effect, a mid-term review was completed for the Feilding to Palmerston North service. The following changes have been made to the service following the mid-term review:

- Implementation of a new Feilding Orbiter service travelling solely within the Feilding township;

- Provision of more Saturday services between Feilding and Palmerston North on the commuter service;
- Provision of free Wi-Fi on the commuter service; and
- Adjustments to the commuter timetable to provide a service leaving later in the evening on weekdays.

Separate to the mid-term review, the following improvements were made to the Feilding to Palmerston North service over the term of the 2015-25 RTP:

- Introduction of bike racks on services; and
- Implementation of the BeeCard.

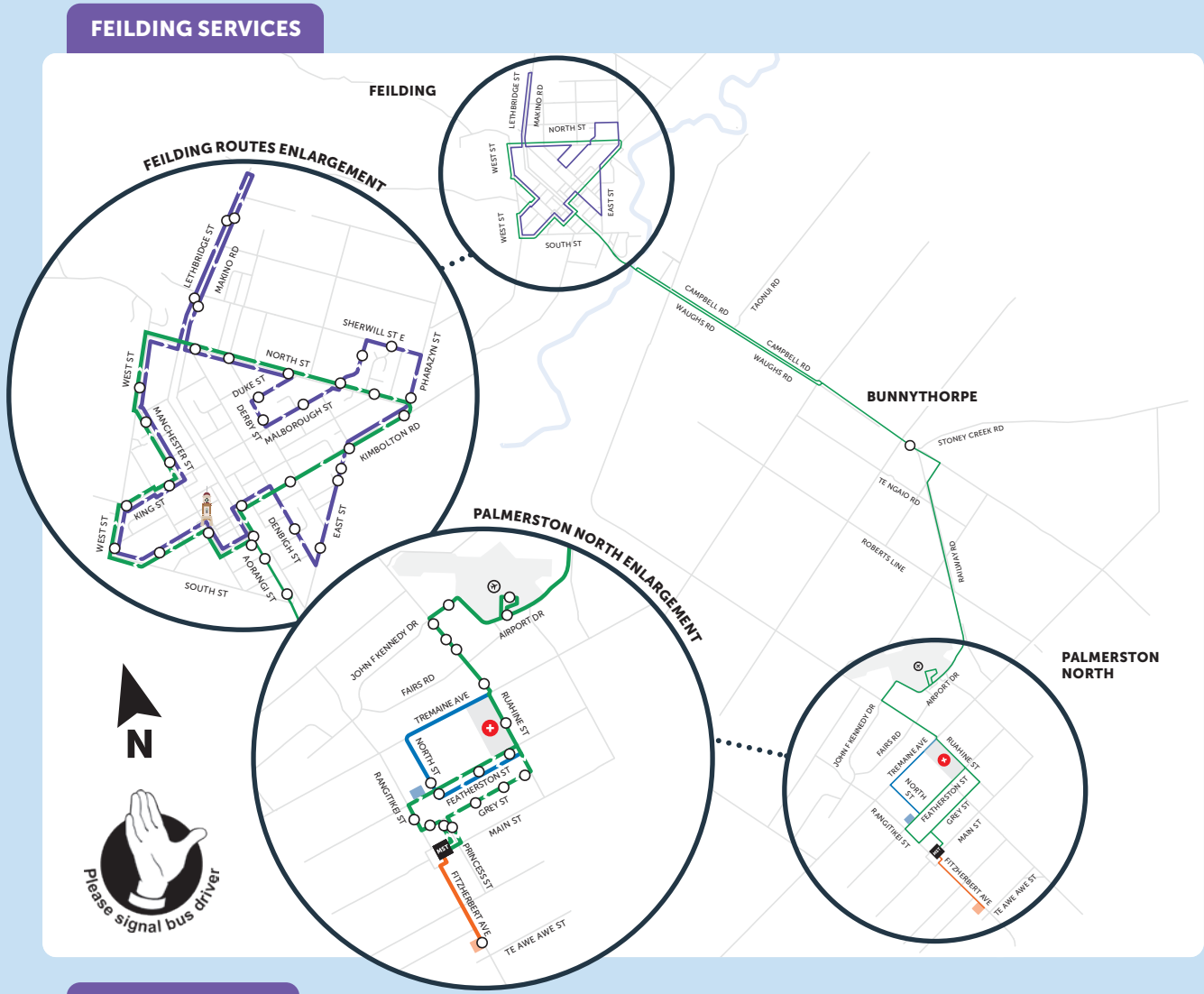
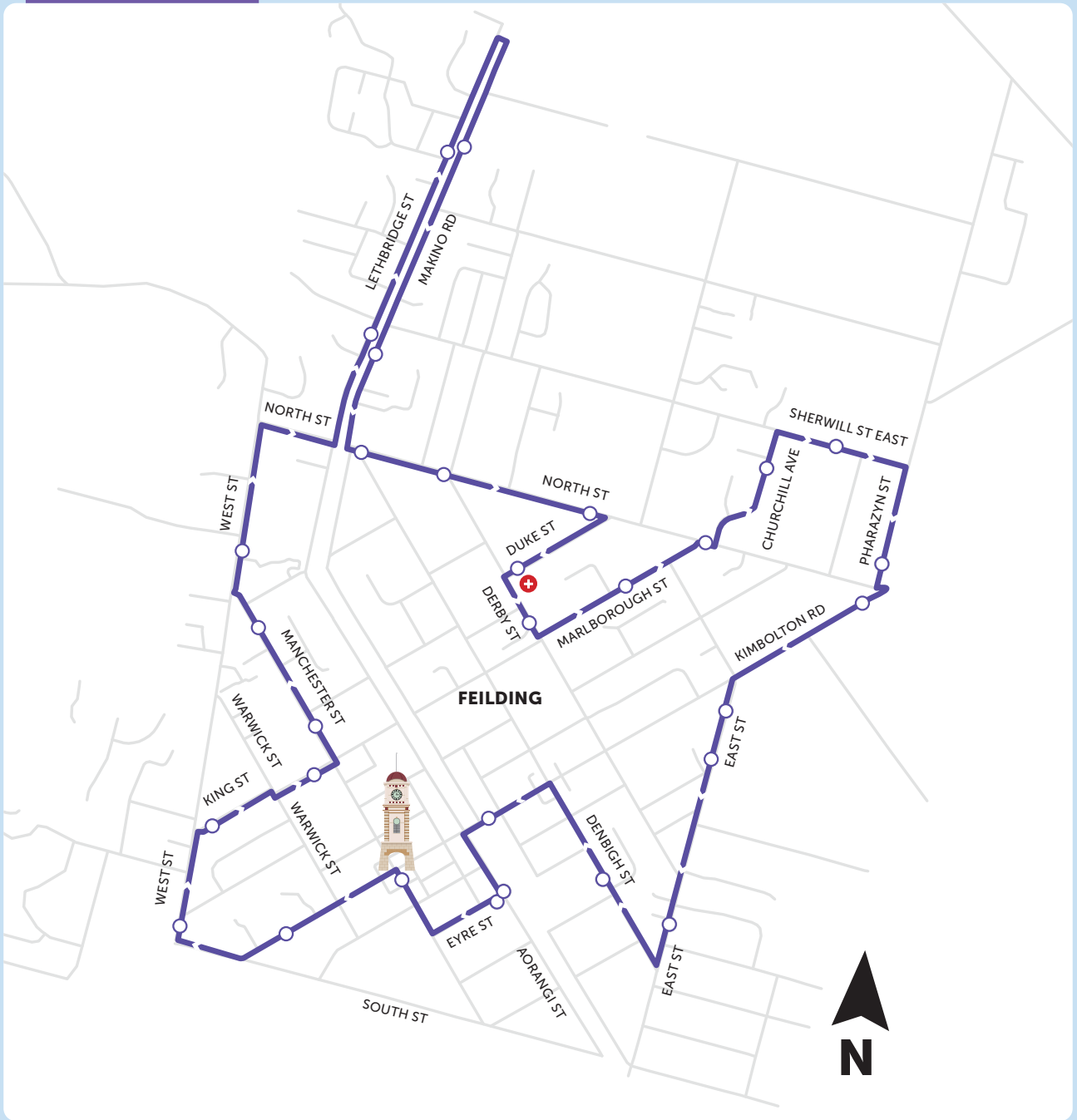


Figure 18: Feilding Commuter and Feilding Orbiter service routes as of January 2022.

**FEILDING ORBITER**



**KEY**






-  Bus stops
-  Direction of travel
-  Medical centre
-  Airport
-  Manchester Square

Figure 19: Feilding Orbiter service route as of January 2022.

## Patronage

Patronage on the Feilding service has largely been consistent. While it dropped during COVID-19 lockdowns, it was one of the fastest services to recover once services returned to normal.

### Feilding to Palmerston North Commuter service patronage (2015-16 / 2021-22)

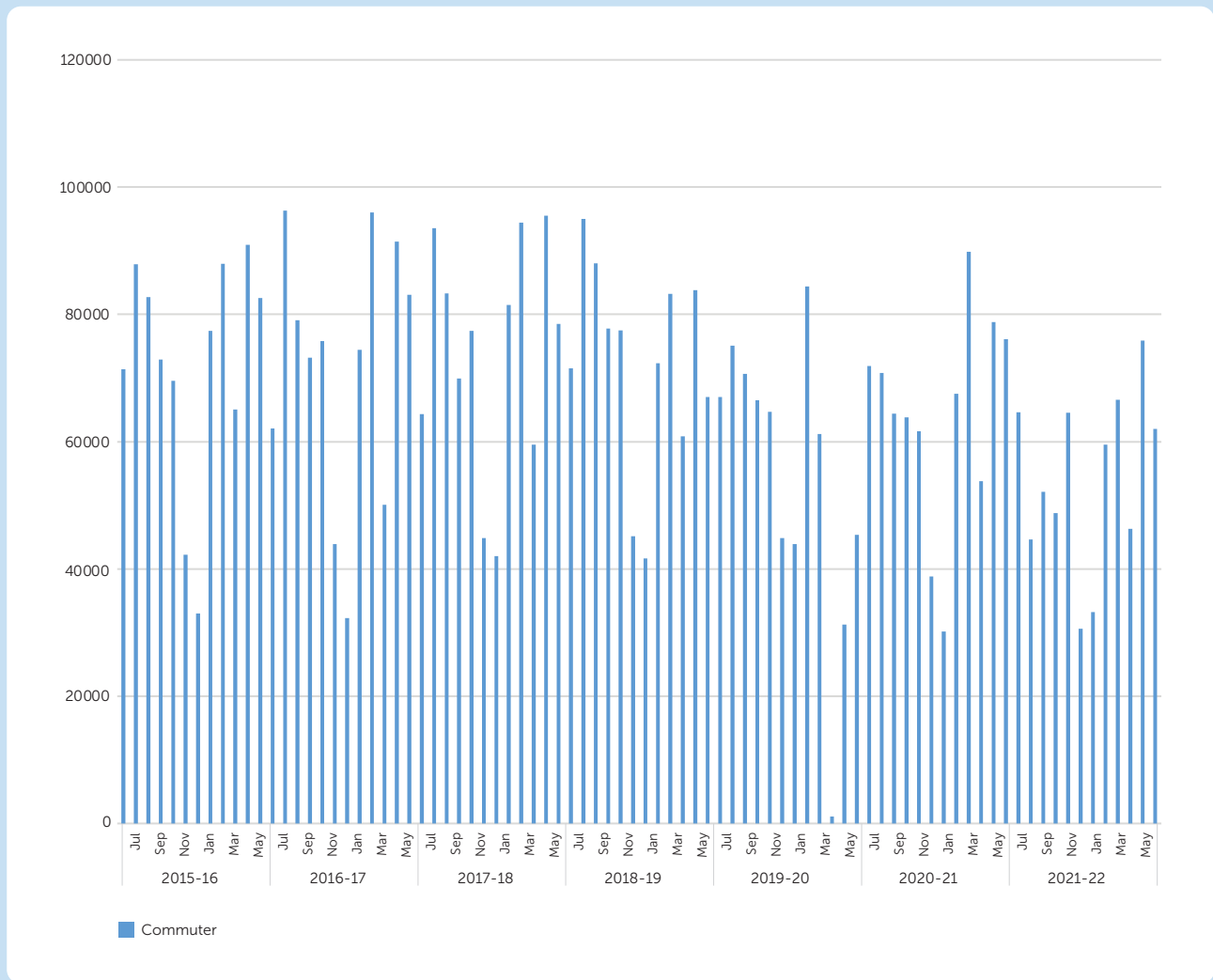


Figure 20: patronage on the Feilding to Palmerston North commuter service 2015-2022.

At the time of preparing this Plan, the Feilding Orbiter service had only been in operation since 25 January 2022. Patronage data for this service was therefore not available.

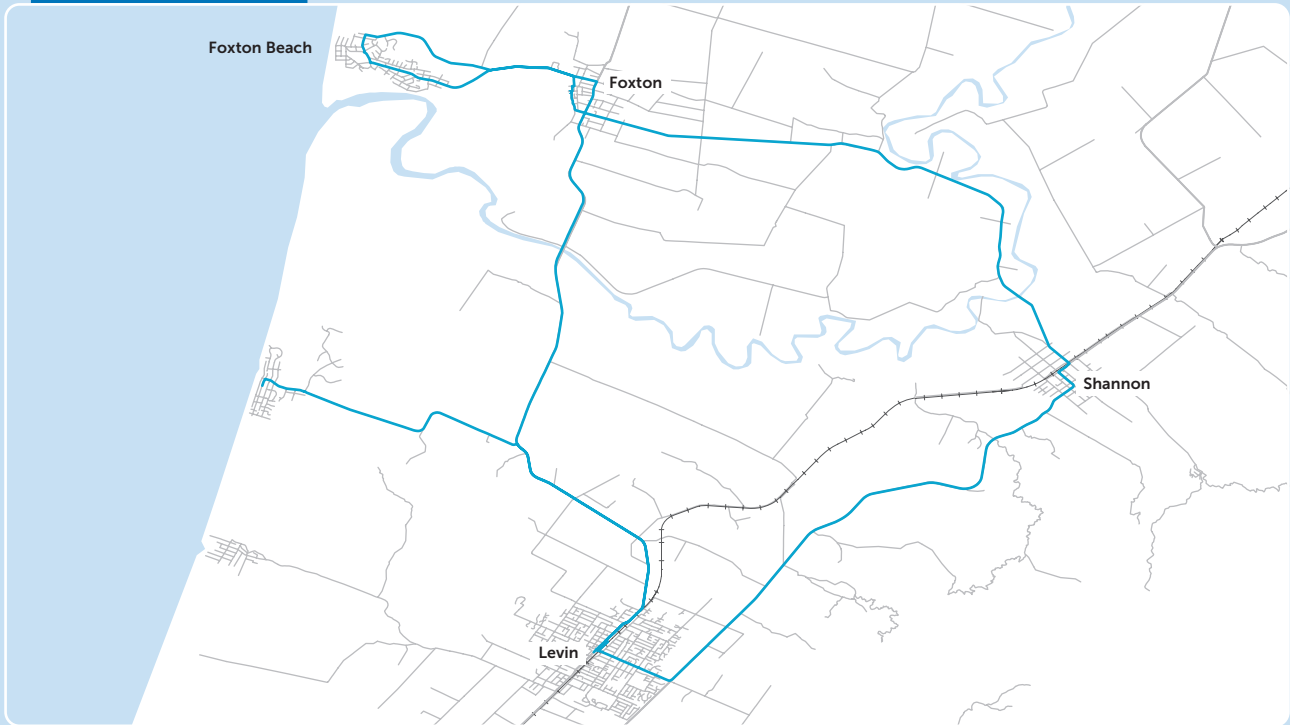
#### 4.1.5 Ngā ratonga ā-rohe Regional services

There are several regional services provided within the Horizons Region. Due to their small size, conventional public transport has not, in recent years, been considered feasible for these communities. However, the need for people to have access to health, education and employment services has been acknowledged and regional public transport services have been provided to enable connection to larger centres such as Palmerston North and Whanganui. In addition to the regional public transport services, there are many other services (health shuttles and community vans) which operate separately to the public transport network. Horizons provides funding support to enable these services to run through the Long-term Plan.

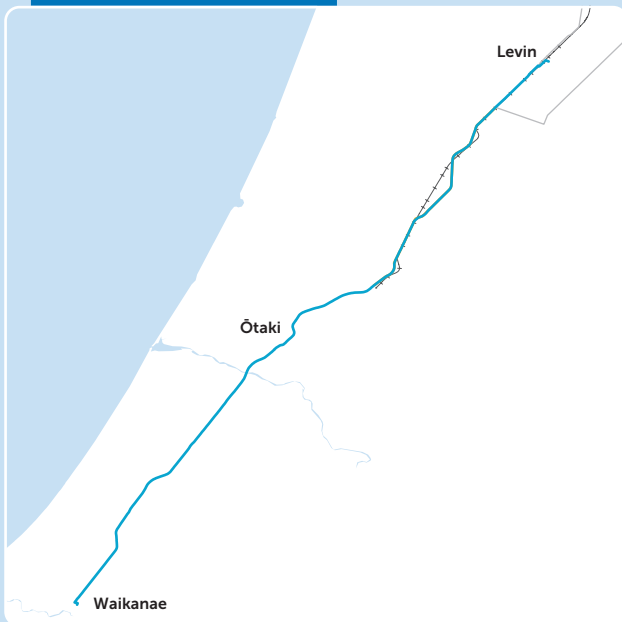
The images that follow, show the bus services currently provided for all other areas of the Horizons Region.



