

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN *2025-2035*





Part B

Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035

*Improving public transport services and infrastructure
throughout Taranaki*

March 2025

Taranaki Regional Council

Foreword

Development of a Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) gives the Council an opportunity to engage with the region's communities, operators and key stakeholders to help assess the region's public transport services.

Messages from our community in recent years have been clear and consistent in seeking improvements to bus services, particularly in New Plymouth. Providing public transport services throughout the region requires considerable investment for this Council and our major funding partner, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency. Increasing that investment must be carefully considered by both organisations, and weighed against alternative uses for very constrained funds.

The development of this RPTP has been more involved than the previous versions of recent times, due to the desire to provide a step-change to significantly increase the levels of bus service provision. To do so, the Council has undertaken investigations and consultations to prepare a business case for investment in improved public transport services and infrastructure in Taranaki. Appendix A provides an overview of the development process completed.

The outcome of this work during 2023 and 2024 is that the Council now knows what changes to make and can more actively seek funding to make these changes. Several minor improvements have already been made because of the work undertaken and public feedback received – refer to section 1.3.

The aspiration is to have a public transport system that connects people to where they want to go and is the preferred mode of choice on key corridors. This will support a range of objectives and have a wide range of benefits – as outlined in sections 3 and 4.

Reaching this goal will require a staged approach, starting with the 'Bronze' option aimed for implementation in 2026, while building towards realising 'Gold' which has greater service frequency. A summary of these options from the business case is provided in Appendix C.

While the initial intent was for this final RPTP to be released in 2024, this had to be deferred due to the changing range of inputs – the most important being the Taranaki Public Transport Single Stage Business Case (SSBC). So, this RPTP will commence from the point of adoption in April 2025, with its implementation focusing on when new bus contracts come into effect in early 2026.

The Council remains committed to providing fit-for-purpose public transport services throughout the region, including supporting Total Mobility for those in our community who are unable to use traditional bus services.

The next RPTP, in 2028 will assess the roll-out of the new network (the 'Bronze' option) and whether further improvements (to 'Silver' or 'Gold') are justified.



Glossary of terms and acronyms

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.
BTC or Better Travel Choices	Better Travel Choices for Taranaki is an integrated planning approach to mode shift consisting of: Part A – Better Travel Choices Strategy 2025 Part B – Regional Public Transport Plan 2025
Bus priority measures	Facilities to improve bus operation i.e. enhance the attractiveness and reliability of public transport e.g. bus lanes, bus bypasses and traffic signal prioritisation.
Business Case Approach (BCA)	NZTA’s approach to transport planning investment. The approach is broken down into phases with decision points along the way to determine if the investment is worthwhile in relation to the desired outcome.
Community Transport (CT)	A broad term for local specialist shared-transport services delivered by charitable and other not-for-profit organisations, typically to meet the needs of communities that cannot sustain a regular public transport service.
Concessions	Discounted bus fares for specific groups of passengers.
Demand-responsive services	A form of shared transport where the vehicles alter their routes based on passenger demand rather than operating to a fixed route or timetable.
Exempt services	Unsubsidised, commercial public transport services that are not considered an integral part of the region’s urban public transport network so therefore do not operate under contract to the Council.
Fare capping	A pricing structure that limits the amount a passenger pays for their trips over a day, a week or a month. Provides incentive and accessibility to all passengers.
Farebox recovery rate	The proportion of the cost of operating a public transport service that is covered by the fares paid by passengers.
GPS	Government Policy Statement on Land Transport is issued by the Minister of Transport under section 66 of the LTMA. It outlines the government’s strategy for investment in land transport over the next 10 years, which is then implemented by NZTA through the National Land Transport Programme. The GPS directly influences how funding from the National Land Transport Fund is to be invested for the following three-year period.
Integrated public transport	The ability to combine different modes of transport to increase ease and efficiency for passengers in terms of cost, comfort, safety, accessibility and convenience.
Key corridors	Generally, a linear area defined by one or more modes of transportation such as streets, roads and railway lines.
Layover facilities	A point where a bus stops to provide for passenger transfers and driver breaks.
LTMA	Land Transport Management Act 2003 – the main statutory framework for land planning and funding in NZ.
LTP	Long-Term Plan – the ten-year long-term council plan produced by regional and territorial authorities in accordance with section 93 of the <i>Local Government Act 2002</i> .
Mode	Transport modes refer to the different ways by which people or goods move from one place to another, for example by bus, car, cycle or walking.
Motu Move	The National Ticketing System (NTS) for Aotearoa being rolled out from 2024
Multi-modal	Using a variety of different modes to accomplish something.
NLTF	National Land Transport Fund – the dedicated fund for land transport activities established under Section 10 of the LTMA.

NLTP	National Land Transport Programme – A three-year programme that sets out how NZTA will invest national land transport funding.
Public transport service	A public transport service scheduled to operate at a specified time and available to the public generally.
RLTP	Regional Land Transport Plan. Provides the strategic direction for land transport in the region. The RPTP must give effect to the public transport service components of the RLTP.
RPTP	Regional Public Transport Plan – guides the design and delivery of public transport services, information, and infrastructure in the Taranaki region.
SPTF	Sustainable Public Transport Framework, replaced the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) in 2023 as the framework for planning, procurement, and delivery of public transport services in NZ.
SSBC	Single Stage Business Case for Public Transport in Taranaki (completed in October 2024)
Stop rationalisation	Reorganising existing bus stops on a given route based on certain criteria such as passenger density and land use patterns.
Territorial Authorities	A city or district council (in Taranaki these are the New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki district councils)
Total Mobility	The Total Mobility scheme subsidises door-to-door transport for disabled people who cannot independently use regular public transport services, all or some of the time.
Transport disadvantaged	People who TRC believes are least able to get to basic community activities and services, e.g. work, education, healthcare and food shopping.
TRC	Taranaki Regional Council
Unit	A grouping of related routes operating within a certain geographic area or along a shared corridor



Contents

Foreword	2
Glossary of terms and acronyms	3
Contents	5
List of figures	6
List of tables	6
1. What's this all about?	7
1.1 What is Public Transport?	7
1.2 What is the RPTP and why is it needed?	7
1.3 Achievements since the last RPTP	7
1.4 Purpose of this RPTP	8
1.5 Part of Better Travel Choices	9
2. What's guiding this?	10
2.1 Current state	10
2.2 Need to procure services	10
2.3 Strategic context	11
2.4 Community feedback	11
2.5 Why do we need to change?	12
2.6 What if we do nothing?	13
3. What do we want to do?	14
3.1 The Vision	14
3.2 Headline target	14
3.3 Objectives	15
3.4 How does this align?	16
3.5 Policies and actions	17
4. How do we propose to do it?	19
4.1 SSBC supported	19
4.2 Next steps (2025-2028)	19
4.3 Next RPTP	20
4.4 Dependencies and uncertainties	20
4.5 Measuring success	21
Appendix A: What has our process been?	22
A.1 How does the SSBC relate to this RPTP?	23
A.2 Where can I find more information?	23
Appendix B: Our current public transport system	24
B.1 Overview	24
B.2 New Plymouth Citylink	28
B.3 Total Mobility	29
Appendix C: Planned bus service improvements	31
C.1 A changed network	31
C.2 Service frequency options	32
C.3 Starting with 'Bronze'	34
C.4 Infrastructure	35
Appendix D: Legal requirements and links to other plans	36
D.1 The legal requirements	36
D.2 Changes to guiding Act	36
D.3 Principles guiding review	37
D.4 Links to other planning documents	37
D.5 The regulatory system	40
D.6 New national guidelines	41
Appendix E: Services integral to the network	42
E.1 Current (2024) integral services	42

E.2 Integral services for new proposed network (from 2026)	44
Appendix F: Units and their establishment principles	46
F.1 What is a public transport 'unit'?	46
F.2 Establishment principles	46
F.3 Current (2024) units	47
F.4 Future (from 2026) units	47
Appendix G: Fares and ticketing systems	48
G.1 Ticketing system	48
G.2 Fare zones	48
G.3 Setting fares	48
G.4 Fare levels and structure	49
G.5 Increasing 'private share'	50
Appendix H: Significance policy	51
H.1 Purpose	51
H.2 Significant variations	51
H.3 Targeted engagement	52
Appendix I: Supporting the transport disadvantaged	53

List of figures

Figure 1: Structure of Better Travel Choices for Taranaki	9
Figure 2: Strategic Policy Context	11
Figure 3: Investment Logic Map for investing in improved public transport in Taranaki	12
Figure 4: Mode shift target from RLTP 2024	14
Figure 5: Relationship of problem statements with the RPTP 2025 and GPS 2024	16
Figure 6: Total patronage (number of trips) on Taranaki public bus services by financial year	26
Figure 7: Overview of financial performance across all the bus services	26
Figure 8: Existing bus routes in Taranaki (mid 2024)	27
Figure 9: Citylink bus timetables and routes in New Plymouth (2024)	28
Figure 10: The preferred new network of bus services	31
Figure 11: Progressive service frequency options for this new network	32
Figure 12: Staging of the preferred network option - Bronze, Silver, Gold	33
Figure 13: Proposed new bus network with initial 'Bronze' service frequency	34
Figure 14: Ministry of Transport Outcomes Framework	38
Figure 15: Current and proposed fares	49

List of tables

Table 1: Bus service patronage in 2023/24	14
Table 2: RPTP 2025 objectives and methods	15
Table 3: Policies and actions (potential initiatives) for RPTP 2025	17
Table 4: Key Performance Indicators and targets	21
Table 5: Summary of development process including consultation steps	22
Table 6: Summary of current public transport services in Taranaki	24
Table 7: Statistical summary of existing bus services in the 2023/24 year	25
Table 8: Total Mobility operators	30
Table 9: Links to other planning documents	37
Table 10: RLTP 2024 problems and benefits of addressing	39
Table 11: Current (2024) Public Transport Units	47
Table 12: Units for the network proposed from 2026	47
Table 13: Bus fare structure	49

1. What's this all about?

1.1 What is Public Transport?

Public transport is a multi-modal system which integrates passenger vehicles with ferries, walking, cycling, shared transport (especially buses), park & ride services and demand responsive transport, some of which will be provided publicly and some privately.

A successful public transport system provides better connections and accessibility to the services and activities people need. It is a major contributor to economic, social, and environmental goals.

In Taranaki, public transport is mostly scheduled bus services, dominantly in the city of New Plymouth.

1.2 What is the RTP and why is it needed?

The Taranaki Regional Public Transport Plan (RTP) guides the design and delivery of public transport services, information, and infrastructure within the Taranaki region.