**DAY OUT IN TOWN**



**LEVIN TO WAIKANAĒ**



**LEVIN TO PALMERSTON NORTH**

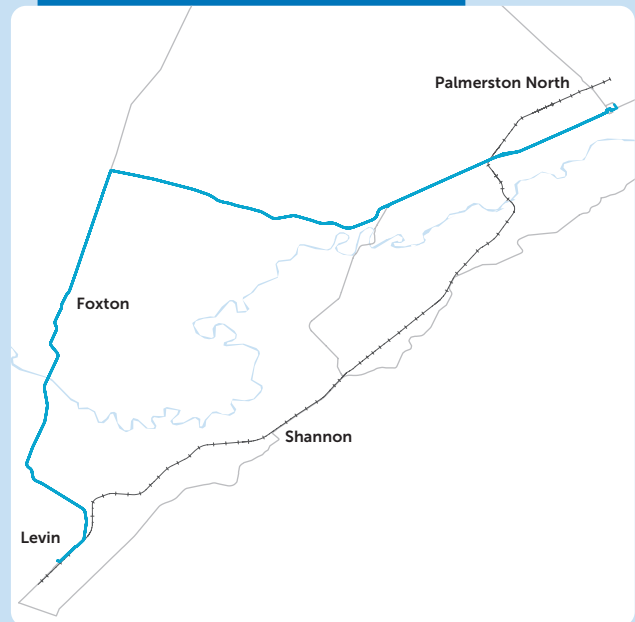


Figure 21: Regional Commuter services in the Horowhenua District.

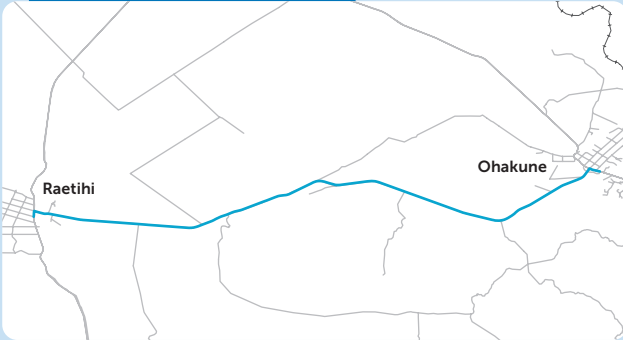
The Levin to Waikanae service was implemented as an off-peak service in 2017. It is a cross-boundary service currently jointly funded by Horizons Regional Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Waka Kotahi. It provides an important link to the Wellington region and their 'Metlink' train services which connect passengers to Wellington. It runs a morning service from Levin to Waikanae and a return afternoon back to Levin on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is not an exempt service in the sense of the Land Transport Management Act because it is in both Horizons' and Greater Wellington's RPTPs as a public transport unit that is integral to our public transport network. It is a cross-boundary public transport service and not an inter-regional service as intended by the LTMA and therefore not an exempt service.

The Day Out In Town service also runs to an off-peak timetable providing one morning and one afternoon service during off-peak times every Friday.

The Levin to Palmerston North service has a peak and off-peak service. The peak service runs every weekday connecting passengers from Levin, Foxton and Himatangi to Palmerston North in the morning and returning to Levin in the evening. The off-peak services run on Monday and Wednesday connecting passengers from Levin, Foxton, Himatangi, Shannon, Tokomaru and Linton to Palmerston North in the morning and returning in the afternoon.

## Rangitikei and Ruapehu Regional Services

### OHAKUNE TO RAETIHI



### TAIHAPE TO WHANGANUI



### OHAKUNE TO RAETIHI



### TAIHAPE TO PALMERSTON NORTH



Figure 22: Regional Commuter services in the Rangitikei and Ruapehu District.

The Rangitikei and Ruapehu services are off-peak commuter services (with the exception of Marton to Palmerston North) which provide connections from remote towns to larger centres such as Palmerston North and Whanganui. The Marton to Palmerston North commuter operates a morning and evening return service on weekdays to enable commuters access to employment and education within Palmerston North.

## Ashhurst Regional / Commuter service

### ASHHURST TO PALMERSTON NORTH

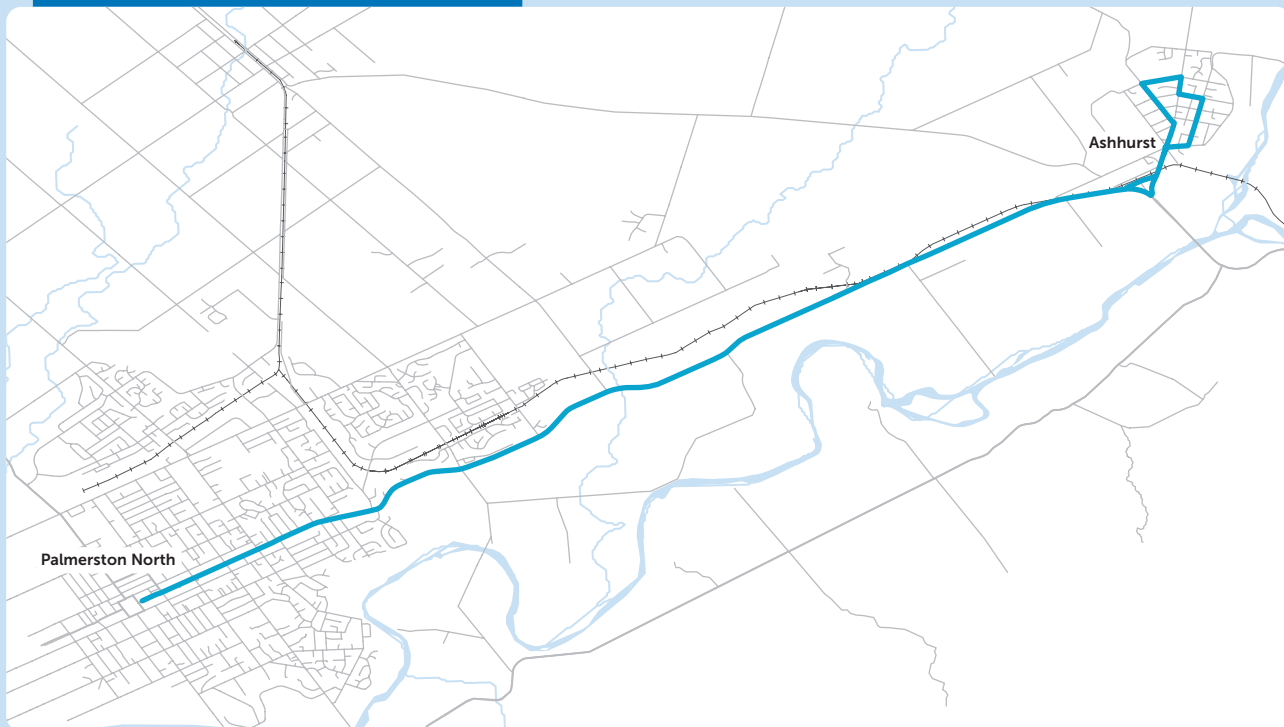


Figure 23: Regional Commuter services in Ashhurst.

The Ashhurst to Palmerston North commuter service is currently operated under a separate contract to the Palmerston North Urban services contract. However, this service was reviewed in conjunction with the Palmerston North review completed in 2021 and will be included as part of the 2022 tender for services. Once a new contract is awarded and implemented, the Ashhurst public transport services will form part of the Palmerston North public transport unit. The route will remain the same, however, services between Palmerston North and Ashhurst will increase.

### WHANGANUI TO PALMERSTON NORTH

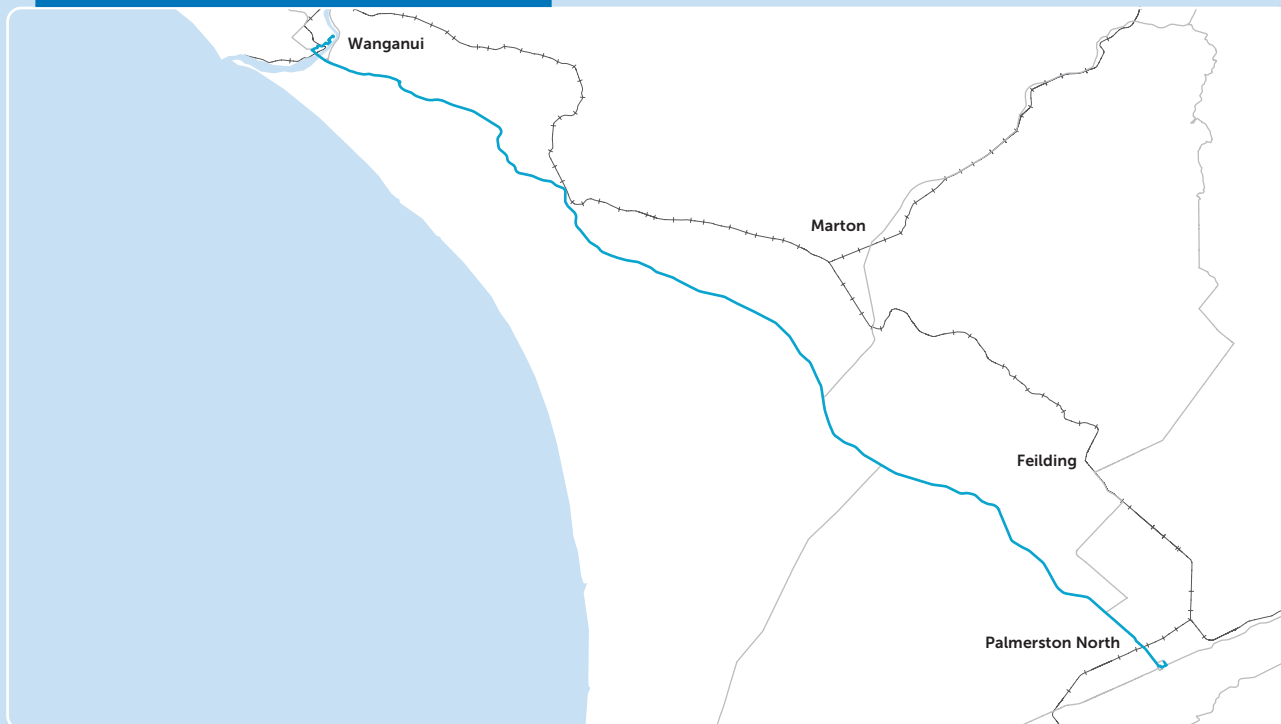


Figure 24: Regional Commuter services in the Whanganui District

The Whanganui to Palmerston North commuter service runs at peak time providing an important connection for Whanganui residents to access tertiary education and employment in Palmerston North.

#### 4.1.6 Rerewhenua mō te pāhihi Passenger Rail

Two passenger rail services are operating in the region, the Capital Connection and the Northern Explorer. The Northern Explorer has been heavily impacted and services have been suspended until September 2022 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Capital Connection is the primary passenger rail service in the region and has been in operation since 1991. It travels between Palmerston North and Wellington, providing a vital connection between the two regions. The service operates on weekdays, completing one morning trip from Palmerston North to Wellington and one evening trip from Wellington to Palmerston North. Before 2015, the Capital Connection was run as a commercial unit, with no local funding from councils. It was therefore an exempt service under the previous RTP (2015-25).

Since 2015, both Horizons and Greater Wellington Regional Council have subsidised a portion of this service to enable it to continue operating while a long-term solution is developed. The most recent Regional Land Transport Plan (2021-31) for the Horizons Region secured funding for Horizons contribution to complete

the detailed business case process for the Capital Connection service and is known as the Lower North Island Rail Integrated Mobility (LNIRIM) Project. This project is identified as a significant activity and sits as priority 4 in the RLTP. The local investment in this project by Horizons Regional Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council is significant and reflects the importance of the Capital Connection service to both regions. This investment will enable the continuation and replacement of the current service with a new, modern fleet of trains as well as increased service frequency which will improve accessibility and transport choice for the people of our region. Moving forward, there will be opportunities to leverage off this service and look at connecting bus services to the Capital Connection from other urban areas such as Whanganui, Foxton and Marton which don't have passenger rail.

The Capital Connection has been identified as an exempt service in this Plan, however, this status is subject to change following inter-regional transport planning prioritisation by Horizons Regional Council, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi and regional transport partners.

## Capital Connection Patronage

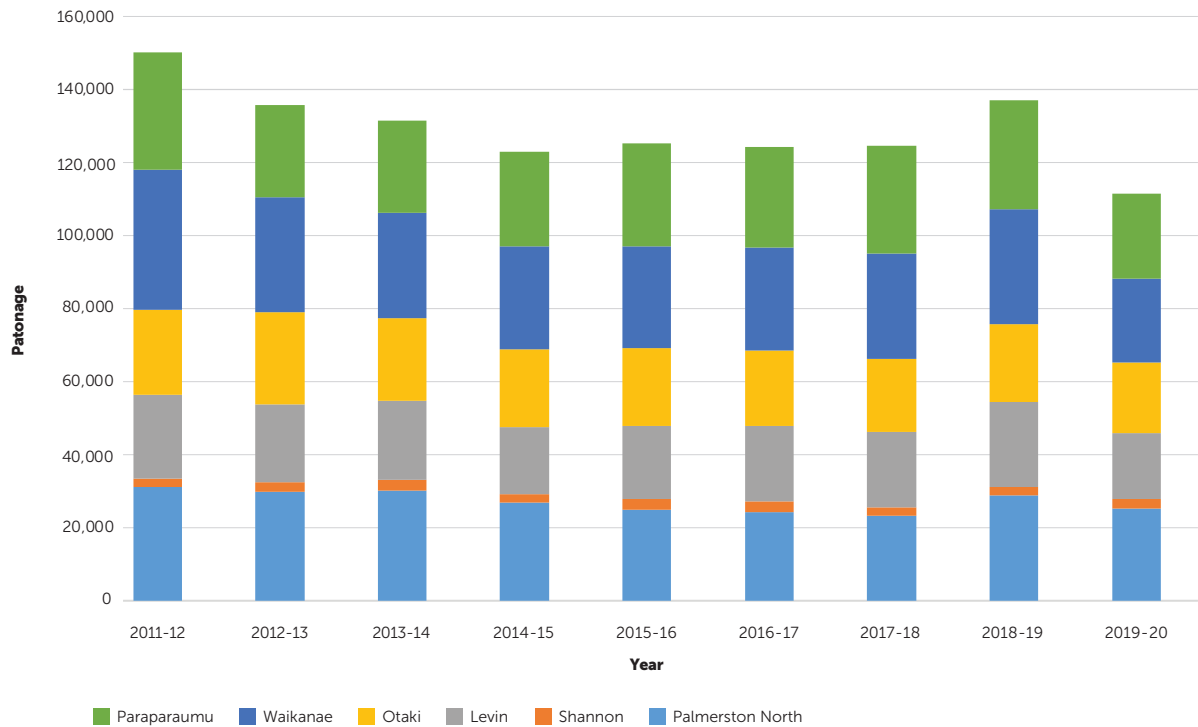


Figure 25: Capital Connection patronage 2011-2020.

The Northern Explorer is a long-distance scenic passenger service running between Auckland and Wellington, stopping at Palmerston North, Ohakune, National Park and Hamilton. It is a popular travel option for tourists and therefore an important travel mode within the region as it provides a safe travel option and facilitates economic growth (via tourist spend). The Northern Explorer is not subsidised and runs as a fully commercial operation meaning it is an exempt service. However, given the reliance of this service on tourist demand (both domestic and international), it has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The operation of this service has therefore been paused until September 2022, after which it is expected to resume running.

### 4.1.7 Nekenekē Noa Total Mobility

#### Overview

The Total Mobility scheme provides subsidised taxi transport for people with long-term disabilities or mobility issues. The scheme is offered nationwide but can only be provided where there is a taxi or small passenger service available and able to meet the compulsory requirements set out by Waka Kotahi. The scheme is funded in partnership by local and central government.

The purpose of the scheme is to provide financial assistance, to enable people with disabilities or mobility issues to access appropriate transport to meet their daily needs and enhance their community participation, in the same way non-disabled people do. The Total Mobility scheme is intended to complement the provision of public transport services, which are expected to be accessible as possible to meet different mobility needs.

Taxi operators must sign a contract agreeing that all drivers will pass unit standards on how to transport people with disabilities, especially those that operate a wheelchair hoist.

Within our region Total Mobility operates in Palmerston North, Levin, Whanganui, Marton and Feilding. As well as standard taxi services, companion services are operating in Palmerston North, Feilding, Levin and Whanganui.

There are approximately 6,000 people registered on the Total Mobility scheme in the Horizons Region.

### **Assessment and Eligibility**

Anyone wanting to be part of the Total Mobility scheme, needs to have an assessment to ensure the funding criteria is met. The key criteria are that a person must have a long-term disability or mobility issues. These can include (but are not limited to) physical, mental or emotional disabilities. The assessments are carried out by disability services, health services and community providers in each district where the scheme operates.

Children can also apply to be part of the scheme under the same eligibility as adults.

### **Subsidy levels**

The subsidies are provided at a rate of 50% discount up to a maximum subsidy. A fare less than the maximum subsidy is discounted at the 50% discount rate, or if the fare is greater than the maximum subsidy, the full subsidy amount is applied. The current maximum subsidy for each district is:

Whanganui	\$10.00
Marton	\$5.00
Palmerston North	\$10.00
Feilding	\$10.00
Levin	\$10.00

### **Wheelchair Hoists**

#### **Hoist Flat Rate Payment**

In 2007, a flat rate payment to operators (currently \$10.00, excluding GST) for each hoist trip was introduced. The payment is to compensate operators for the increased costs associated with operating a hoist vehicle and the extra handling and loading time and ensures that hoist users are not paying a higher tariff than other Total Mobility users.

The payment is 100% funded by Waka Kotahi but is administered by regional councils.

#### **Hoist Installation:**

An important part of the scheme is the provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles as part of a taxi fleet, in each district. The demand for this type of transport service is increasing and is anticipated to continue to increase due to our ageing population.

Horizons supports taxi operators by providing funding to assist with the purchase and installation of a hoist, via a suspensory loan agreement. Once the operator has purchased a van, the funding will cover the hoist installation under a suspensory loan agreement which states that the funding recipient must prioritise Total Mobility clients and also continue to provide services for five years. Failure to adhere to this will result in funding being repaid proportionately depending on how long they have provided the service.

## **4.1.8 Ngā Waka Kōpiko me ngā Pahi iti ā-Hapori Health Shuttles and Community Vans**

Outside of the main urban centres, access to health, and education facilities, shops and employment can be difficult due to limited travel options. In these smaller areas, traditional bus services running to a set timetable do not exist currently. In response to specific community needs, specialised transport solutions, such as community vans and health shuttles have evolved. The health shuttles and community vans help bridge the gap by providing important transport options for people in these smaller communities. They are generally run by community organisations to provide transport services for those who are transport disadvantaged.

Given the value these services hold to the communities they support, Horizons assists these services by subsidising a portion of their costs through the Long-term Plan. They are treated as 'excluded services' in the Land Transport Management Act as they do not operate to a set timetable and are generally provided in response to individual user demand.

## 4.2

# Te pēhea o te tahua waka whenua How public transport is funded

Public transport is funded through fares, regional council rates, and investment from Waka Kotahi. Council sets the level of expenditure and rates contribution as part of the Long-term Plan and Annual Plan processes. Public Transport fares are reviewed on an as-required basis. The share of funding provided by Waka Kotahi is set by the Financial Assistance Rate<sup>9</sup> (FAR). The graph that follows is from Horizons 2021-31 Long-term Plan and outlines Council's expected funding sources and levels for transport services over the next 10 years. Subsidies and grants represent Waka Kotahi funding (currently 51% for public transport and 60% for total mobility) and fees and charges relate to the revenue generated from fares on public transport services.

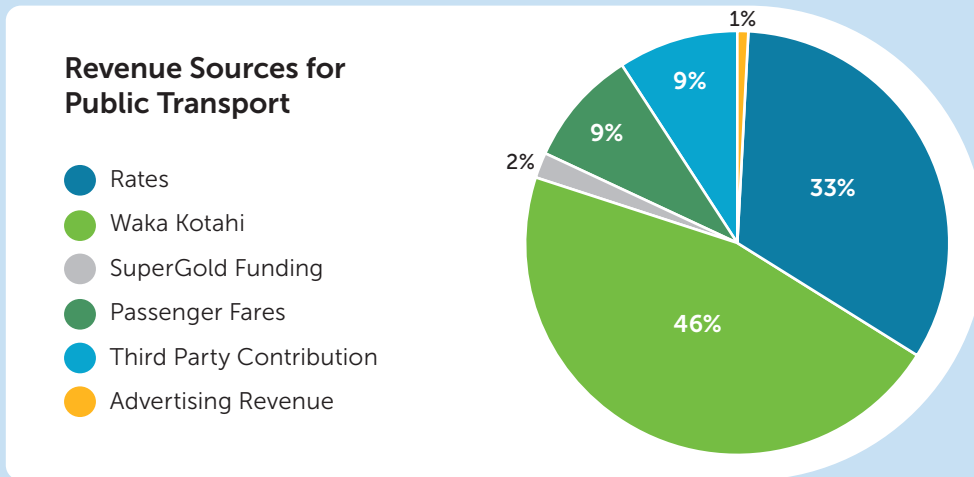


Figure 26: Horizons Regional Council Long-term Plan, revenue sources to fund transport activities.

The Total Mobility service attracts a higher FAR than public transport services, and hoist services (for those in wheelchairs) are 100% subsidized by Waka Kotahi.

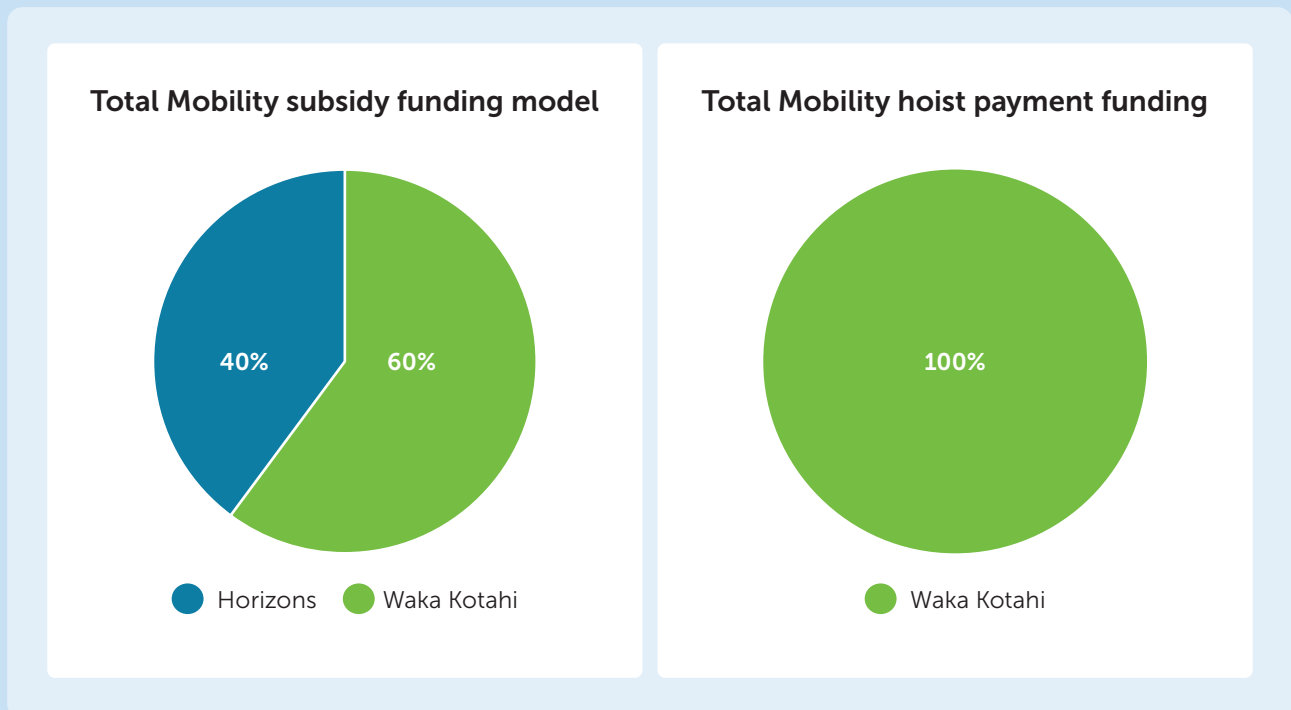


Figure 27: Horizons Total Mobility subsidy and hoist funding model.

<sup>9</sup>The funding assistance rate is the contribution proportion from Waka Kotahi and is set every three years through the National Land Transport Programme

Health shuttles and community vans are funded differently from public transport services, where Horizons allocates a fixed amount of funding in the LTP and Annual Plans for community vans and health shuttles. The organisations then apply externally for the amount of funding they need. The portion provided by Horizons and subsidised by Waka Kotahi is only a small part of the amount needed and these providers also seek funding from Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand (formerly District Health Boards) and through organisations, donations and sponsorship. The diagram below provides an example of how this funding model works.

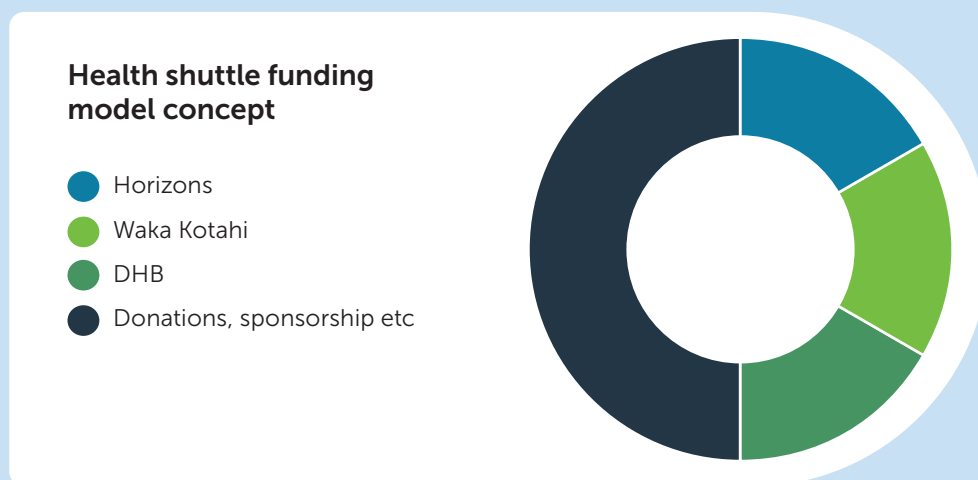


Figure 28: Health shuttle and community van funding model example.

### 4.3 Ngā mātātaki mō te rohe Challenges facing the region

Public transport plays an important role in supporting and creating healthy communities. It has the potential to connect us, enhance our wellbeing, and provide access to important social, economic and education opportunities. There are many challenges facing public transport across the region, but also a number of opportunities.

This section focuses on challenges facing the Horizons region, with the next section of this Plan focusing on the opportunities. The challenges outlined in this section are further complicated by the following factors:

- An ageing population;
- Government expectations around reduction in carbon emissions from transport, including decarbonisation of the public bus fleet by 2035;
- A constrained funding environment which can make change difficult;
- Continued urban sprawl which makes servicing new urban development areas with public transport difficult;
- House prices pushing people to cheaper areas, which often have less amenities such as public transport;
- Subsidised car parking in town and city centres; and
- The ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

This section outlines some of the key challenges facing the region in providing adequate levels of public transport that is well-patronised.

#### Attractiveness of public transport

The Horizons Region is diverse with a mixture of urban and rural areas. Consequently the transport needs of the region’s residents is highly varied. Public transport in the region has a low mode share compared to the national average, especially when compared to the large metros. At present the mode share for journeys to work is dominated by private vehicle, with public transport only representing 0.7% of travel to work, compared to just under 5% nationally. Travel to education has a higher share, with trips as a passenger being the primary mode of travel (42.6%), transport by school bus at just over 10% (in line with the national average), and transport by public bus at 4.7%<sup>10</sup>, compared to just under 7% nationally.

Over the last 10 years, the public transport system has focused on urban areas, and on passengers in these areas with the greatest need. This includes focusing on providing a minimum level of service for people who do not have cars such as students, the elderly and lower socio-economic groups. In the past and currently, using public transport generally takes more time than using a private vehicle. This has not been considered a significant barrier as these groups may be more willing to wait. This focus has limited the attractiveness of public transport to other groups.

There are many levers that impact people’s transport choices. Current public transport frequency, journey

<sup>10</sup>Data sourced from Statistics New Zealand place summaries, Manawatū-Whanganui Region



times, and hours of operation limit the attractiveness of public transport for customers. The ease of driving and high car ownership in the region creates a significant challenge for the uptake of public transport services.

Time is an important commodity to people, so while it is easier, quicker, and affordable to use a private vehicle, many are going to choose this option. Even more so if access to a public transport service is limited by where you live. One result of these issues, as anecdotal accounts suggest, is that people still do not have a good perception or experience of using our public transport system. They do not view it as a realistic or viable alternative to driving. Until this changes, public transport will struggle to compete with other travel modes.

Improving the attractiveness of public transport is a key challenge for the region. Factors such as better public transport frequency, better access to services, shorter travel times, affordable travel and land use planning that considers public transport in its design will all play a role in tackling this challenge. It has also been suggested at a central government level that a reduced emissions profile of fleets could increase the attractiveness of public transport and increase the proportion of customers who choose to use it. Disincentives for car use such as parking costs and other initiatives that make car travel less attractive will also support an increase in public transport use.

### **Lack of access in less central areas and remote communities**

Public transport, where available, ensures people can reach essential services critical to daily life. This is especially important for those without access to private transport. In the Horizons Region there are additional layers to the challenge of providing for the wellbeing, social and economic benefits of public transport; including lack of access for communities in less central and remote areas of the region, as well as lack of access to public transport within and between our urban areas.

In less central communities, access and mobility issues can be significant for residents. Without some realistic transport options, small communities are more likely to struggle to retain some residents due to lack of access to employment, education, health and other facilities necessary for day-to-day life. The reduction in medical services in rural towns has exacerbated the need for transport options to larger centres. Public transport has a role to play in improving access and liveability in Horizons smaller, less central communities.

Horizons currently offers several regional and urban public transport services for medium and small urban areas. Per capita spend in these areas tends to be significantly lower in these areas, compared to Palmerston North. As a result, frequencies and patronage are often low with the service tending to

be focused on specific groups such as SuperGold cardholders. This signals that their practicality is limited for users and may not be meeting the needs of these communities. Similar issues are experienced in urban areas such as Palmerston North and Whanganui where the service levels are often considered inadequate by the community to meet their needs. Potential users choose other transport modes where there is the option to do so.

### **Public transport planning**

Public transport services in the Horizons Region have generally been reviewed in isolation from each other. This may have meant that opportunities for efficiency through coordination may have been missed. Regional services have also been planned and reviewed in isolation from each other. Consideration of these integrated services that serve multiple towns on 'through-routes' has been out of the scope of reviews.

In many cases, new services in the region's urban areas have been added one by one at the margins. For example, limited evening services and frequent services have been trialled in Palmerston North since its last review. There has generally been a 'use it or lose it' approach to these trials, as was the case with the Palmerston North evening services trial in 2019.

The reason for the 'service by service' approach largely stems from the way the transport procurement and funding models have been developed and administered. This has made it difficult to consider integrated service reviews and implementation. The challenge is providing better integration and the 'right' type of public transport to support and provide for the needs of all communities in the region. Public transport will need to embrace new service models and modify how it integrates with other modes so it supports positive changes in the transport system.

### **Climate Change**

Climate change and the role transport plays in this, has been a highly discussed topic in recent years. Vehicles that run on fossil fuel are the fastest-growing source of harmful climate pollution, with 20% of New Zealand's domestic greenhouse gas emissions coming from transport and 90% of these emissions coming from road transport<sup>11</sup>. In August 2020 Council released a report<sup>12</sup> outlining regional carbon emissions, breaking them down by sector. This report identifies the transport sector as the second-largest contributor of carbon emissions in the region at 25%. The largest is agriculture at 66%. The graph below, sourced from this report shows the breakdown of emissions by sector and district. Palmerston North has the largest contribution of carbon emissions from transport which is expected, given it is the largest urban area in the region with the highest population.