This RTP describes:

- What we want our public transport system to achieve (long-term goals and objectives).
- How we propose to get there (our strategic focus areas, policies, and actions to achieve our goals).
- The public transport services we currently provide and propose to provide.

The RTP has a ten-year strategic focus, with particular attention to the first three-yearly operational cycle. This RTP focuses on the period from mid-2025 to 2035.

RTPs are statutory documents (required by legislation) under the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA). Regional councils like Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) who provide or fund public transport must adopt a RTP.

Councils are then able to contract services in accordance with the RTP – including bus services and Total Mobility services.

1.3 Achievements since the last RTP

The last Taranaki RTP was published in October 2020, seven months after the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic which markedly changed the way we live, work and move around the region. The 2020 RTP was about consolidation in a highly uncertain world. The focus was on ensuring that people were able to travel safely and affordably.

To that end, the Government of the time introduced half price fares for all passengers between April 2022 and June 2023. This resulted in a significant boost to bus patronage – for example a 35% increase between March 2022 and March 2023.

Much else also changed in this time, including the cost of living and community expectations around improving travel options and reducing transport emissions.

Demand for bus travel in Taranaki is driven strongly by children and young people accessing education, and TRC has been proactive by introducing additional urban school routes in New Plymouth and the Your Connector service from Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, and Inglewood into the city.



Compared to many parts of the country, local bus operators Tranzit, Pickering Motors and Weir Brothers have managed to provide enough drivers to keep services going to the current timetable. This achievement has enabled adverse impacts on patronage to be minimised.

The Bee Card was introduced in October 2020, making public transport in Taranaki easier and more efficient. The tag-on, tag-off system sped up boarding times, helping buses run more smoothly. People appreciated the convenience of topping up online, setting up automatic top-ups to always have credit, checking their transaction history, and managing multiple cards in one place. Seamless transfers between services also made getting around the region much simpler.



In January 2022, a simpler Fare Zones system was introduced, further streamlining travel across the region. Together, these two improvements have made public transport more user-friendly, encouraged greater ridership, and improved connectivity across the region.

As a result of community feedback during development of this RTP in 2023 and 2024, several other interim improvements have been made:

- Created a Waitara Express service.
- Increased the frequency of Connector services, added more stops and included an Accessible Connector (starting March 2025).
- Ōpunake to New Plymouth increased to five days, timetable improved.
- School services assessed, some routes modified or discontinued.
- Urban and regional services – removed unnecessary or unpatronised legs of the route.
- Urban and regional – schedules assessed for punctuality and alterations made.

A range of minor improvements have also been made to the Total Mobility Scheme, which are summarised in Appendix B.

1.4 Purpose of this RTP

This 2025 RTP is very much about looking forward with a renewed sense of ambition, and improving the Taranaki public transport network to meet the challenges faced.

As in most regions, Taranaki's public transport services and infrastructure require significant improvement to meet the challenges of a world where single occupancy car travel – especially for shorter urban journeys – is reduced to meet our climate change obligations. In many instances, bus services are an under-used resource which are primarily patronised by people who do not have access to a private car. Adult passenger numbers are generally low, compared with other modes of travel – especially the private car. Only school services are busy. Infrastructure – in the form of bus waiting facilities and on-road priority measures – is patchy in terms of coverage and quality. The system is not consistently accessible to disabled people, which is a breach of United Nations charter commitments that Aotearoa New Zealand signed 15 years ago.

This RTP intends to start the transformation of the region's public transport into a modern, environmentally conscious, integrated, accessible, and customer-focused service which becomes the mode of choice for a range of utility and leisure travel, whether people have a car or not.

Transformation starts by understanding the current strengths and weaknesses of the system, and making better use of available short-term investment – this is well underway. In the medium to longer term, the aim is to build further service frequency and capacity into the system, so that using public transport becomes convenient, intuitive, and excellent value for money.

Where does the Total Mobility scheme fit?

Total Mobility (TM) is a public transport service but because it operates so differently it is generally considered separately from our bus services. We've summarised TM in Section B.3.

1.5 Part of Better Travel Choices

The RTP 2025 is part of the TRC “Better Travel Choices for Taranaki” initiative, which is integrating public transport planning with the wider context of mode shift to a range of shared and active travel modes. Better Travel Choices is about improving the range of travel choices available to our communities, and supporting them to make better travel choices for their wellbeing and that of the environment. Better Travel Choices is structured as shown in Figure 1.

The Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) is an integral part of Better Travel Choices and sets out a visionary ten-year strategy for bus-based mode shift.

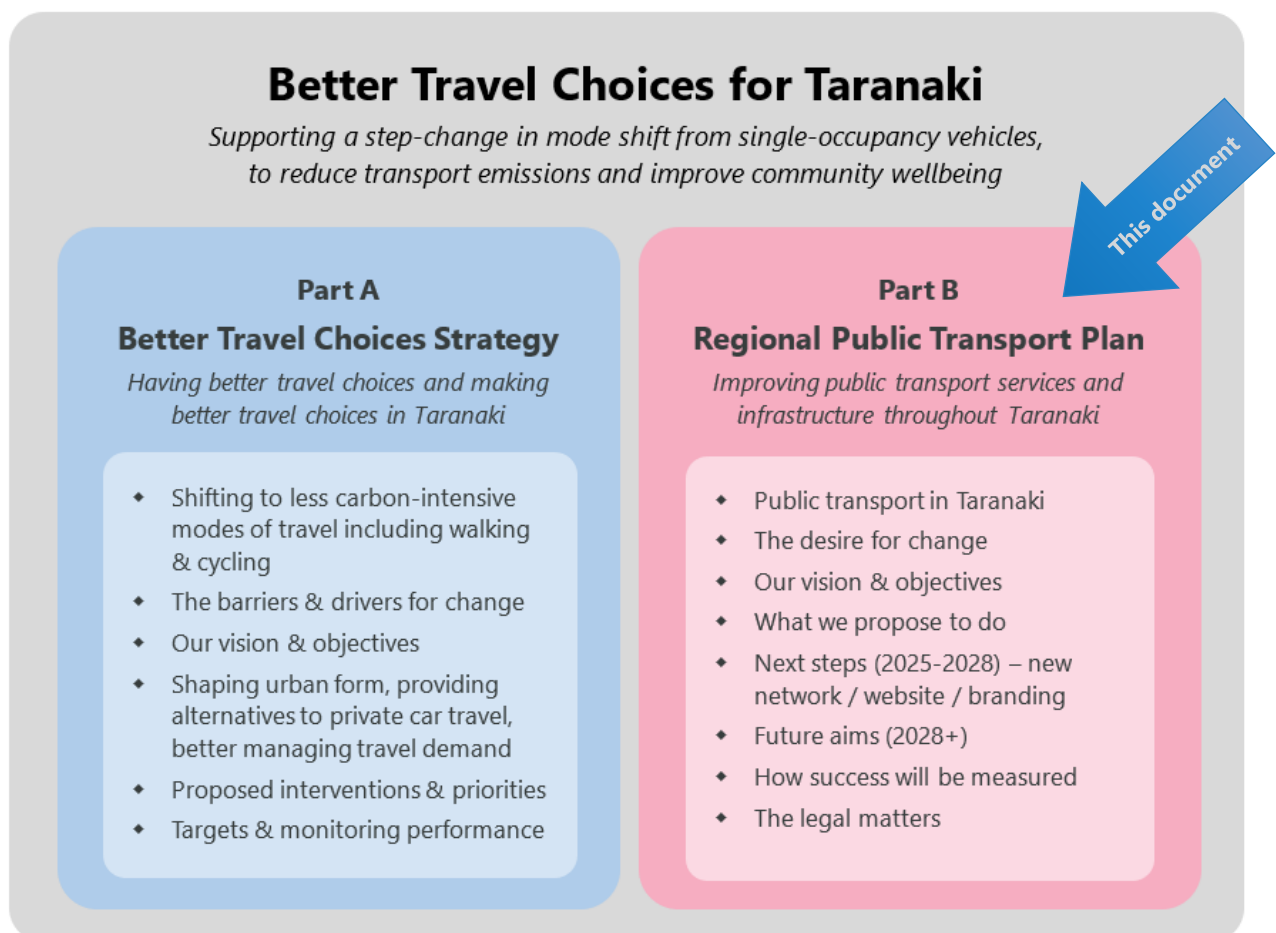
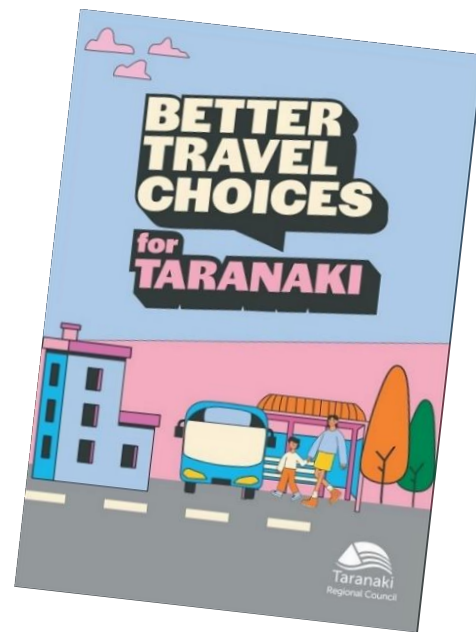


Figure 1: Structure of Better Travel Choices for Taranaki

2. What's guiding this?

2.1 Current state

Before any changes to public transport services can take place, there is a need to understand what currently exists, and how it is performing. The existing services are outlined in more detail in Appendix B, including an overview of patronage and costs of provision.

Bus services

The existing public bus network has largely been unchanged for the past 15 years. During this time the community has grown, and land uses have changed.

A preliminary review of the existing public transport system in Taranaki was undertaken in early 2023 (by Taith Consulting). This led onto a Single Stage Business Case being prepared (by Beca) to present the case for investing in improved public transport services and minor infrastructure in the Taranaki region. This was finalised in October 2024 (available [online here](#)) and forms an important resource for this document.

In brief, the existing bus services are too complex, meandering and infrequent to meet the needs of most of the community. This has contributed to high private vehicle use and transport emissions in the region. Those without access to a car have been left behind because the public transport network does not meet their needs.

Without added investment, accessibility to jobs, education and support, and the health and wellbeing of residents will continue to be compromised. In short, things need to change.

Total Mobility services

The Total Mobility scheme continues to be well-used within the Taranaki region, with minor improvements to services and processes continually being made where possible and in alignment with national directives in this area.

2.2 Need to procure services

The RPTP, and the consultation involved during its preparation, decides the key services to provide to the community.