<sup>11</sup>Government Policy Statement on Land Transport, 2021

<sup>12</sup>Horizons Region Community Carbon Footprint 2018/19 (August 2020)

## Total gross emissions in the Horizons Region

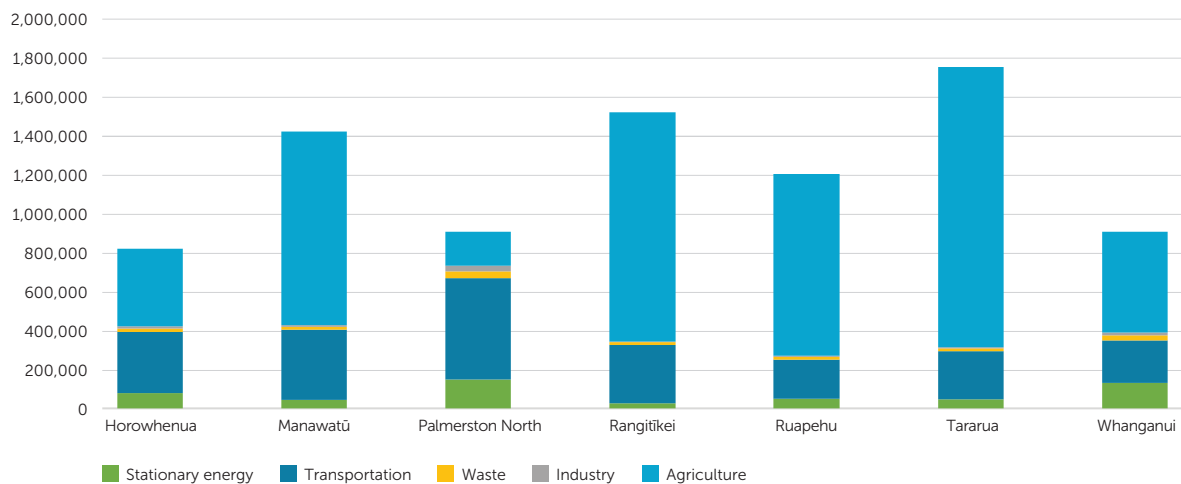


Figure 29: Total gross emissions in the Horizons Region, by sector (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). Source: Horizons Region Community Carbon Footprint 2018/19 (August 2020)

The strategic direction from central government and the Regional Land Transport Plan provides a strong directive to reduce carbon emissions from transport. Public transport has an important role to play in this space. High-quality vehicles and increased use of public transport will form an essential component in contributing to reductions in emissions associated with transport. However, a low emission fleet alone is unlikely to result in an adequate reduction in the region's transport emissions due to low use of public transport. A transition to zero-emission public transport needs to be coupled with a significant increase in patronage. The challenge will be making public transport an attractive and competitive mode of travel to enable reduced reliance on private, fossil-fuelled vehicles as well as sourcing funding to provide a lower emission public transport fleet, including a zero-emission public bus fleet by 2035.

### Ageing population

The population is ageing, as more people live longer and as the birth rate declines. Approximately 18% of the region's population is over 65, with this percentage projected to rise to 26% by 2053<sup>13</sup>. An ageing population will require access to a wider range of transport options. With an increasing proportion of households on fixed incomes due to retirement, public transport will need to remain and become even more accessible and affordable over time.

Public transport plays and will continue to play a large role in meeting the mobility needs of an older population at an affordable price. The challenge will be to provide services to a level that are both accessible and affordable.

### Transport affordability and funding

Transport affordability is a continued challenge for the region. Public transport fares should provide value for money and consider the economic limitations of communities, enabling those who depend on public transport to carry out their daily lives. However, the service must also remain financially sustainable for customers, ratepayers and funding partners.

With population growth and increasing expectations on what a public transport system should deliver, providing sufficient transport capacity for our cities and towns is coming at an ever-increasing financial cost.

Horizons is similar to most other regions in New Zealand where very few public transport services are operated wholly commercially and some form of subsidy is generally required. At present funding for public transport comes primarily from four main sources:

- Fares paid by customers who use public transport;
- Rates collected by Horizons Regional Council for services (both public transport, infrastructure such as bus stops and total mobility). This is often referred to as the 'local share';
- Third-party/developer contributions from parties who wish to subsidise free travel for staff or students (e.g. Massey and UCOL unlimited access schemes);
- Central Government via the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) and SuperGold card scheme.

The ability to fund public transport services from fares is driven by patronage on services and the price of fares that are paid to use the service. It is important that public transport is priced in a way that encourages

<sup>13</sup> Manawatū-Whanganui projections, July 2020 (Infometrics)

sustainable travel behaviour for those who have a choice. This contributes to managing travel demand on already constrained roads and provides those with limited travel options, access to essential services. At the same time there needs to be a sustainable funding model to pay for a high-quality public transport service that people want to use.

Councils across the country are all facing similar challenges regarding funding for public transport. In the Horizons Region, we are strongly motivated to provide the best public transport system possible, that gets widely used and reduces the reliance on other traditional travel modes. However this comes at a cost. Changes to the funding model and finding innovative ways to fund public transport are possible, though not always achievable. Lobbying central government for greater and more flexible funding is a key challenge moving forward as is securing enough funding to increase public transport services.

It is not possible to significantly increase passenger fares and grow patronage. As well as seeking funding through the usual sources, Council will need to work in partnership with the region's territorial authorities and other transport partners to:

- Achieve the longer term objectives of this Plan;
- Use best-practice service design and network principles, alongside strong marketing and information to improve patronage and financial performance without needing to raise fares;
- Investigate new funding approaches that aim to explore alternative funding sources and reduce reliance on passenger fares and public subsidy; and
- Sequence additional investment and network improvements with land use development and population and travel demand growth to enable investment at the right time so costs can be funded across a larger population base.

### Urban land-use

Urban design and land use have often catered for the use of a private vehicle rather than other transport modes. Historical planning and design of urban areas in the region have resulted in urban sprawl. This can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of public transport and can make it difficult to provide adequate levels of service to all areas of our towns and cities.

Compounding this issue is street design which can be narrow and not suitable for buses or able to accommodate bus stops. Strong relationships with territorial authorities are key to ensuring an urban design that supports public transport into the future.

### COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the region's public transport services during 2020 and 2021. During March-May 2020 when New Zealand was in the first level 4 and 3 lockdown, services were reduced and passenger numbers dropped significantly. Most services were slow to recover after this lockdown as people limited their travel. However as time went on, many of the services in the region started to

recover. This was in part due to the free fares offered until 30 June 2020 and simplified fares (child fare) until September 2020. While we have seen services recover, most have not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels.

The second level 4 and 3 lockdown for the region in August-September 2021 also disrupted patronage. The average number of trips taken on a weekday dropped from 3,450 pre lockdown to 2,400 post-lockdown. The variance in pre and post lockdown numbers is likely due to fewer passengers using the Massey services. During the 2021 lockdown, the network carried a total of 3,412 passenger trips across the three weeks, with an estimated 45,000 to 55,000 passenger trips estimated to be lost over this period. However all networks (except the Massey services) recovered faster than expected from the 2021 lockdown. Within one week of moving back to COVID-19 Alert Level 2, patronage on the Whanganui, Feilding, Ashhurst and Horowhenua services were close to pre-lockdown levels.

Moving forward, it is difficult to predict the scale and level of impact COVID-19 will continue to have on public transport. There are likely to be changes to travel patterns and employment destinations that the network will need to respond to, as well as communities potentially relying on lower or more fixed incomes. In addition, more people are working and studying from home which will affect the overall use of the public transport service. There may be opportunities to offer better service for new travel patterns, for example, more travel during off-peak times. Being an essential service, the public transport network will need to continue to adapt to the challenges presented by COVID-19 to ensure our communities are connected, and have access to social, economic and wellbeing opportunities.

## 4.4

### Ngā whai wāhi mō ngā waka whenua

## Opportunities for public transport

This section outlines the opportunities available within the public transport space which, if utilised, will likely result in improvements to the public transport experience and access in the region. Looking at a more holistic view, if we can solve the public transport challenges outlined in the previous section, the region could reasonably expect to see the following opportunities realised:

- Improved air quality. Through greater use of public transport and less use of private motor vehicles and through use of a low and zero emission public transport fleet;
- Improved road safety. More people using public transport mean less vehicles on the road which can improve safety outcomes; and
- Social cohesion. When people are connected, their well-being benefits. Similarly, an integrated community is more likely to be an inclusive one.

## Population growth and integrated planning

This opportunity provides a key point of balance to some of the challenges identified earlier in the Plan. While existing land use promotes private vehicle use, it's important that opportunities to change this are taken.

Population growth represents both a challenge and an opportunity for public transport. The rate of growth being experienced in our region will become a real challenge unless we ensure our public transport system can maintain accessibility, connectivity and more generally, protect the liveability of the region for our residents. However, growth also represents an opportunity for public transport as there are potentially more people likely to use the service, particularly if travel by car becomes more difficult due to congestion on the road network. Further to this, a good public transport service can support population growth and increased urban density. As can be seen in larger urban areas with good access to public transport, people often choose to live within public transport corridors.

The projected level of urban growth, particularly in Palmerston North, Whanganui, Feilding and Levin will require a successful, evolving public transport system that supports key commercial and residential growth areas. The close integration of transport infrastructure and land use planning will be critical to a successful public transport system as areas of the region grow. Strong working relationships between territorial authorities, Waka Kotahi (as the state highway provider) and Council will be key to integrated land use and public transport planning.

In time, if managed well, the nature of urban growth will provide the right conditions for the public transport system to grow and succeed further.

## Technology

Emerging technology is constantly evolving and can provide significant opportunities to improve all aspects of a public transport service. Many new technologies are already available that are changing the way people choose to travel, including electric bikes and cars, ride-hailing apps such as Uber, electric buses, and electric scooters. New technology can also present better ways to operate the transport system by:

- Making service, timetable and wayfinding information, including real-time information easier for users;
- Optimising the use of assets;
- Managing the transport network efficiently; and
- Gathering useful data about problems and opportunities across the network.

Being open and adaptive to new technologies will create opportunities to provide a more efficient transport network, a better travelling experience, more cost-effective investment, and reduced environmental impacts enabling us to deliver the best possible public transport system for our region.

## Learning from success in other regions

In recent years, there have been other regions with success in patronage growth such as Otago, Waikato,

and Auckland. Auckland and Otago in particular have seen high increases in patronage, which has also improved financial viability markers like farebox recovery rates. These successes include smaller urban areas such as Queenstown and Waiheke Island, as well as larger centres like Dunedin and Hamilton.

Success in these regions has been achieved through new planning approaches, such as 'Network Oriented Planning'. This is not one tool, but a collection of tools used together to increase patronage through network effects. Some examples of this approach include:

- Higher frequencies;
- More integrated routes that allow for multiple destinations, for multiple reasons at multiple times;
- Competitive journey times; and
- Strong branding and service information - including encouragement and information about transfers, and the use of online tools like the Transit app.

## Geographic, historic, and urban form opportunities

Many urban areas in our region developed around rail and other public transport services. This creates opportunities for public transport today. Whanganui built New Zealand's first provincial tram system and retains strong population density on public transport corridors and relatively low car ownership. Rail used to run down some key transport corridors in Palmerston North. This provides an opportunity to utilise this public space for public transport rather than just cars. Both Palmerston North and Whanganui also have more than century-long histories of bus services.

Until the 1990s, New Zealand rail road services, as well as other services, provided a wider and more regular array of inter-urban bus services than are available today. This suggests that the roads and distances between centres may be suitable for more regular inter-urban services.

In rail, the Horizons Region has a strong history and geographic opportunities due to its railway corridors. Many of the urban pockets in the region are along the main trunk line, which may make them easier to service with future growth in passenger rail. This is not just limited to centres like Palmerston North and Levin. Marton, Taihape, and Taumarunui all previously had public transport-focused rail services in both directions toward Auckland, Wellington and other centres on the main trunk line.

Better use of the rail network for passenger travel provides a significant opportunity for public transport in the region. It is generally considered to be an attractive and convenient means of travel by many. Use of rail can also support reductions in carbon emissions and improve safety on the road network through less modal conflict. With the rail infrastructure in place, the introduction of passenger rail comes down to adequate government and funding support to enable these services to be provided at an affordable price for our communities. While there is a long timeline for improvements in rail, feeder bus services to upcoming rail improvements may help to grow demand for future services in the interim.



# **Te pikitia nui: Tā mātou ahunga ā-rautaki**

## **The big picture: Our strategic direction**

This section outlines our strategic direction for public transport in the Horizons Region over the next 10 years. It includes a vision setting out the overarching goal for public transport over the life of this Plan. This section also includes the strategic objective and policy framework which outlines how we will achieve the vision.

## Developing the strategic direction

In developing the strategic direction, the Passenger Transport Committee undertook an Investment Logic Mapping exercise. Investment Logic Mapping (ILM) is a technique to ensure that robust discussion and thinking is done up-front, resulting in a sound problem definition before solutions are identified and before any investment decision is made. In respect to RPTP development, an ILM process helps set the scene for the region's strategic direction and investment priorities and has been instrumental in developing the vision and objective framework contained in this Plan. It considers the existing public transport network, challenges and opportunities

Through this ILM process, three problem statements were identified to represent the current public transport system in the Horizons Region:

### **Public Transport is not supplied at a level that is convenient, attractive and viable for everyone, preventing mode shift and inclusive access to social and economic opportunities.**

This problem statement reflects the existing low level of service provided by public transport offered across the region. Key points in the development of this problem statement include:

- Public transport is not currently a convenient or viable alternative to private vehicles for most trips.
- Accessibility of the public transport network varies significantly across the region with many parts having no public transport at all.
- Service frequency varies significantly across the region.
- Public transport in the region doesn't value user's time.

The opportunities that arise with overcoming this problem are significant. Providing an effective public transport network that meets the needs of users will mean more people on buses and less in private vehicles. Doing this will improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the region's communities. Specifically, it has the potential to reduce the cost of living as car ownership is expensive. In addition to the initial outlay, costs associated with fuel (which are currently rising steadily), annual registration, warrant of fitness and maintenance are significant. On top of this, vehicles depreciate in value. Regular use of public transport and not owning a car has the potential to save some families a significant amount of money.

Lastly, public transport is proven to be a safer travel mode than the private vehicle. Travelling by bus is safer for passengers in the event of a collision, and the more people who travel by bus, the less private vehicles there are competing for road space. If public transport was supplied at a level that is convenient, attractive and viable for everyone, then these benefits would likely be realised.

### **A marginal approach to planning and modelling of public transport has led to unequal levels of resourcing and a network that is not as integrated, efficient or as easily understood as it could be.**

Investment decisions for public transport in the region have historically been made based on the level of

funding available rather than delivering on the needs of the community. These incremental changes have resulted in the public transport network we have today being not as effective and efficient as it could be. While this is not currently the case, previous government direction has not supported significant change in public transport investment.

Over time, the funding available for improvements has tended to favour larger urban areas, meaning that areas outside of Palmerston North have a lower level of resourcing per capita than Palmerston North. Furthermore, because changes across the region are generally incremental and marginal (e.g. a percentage of increase on current spend), other areas have not been able to catch up to the increase in investment in other areas.

Further to this, public transport units and regional services in the Horizons Region have generally been planned and reviewed in isolation from each other, the result being that consideration of the wider network has been out of scope of individual service reviews. This may have meant that opportunities for efficiency through coordination have been missed.

### **The public transport system is not set up to help reduce emissions and environmental impacts leading to the inability to deliver on community and government expectations.**

Reducing emissions has not historically been a primary focus for the public transport network in the region. As identified earlier in the Plan, it has focused on providing a level of service in urban areas for those with the greatest need. This is different than providing a public transport network that supports a reduction in transport emissions. To do this, the public transport network needs to appeal and attract a wider range of users.

The other component to reducing transport emissions is changes from the existing diesel bus fleet to a low and no emission fleet. While the fleet contributes a relatively small component for all transport emissions, it is important to be able to provide a lower emission transport alternative to the public.

The ILM benefits were developed by the PTC. If the problems identified are resolved, we can expect to experience the following benefits:

1. Improved access to a multi-modal inter/intra-regional transport system with wide appeal and convenience for public transport;
2. Increased safety and community wellbeing;
3. Improved connectivity, integration and efficiency with more inclusive access; and
4. Improved environmental health through decreased pressure on the transport system.

These problems and benefits, along with the strategic direction signalled in the GPS and Regional Land Transport Plan have guided the strategic response outlined below to solve these problems.

## 5.

# Tā mātou e kōingo ai What we want to achieve

This section outlines our strategic direction and what we want to achieve for public transport over the life of this Plan. It sets out our vision for Horizons public transport system and will guide decisions and investment in our network over the next 10 years. Put simply, this section outlines what we want to achieve (vision), and how we plan to accomplish that (objectives and policies). The strategic direction has been guided by the key legislation and strategies outlined in Section 2 of this Plan and tested through early engagement with key stakeholders.

Targets have been included in section 6.3 of this Plan. These will measure how we are tracking against meeting the vision and objectives as various elements proposed through this Plan are implemented.

## 5.1 Te Wawata Vision

The vision for public transport in the Horizons Region is outlined below. It communicates our aspirations for public transport and underpins the objectives and policies designed to achieve this vision.

An attractive, integrated and convenient public transport system that connects us, enhances our wellbeing and environment, and becomes the preferred mode of transport in and between urban areas.

## 5.2 Ngā Whāinga me ngā Kaupapa Here Objectives and policies

The six objectives outlined below will guide implementation of the RPTP. These objectives will help achieve the vision whilst reflecting the issues which have been identified through consultation and wider national, regional, and local policy context. The policies (how we will get there) supporting each objective, provide further detail on how each objective is to be achieved.