With existing regional public bus service contracts expiring in April 2026, there is prime opportunity to undertake the step-change in services that the community has been calling for.

As public transport is part-funded by Central Government, a Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) was needed to support any request for increased funding for improved service provision. The SSBC investigated public transport provision with a regional focus, however, due to the size and complexity of the New Plymouth urban network, particular attention was paid in this area.

To align with the timing requirements of tendering for new contracts, this process had to commence before this document was finalised. However, both this RPTP and the tendering for new services are based on the proposals made in the Business Case.



2.3 Strategic context

The RTPP exists within a legislative, regulatory and policy framework, which guide how public transport must be planned and delivered. A brief outline of the key components of this framework is provided below and in Figure 2, while more detail is given in Appendix D.

- Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA)
- Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 (GPS)
- Guidelines for developing Regional Public Transport Plans
- Regional Land Transport Plan for Taranaki 2024/25-2026/27 (RLTP 2024)
- New Plymouth's Integrated Transport Framework. (ITF)

The national planning environment for public transport has changed dramatically over the last few years; from a congestion-reduction economic-only focus, to one that was strongly supportive of increasing public transport for multiple benefits, and then swinging back to a narrower 'value for money' imperative in late 2023. This change in policy and regulatory direction at national level does not reflect the local situation. In Taranaki, the community's calls for improving public transport provision have been consistently growing in volume.

2.4 Community feedback

The community has repeatedly asked for improvements to public transport services. The messages were very clear in the community feedback and submissions that fed into development of the 2020 Regional Public Transport Plan and the 2021 TRC Long-Term Plan. The people of Taranaki want to see a low- or no-emissions public transport fleet, additional bus routes and more frequent services, and cheaper fares.

Further TRC and NPDC consultations on transport during 2023 and 2024 confirmed and clarified details around the strong community support for significant improvements to the public transport network, as a means of tackling a range of issues including access to jobs / education, social isolation, sustainable economic regeneration, and climate change.

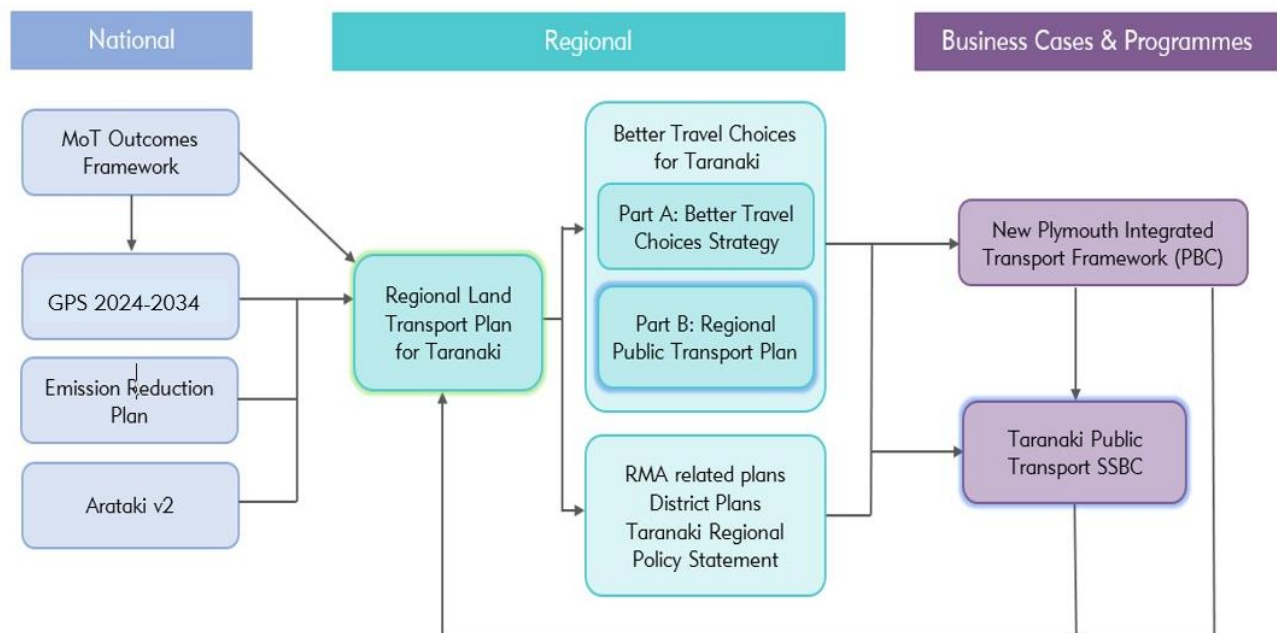


Figure 2: Strategic Policy Context

2.5 Why do we need to change?

What are the key problems identified with the current public transport system in Taranaki? How do solving these align with regional and national transport objectives?

The existing public transport network has largely been unchanged for the past 15 years, other than the addition of an intra-regional Connector service which connects the key urban areas of the region. During this time the community has grown, and land uses have changed.

The current public transport mode share for journeys to work is very low, at less than 0.5%. In contrast, for journeys to school the figure is well over 10%, which is higher than the national average.

The key problems identified with the existing public transport services in the region are shown in Figure 3 (source Beca SSBC 2024). The detail and evidence behind this Investment Logic Map is available in the SSBC.

As shown, the problems can be mapped to three investment objectives to address the problems identified. The key benefits from addressing these problems are:

- Promoting and encouraging the uptake of public transport,
- Improved social and economic accessibility for the community, and
- Reduced vehicle kilometres travelled by light vehicles and therefore a reduction in transport emissions improving health and wellbeing for the community.

The benefits of creating a good public transport system which is well-used as it meets the needs of the community are well known. Being able to move more people around the region efficiently (be it to training, work, shopping, social outings, to access health or other services) and safely, has multiple economic and productivity outcomes, along with multiple environmental and well-being co-benefits.

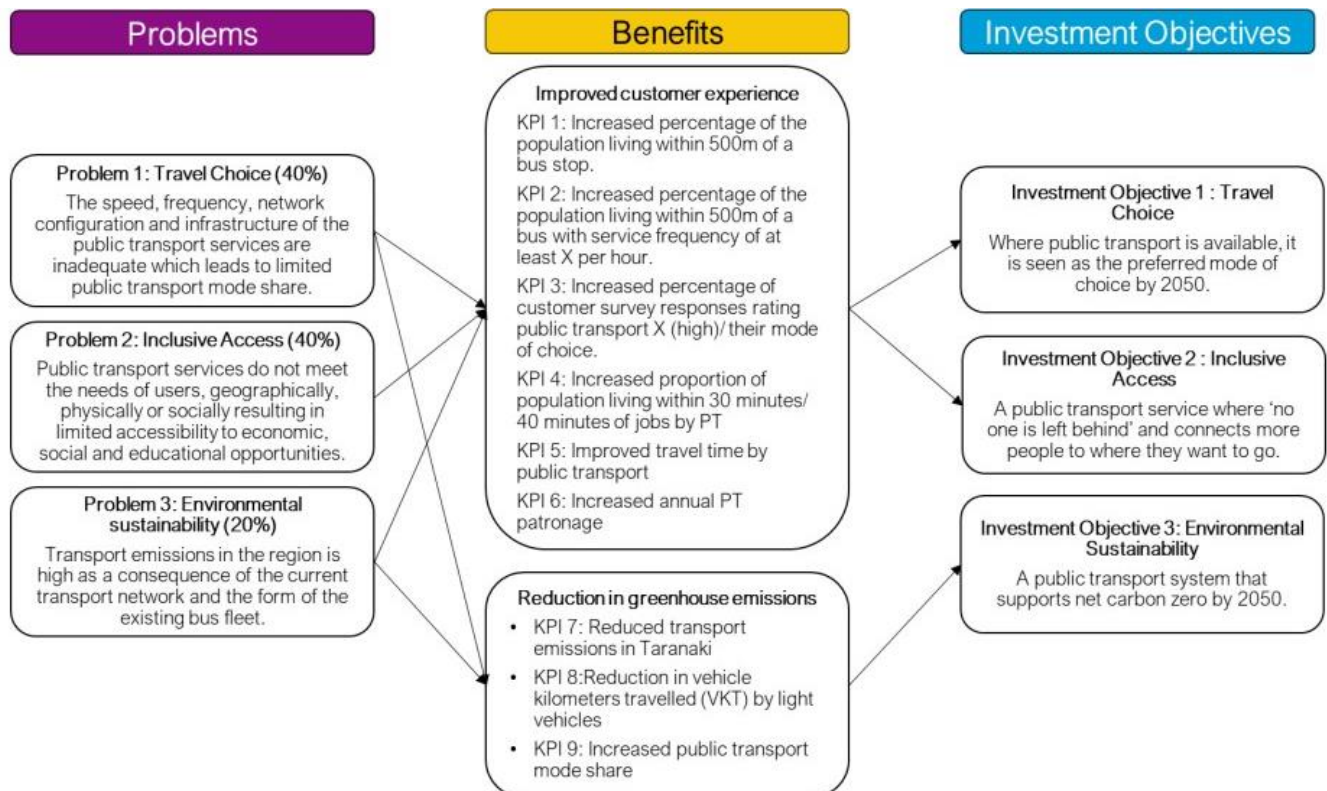


Figure 3: Investment Logic Map for investing in improved public transport in Taranaki

2.6 What if we do nothing?

If no added investment is made, public transport patronage will remain low, and there will be a continued lack of travel choice and an over-reliance on private vehicle use for the community. This lack of long-term sustainable transport choice will be counter intuitive to the objectives of delivering mode shift from car to buses and in helping to reduce carbon emissions from transport. Key disbenefits include:

- Continued inaccessibility to jobs and economic opportunities
- Limited travel choice
- Continued high and increased carbon emissions.

Failure to improve the public transport system to better meet the needs of the community will continue to compromise social, education and economic opportunities for the community and further increase inequality for those that are disadvantaged.

If nothing is done, transport emissions, especially from private vehicles, will remain high in the region. This will have detrimental effects on the health and wellbeing of the people in the community and is contradictory to the climate change objectives for Aotearoa New Zealand. It would also result in economic impacts which are counter-intuitive to the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024.



3. What do we want to do?

3.1 The Vision

The vision for public transport in the Taranaki region is:

An accessible, integrated and customer-focused public transport system that enhances our wellbeing and environment, and becomes an attractive mode of transport within and between urban areas.

3.2 Headline target

At least a doubling of trips made by public transport throughout the region by 2035*

* from 2023/24 baselines

This target directly aligns to the Regional Land Transport Plan for Taranaki 2024 (RLTP 2024), which has the following as one of its three headline targets –

Increasing mode shift

At least a doubling of trips made by walking, cycling and public transport throughout the region by 2034*

Reflects the region’s aspirations for improved and healthier travel choices and a reduction in carbon emissions.