### Objective 1. Connected

**Provide a simple, connected and convenient public transport network with wide appeal that attracts and retains customers, and encourages mode shift.**

This objective is focused on providing a more attractive public transport network that people want to use. It is acknowledged that the current public transport system is limiting and does not currently compete with the convenience and attractiveness of the private vehicle. We want public transport to be the preferred mode of transport in and between our urban areas. To do this we need to remove the current barriers and move towards a simple, connected and convenient transport network. The following key steps will be important in achieving this objective:

- Supplying services at frequencies, hours of operation, journey times, and coverage to offer an attractive and viable alternative to the private car, and provide for multiple destinations, purposes and times of travel;
- Enable a pathway for a region-wide review that considers and adjusts the way separate areas of the region are reviewed to ensure geographic

improvements are connected and lead towards a simple, connected and convenient regional network;

- Creating routes that are well connected and frequent enough to increase patronage;
- Combine best practice service design across the network with smart communications and information that emphasise the network's simplicity, connectedness and convenience;
- Have clear, simple wayfinding, signage and information; and
- Ensure customers are well informed about how best to use the network and can effectively plan their journeys.

To achieve a simple, connected and convenient public transport network that attracts customers and encourages mode shift, users need an integrated network that links different layers of services. Services on key corridors within large urban areas have different demands than those that connect to outlying suburbs, or longer distance services connecting different towns or cities.

In the previous RPTP, services were defined only as urban or regional. A different approach has been taken in this Plan, which also brings the region in line with other approaches nationally. Sample service levels provide Council with a framework to determine the level of service for public transport services, based on network goals, community demand or need, and available resources. We are proposing a layered network consisting of core, local, regional and inter-regional, and targeted services as follows:

- **Core** services that create efficient routes and networks of routes around urban areas. The ability to transfer and the use of crosstown routes means core services can be used flexibly to reach multiple destinations, for multiple travel purposes and times. Core services operate at higher frequencies and aim to be competitive with the private car, as well as integrated with active and other transport modes. These services could have a higher level of service during peak times and a lower level of service during off-peak times.
- **Local** services which provide coverage to areas of the public transport network not well served by the core services. Local services include lower frequency urban services linking lower density areas to destinations and key nodes on the core network. Integration with core networks mean there are multiple choices for the final destination.
- **Regional and inter-regional** services which link core urban networks to other core urban networks, and/or link two or more urban areas of varying sizes. They will reach smaller rural destinations where they sit along the route. They include rail services. They generally have more limited targeted operational hours and run at lower frequencies to meet the needs of the community.
- **Targeted** services which aim to provide services to areas or link destinations where there is not a core or local service, or where normal services cannot meet peak demand. Targeted services include: 'feeder services' that connect to regional or inter-regional services, school bus services, on-demand/demand responsive services, community vans and health shuttles, and special event services. Targeted services should also aim to link with core, local and regional services.

## Policies and Actions

<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b> Provide a simple, connected and convenient public transport network with wide appeal that attracts and retains customers, and encourages mode shift	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1.1. Provide a public transport network that maximises the range of travel options and destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design routes that maximise flexibility, access and travel options to destinations such as employment, recreation, health services, education facilities, and other key services.</li> <li>• Design routes, interchanges, timetables, infrastructure and fares that make it convenient and safe to transfer and connect between services.</li> <li>• Work with territorial authorities to ensure that supporting physical infrastructure supports easy and safe access to the public transport network.</li> <li>• Work with territorial authorities to integrate land use and public transport planning to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate the provision of services in new development areas; and</li> <li>- Improve integration within the existing network.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Facilitate increased development density or redevelopment around stops and major public transport facilities on the network.</li> </ul>
1.2. Provide a simple, layered network of services (core, local/regional and targeted) that is easy to understand and meets a diverse range of travel needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide and enhance both urban and regional public transport services, using the following layers of services and as previously described:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Core</b> services: provide direct, frequent services that connect people with destinations along key transport corridors;</li> <li>- <b>Local</b> services provide coverage on areas of the public transport network not well served by the core services and connect to the core network;</li> <li>- <b>Regional and inter-regional</b> services link core urban networks to other core urban networks, and/or link two or more urban areas of varying sizes; and</li> <li>- <b>Targeted</b> services provide services to areas or link destinations where there is not a core or local service, or where normal services cannot meet peak demand.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1.3. Provide regional and urban public transport services that are highly accessible, flexible and affordable alternatives to private vehicles, empowering communities to choose public transport over other modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to provide frequencies, connections and hours of operation that are competitive with the convenience of private vehicles.</li> <li>• Design services that allow for different purposes of travel, including those other than the traditional 40 hour working week, as well as more traditional purposes.</li> </ul>



<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b> Provide a simple, connected and convenient public transport network with wide appeal that attracts and retains customers, and encourages mode shift	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1.4. Improve public transport journey times and resilience. Maintain public transport reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with operators and other partners to improve the reliability, resilience, accessibility and punctuality of public transport services.</li> <li>• Specify consistent standards for reliability and punctuality and incentivise good service performance through operator contracts.</li> <li>• Work with Palmerston North City Council and Whanganui District Council to investigate the need for bus priority on key corridors.</li> <li>• Work with territorial authorities, Waka Kotahi and operators to develop and improve processes for managing planned and unplanned service disruptions to minimise impacts on customers, including processes for communicating with them.</li> </ul>
1.5. Investigate options to review and improve regional and inter-regional connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a region-wide review of regional and inter-regional services to ensure we have a connected and efficient network. Identify opportunities to reach, or better reach parts of the region with a network-oriented approach.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to better serve smaller communities at low cost by incorporating them into viable regional and inter-regional routes that connect multiple urban areas.</li> <li>• Collaborate with central government agencies, territorial authorities and local communities to identify the demand and willingness to financially support services that improve regional connectivity.</li> <li>• Consider and adjust the way separate districts are reviewed to ensure that geographically linked improvements are connected and lead towards a simple, cohesive and convenient network.</li> <li>• Consider requests for new regional services from relevant territorial authorities, community boards, or resident groups when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposed regional connection is consistent with the objectives of this Plan;</li> <li>- There is potential for a suitable and sustainable level of demand; and</li> <li>- There is community willingness to financially support the introduction of a regional connection.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider and support requests, where there is a willingness for the community or territorial authority to explore options, policies, or incentives within their control to make the service a success.</li> <li>• Investigate options for connecting passenger services to the rail network by 2024-2025.</li> <li>• Work with other councils, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, Ministry of Transport, government, and operators to support extending and increasing levels of service for regional passenger rail. This includes leadership and advocacy to support better use of the rail network and better funding structures.</li> <li>• Consider inter-regional public transport options alongside relevant service reviews, in collaboration with neighbouring regional councils and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
1.6. Work collaboratively with territorial authorities and communities, operators, partner agencies, stakeholders and customers to grow the modal share of public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively work with community and stakeholder groups to understand the needs and opportunities to inform future service provision.</li> <li>• Collaborate with territorial authorities, central government and partner agencies to support an integrated approach to mode shift.</li> <li>• Work with territorial authorities and stakeholders to ensure access to public transport is factored in when new development areas are proposed and built.</li> <li>• Work with territorial authorities and developers to ensure that street networks are designed to support public transport services and are well connected with walking and cycling facilities. Promote the introduction of parking policies that support public transport uptake.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain regional advisory or governance groups with each territorial authority to improve existing public transport services and guide the development of new services.</li> <li>• Engage with Waka Kotahi and territorial authorities to co-develop a mode shift plan to focus efforts to grow the share of travel by walking, cycling and public transport.</li> </ul>
1.7. Provide a positive and consistent customer experience across the public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a high level of customer service across all services in the region.</li> <li>• Require all staff (council and operators (office staff and drivers)) to undertake and maintain customer service and disability awareness training.</li> <li>• Maintain consistent Conditions of Carriage across all contracted services.</li> </ul>
1.8. Collect and use travel data and customer insights to improve the network as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly engage with customers to understand needs and opportunities across the region.</li> <li>• Undertake biannual public transport customer satisfaction surveys collecting information on service quality and performance, including information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer satisfaction;</li> <li>- Passenger facilities (on bus);</li> <li>- Complaints (including number resolved); and</li> <li>- Quality of infrastructure such as bus stops, shelters, signage, bike parking; and website content.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1.9. Ensure timetables are achievable to provide punctual, reliable and customer focused services across the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop realistic and achievable timetables using actual monitored travel times.</li> <li>• Work with operators to monitor actual travel times using GPS real time tracking where possible and other performance measurement systems. Where necessary modify timetables as required to provide customers with a high standard of service reliability.</li> </ul>
1.10. Consider and explore trial services to test viability of new services and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial services where appropriate to test the viability of new services.</li> <li>• Work with partner agencies to explore the introduction of new services.</li> </ul>

Table 2: Policies and Actions for Objective 1

## Objective 2. Infrastructure and information

### **Provide high quality, safe and accessible public transport infrastructure and information that supports an efficient and connected transport network, and multi-modal travel.**

The success of our public transport network relies on close integration, planning and collaboration between Horizons, territorial authorities and partner agencies. A successful network relies on the provision of bus priority measures, passenger facilities, and safe access via other modes to the network. Territorial Authorities are responsible for providing infrastructure to support and complement the public transport services provided by Horizons, making effective communication and coordination between agencies critical. Other key factors include providing safe access to the network for everyone, particularly for those with disability and/or mobility challenges.

The last piece of the puzzle includes ensuring information is readily accessible, easily understood and supports the public transport system.

Currently Horizons public transport has no straightforward way to refer to our bus services, which can sometimes lead to confusion. We intend to emulate other regional councils (eg Otago Regional Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council) and bring the services under one unified brand. Based on the experience of other councils, we expect this will make our network easier for people to identify the public bus service, and importantly, to know where to go for information. Once established, we will continue to provide a consistent brand across our public transport network. All contracted operators in the Horizons Region will be required to be part of this integrated branding system. This branding will be developed by Horizons with input from territorial authorities, operators, and partner agencies.

Further to a consistent brand experience, we also acknowledge that technology is moving at pace. This presents opportunities to improve how we deliver services and information. As our region continues to grow and people choose to call Horizons home, we will need to explore new ways to enable more public transport journeys and improve the overall experience. In specific growth areas, travel demand will shift over time and may not be able to be met by the existing public transport network. Equally, there are exciting opportunities for new technology and service platforms to play a bigger role in our service offering. Trialling new technology will allow us to gather information and assess costs and benefits, before committing to a permanent solution.

This objective and supporting policies and actions seek to:

- Promote the public transport network to influence positive behaviour for customers;
- Ensure we keep pace with customer expectations of smart and accurate digital information and interactions;
- Provide clear, simple wayfinding, signage and information;
- Ensure customers are well informed and can effectively plan their journeys;
- Develop a common 'brand' for Horizons Regional Council public transport services to enable easier access to information for customers; and
- Encourage and enable development of supporting infrastructure such as bike parks and park and ride facilities, and require on-bus facilities (bike racks) to support multi-modal travel.



## Policies and Actions

<b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b> Provide high quality, safe and accessible public transport infrastructure and information that supports an efficient and connected transport network, and multi-modal travel.	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Actions</b>
2.1. Provide easy to access and intuitive information to customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that customer and wayfinding information related to the public transport network is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible and widely available;</li> <li>- Accurate and up-to-date;</li> <li>- Meets Horizons Regional Council branding and communication standards; and</li> <li>- Making best use of existing infrastructure and assets such as bus stops and shelters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Explore opportunities to improve bus stop identification for customers.</li> <li>Ensure that customer information is current and in a format that is fully accessible by customers, including those with hearing and sight impairments.</li> </ul>
2.2. Provide a consistent brand experience across the public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2024, design, implement, and maintain a high quality brand for Horizons Regional Council public transport services that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is developed in collaboration with territorial authorities, operators and partner agencies;</li> <li>- Is easily found and identifiable by current and potential customers;</li> <li>- Improves access to public transport information in the region; and</li> <li>- Is applied consistently across the regional public transport network and supporting infrastructure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Once established, ensure that all advertising or other media does not negatively impact the implementation or recognition of the Horizons public transport brand.</li> </ul>
2.3. Keep pace with technology to provide smart and accurate digital information that enhances the user experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate, trial and implement new technology and platforms where there is potential to improve the operation and experience of the public transport network.</li> </ul>
2.4. Provide on-street infrastructure that is safe, welcoming and attractive for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that accessibility and safety is incorporated in the planning and provision of all infrastructure, including bus terminal upgrades.</li> <li>Work with territorial authorities, stakeholders and infrastructure providers to ensure that safety is a core consideration in all public transport infrastructure delivery.</li> <li>Monitor and continuously improve infrastructure assets to meet best practice where possible, service requirements, comfort, and future needs.</li> <li>Work with territorial authorities, New Zealand Police, Waka Kotahi and community groups to review, and where necessary, adapt infrastructure to meet mobility or other community needs.</li> <li>In addition to accessibility and safety, any terminal upgrade or development should give consideration to balancing environmental, amenity and space impacts from use of the terminal with the needs of the public transport network.</li> <li>Measure and work to improve the level of service of bus shelters. Enable this through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with territorial authorities.</li> </ul>
2.5. Ensure people with mobility challenges and higher accessibility needs are able to easily and safely access public transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the disability community and other stakeholders to ensure a best practice approach is taken to providing a barrier free public transport infrastructure and services.</li> <li>Provide accessible public transport services, including priority seating, low floor access, access to bus stop kerbs and standing pads.</li> </ul>
2.6. Maintain sufficient vehicle capacity and facilities on public transport services to support comfortable, safe and attractive passenger journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require operators to ensure that they have sufficient vehicles that comply with vehicle quality standards and meet standard accessibility requirements.</li> <li>Ensure all vehicles meet sizing specifications for specific routes and contracts as required.</li> <li>Ensure operators comply with vehicle cleanliness and maintenance standards.</li> <li>Ensure that operators provide a high standard of customer service, comfort, appeal and experience on buses by outlining and monitoring the standards in operator contracts and through customer and driver feedback.</li> <li>Work with operators to investigate, trial and implement best practice and innovative service practices.</li> </ul>
2.7. Work with territorial authorities to encourage high quality, safe walking and cycling connections to public transport and safe cycle storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require operators to provide for the safe carriage of bicycles and micro-mobility devices on bus services, including long distance services where possible.</li> <li>Work with territorial authorities to provide convenient and safe connections, and visible signage between public transport and walking and cycling networks and ensure integration with these networks is taken into account when upgrading and delivering public transport infrastructure.</li> <li>Encourage development of secure and weather-proof bike parks on major urban routes to attract active transport users who want to use public transport.</li> </ul>
2.8. Work with territorial authorities to explore the value and need for park and ride facilities and encourage paid parking at appropriate sites to support public transport use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the feasibility of dedicated park and ride facilities to provide greater connections between other modes and the public transport network.</li> <li>Work with territorial authorities and Waka Kotahi to investigate the need for park and ride facilities at strategic locations on the public transport network to enable mode shift and support greater access.</li> <li>In the event park and ride facilities are constructed in the region, ensure they are designed to enhance safety, accessibility, multi-modal connectivity and urban form and enable potential future technologies.</li> <li>Work with territorial authorities to introduce parking policies that remove subsidised and/or free parking in urban centres to support public transport uptake;</li> <li>Work with territorial authorities and KiwiRail to provide suitable park and ride facilities for passenger rail, particularly to extend the reach of the existing Capital Connection Passenger Rail service.</li> </ul>
2.9. Promote public transport services to influence behaviour change and create positive perceptions of services to support mode shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that promotion of existing services and service changes are well communicated through a variety of channels.</li> <li>Work with operators and territorial authorities to provide excellent customer information to market public transport products.</li> <li>Encourage behavioural change for payment methods, compliance with conditions of carriage, travel patterns and etiquette.</li> <li>Proactively market service improvements or changes to key market segments. This should use a range of approaches and communication channels to reach both users and non-users.</li> </ul>

Table 3: Policies and Actions for Objective 2

## Objective 3: Reduce emissions

### Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport and improved air quality through increased use of public transport and decarbonising the public transport bus fleet.

The strategic direction from central government and the Regional Land Transport Plan provides strong direction regarding reduction in carbon emissions from transport. Public transport has an important role to play in this space. High quality vehicles and increased use of public transport will form an essential component in contributing to reductions in emissions associated with transport. This objective seeks to ensure our public transport system not only meets minimum standards but strives to excel in the vehicle quality provided while also attracting and retaining users.

It is widely accepted that if more people travel by public transport, rather than in single occupant vehicles, emissions of greenhouse gases from transport contributing to climate change will reduce. Other environmental benefits include improved air quality, reduced heavy metal deposits by vehicles on our roads (which then pass into stormwater and freshwater systems) and reduce noise effects in urban areas. The internationally recognised Avoid-Shift-Improve (ASI) framework is a key transport approach to reduce environmental impacts and improve access and liveability of communities. This framework underpins many recent national policy documents and subsequently underpins multiple objectives within this Plan. Reducing reliance on cars

and supporting people to walk, cycle and use public transport, supports system and trip efficiency which will reduce carbon emissions from transport overall.