Increasing mode shift away from private vehicles has a range of environmental and wellbeing outcomes, as well as reducing traffic congestion through effective and efficient mass movement of people and corresponding financial pressures to increase roading capacity. Mode shift requires improving the availability and attractiveness of public transport and active transport modes.

* from 2023/24 baselines

The RPTP is the key implementation tool for effecting mode shift to public transport to meet the aspiration within the RLTP.

The 2023/24 bus service patronage (trips) totals are shown in Table 1, which shows the total trips taken in that year as 772,768.

Table 1: Bus service patronage in 2023/24

Service	Patronage
Citylink (New Plymouth)	688,003
Connector/Your Connector	81,708
Southlink Ōpunake-New Plymouth	1,758
Southlink Ōpunake-Hāwera	456
Southlink Waverley-Hāwera	843
Regional total	772,768

The target is at least a doubling of this figure within ten years. So we are seeking more than 1.5 million trips in the 2035/36 financial year.

Figure 4: Mode shift target from RLTP 2024

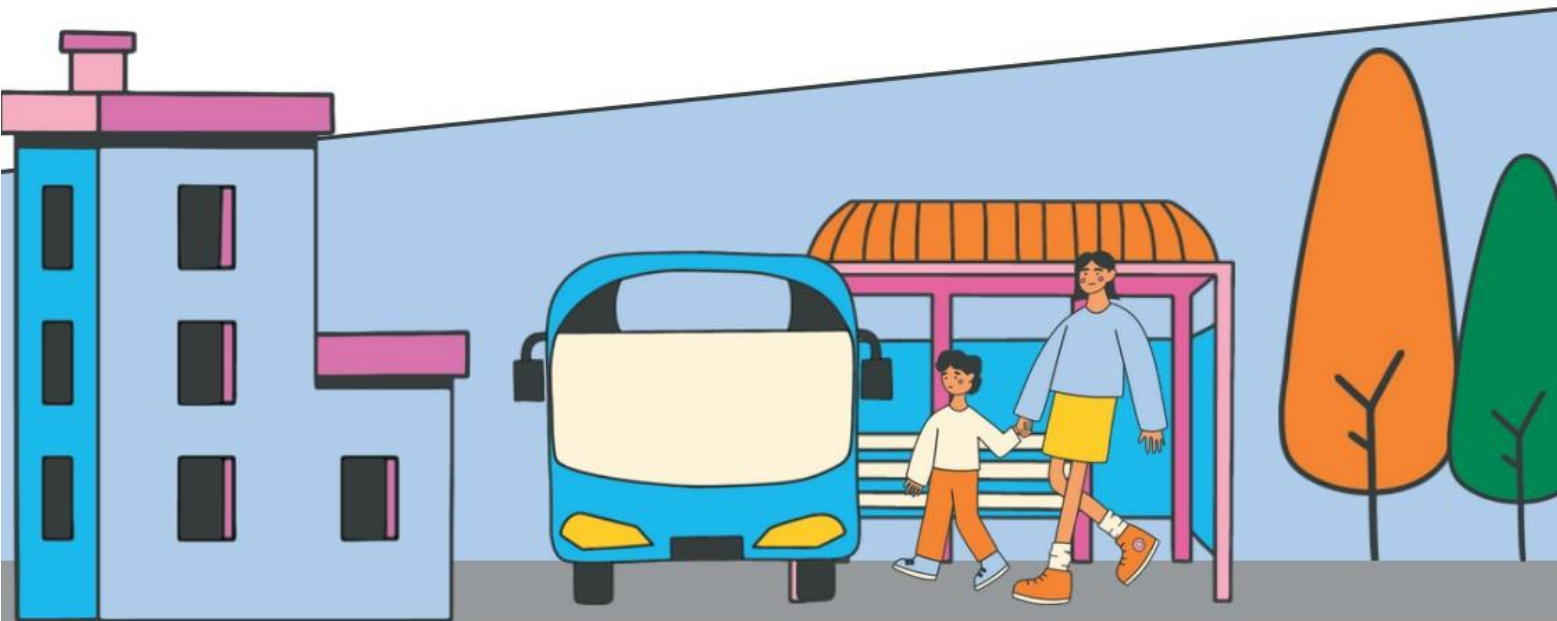
3.3 Objectives

There are six strategic objectives which contribute to the vision, stated in Table 2.

Table 2: RPTP 2025 objectives and methods

Objectives	Methods
Mode shift Deliver mode shift from car to bus	Provide frequent, reliable, and punctual urban and inter-urban public transport networks that attract new customers and retain existing ones.
Equitable access Improve public transport accessibility and equity	Provide safe and accessible public transport services and infrastructure that supports an efficient and connected transport network, and multi-modal travel.
Enabling Improve economic and environmental performance	Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport, improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion through mode shift to public transport and decarbonising the bus fleet.
Value for money Deliver affordable and value for money services	Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.
Quality experience Improve customer experience of the public transport system	Provide high quality information and branding that enables passengers to easily understand and navigate services.
Optimised services Manage service improvements optimally	Undertake an approach to planning, procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.

These form the basis of policies and initiatives which aim to deliver a system transformation for public transport. These policies and actions are outlined in Section 3.5.



3.4 How does this align?

Figure 5 below shows how addressing the core problems with the existing public transport system in Taranaki will contribute to regional and national objectives. It shows that there is significant overlap between key objectives and that the problem statements link to multiple key priorities.

This RTPP strongly supports key regional and national objectives around reducing carbon emissions, increasing resilience improving accessibility, and promoting safety. By reducing traffic levels and congestion, investing in public transport can also benefit people and businesses for whom car, van and truck use is essential.

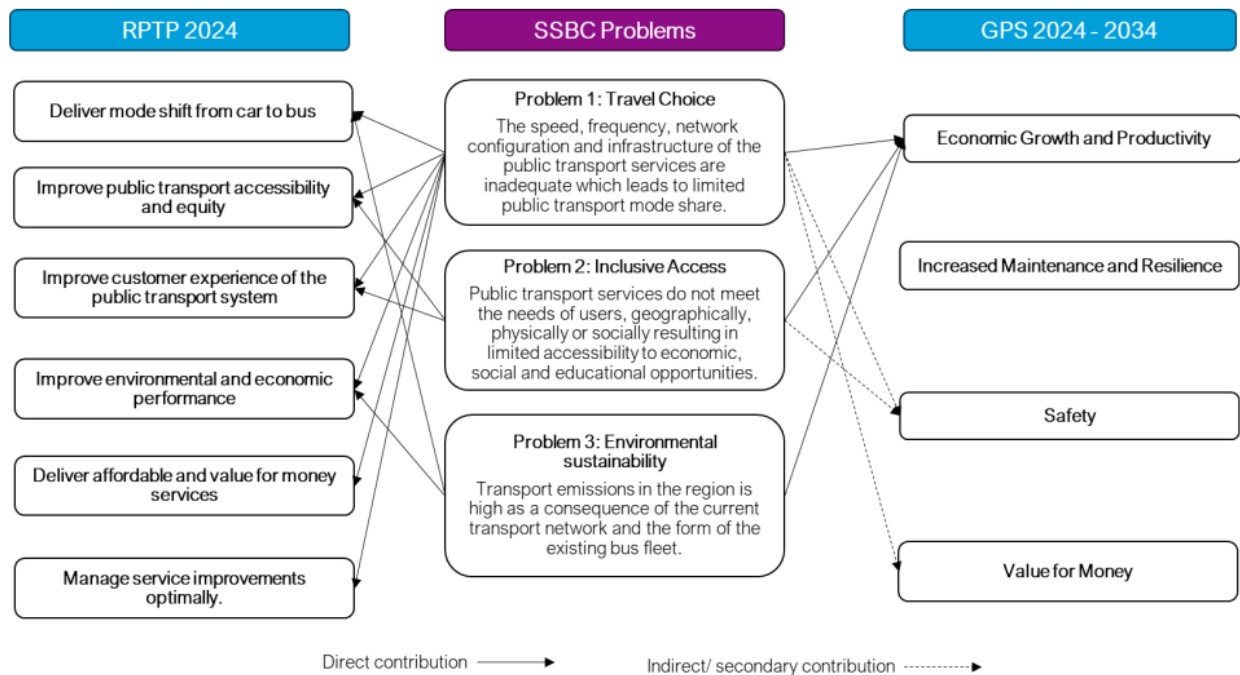


Figure 5: Relationship of problem statements with the RTPP 2025 and GPS 2024



3.5 Policies and actions

The objectives stated in Section 3.3 will be delivered by a series of policies and actions outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Policies and actions (potential initiatives) for RPTP 2025

Policies	Actions (Potential initiatives to deliver the policy)
P1 - Increase the convenience and attractiveness of public transport for a range of journey purposes through investment in improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise existing investment in bus services, and identify short term improvements within current budgets to be implemented in 2024 and 2025. Engage with communities and local service providers to establish and design public transport services around passenger needs. Produce business case for bus services and infrastructure to secure long-term investment. Procurement of new bus contracts in 2025 provide the opportunity to fund service improvements, supported by upgraded infrastructure. Investigate and prioritise delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher frequency urban services in New Plymouth to provide more choice and opportunities for service transfer. Greater integration between New Plymouth urban and school services to make best use of available resources. Higher frequency Ōpunake / Hāwera to New Plymouth Connector services to support mode shift on State Highway 3. More evening and weekend services to support shift workers and the leisure economy. New or improved bus services or Community Transport to provide greater coverage of the region, for example around the coast and to neighbouring regions. Inter-regional passenger bus or rail services from New Plymouth to Whanganui and beyond to Palmerston North (and onward connections to Auckland and Wellington). Investigate and trial provision of Community Transport services in rural areas which currently have little or no public transport options. Identify locations where bus priority will be required to protect bus services from the impact of traffic congestion, and secure investment to deliver projects. Stay abreast of Territorial Authority District Plan policies for location of new development to ensure future public transport network includes new routes or extensions.
P2 - Improve public transport service access for disabled people, so that they have the same transport choices and opportunities as the able-bodied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support Total Mobility provision across the region. Introduce accessible buses on Connector and Southlink services as part of new contracts. Work with Territorial Authorities to improve accessibility for disabled people at bus stops, and on active travel routes to bus stops. Ensure that Community Transport services are supplied with accessible vehicles where feasible. <p><i>Appendix I contains more detail equitable access and transport disadvantaged</i></p>

Policies	Actions (Potential initiatives to deliver the policy)
<p>P3 - Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport, improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion through mode shift to public transport and decarbonising the bus fleet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and implement a business case which makes a strong investment case for higher bus service frequencies to encourage mode shift away from the private car. • Register 'exempt services' (this term is explained in Appendix D.5) which are provided on a commercial basis. • Investigate options for future bus service contracts using alternative fuels or modern diesel vehicles which have the highest environmental standards. • Evaluate and progress Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funding opportunities for trialling of hydrogen buses on services with high daily vehicle kilometres. • Take advantage of funding opportunities for acceleration of zero emission bus implementation into the urban fleet.
<p>P4 - Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review fares on an annual basis and implement any changes in response to passenger numbers and financial performance. • Encourage and prioritise payment for bus travel by electronic card-based methods - especially groups benefitting from concessions, who will be required to use a card for their journey, or else pay cash. • Continue to provide some concessionary fares for eligible users (e.g. Super Gold card holders), in line with national government policy. • Investigate fare capping to reward frequent public transport usage. <p><i>Appendix G contains more detail on fares and ticketing systems</i></p>
<p>P5 - Provide high quality information that enables passengers to easily understand and navigate services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide online and paper timetables for all public transport services, and disseminate through a wide range of outlets. • Promote the Transit-app as the short to medium source of real-time passenger journey planning information. • Roll out of real time passenger information at the bus hub and on buses, as funding permits. • Work with Territorial Authorities to realise opportunities to increase visibility and information provision at bus stops, including flags at all locations and totems at major hubs. • Develop a separate Public Transport website which offers greater functionality and improved user experience. • Investigate integrating other travel modes into the journey planner functionality of the public transport web site, potentially as part of a wider inter-regional collaboration, to provide a one-stop shop for all public transport, walking, cycling, and disability access information.
<p>P6 - Undertake an approach to planning, procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update contract units in response to service improvement proposals approved following a business case. • Implement the requirements of the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF). • Undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of service, unit, and system performance. • Utilise existing forums with the Territorial Authorities to support the Public Transport Committee review progress against actions, and agree revised or further actions as required.

4. How do we propose to do it?

4.1 SSBC completed and the recommendations supported

The SSBC prepared for Taranaki public transport set out the rationale for investing in an improved public transport network in Taranaki. The SSBC was approved by Council and released in October 2024.

Through the SSBC, a new service offering has been designed with a renewed sense of ambition, aiming to improve the public transport network to meet the challenges of the region so that public transport becomes the preferred mode of travel and single occupancy car travel, especially for shorter urban journeys, is reduced. The network has been redesigned with engagement from the local community ensuring it aligns with their needs and preferences.

Given the current funding constraints, the SSBC recommended that the new service network was first implemented at a lower frequency than the end goal, with a staged approach to increasing frequency over time being recommended to provide for growth in a sustained manner.

The following was agreed by the Council:

- Approval of the designed preferred network option outlined, with minimal additional funding requested for the initial 'Bronze' stage.
- Acknowledgement and endorsement of a staged frequency approach with 'Gold' being the desired frequency option where further funding will be sought when available. Noting that an addendum to this SSBC will be undertaken including an updated BCR.
- Agreement to the establishment of a Joint Committee between Taranaki Regional Council and New Plymouth District Council to facilitate and support the development of public transport moving forward.



4.2 Next steps (2025-2028)

New contracts, new network

The new contracts will commence on **6 April 2026** and are anticipated to be for between six to nine-year periods. This is the opportunity to deliver the new public transport network for Taranaki – details of which are provided in Appendix C.

The intent is a staged improvement process to take the region from the current state to its aspired state. The first step is implementing the new service network with a 'Bronze' frequency which keep budgets manageable in the currently very constrained funding environment. It allows for growth in the form of more frequent services as patronage increases and funding becomes available.

The new contract specifications include a fleet with the lowest possible greenhouse gas emissions and/or a clear strategy to transition to zero emission vehicles.

New ticketing system

The move to the new national ticketing system, Motu Move, is scheduled for late 2025 to early 2026, and is likely to be aligned with the move to the new network.



Improved information

TRC currently provides a mix of paper and online information on bus services.

Paper information consists of individual route timetables and maps for public buses, along with a summary map of the urban services in New Plymouth city. A useful aspect of the individual CityLink route maps is that they show stop and shelter locations. Timetables have other information such as fare zones, Bee Card operation, customer etiquette and how to use the bus, which is important for people who are not regular users of public transport.

A refresh of timetables will create a common and user-friendly format and address current issues such as timings which are referred to in the leaflet as "approximate" (except for the start of each

route). Therefore new timetables will set realistic intermediate timing points. Differences in format between the timetables of the Connector and Citylink services will also be rectified.

The online offering – at Buses & Transport / Taranaki Regional Council (trc.govt.nz) – provides comprehensive information on urban / school services, Total Mobility timetables, fares / concessions, new updates, and other essential information such as lost property. Real-time tracking is provided by the Transit app, based on data feeds provided by TRC and the operators.

A **new website** will be developed to better meet the needs of customers for fast and comprehensive journey planning.

New branding

Aligning with the new website, and to support the visibility and cohesion of the new bus services, a new regional brand is being developed. This will be a full redesign of the public transport brand, including a new logo, visual identity, and marketing materials. This rebrand will roll out with the new network in 2026.

Community transport options

'Community Transport' is a broad term for local specialist shared-transport services delivered by charitable and other not-for-profit organisations, typically to meet the needs of communities that cannot sustain a regular public transport service.

Consider the provision of accessible community transport services, including demand-responsive and shopper and specialty services for health and well-being where regular scheduled local public transport services are not viable. These can also provide access to the conventional public transport network.

During the life of the RTP, research will be undertaken into how community transport services in the region could be supported, and implementation started if funding allows.

In particular, how third-party contributions can best be utilised to help provide community transport options within the region will be explored.

4.3 Next RTP

The next review of the RTP is scheduled for 2028. Although monitoring of services and minor improvements are constantly undertaken, this will be the next opportunity for a more fulsome review. This will provide a useful opportunity to assess the success in establishing the new network of bus services and associated improvements. If increased community support, as demonstrated by increased patronage levels, warrant it, and funding is able to be accessed, further improvement steps can be considered at that stage.

4.4 Dependencies and uncertainties

These are already well-explained in the SSBC, but can be grouped into the following themes:

- Funding of national and local share.
- Interdependence on infrastructure being similarly improved by the district councils.
- The new Government requirement for increasing private share funding from 2025/2026 will require an increase in bus fares. Higher bus fares may negatively impact patronage levels and therefore the ability to meet targeted patronage increases.
- Patronage increases which justify continued investment in improved services.



4.5 Measuring success

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets proposed to measure delivery of the RPTP 2025 are outlined in Table 4.

These are a combination of those proposed in the 2023 draft RPTP and those in the SSBC that was completed in 2024.

The targets are aspirational, and depend on the ability of the Council and Territorial Authority partners obtaining sufficient funding to deliver the necessary service and infrastructure improvements.

The targets are designed to signal the desire to elicit change in the public transport system in Taranaki. These targets will be treated in a transitional manner until new contracts are introduced in 2026. During the next 18 months, the appropriateness of baseline data will be confirmed, and a monitoring and reporting framework set up.

Table 4: Key Performance Indicators and targets

Ref.	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data source/s
KPI 1	Increased percentage of the population living within 500m of a bus stop	Increase of 20% by 2030	Current percentage of population based on 2024 data (Remix)
KPI 2	Increased percentage of the population living within 500m of a bus with service frequency of at least 2 per hour	Increase of 10% by 2030	Current percentage of population based on 2024 data (Remix)
KPI 3	Increased percentage of customer survey responses rating public transport as their mode of choice	Increase of 20% by first year	2024 survey to be used as a base
KPI 4	Increased proportion of population living within 30 minutes of a job by public transport	Increase of 25% by 2030	Current percentage of population based on 2024 data (Remix)
KPI 5	Improved travel time by public transport	10% improvement within 1 year	Current corridors as of 2024 travel time
KPI 6	Increased annual public transport patronage	25% improvement by 2030	Current 2024 ridership will be utilised
KPI 7	Reduced transport emissions in Taranaki	Net zero by 2050	Emissions based on current as of 2024
KPI 8	Reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) by private vehicles	Reduction of 20% by 2030	VKT based on current as of 2024
KPI 9	Increased public transport mode share	Increase of 20% by 2030	Mode share current as of 2024

These will be monitored using data collected from:

- Ticketing system;
- Passenger surveys;
- Real-time service monitoring;
- Use of GIS software;
- School and workplace travel plans; and
- National census.

Appendix A: What has our process been?

Below is a summary of the development process involved in creating this RPTP and the SSBC as these processes have been intrinsically intertwined. The steps involving community consultation are shown in bold.

Table 5: Summary of development process including consultation steps

Dates	Details
15 Mar – 30 Apr 2023 <i>'The Road Ahead' consultation</i>	Regional engagement on the community's desired future transport network incorporating active modes (walking and cycling), shared modes (particularly public transport), safety and speed. The community's feedback helps guide development and drafting of upcoming district and regional transport plans.
Mar – Jun 2023	A Taranaki Public Transport Network Review' was undertaken by Taith Consulting for TRC. The review sought to make positive changes and recommendations to encourage mode shift towards public transport. The review focused on the short-term changes that could be achieved within the existing budget.
Apr – Sep 2023	Taith Consulting drafted BTC documents for TRC
6 Sep 2023	Taith Consulting held a TRC councillor workshop on the draft BTC documents
11 Sep 2023	TRC approves draft BTC including the RPTP for public consultation
18 Sep – 29 Oct 2023 <i>'Better Travel Choices' consultation</i>	Public consultation on draft Better Travel Choices for Taranaki (6 weeks) which included both Part A: Better Travel Choices Strategy Consultation was undertaken alongside the districts speed management plans, with a common landing page and combined communications.
Nov 2023	Preparing high-level summary of Officers' Report on the submissions received.
Nov 2023	Point of Entry work undertaken for Taranaki public transport which advised a SSBC was required to support new investment in the region.
24 Nov 2023	New coalition Government sworn in, signalling a significant shift in national policy direction for transport and other sectors in Aotearoa
4 Dec 2023	TRC holds public hearing of submissions on BTC
16 Feb – 16 Mar 2024 <i>Draft RLTP 2024 consultation</i>	Consultation on the draft Regional Land Transport Plan for Taranaki 2024-2027 (RLTP 2024) had a step-change improvement in public bus services as the number one funding priority for the region
19 Feb 2024	TRC endorses delaying deliberations on BTC submissions to June 2024 to align with related processes underway including the SSBC.
Feb – May 2024	Preparing BTC Officers' Report on the over 400 submissions received.
22 Apr – 6 May 2024 <i>'Hop on Board' consultation</i>	Collected feedback for SSBC on ideas on specific bus services, frequency, and timetables to make bus travel more attractive and provide more travel choices.
4 Jun 2024	New draft Guidelines for developing RPTPs were released by Waka Kotahi, which signalled changes to what was required within a RPTP.
22 May – 11 Jun 2024 <i>'Where to Next?' consultation</i>	Bus network consultation asked the community to compare two bus network options and advise which one they preferred. Received over 380 submissions.
17 Jun 2024	TRC held formal deliberations on the BTC submissions received. Councillors were also updated on preparation of the SSBC.
9 Sep 2024	TRC approved the SSBC including the intent to pursue the recommended 'Bronze' network option initially.
20 Sep 2024	New 'Development Guidelines for RPTPs 2024' released by Waka Kotahi.
24 Mar 2025	TRC receives the final RPTP 2025 for consideration of approval.
1 Apr 2025	TRC adopts the RPTP 2025.
2 May 2025	The RPTP 2025 comes into effect.