To achieve the desired mode shift, we will work collaboratively to encourage greater usage of public transport. This is addressed in Objective 1: Provide a simple, connected and convenient public transport network with wide appeal that attracts and retains customers, and encourages mode shift.

The vehicles used to deliver public transport can have significant impacts on our local environment, communities, and health through emissions of greenhouse gases, other particulates, and noise. In the Horizons region, the bus fleet is of average quality, with only one electric vehicle currently in operation. To reduce the negative environmental impacts of running a public transport service, we need to ensure that the vehicle fleet that operates on our network is modern, energy efficient, and is as clean as possible. As a minimum, all buses will be required to meet the common minimum standards set through Waka Kotahi's Requirements for Urban Buses in New Zealand (RUB), however we acknowledge this is not enough to achieve the changes recently signalled by central government. Therefore, through this objective and its supporting policies and actions, we will actively encourage and enable the introduction of zero-emission vehicles (electric or other non CO<sup>2</sup> emitting vehicles). Funding and investment from central government will be required to support this transition.

## Policies and Actions

<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b> Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport and improved air quality through increased use of public transport and decarbonising the public transport bus fleet.	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Actions</b>
3.1. Ensure high quality vehicle standards on all contracted services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all contracted bus services comply, at a minimum, with Waka Kotahi's 'Requirements for Urban Buses' and any other standards including any set by Horizons Regional Council on vehicle quality.</li> <li>• Incentivise higher vehicle quality and technology through contract procurement.</li> <li>• Plan for, and incentivise the transition to a zero-carbon emissions public bus fleet through contract procurement.</li> <li>• Work with operators of contract public transport units to increase the number of buses aged 0-10 years so they make up at least 50% of the fleet by 2027.</li> </ul>
3.2. Transition to a zero-emission public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2025, in collaboration with regional partners and Waka Kotahi, develop an investment programme and timeline to enable the transition to a zero-emission (non-CO<sup>2</sup>) public bus fleet by 2035, or any other such date as required by central government.</li> <li>• Ensure non CO<sup>2</sup> emitting vehicles are incorporated into the operational bus fleet in a phased approach based on the re-tendering of contract units and/or in accordance with government requirements.</li> <li>• Engage with operators to explore options to introduce zero-emission vehicles and/or alternative fuelled vehicles into the operational bus fleet earlier than the retendering of contract units through contract variations.</li> <li>• Actively engage with partners and the community to identify, explore and trial new technologies and platforms that improve the efficiency and environmental impacts of the public transport network.</li> <li>• Consider and utilise the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework to increase public transport use and reduce carbon emissions from transport.</li> </ul>
3.3. Support and advocate for sustainable approaches to the introduction of new physical and other supporting infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider long-term, sustainable approaches when planning, designing, and building the physical infrastructure needed to support a zero-carbon public bus fleet by 2035.</li> <li>• Investigate and consider alternative funding opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations and other necessary supporting infrastructure, to enable the transition to low carbon vehicles.</li> <li>• Ensure contracts for new physical infrastructure (i.e. bus stops, shelters and bus terminals) incorporate environmentally sustainable practices.</li> </ul>

Table 4: Policies and Actions for Objective 3

## Objective 4: Accessible and equitable

### Pursue improved, equitable access to public transport across the region.

All customers should be able to use our public transport network with relative ease and dignity. People with accessibility needs include people with impairments, older persons and others who can find the independent use of public transport services difficult or impossible without appropriate accessibility considerations for each stage of the journey.

Further, serving the wide geographical spread of the region has been considered difficult and there

are areas of the region that do not have access to public transport. This has resulted in a lower level of accessible public transport for less central, and less populated parts of the region. Other areas that do have access to public transport, find the level of service inadequate to provide for their needs.

This objective and its supporting policies aims to consider the public transport needs of communities across the region. We want to ensure a high level access to the public transport network for all users regardless of age, ability or location.

## Policies and Actions

OBJECTIVE 4: Pursue improved, equitable access to public transport across the region.	
Policy	Actions
4.1. Provide a public transport network that is accessible and safe for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use universal design principles in the design and planning of services to ensure the public transport network is free of barriers and accessible for all users;</li> <li>Identify target groups and areas where service planning can help the transport-disadvantaged in particular, vulnerable users such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities.</li> <li>Work with stakeholders, including but not limited to Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand<sup>14</sup> and Māori health providers, to identify and resolve accessibility and safety issues.</li> <li>Design urban routes so that at least 90% of the residential urban population resides within 800m of a bus stop.</li> <li>Permit pets on scheduled urban services with appropriate controls in place.</li> </ul>
4.2. Continually improve accessibility for people with disabilities across all stages of a journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the location and design of facilities to ensure safe access for all customers at and around bus stops, with particular consideration given to the needs of people with disabilities. Safe access to and from the stop forms part of this consideration.</li> <li>Work with operators to ensure that training for drivers includes appropriate assistance for customers who have difficulty using public transport.</li> <li>By 2026, work with stakeholders to develop an Accessible Journey Plan to guide the development of a fully accessible network over all stages of a journey, focusing on the needs of those with disabilities.</li> </ul>
4.3. Provide a public transport network that caters for school travel where possible, and targeted school bus services to supplement the public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of school students using public transport should use the services available on the urban network;</li> <li>Where there is enough demand, supplementary school bus services should be provided in urban areas as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the nearest public or zoned schools not served by the public transport network;</li> <li>Where capacity on the public transport network cannot meet demand; and</li> <li>It is more cost-effective to provide a targeted school bus service than a regular public service.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Regular assessment of these services must be undertaken to assess demand and work with schools to find effective solutions to school travel.</li> </ul>
4.4. Provide Total Mobility services to optimise inclusion, opportunity and independence for Total Mobility customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the Total Mobility scheme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments for those wishing to enter the scheme;</li> <li>Contracting small passenger service operators and specialist operators to provide targeted services;</li> <li>A discount on qualifying travel up to a specified subsidy; and</li> <li>In eligible cases, assisting with the installation of hoists or ramps in specialist vehicles so that wheelchairs can be carried.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ensure appropriate signage and equipment is installed in all participating vehicles.</li> <li>A subsidy review will be completed every three years or alternatively whenever evidence suggests the maximum amount is insufficient for the user's needs.</li> </ul>
4.5. Investigate and explore public transport need and demand across the region with the option to trial and test viability of new services that increase equity of access in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partner agencies and communities to explore and provide specialist and/or trial public transport services in specific circumstances to improve community access to public transport.</li> <li>Investigate opportunities to better serve smaller communities at low cost by incorporating them into viable regional and inter-regional routes that connect multiple urban areas.</li> <li>Support public transport access to events to reduce congestion and ensure the continued operational performance of the transport network at these times.</li> <li>Consider and include service thresholds in service reviews where appropriate. Work towards a regional service threshold framework prior to the next Regional Public Transport Plan review.</li> </ul>
4.6. Investigate options for equitable distribution of resourcing into public transport across the region, in consultation with residents, territorial authorities and key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with communities and work with partner agencies and local businesses to identify and resolve funding and procurement issues or barriers affecting the ability to provide public transport services.</li> <li>Work with partner agencies to consider the public transport needs across the region.</li> <li>Consider the mechanisms for distribution of funding to address regional public transport needs.</li> </ul>

Table 5: Policies and Actions for Objective 4

<sup>14</sup> Formerly District Health Boards (pre July 2022)

## Objective 5: Simple and affordable fares

### Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.

We want to deliver a public transport network that provides optimal value for money for customers, but also one that promotes fairness and sustainability for ratepayers and those who contribute to funding the system. We also acknowledge that having affordable, fair and simple fares can support travel behaviour change. With rising costs associated with living and operating private vehicles, setting fares that not only support those with limited options but also compete with the private vehicle is an opportunity to attract more people to public transport. If successful, this should result in greater use of public transport and a reduction in carbon emissions, thereby supporting the vision of this Plan.

Funding for public transport comes from a range of sources such as central government funding, rates, and fare revenue. Since 2014, we have made progress in simplifying our fares and investing in an integrated ticketing system (BeeCard). We want to keep working on simplifying the fare structure and products provided to improve the user experience and ensure equitable and affordable fares. With this in mind, the following key concepts are guiding a review of fare structures:

Public transport fares in the region should be:

- simple to understand;
- equitable; and
- user focused.

The above concepts have been kept in mind when developing this objective and its supporting policies and actions.

Council's ability to control costs is limited by the availability of funding and resources. We are always striving to improve our services without increasing fares even as operating costs increase. We must balance the costs and benefits of meeting community needs and demands. This requires sustainable funding arrangements that balance user contributions (fares) with public funding, while still providing an affordable and accessible service.

Farebox recovery: In the past, we were required to set regional targets and policy for farebox recovery as a condition of funding under a National Farebox Recovery Policy. With the changes to national funding policy since mid-2018, we have no longer been required to comply with a national farebox recovery target. Therefore we have no regional targets for farebox recovery set for the term of this Plan.

However, the underlying principles of the previous farebox recovery are still relevant when developing regional fare policies:

- Fare policies should be consistent with the wider objectives in Regional Public Transport Plans and contribute to the government's transport priorities;
- Fares play an important role in helping cover the cost of public transport within available budgets; and
- Farebox recovery is one component to consider when planning fare revenue and reviewing fare levels but should not be the only measure considered.

Monitoring of farebox recovery rates using the methodology and reporting process specified by Waka Kotahi is still required. Horizons will continue making funding decisions in accordance with the policies set out in the Long-term Plan.



## Policies and Actions

<b>OBJECTIVE 5:</b> Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.	
Policy	Actions
5.1. Apply a consistent and simple fare structure approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor customer experience of the fare structure and their perception of fares relative to the benefits they receive.</li> <li>Use customer insights to ensure the current fare structure and pricing approach is fit for purpose, promotes fairness and affordability for customers, ratepayers and funding partners.</li> <li>Provide greater clarity for customers on how fares are set, reviewed and adjusted.</li> </ul>
5.2. Provide concession fares to targeted groups to increase access to affordable public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On all services:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide free travel for children under 5;</li> <li>Provide concessions for school-aged children;</li> <li>Provide concessions for tertiary students;</li> <li>Provide concessions for Seniors;</li> <li>Provide concessions for beneficiaries;</li> <li>Provide concessions to people with disabilities and free travel for caregivers who travel with them;</li> <li>Support the central government scheme providing free off-peak travel for Super-Gold card holders; and</li> <li>Work with central government on national concession schemes, including initiatives to enable cross regional concession schemes and provide concessions to Community Services Card holders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5.3. Provide incentives to encourage more frequent use of public transport, more off-peak travel and greater use of electronic cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide discounts to reward regular users through fare capping or other incentive schemes.</li> <li>Price fares to encourage greater use of electronic ticketing and ensure simple and accessible top-up options are available.</li> <li>Enable flexibility for potential fare promotions and products.</li> <li>By 2024, investigate innovative incentive options to encourage greater use of public transport and smarter connections between public transport and other sustainable transport modes.</li> <li>Explore 'mobility-as-a-service' options to facilitate access to public transport.</li> </ul>
5.4. Participate in the existing regional and national integrated ticketing systems that support integration of fares and the public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the collective regional council 'Service Level Agreement' with the contracted provider for the Regional Integrated Ticketing System (RITS).</li> <li>Assess, when appropriate, the value for money case of participating in the National Ticketing Solution (Project NEXT).</li> <li>If participation in Project NEXT is confirmed, develop a transition plan and implement an updated integrated ticketing solution that enables seamless journeys across the network.</li> <li>For any ticketing system implemented on contracted services:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all operators implement the required fare and ticketing systems;</li> <li>Ensure that all fare revenues collected by operators and third parties are auditable and available for apportionment; and</li> <li>Ensure that the ticketing system is automated to enable collection of the correct fare.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5.5. Investigate and provide special fare concessions or enter into agreements for unlimited free travel access schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider requests for a free access or bulk buy scheme in accordance with Appendix 2 of this Plan.</li> <li>Encourage and promote free access schemes as an option for businesses and community groups to enhance travel options for their staff, students and members.</li> </ul>
5.6. Ensure public transport users make a sustainable and equitable contribution towards funding of the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review fares triennially to establish whether fare adjustments are required to balance the user contribution with public funding.</li> <li>Consider as part of that review the cost of using a private vehicle for the same journey. Adjust fares to be competitive with private vehicles and encourage greater use of public transport.</li> </ul>
5.7. Investigate and explore alternative revenue and funding sources to support the public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate new funding and financing mechanisms to reduce pressure on fare payers, ratepayers and funding partners.</li> <li>Advocate for greater flexibility and a higher government contribution to the funding of public transport and network improvements.</li> <li>Encourage businesses and other organisations to advertise across the network, including at terminals and on buses.</li> <li>Provide a pathway for territorial authorities to contribute funding to public transport services that are in the interest of their communities.</li> </ul>

Table 6: Policies and Actions for Objective 5

## Objective 6: Procurement

### **Undertake an approach to procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.**

A lot has changed with procurement since the last Regional Public Transport Plan was adopted in 2015. Objectives and policies in the previous RPTP were designed towards transitioning contracts to the newly introduced Passenger Transport Operating Model (PTOM) framework. Over the duration of the previous RPTP, work has been undertaken to transition the majority of the region's contracts to the PTOM framework. The Palmerston North contract is the last remaining contract to be transitioned and will be done via the new contract due to be implemented November 2023.

The procurement policies that will guide delivery of this RPTP are built on those developed for the transition to PTOM. Specifically, with the transition

now largely complete, the focus for procurement is to ensure continued efficiency, effectiveness, and value for money under the new operating framework. This objective also seeks to guide policies on information to be collected from public transport operators to assist with planning, contracting, monitoring and benchmarking of public transport services.

By operating more efficiently we can reduce our costs and more effectively align our costs with revenue and demand. Operating efficiencies will be addressed primarily as part of our programme of service reviews, as well as through targeted service reviews and service performance reviews. Service reviews will identify routes with low demand and revenue to cost ratio and assess whether any changes are required. They will also consider the need to maintain the consistency of service levels, particularly those for frequency, hours of operation and route-level commerciality ratios and performance.





## Policies and Actions

<b>OBJECTIVE 6:</b> Undertake an approach to procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.	
Policy	Actions
6.1. Procure contracts for units in accordance with the requirements of PTOM and using a partnering approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with operators, suppliers, and funders to align with the PTOM to deliver an efficient and effective range of public transport services across the region. Specifically:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All public transport services that are integral to the regional public transport network described in this Plan (other than exempt services) will be grouped into units;</li> <li>All public transport services described in this Plan (other than exempt services) will operate under a contract with Horizons Regional Council;</li> <li>Each unit will form the basis of an individual PTOM contract with Horizons Regional Council; and</li> <li>All contracts will include key performance indicators around service performance, quality, customer service, cost effectiveness and safety.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Comply with Waka Kotahi's procurement requirements and Requirements for Urban Buses (RUB) and Horizons Regional Council's Procurement Strategy when procuring or amending units.</li> <li>Deliver a financial incentive mechanism that will be incorporated into the partnering contracts.</li> </ul>
6.2. Establish new units or amend existing units for the public transport network as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish any new or amended units for the Horizons Regional Council public transport network in accordance with legislative requirements and in response to any new major network planning outcomes.</li> <li>Actively review current exempt services to determine whether they are now integral to the public transport network.</li> </ul>
6.3. Apply a partnering approach to network planning, operation of services, and service changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the PTOM contracting model to enter and manage contractual relationships with operators.</li> <li>Where possible, implement significant network changes at the start of the PTOM contract tendering / negotiation rounds.</li> <li>Utilise shared, centrally accessed service specifications, service performance, and service measurement data between the Council and operators to improve service performance.</li> <li>Work with contracted operators to develop a business plan for each PTOM unit that aims to grow its commerciality and passenger demand, subject to the overall network development plans and targets in the RPTP.</li> <li>Revisit the business plan at regular intervals (at least annually).</li> </ul>
6.4. Identify exempt services and ensure the operation of these services does not adversely affect the wider public transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide for exempt services to operate within the Horizons Region without a PTOM contract and inter-regional services that operate without a direct subsidy from the Council.</li> <li>Assess all applications to operate or vary exempt services according to the statutory requirements. Horizons Regional Council may decline to register an exempt service, or vary the route or routes of an exempt service, where the service or variation is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>likely to have a material adverse effect on the financial viability of any unit;</li> <li>likely to increase the net cost to the Council of any unit; and</li> <li>contrary to sound traffic management or any environmental factor identified by the Council as important to the region.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6.5. Monitor performance of services and network and customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public transport travel, performance data, customer insights and feedback are collected. Use this to inform improvements to planning and delivery of service.</li> <li>Utilise modern data and knowledge management technologies and services to streamline access, use and sharing of public transport data, information and knowledge.</li> <li>Publish service quality and performance information via reports to the Passenger Transport Committee;</li> <li>Under PTOM and Total Mobility contracts, require operators to provide timely operational, performance data and information, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>safety, security and incidents;</li> <li>complaints records;</li> <li>driver training and behaviour;</li> <li>compliance with vehicle quality standards;</li> <li>records of damage and graffiti incidents and time taken to resolve; and</li> <li>other measures as required.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Seek feedback on driver satisfaction associated with the routes, timetables and infrastructure.</li> <li>Provide contractual mechanisms to vary and improve standards of services, products and processes.</li> </ul>

Table 7: Policies and Actions for Objective 6

## 6.

# Te Whakatinanatanga me te Arotakenga Implementation and review

This chapter outlines how public transport services in the region will be monitored and reviewed. It also includes guidance on when the Plan will be reviewed and the process for making changes to the Plan, including when changes are considered significant.