A.1 How does the SSBC relate to this RPTP?

The Single Stage Business Case (SSBC) presents the case to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency for investment in a revitalised bus network and uses the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) and the RPTP as supporting evidence. While these plans offer strategic and long-term guidance, the SSBC focuses on operational improvements needed to enhance public transport in Taranaki and outlines what specific changes will be implemented.

The SSBC involved a multi-phased consultation process: firstly, collecting various bus network feedback under several categories (Hop on Board); secondly, presenting these bus network options for public selection (Where to Next?); and finally, reporting on the finalised bus network (On the Horizon). The key driver behind the consultations has been to receive feedback from the public and use that feedback to determine what services our community wants. The results from the extensive consultation process are directly informing the new bus service contracts that come up for tender in February 2025, with implementation scheduled for April 2026.



A.2 Where can I find more information?

The following related resources are available on our website at www.trc.govt.nz/buses-transport/transport-planning/transport-planning-documents:

- The final SSBC (Oct2024)
- Deliberations material (Jun2024)
- Hearing of submissions (Dec2023)
- The Network Review (Jun2023)
- All related consultation reports

In addition, related information is available in the meeting agendas for TRC's Executive, Audit and Risk Committee which is responsible for developing the RPTP. Access through the following link - www.trc.govt.nz/council/meetings.

THE ROAD AHEAD






Appendix B: Our current public transport system

B.1 Overview

There are currently five forms of public transport services provided in the region (in 2024) as described in Table 6, with more detail on the following pages.

Table 6: Summary of current public transport services in Taranaki

Service / location	Details
New Plymouth services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter services – These operate from Monday to Friday with 14 services per day with varying frequency until around 6pm. Two different routes operate on Saturdays with two services each. Currently, no services are provided on Sunday or public holidays. • School services – There are 27 individual services with each service performing one weekday AM and PM trip. These are well utilised, with additional buses required in some instances.
Regional Connector 	<p>Introduced in 2014, the Connector service links a series of townships along State Highway 3 during on weekdays only. There are services from Ōpunake, Hāwera and Stratford to New Plymouth. These operate four times per day in each direction. There are also two school services which travel from Hāwera to various schools in New Plymouth.</p> <p><i>Connector supports a relatively high number of passengers for the relatively low level of frequency, which indicates significant potential for further service improvement both on weekdays, and possibly weekends.</i></p>
Rural Southlink 	<p>There are three routes in South Taranaki collectively branded as 'Southlink' providing a basic access option between urban areas for those in the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ōpunake – Kaponga – Manaia – Hāwera (serves Ohawe on demand) – Thursday weekly service • Waverley – Pātea – Hāwera – operates on Tuesday and Thursday • Ōpunake – Ōākura – New Plymouth – Monday to Friday weekly service <p><i>Southlink only carries a small number of passengers (an average of 7.6 per trip in March 2023), which results in a high subsidy per journey.</i></p>


Service / location	Details
Total Mobility 	<p>For people with a disability which limits their ability to use conventional public transport. Total Mobility is a nationwide scheme aimed at assisting people with impairments to become more mobile and active in the community by providing transport assistance through approved taxi companies and companion driving services.</p> <p>In partnership with Government, the Council's administers Total Mobility in the region which provides discounted fares for eligible members who otherwise have no or limited access to public transport services. Total Mobility makes it easier by saving users up to 75% of the cost of a normal fare.</p>
Additional public transport services	<p>There are also the following public transport services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive rural school services funded directly by the Ministry of Education. • Community transport services run by local charities such as St John in South Taranaki. • Long-distance coach services to Auckland and Wellington operated by InterCity.



Table 7 is a summary of the bus services for the 2023/24 financial year which provides a useful snapshot of the relative patronage and costs of the existing bus services.

Table 7: Statistical summary of existing bus services in the 2023/24 year

Service	Patronage	Revenue	Operating Expenditure	Farebox
Citylink (New Plymouth)	688,003	\$1,182,960	\$3,876,514	30.5%
Connector/Your Connector	81,708	\$412,658	\$1,026,751	40.2%
Southlink Ōpunake-New Plymouth	1,758	\$5,091	\$76,785	6.6%
Southlink Ōpunake-Hāwera	456	\$1,151	\$16,487	7.0%
Southlink Waverley-Hāwera	843	\$1,280	\$36,845	3.5%
Regional total	772,768	\$1,603,140	\$5,033,382	31.9%

Figure 6 and Figure 7 give an overview of patronage and financial performance of the region’s bus services over the last few years.

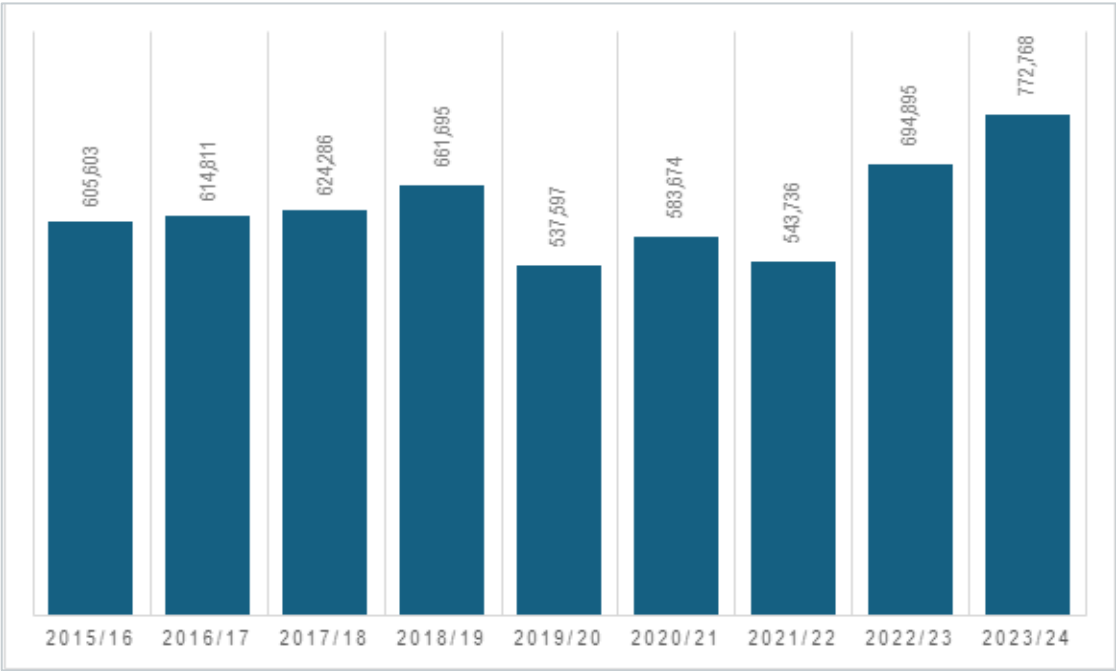


Figure 6: Total patronage (number of trips) on Taranaki public bus services by financial year

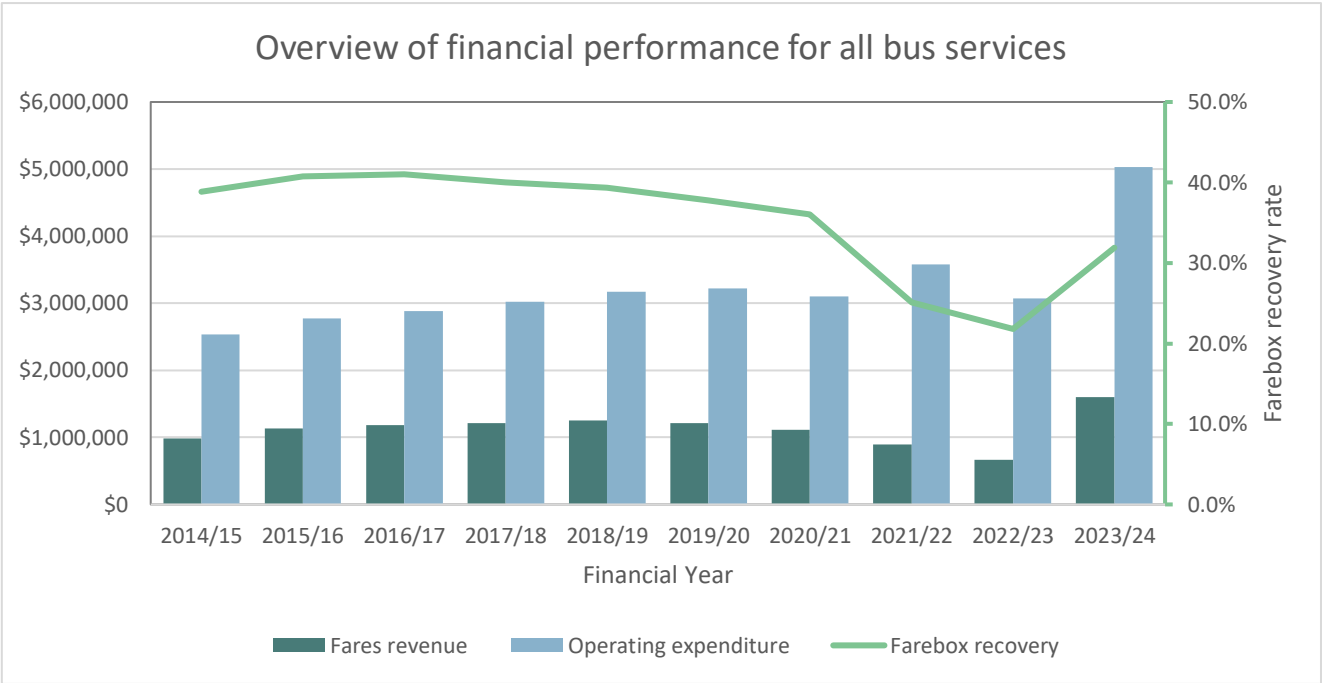


Figure 7: Overview of financial performance across all the bus services

The current bus network in Taranaki and its frequency (as at mid-2024) are shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9. These summary figures are sourced from the SSBC and more detail is available in that document.