## 6.1

### Aroturuki Mahi Performance monitoring

Council undertakes monitoring of the region's public transport network in several ways:

- By monitoring operator performance to ensure that public transport operators are delivering services at the required level to meet their contractual obligations; and
- By undertaking operational monitoring to ensure that the public transport network is contributing to the overall objectives of this Plan.

Occasionally, there will be a need to take account of changing circumstances and demands, which will often be identified through the monitoring programme.

#### Service performance monitoring

Policy 6.5 of this RPTP outlines the information that will be required from operators to enable monitoring of the contracted units. For the sake of clarity, Policy 6.5 is repeated below.

Policy	Actions
6.5. Monitor performance of services, network and customer satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure public transport travel, performance data, customer insights and feedback are collected. Use this to inform improvements to planning and delivery of service.</li><li>• Utilise modern data and knowledge management technologies and services to streamline access, use and sharing of public transport data, information and knowledge.</li><li>• Publish service quality and performance information via reports to the Passenger Transport Committee of Horizons Regional Council.</li><li>• Under PTOM and Total Mobility contracts, require operators to provide timely operational and performance data, information and reporting as required, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- safety, security and incidents;</li><li>- complaints records;</li><li>- driver training and behaviour;</li><li>- compliance with vehicle quality standards;</li><li>- records of damage and graffiti incidents and time taken to resolve; and</li><li>- other measures as required.</li></ul></li><li>• Provide contractual mechanisms to vary and improve standards of services, products and processes.</li></ul>

In addition to the above, and as part of our ongoing performance monitoring programme, Council will undertake regular reporting of operational performance for all contracted units. The purpose of this monitoring will be to assess operator performance and viability of the contracted service.

The following information will be used to assess performance:

- Reliability, punctuality, and adherence to timetable schedules;
- Complaints and compliments;
- Service quality and customer experience;
- Bus appearance and condition;
- Revenue protection (fares evasion);
- Patronage levels;
- Non-patronage based revenue generation; and
- Operator responsiveness.

#### Unit monitoring

As part of its monitoring process, Horizons will undertake regular reviews of each public transport unit in the region. Horizons will ensure that all units comply with the monitoring requirements of Waka Kotahi. Contracts between operators and Horizons will include specific performance targets relevant to each unit to ensure they meet the objectives of this Plan.

## Ngā arotakenga Mahere Waka Whenua Public Transport Plan reviews

The Land Transport Management Act requires Regional Public Transport Plans to be kept current for a period of not less than three years but no more than 10 years. In practice this means the RPTP should generally be reviewed every three to six years. Reviews usually occur following adoption of an updated Regional Land Transport Plan, where the public transport components of the Regional Land Transport Plan are varied.

Accordingly, Horizons Regional Council will:

- Review the RPTP in alignment with the statutory requirements outlined in the Land Transport Management Act, 2003; or
- Undertake a review when otherwise agreed by Horizons Regional Council; or
- Undertake a review of the Plan if monitoring under Section 6.3 indicates the Plan is unable to meet the objectives and/or targets of this Plan. This review shall occur no earlier than 2027.

## 6.2.1

### Te panoni i te mahere nei Making changes to this Plan

If a review of this Plan is undertaken, Council will:

- Work with partner organisations to undertake the review; and use the significance policy outlined in section 6.2.2 to determine whether or how it will consult on any future versions of this Plan.

## 6.2.2

### Te tino kaupapa here Significance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out how to determine the significance of variations to the RPTP<sup>15</sup>. The RPTP can be varied at any time.

Significance can be viewed as a continuum ranging from a very low level of significance to a high level of significance (where the variation is 'critical'). At some point on the continuum the degree of significance becomes high enough that the matter is significant. Assessing the level of significance of a variation is essentially a matter of judgement.

For the purpose of clarity, the correction of minor errors in any part of the RPTP is not considered to be a variation, provided it does not affect any right, interest or duty of any person or organisation, affected by, or with an interest in, this Plan.

#### Assessing significance

Whether a variation to this RPTP is significant will be determined on a case by case basis by the Horizons Passenger Transport Committee.

A significant variation is likely to have more than minor impact on any of the following:

- The Council's ability to achieve its vision;
- The Council's ability to achieve the strategic direction of the RPTP;
- The Council's ability to achieve the objectives of the RPTP, or the Regional Land Transport Plan;
- The reallocation of the funding available for public transport in the region.

When determining the level of significance of a variation, consideration will be given to the following factors:

- The reasons for the variation and alternatives available;
- The effect of the variation on the Horizons Long-term Plan;
- The effect on the overall level, quality, and use of public transport services in the region;
- The extent to which the variation signals a material change to the planned levels of investment in the public transport network;
- The extent to which the variation will result in this RPTP being inconsistent with the Regional Land Transport Plan;
- The extent to which the variation departs from the vision and objectives of this Plan;

<sup>15</sup> This policy is a requirement of s120(4) of the Land Transport Management Act

- How many people will be affected by the variation, and the degree of impact on any or all of those people;
- The implications for the present and future economic development and efficiency of the region, safety and personal security, access and mobility, environmental sustainability, or public health; and
- The effect on the overall affordability and integrity of this Plan.

If a variation is **not significant** then the consultation requirements under s125(1) of the Land Transport Management Act do not apply. This does not imply that the variation is unimportant or that no consultation will take place. The Regional Council **will** undertake targeted consultation on matters that affect specific communities and stakeholders, including operators, even when these matters do not invoke the significance threshold outlined in this policy.

## Consultation

For **significant** variations, the decision on the type and level of consultation that will be carried out in relation to any variation of this Plan must be carried out in accordance with s125 of the Land Transport Management Act and the principles of consultation set out in section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002. These principles give local authorities the discretion to decide how much and what type of consultation they will carry out.

For variations deemed to be **not significant**, the Council will generally undertake targeted stakeholder engagement in the following circumstances:

- For **service reviews**:

As service reviews affect only a part of the region, full consultation will not generally be required. Key stakeholders will be included in preliminary engagement as the service plan is developed, and targeted public engagement will follow when options have been identified;

- For **minor changes in the delivery of public transport services**:

Minor changes in service delivery that are required to improve efficiency (such as adding or removing trips, and minor route changes) have only a local impact. In these cases, engagement will generally be undertaken on a low level with the operator(s) involved, the relevant territorial authority, and passengers who use the services;

- **Other variations**:

Any proposals for changes that affect only a sector of the community or the industry (such as a change to the Total Mobility scheme, or a change to specific vehicle quality standards) will be worked through with those most likely to be affected, as well as other relevant stakeholders.

Note that this policy does not preclude the Council from a more comprehensive consultation process for a variation that does not meet the significance threshold if the benefits of that consultation are considered to outweigh the costs.



## Ngā Whāinga RPTP me te Arotakenga RPTP Targets and Monitoring

An important element of any Plan is to monitor progress against achieving the objectives and vision. This can be done many ways. For this Plan, some key targets have been set which outline what Council wants to achieve in the next 10 years to deliver on the vision. They will also help inform an assessment to determine how Council is tracking in achieving the six objectives of this Plan.

The targets included in this Plan are designed to signal the desire to elicit change in the public transport system in the Horizons Region. These are a new function of the Plan and will be treated in a transitional manner for the first three years of the Plan. During this time, the appropriateness of baselines will be confirmed and a monitoring and reporting framework set up. Additionally, an assessment of the targets and percentages, in terms of achieving the objectives in the Regional Land Transport Plan as well as any other national direction, including the government's Emissions Reduction Plan will be undertaken. The targets included in this Plan seek to align with Horizons Regional Land Transport Plan and Long-term Plan, as well as government's direction at the time.

### MODE SHARE

**At least 10% of travel in the region to be by public transport by 2032**

- The baseline year for this target will be the 2018-19 year, to avoid misrepresentation created by patronage fluctuations in 2020-22 due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Data will be sourced using census information and regional BeeCard data.

### CARBON EMISSIONS

**At least 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per kilometre travelled for public transport bus services by 2032**

- Data for this target will be sourced from operators and contracts.
- Progress towards this target will be reported annually.
- The baseline year for this target will be 2022.

### PATRONAGE

**At least 300% increase in public transport patronage by 2032**

- The baseline year for this target will be the 2018-19 year, to avoid misrepresentation created by patronage fluctuations in 2020-22 due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Data will be sourced using census regional BeeCard data.

### CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

**90% of surveyed customers and community stakeholders are satisfied with the public transport service and total mobility scheme**

- This target will be monitored and reported on annually in conjunction with monitoring against Horizons Long-term Plan.

Figure 30. Regional Public Transport Plan targets

### Monitoring against objectives and vision

The targets outlined in section 6.3 will be monitored and reported on annually to the Passenger Transport Committee, along with qualitative reporting against the six objectives. The annual monitoring report will focus on progress towards achieving the targets and objectives.

Every three years, in conjunction with the reviews undertaken under 6.2 in response to an updated Regional Land Transport Plan, Council will complete a detailed monitoring report assessing progress towards achieving the vision, objectives, policies and targets of this Plan. The monitoring report will assess each objective and their policies and make a judgement on whether each objective and target is 'on track' to being achieved, 'achieved' or 'at risk' of not being achieved. Determination of these assessments will largely be subjective but will rely on all relevant data collected by Council through normal service management and through the targets above.





# Ngā āpiti hanga Appendices

## Āpitihanga 1: Ngā Tino Wāhi o te Kōtuitui

### Appendix 1: Public Transport Units integral to the network

#### Public Transport Units

This section outlines the public transport units in the Horizons Region that are integral to our public transport network.

They have been split into a layered network as follows:

**Core services:** provide direct, frequent services that connect people with destinations along key transport corridors. They provide a consistent, frequent service throughout the day and allow for flexible destinations and purposes of travel. These services could have a higher level of service during peak times and a lower level of service during off-peak times.

**Local services:** provide coverage to areas of the public transport network not well served by the core services. Local services include lower frequency urban services linking lower density areas to destinations and key nodes on the core network. Integration with core networks mean there are multiple choices for the final destination.

**Regional and inter-regional services:** link core urban networks to other core urban networks, and/or link two or more urban areas of varying sizes. They will reach smaller rural destinations where they sit along the route. They include rail services. They generally have more limited targeted operational hours and run at lower frequencies to meet the needs of the community.

**Targeted services:** provide services to areas or link destinations where there is not a core or local service, or where normal services cannot meet peak demand. Targeted services include: 'feeder services' that connect to regional or inter-regional services, school bus services, on-demand/demand responsive services, community vans and health shuttles; and special event services. Targeted services should also aim to link with core, local and regional services.



The table that follows lists the **integral public transport units** for the Horizons Region.

Service Unit	Service Area/Route	Service Type	Expiry	Frequency
Palmerston North Urban	Palmerston North City Massey/IPU/ Summerhill	Local	November 2023	40 minutes
Ashhurst to Palmerston North	Around Ashhurst Ashhurst to PN return	Regional and inter-regional	November 2023	2-3 hourly
Whanganui Urban	Whanganui City	Regional and inter-regional	6 October 2028	90-120 minutes
Whanganui to Palmerston North Commuter	Whanganui to Palmerston North (am) Palmerston North to Whanganui (pm)	Regional and inter-regional	6 October 2028	1x morning service and 1x evening return
Marion to Palmerston North Commuter	Marion to Palmerston North via Bulls, Sanson and Awahuri (with evening return)	Regional and inter-regional	17 January 2025	1x morning service and 1x evening return
Taihape to Palmerston North and Taihape to Whanganui	Taihape to Palmerston North via Hunterville, Ohingaiti, Marion, Bull, Sanson and Feilding Taihape to Whanganui via Hunterville, Ohingaiti, Marion and Turakina	Regional and inter-regional	1 July 2022	One morning and one afternoon (off-peak) trip on the third Friday of the month One morning and one afternoon (off-peak) trip on the first Thursday of the month
Raetihi to Ohakune bus service	Raetihi to Ohakune (return)	Regional and inter-regional	1 July 2022	Off-Peak 1x morning and 1x afternoon return trip every second Tuesday
Feilding Around Town and Feilding to Palmerston North	Commuter around Feilding and between Feilding and Palmerston North and return Feilding orbiter: around Feilding township	Local and inter-regional	17 January 2025	30-60 Minutes
Levin to Palmerston North Commuter	Levin to Palmerston North (am) Palmerston North to Levin (pm)	Regional and inter-regional	2 March 2025	Peak: Monday to Friday – 1x morning service and 1x evening return Off-Peak Monday and Wednesday 1x morning service and 1x afternoon return
Levin to Waikanae	Levin to Waikanae (am) Waikanae to Levin (pm)	Regional and inter-regional	2 March 2025	1x morning service and 1x afternoon return (Off-peak) on Tuesday and Thursday
Day out in Town	Return service from Levin to Shannon, Foxton, Foxton Beach and Waitarere Beach loop	Regional and inter-regional	2 March 2025	1x morning service and 1x afternoon return (Off-peak) on Friday

Table 8: Current Public Transport Units integral to the public transport network

## Community vans, health shuttles and other services

There are a number of community vans, health shuttles and other services operating within the Horizons Region. While these services are partly funded by Horizons, they don't form part of the 'integral' services managed by Council. They are however an important service for communities who need access to health services and other services. The table below outlines the current services running in the region.

Service Unit	Service Area/Route	Service Type	Expiry	Frequency
Tongariro National Park Public Transport Service	Ohakune and National Park. Service previously managed by Ruapehu District Council	Targeted	n/a	As required during winter ski season
Durie Hill Elevator	Durie Hill, Whanganui	Targeted	n/a	8am-6pm weekdays 10am-5pm weekends and public holidays
Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Services (PARS)	Around Palmerston North and districts	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Order of St John South Whanganui	Around Whanganui and districts Whanganui and districts to Palmerston North	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Order of St John Marton Health Shuttle	Marton to Whanganui	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Taumarunui Mobility Van	Around Taumarunui and districts	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Order of St John Waimarino Health Shuttle	Waimarino district to Whanganui	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Order of St John Dannevirke Health Shuttle	Around Dannevirke Dannevirke and districts to Palmerston North	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Order of St John South Tararua (Bush) health Shuttle	Around Pahiatua and districts Pahiatua and districts to Palmerston North	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Dannevirke Community Vehicle trust	Around Dannevirke	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Pahiatua Community Vehicle Trust	Around Pahiatua	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Foxton Beach Community Services	Foxton Beach to Foxton, Levin, Shannon and Palmerston North	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Horowhenua Health Shuttle	Around Levin Levin to Palmerston North	Targeted	n/a	On demand
Order of St John Feilding Health Shuttle	Around Feilding and districts Feilding and districts to Palmerston North	Targeted	n/a	On demand

Table 9: Non-integral public transport units operating in the Horizons Region

## Total Mobility Services

The table that follows, lists all of the small passenger services currently contracted to carry Total Mobility clients.

Company Name	Area where this service is available
Taxis Palmerston North	Palmerston North and districts
Taxis Gold and Black	Around Palmerston North and districts (including Feilding)
Driving Miss Daisy	Palmerston North and districts, Feilding, Levin, Whanganui
Cosy Car	Palmerston North and districts
Cranshire Taxis	Palmerston North and districts
Manawatu Combined Taxis	Palmerston North and districts
Feilding Taxis	Feilding and districts
River City Taxis	Whanganui
Levin Taxis	Levin
Taxis Direct	Levin
Marion Cabs	Marion

Table 10: Total Mobility service providers operating in the Horizons Region.

## Exempt Services

The table that follows outlines the exempt services in the Horizons Region. As per the LTMA definition, an exempt service is a public transport service that was a commercial public transport service operating in a region at 30 June 2011, or an unsubsidised service beginning after that date. Inter-regional public transport services are also considered to be exempt services under the LTMA.

Service Unit	Service Area/Route	Days of Operation	Operator
Capital Connection Passenger Rail service*	Palmerston North to Wellington (am) Wellington to Palmerston North (pm)	Monday to Friday	KiwiRail
Levin to Palmerston North school service	Levin to Palmerston North	Monday-Friday (school term only)	Uzabus
Marion to Palmerston North via Feilding school service	Marion to Palmerston North via Bulls, Sanson, Feilding and Awahuri	Monday-Friday (school term only)	Tranzit
Dannevirke to Palmerston North school service	Dannevirke to Palmerston North via Woodville	Monday-Friday (during school term only)	Tranzit
Bulls to Palmerston North (via Feilding) school service	Bulls to Palmerston North via Ohakea, and Sanson	Monday-Friday (during school term only)	Tranzit

Table 11: Exempt services operating in the Horizons Region.

\*The Capital Connection has been identified as an exempt service in this Plan, however this status is subject to change in accordance with inter-regional transport planning prioritisation by Horizons Regional Council, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi and regional transport partners.

## New / Proposed Public Transport Units

This section outlines the suite of new or proposed public transport units to be implemented over the duration of this Plan. Some will result in significant changes to the public transport network (e.g. Palmerston North review changes and Whanganui improvements), while others will involve investigating a prioritising new services that may be needed to meet the objectives and policies of this Plan.

The units identified as a **high** priority should be undertaken by 2024.

The units identified as a **medium-high** priority should be undertaken by 2026.

The units identified as a **medium** priority should be undertaken by 2028.

All remaining units should be undertaken by 2030.

Service Unit	Service area/route	Proposed changes / investigations	Service type proposed	Start	Priority
Palmerston North Urban and Urban review changes	Palmerston North City	Significant increase in service frequency and changes to network layout. Ashhurst will form part of the urban services	Core and local	November 2023	High
Whanganui Urban Service improvements	Increased coverage and service frequency around Whanganui City	Changes to network design and increase in service frequency	Core and local	Early 2023	High
Regional and inter-regional, local and targeted services	Region wide and inter regional	Undertake a region wide review of regional, inter-regional, local, and targeted services to ensure we have a connected and efficient network that enables inter-operability with other services and reviews. Identify opportunities to reach, or better reach parts of the region with a network-oriented approach.	Regional and Inter-regional, local and targeted	Review by 2024	High
Regional services for Manawatū district	Kimbolton, Colyton, Halcombe, Rongotea, Cheltenham, Āpiti	Investigate demand for and feasibility of services in line with Regional review for small communities surrounding Feilding. Either to connect to Feilding township or Palmerston North	Regional and inter-regional	2023	High
Feilding service review	Feilding to Palmerston North and Feilding township	Undertake a full review prior to contract expiry. In addition to considering operational performance and efficiencies, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for services in Precinct 4 growth areas</li> <li>• two way/alternating direction</li> <li>• innovative technology</li> <li>• service frequency</li> <li>• express services between Palmerston North and Feilding</li> </ul>	Core, local and Regional / inter-regional	2023	Medium-High
Levin urban services	Levin	Investigate demand and feasibility for an urban service around Levin. Consider use of alternative transport options such as on demand travel	Local or targeted (Tbc)	2024 - 25	Medium-High
Horowhenua inter-regional public transport	Whanganui to Levin (return) Palmerston North / Levin to Wellington	Investigate demand for and feasibility of services in line with Regional review. Enable access from Whanganui to Levin and Palmerston North and Levin to Wellington to enable access and alternative travel options to additional services.	Regional and inter-regional	2024-25	Medium-High
Dannevirke town services and Dannevirke to Woodville & Palmerston North connector	Dannevirke Woodville	Investigate demand and feasibility for introducing public transport services in the Dannevirke township and a connector service between Dannevirke and Woodville	Local and Regional and inter-regional	2024-25 *possibly in line with new highway opening	Medium-High
Tararua Total Mobility services	Dannevirke Woodville Norsewood	Investigate demand for and encourage small passenger service operators to establish services in the Tararua District	Total Mobility	2024-25	Medium-High

Table 12: Proposed Public Transport Units

Service Unit	Service area/route	Proposed changes / investigations	Service type proposed	Start	Priority
Improved regional connections to/ from Palmerston North	Linton Longburn Pohangina Shannon	Investigate demand and feasibility for introducing regional connector services for these areas in line with Regional review	<b>Regional and inter-regional and local</b> (TBC)	2024-25	Medium-High
Whanganui urban public transport unit review	Whanganui City	Undertake a mid-term review and consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• growth areas</li> <li>• frequency</li> <li>• route design and concept</li> <li>• Industrial connections (for shift workers)</li> <li>• services in Putiki and Brunswick</li> </ul>	<b>Core and local</b>	2024	Medium-High
Raetihi to Ohakune public transport unit review. Ruapehu District Services	Raetihi Ohakune	Review existing service to assess demand and identify any operational efficiencies or opportunities in line with Regional review. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging off tourism opportunities</li> <li>• Incorporating services for Taumarunui, National Park, Waiouru</li> <li>• infrastructure &amp; marketing improvements</li> <li>• use low emission technology, particularly for services in the National Park area</li> </ul>	<b>Regional and inter-regional</b>	2026	Medium
Taihape-Palmerston North / Whanganui service review Rangitikei District connections	Taihape to Palmerston North / Whanganui	Review existing service to assess demand and identify any operational efficiencies or opportunities in line with Regional review.  Determine any connection gaps and assess demand for local services between these small communities for access to health services and employment.	<b>Regional and inter-regional</b>	2026-27	Medium
Marton to Palmerston North commuter	Marton to Palmerston North via Bulls, Sanson and Awahuri (with evening return)	Review existing service to assess demand and identify any operational efficiencies or opportunities in line with Regional review.	<b>Regional and inter-regional</b>	2026-27	Medium
PN Urban city expansion review	Palmerston North (city edge)	Consider proposed City expansion areas (city-west, Aokautere) and demand / need for public transport in these areas along with any other improvements for urban services.	<b>Local</b>	2026-28	Medium-Low
Access services to the Lower North Island Rail Integrated Mobility Project (Capital Connection) Rail service	Levin, Palmerston North, Shannon	Investigate need for services to connect to the Lower North Island Rail Integrated Mobility (LNIRIM) project (Capital Connection) Passenger Rail service once frequency increases	<b>Regional and inter-regional</b>	2026-27	Medium-Low
Service improvements on all Horowhenua public transport units	Levin to Palmerston North Levin to Waikanae Day out in Town	Investigate demand for and feasibility of services in line with Regional review. for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased frequency</li> <li>• better accessibility</li> <li>• use of innovative technology</li> </ul>	<b>Regional and inter-regional</b>	2027-28	Medium-Low

Table 12: Proposed Public Transport Units

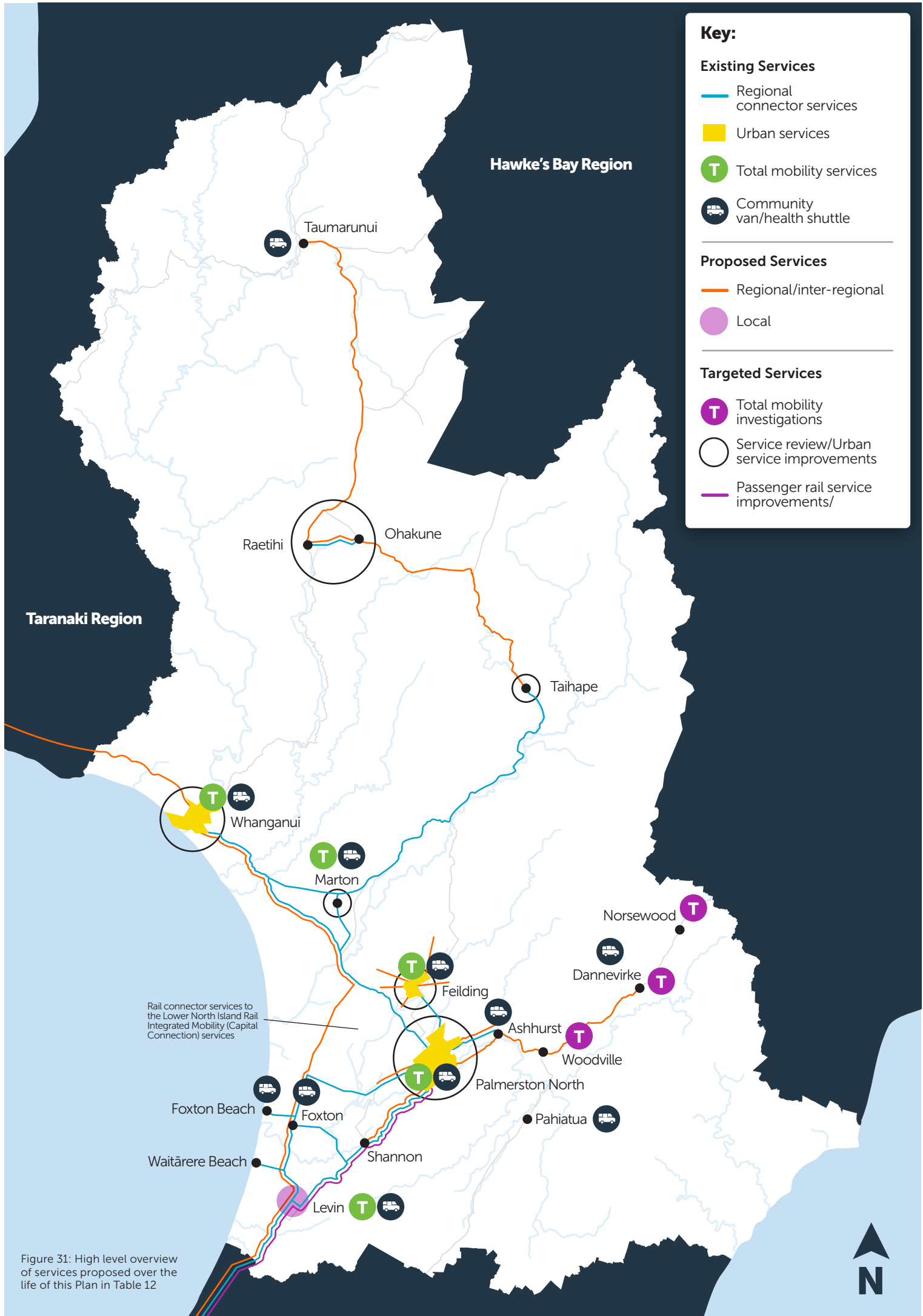


Figure 31: High level overview of services proposed over the life of this Plan in Table 12



### **Other longer term projects**

There are a number of other possible projects which will be considered over the lifetime of this Plan. However, they are of low priority and therefore have been identified as longer-term projects. The projects are broken down by district and are listed below:

#### **Whanganui**

- Inter-regional public transport between Whanganui and surrounding towns and villages, e.g.
  - Waverley
  - Whanganui airport
  - Turakina
  - Ūpokongaro
  - Whangaehu
  - Fordell
  - Kaitoke
  - MaryBank
  - Kai Iwi
  - Rātana

#### **Rangitikei**

- Explore the need for a Marton to Whanganui commuter (for employment or health service access);
- Consider whether a regional connector service is needed between Mangaweka and Taihape to provide access to shopping and health services;
- Consider whether a regional connector service is needed between Hunterville and Marton or Bulls to provide access to shopping and health services.

#### **Ruapehu**

- North Island Connector Rail: explore and possibly advocate for possible inter-regional rail connections for access to health, education or employment services;
- Total Mobility: explore options and encourage potential operators to establish in the Ruapehu region, particularly in Taumarunui and surrounds;
- Explore demand and feasibility of a connector service from small towns to Taumarunui;
- Taupō/Tūrangi mountain connection: work with Waikato Regional Council to establish if there is demand for an inter-regional tourism opportunity for services between Taupō and Mount Ruapehu.

#### **Rail**

- Work with other councils, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, Ministry of Transport and government to investigate the feasibility of inter-regional rail outside of those areas currently served, including services passing through the Whanganui and Tararua districts.

## Āpitihanga 2: Ngā kaupapa utu kore

### Appendix 2: Free access schemes

Horizons will investigate and provide special fare concessions or enter into agreements for unlimited free travel access schemes where there is a benefit to the community transport needs and the partnering agency contributes an agreed amount towards the cost of providing the scheme, based on the estimated uptake of the scheme, payable at least annually. The following apply:

- a. The partnering agency's contribution will be reviewed annually based on the previous 12 months uptake and amended accordingly. More frequent reviews will apply for shorter term contracts;
- b. Where uptake of the scheme is significantly higher or lower (+/- 20%) than estimated, Horizons will adjust the partnering agency's contribution accordingly;
- c. Horizons will undertake an annual (or more frequent as agreed with the partnering agency) assessment of uptake and re-evaluate the benefit of continuing with the scheme if uptake is low. In the event uptake is consistently lower than expected, Horizons may choose not to renew the agreement;
- d. The agreed contribution will be based on no additional services being required to accommodate users of the scheme;
- e. In the event that new services are required, the partnering agency will be expected to contribute a greater amount to enable the additional services to be implemented at minimal cost to the ratepayer.

Free Access or Bulk buy schemes are agreements which enable an organisation or education provider to have their staff and/or students travel for free or at an agreed discounted rate on selected bus services contracted by Horizons Regional Council.

Existing schemes have largely been very successful and have grown patronage on Horizons services. This has flow on benefits to the region by reducing carbon emissions, supporting multi modal travel and likely attracting new people to the region (free travel being a drawcard to students choosing which university to attend).

The above policy applies to any party, organisation or education provider wishing to provide free or discounted access to Horizons bus services for a group of people. Each request will be assessed on its merits and the principles of Policy 5.5 applied.



## Āpitihana 3: Kuputaka

### Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

Term or acronym	Meaning
Accessibility	The ability to reach a destination by a transport mode. Another meaning used more narrowly in relation to public transport is “the ease with which all categories of passenger can use public transport” as defined by the Human Rights Commission in The Accessible Journey 2005. Of specific relevance to people with disabilities
Farebox Recovery	The proportion of total operating costs that are recovered from users
GPS	Government Policy Statement on Land Transport
LTMA	Land Transport Management Act
Micro-mobility	A small electric mobility device such as e-scooters, e-bikes, e skateboards etc
Multi-modal	Means using more than one type of transport to reach a destination eg bike and bus or car + bus + e-scooter
NLTF	National Land Transport Fund
NLTP	National Land Transport Programme
Off-peak service times	Weekdays 9:00am until 3:00pm, weekends and public holidays
Operators	Companies that are contracted by Horizons Regional Council to provide public transport services
Park-and-ride	A facility that allows people to securely leave their personal vehicle (i.e. car, motorbike, cycle) to use a public transport service
Peak service times	Weekdays before 9:00am and from 3:00pm to 6:30pm
PTOM	Public Transport Operating Model
Public transport route	A grouping of related public transport services going from A to B.
Public transport service	A public transport service scheduled to operate at a specified time and available to the public generally
Public Transport Unit	All services that are integral to the region’s public transport network are grouped into units
RLTP	Regional Land Transport Plan
RPTP	Regional Public Transport Plan
TAs	Territorial Authorities (City and District Councils)
Service review	A review of public transport routes and services within an area or a review of any other grouping of services
Total Mobility	Subsidised transport for those with impaired mobility who have difficulty with, or are unable to use, scheduled public transport services
Transport disadvantaged	Residents who have limited or no access to basic economic, social, and community services such as employment, health care, shopping
Waka Kotahi	Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency

Table 13: Glossary

## Āpitihana 4: He arotakenga ā-rohe whāuitui mō te horopaki me te ārahi

### Appendix 4: Regional and inter-regional review context and guidance

The purpose of this appendix is to provide context and high-level guidance on matters to be considered when undertaking the 'Regional and inter-regional review' outlined in Appendix 1, Table 12 of this Plan.

Service Unit	Service area/route	Proposed changes / investigations	Service type proposed	Start	Priority
Regional and inter-regional, local and targeted services	Region wide and inter-regional	Undertake a region wide review of regional, inter-regional, local and targeted services to ensure we have a connected and efficient network that enables inter-operability with other services and reviews. Identify opportunities to reach, or better reach parts of the region with a network-oriented approach.	Regional and Inter-regional, local and targeted	Review by 2024	<b>High</b>

Table 14: Proposed Public Transport Unit: Regional and Inter-Regional review

#### Purpose

The purpose of the regional and inter-regional review is to complete a stock take of all current regional, inter-regional, local and targeted public transport services in operation across the region and identify service gaps within the network. A holistic, big-picture view of the region and its connections between cities, towns and villages will be undertaken with a view to identifying areas that currently have none or very few services available. Consideration will be given to:

- How current and potential future services could be connected, in the most efficient way;
- The timing of current service reviews and contract expiry and any opportunities for alignment or grouping of services;
- Consideration of the needs and demands for each area identified as needing a new or additional public transport connection;
- Prioritising the identified list of service updates, developments and changes.

For the purpose of clarity, this investigation **is not** a review of individual contracts or services. These are undertaken in line with contract and PTOM requirements. However, this investigation may give rise to recommendations that may lead to changes to existing contracts or services.

#### Scope

The general scope of the regional and inter-regional investigation is outlined above. The following services should be considered as part of the investigation:

- The regional, inter-regional, local and targeted services listed in tables 8 and 12 of Appendix 1 of this Plan; and
- The services listed as longer term projects under Appendix 1;
- Whanganui – Hāwera Connector (medium priority); and
- Masterton to Palmerston North connector service; and
- Pahiatua to Palmerston North connector service.





# horizons

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