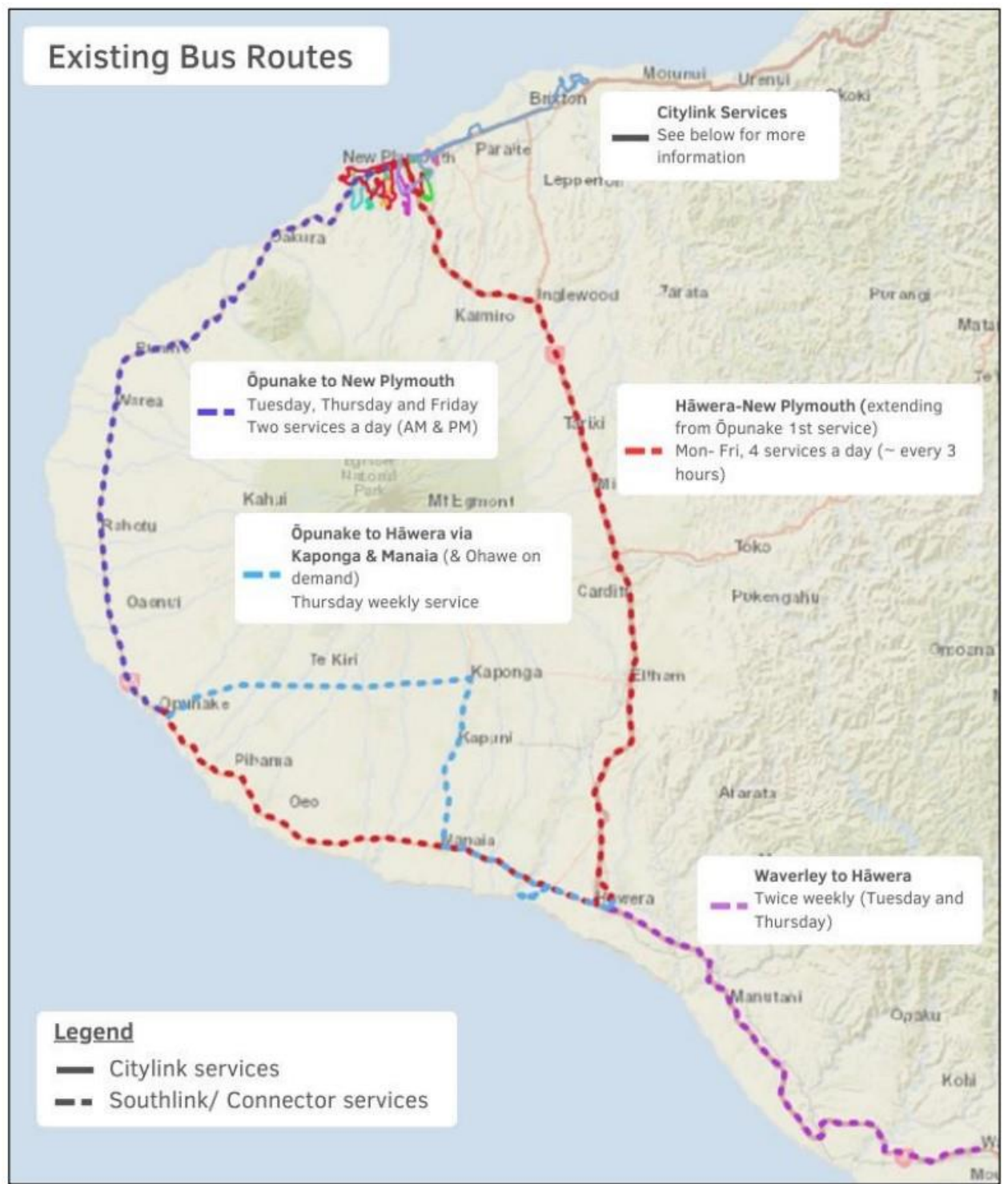
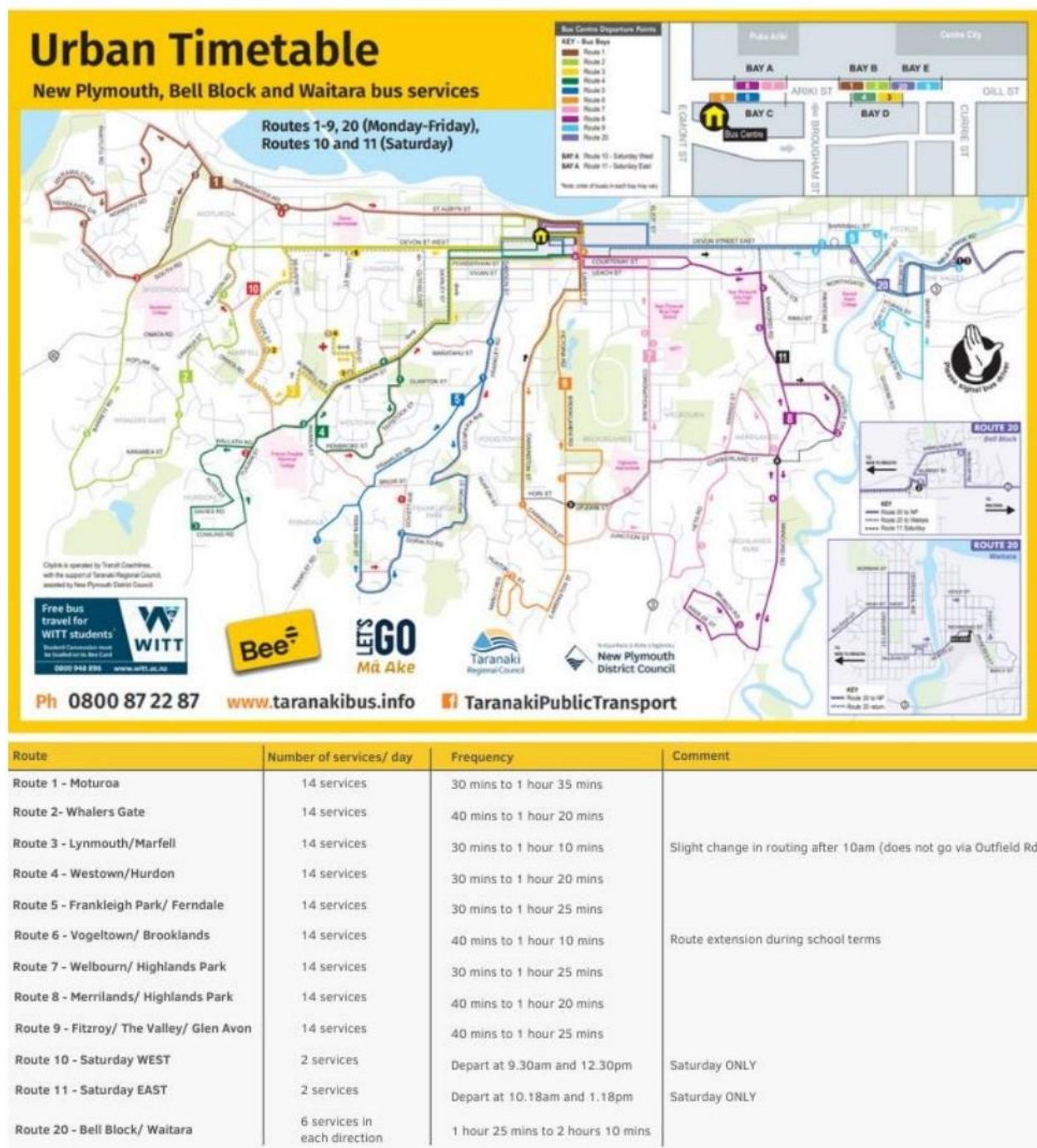


Figure 8: Existing bus routes in Taranaki (mid 2024)

B.2 New Plymouth Citylink



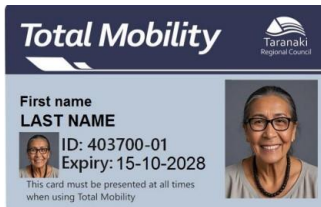
All routes run from Monday to Friday except for Route 10 and 11 which runs only runs on Saturdays
First service for routes 1 - 9 is around 7.00am with the last service at 6.20pm.
First service for route 20 is at 9.10am and last service at 5.30pm.

Figure 9: Citylink bus timetables and routes in New Plymouth (2024)

This current network is overly complex and slow, with some routes changing depending on the time of day, some routes using different roads in opposite directions creating long one-way loops resulting in slow journey times. This reduces the efficiency of public transport and consequently it is currently much faster (and more reliable) to travel via a private vehicle.

B.3 Total Mobility

Total Mobility (TM) is a nationwide scheme aimed at assisting people with impairments to become more mobile and active in the community by providing transport assistance through approved taxi companies and companion driving services. TM



provides discounted fares for eligible members who otherwise have no or limited access to public transport services.

Fares

The TM scheme is jointly funded by NZTA and TRC, currently offering a 75% discount to TM clients. Taranaki has a fare cap of \$40 per one way trip (meaning TRC can pay a maximum of \$30 towards a one-way fare). An example of how the fares work is provided below:

Total taxi fare	Customer pays	TRC pays
\$20	\$5	\$15
\$30	\$7.50	\$22.50
\$40	\$10	\$30 max. subsidy reached
\$50	\$20	\$30 max. subsidy reached
\$60	\$30	\$30 max. subsidy reached
\$70	\$40	\$30 max. subsidy reached

Note:

- Temporary free fares for TM services were available between 14 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 as part of the covid-19 pandemic response – fare caps and subsidies were still applicable.
- From 1 April 2022 – 30 June 2022, the government introduced half price fares across all public transport, incl. TM. This enabled TM clients to receive a further 25% discount on top of the usual 50% discount. It was then extended from 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- Half price fares then became permanent from 1 April 2023, under the Government's Community Connect Scheme subsidising public transport.

Usage

Financial year	Total number of trips	% change from previous year
2019/20	55,236	-1.6%
2020/21	54,361	-1.6%
2021/22	47,037	-13.5%
2022/23	57,874	+23%
2023/24	64,798	+12%

Assessment agencies

A person's eligibility for TM is assessed by doctors or approved assessment agencies.

Using approved TM assessment agencies is an easier, cheaper option for TM applicants with more accessible/available appointments than being assessed by a GP or specialist doctor. TRC currently has two approved assessment agencies as follows:

- **Your Way Kia Roha** was our first and only TM assessment agency up until 2024. Previously they would conduct assessments and forward the application through to TRC. They have now been set up to complete the application process directly into the TM system. They offer both in home assessments (upon request) and on-site assessments. However, due to not having the ability to accept payment, clients are required to pay TRC directly for the application/assessment fee.
- **The Taranaki Disabilities Information Centre** is newly contracted to carry out TM assessments commencing late May 2024. The entire application process is completed on site (including photo, payment and assessment), taking away the complications of sending through all components by the applicant.

To continue streamlining the TM application process, TRC is seeking other organisations to contract around Taranaki and slowly move away from the need to use GP's and specialists.

Total Mobility operators

Taranaki currently has seven operators providing TM services as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8: Total Mobility operators

Approved transport operator	Area	Wheelchair accessibility
Taranaki Executive Taxis	New Plymouth	
Driving Miss Daisy New Plymouth	New Plymouth (other areas by request)	Wheelchair ramp available
Driving You Taranaki Ltd	All of Taranaki	Wheelchair ramp available
Freedom Companion Driving Service	New Plymouth	Wheelchair ramp available
Ironside Vehicle Society	New Plymouth / Inglewood / Waitara	Pre-booked hoist assistance available
New Plymouth Taxis	New Plymouth	
STOPS	Hāwera / South Taranaki	Wheelchair ramp available

A new transport operator - Driving You Taranaki, was contracted in December 2024 and has a small fleet based around the coast, including a hoist vehicle. They can provide TM services in multiple locations around Taranaki.

TRC has received interest from some potential new transport operators. However, no applications have been received following the discussed requirements.

The future of TM

Support and administering of TM in Taranaki will continue as long as national support does, along with making improvements to provide an optimal service for users.

Outcomes of a long-running national review are awaited. In the meantime, ongoing improvements are planned to include:

- Continuing with streamlining application processes.
- Establishing strong relationships with external stakeholders to help understand the travel needs of our most vulnerable.
- Designing a user-friendly website for TM and other public transport services.



C.2 Service frequency options

Three states or phases, described as 'Bronze', 'Silver' and 'Gold' refer to increased stages of service frequency of this same network, and are shown in Figure 11. While an outline of the staging through these phases is provided in Figure 12.

Note that IP means 'inter-peak' which is the period of lower activity compared to the peak travel periods in the morning and afternoon.

Table 9-1 : Peak Frequency Options for Urban Services

	BRONZE			SILVER			GOLD		
	FREQUENCY (MIN)			FREQUENCY (MIN)			FREQUENCY (MIN)		
	AM	IP	PM	AM	IP	PM	AM	IP	PM
Urban Services									
Airport to Whalers Gate	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	30	15
Carrington / Govett	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	70	15
Frankleigh Park	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	70	15
Mangorei Taranaki Hospital	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	70	15
Port Taranaki - Vogeltown	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	70	15
Proposed Orbiter Route	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	70	15
Route 3-Hurdon	40	70	40	30	70	30	15	70	15
Route 5 - Waitara	120	105	120	60	105	60	30	105	30
Waitara Express Route	120	140	120	60	140	60	30	84	30

Table 9-2 : Number of Services per week and weekend services for each option

	BRONZE		SILVER		GOLD		
	Return Trips/ week	Saturday	Return Trips/ week	Saturday	Return Trips/ week	Saturday	Sunday & Public Holidays
Urban Services							
Airport to Whalers Gate	70		80	4	165	12	12
Carrington / Govett	70		80		125	12	12
Frankleigh Park	70		80		125	12	12
Mangorei Taranaki Hospital	70		80		125	12	12
Port Taranaki - Vogeltown	70		80		165	12	12
Proposed Orbiter Route	70	2	80	4	125	12	12
Route 3-Hurdon	70		80		165	12	12
Route 5 - Waitara	30		40		65	12	12
Waitara Express Route	25		35		60	12	12
Regional Services							
Waverly to Hawera	1		1		2		
Opunake to Hawera	1		1		10	2	2
Opunake to NP	10		10		20	2	2
Hawera - Taranaki Hospital	20	4	20	4	20	4	4
Hawera to NP	5		5		40	8	8

Figure 11: Progressive service frequency options for this new network

Staging of the Preferred Network Option

With network changes in place, three frequency options have been considered for the preferred option (referred to as Bronze), Silver and Gold. Gold is the desirable preferred with 15-minute headways during the peak periods for the Urban routes and increased services on the weekends. Bronze and Silver options are considered for staging, based on current funding constraints. The difference in the frequency of services for each option is presented below.

	BRONZE		SILVER		GOLD		
	Return Trips/ week	Saturday	Return Trips/ week	Saturday	Return Trips/ week	Saturday	Sunday & Public Holidays
Urban Services							
Airport to Whalers Gate	70		80	4	165	15 min during peaks	12
Carrington / Govett	70		80		125		12
Frankleigh Park	70		80	30 min during peaks	125		12
Mangorei Taranaki Hospital	70		80		125		12
Port Taranaki - Vogeltown	70		80		165		12
Proposed Orbiter Route	70	2	80	4	125		12
Route 3-Hurdon	70		80		165		12
Route 5 - Waitara	30		40		65		12
Waitara Express Route	25		35		60		
Regional Services							
Waverly to Hawera	1		1		2		
Opunake to Hawera	1		1		10	2	2
Opunake to NP	10		10		20	2	2
Hawera - Taranaki Hospital	20	4	20	4	20	4	4
Hawera to NP	5		5		40	8	8

Outcomes Achieved

The preferred network option provides the following customer outcomes over the Do-Minimum:

- An estimated reduction in average travel time via public transport of 2 minutes (5%) between Glen Avon and the CBD, which increases to 6 minutes with the 'Gold' frequency. An estimated 5 minute reduction (14%) between Marfell and the CBD, which increases to 10 minutes with the 'Gold' frequency.
- The New Plymouth Airport is now accessible via public transport increasing travel choice for locals and travellers alike.
- An estimated 14% increase in the overall daily bus patronage by 2035 with the 'Bronze' frequency. This will be further increased to a daily increase of 44% with the implementation of the 'Gold' frequency option.
- By 2053, approximately 54,500 people will be within a bus route. This is a 3,100 or 6% increase from the Do-Minimum.
- Reduction of 4,812 tonnes of CO₂ over 40 years with the 'Bronze' frequency, and a reduction of 13,335 tonnes with the 'Gold' frequency option due to private vehicle trips diverted to public transport.

Figure 12: Staging of the preferred network option - Bronze, Silver, Gold

C.3 Starting with 'Bronze'

The frequency indicated in Figure 13 is referred to as the 'Bronze' option and is financially feasible at present as the cost is within the proximity of current funding envelopes.

The intent is that the new bus service contracts that will be entered into during the 2025/26 financial year will roll out this new network from April 2026, with a 'Bronze' frequency.

The aim is that further increases in frequency will be staged over time as and when patronage growth and funding become available in the future. For the 'Silver' option there is a slight increase in frequency in peak times on the urban routes and there is increase in Saturday services. For 'Gold', the frequency is further increased during the peak periods and increase in services on the weekend.



Figure 13: Proposed new bus network with initial 'Bronze' service frequency

C.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure covers the physical assets such as bus stops and interchanges (hubs) as well as any on-road bus priority.

Like all roading infrastructure, bus stops are the responsibility of the relevant Road Controlling Authority. Each stop should include a sign and yellow box road markings as a minimum, with shelters to provide passenger protection from the elements (both rain and sun) highly desirable.

New Plymouth District Council and TRC have a constructive and collaborative working relationship which focuses on improving communities' access to public transport with the development of a working party for bus shelter maintenance and infrastructure. Most bus stops have standard facilities consisting of a sign, road markings, shelter, and timetable case.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has produced bus stop design guidance which will be used to identify locations where improvements to passenger access and facilities are required.

Citylink routes in New Plymouth are currently able to complete their journeys and arrive back in time for the start of the next service. However, increasing levels of traffic congestion on State Highway 3 between New Plymouth, Bell Block and Waitara are starting to impact on journey speeds, with the potential to result in punctuality challenges. Another challenge is the presence of roadworks, which can result in detours that add time on to the schedule.

The New Plymouth Integrated Transport Framework recognises this situation and forecasts that this congestion will get worse in future. Therefore bus priority in the form of traffic signal detection and dedicated lanes may be required in future.

TRC is working closely with New Plymouth District Council to ensure bus stop infrastructure is optimised for the new network rollout as much as possible within funding constraints.

It is important to understand that TRC provides the bus services but has limited influence on the supporting infrastructure provided, as that is the domain of each Road Controlling Authority (district council for local roads or NZTA for state highways). This is why it is so important to have constructive and collaborative working relationships in place between the other organisations involved – most specifically the district councils.

Achieving the vision for public transport that is sought in this RPTP and the New Plymouth Integrated Transport Framework (refer section D.4) requires that optimal infrastructure is provided to appropriately support the bus services. One of the key reasons for establishing a Public Transport Committee is to strengthen and facilitate the collaboration between councils for a shared commitment to improve public transport in the region.



Appendix D: Legal requirements and links to other plans

The RPTP exists within a legislative, regulatory and policy framework, and this section sets out the key requirements against which public transport must be planned and delivered.

D.1 The legal requirements

The statutory requirements for preparing the RPTP are set out in Part 5 of the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA).

The LTMA places a significant emphasis on Public Transport Authorities planning and delivering public transport in consultation and collaboration with territorial authorities and public transport operators. This recognises that to deliver consistently good journey experiences and attract and retain passengers requires a wide range of elements such as land use, network planning, infrastructure provision and efficient and effective operation of services. These elements must come together in an integrated way.

In section 117 of the LTMA, the purpose of the RPTP is stated as being:

- a) A means for encouraging Regional Councils and public transport operators to work together in developing public transport services and infrastructure;
- b) An instrument for engaging with the public in the region on the design and operation of the public transport network; and
- c) A statement of:
 - i. The public transport services that are integral to the public transport network;
 - ii. The policies and procedures that apply to those services; and
 - iii. The information and infrastructure that support those services.

Section 126 of the LTMA states the RPTP must, at all times, be kept current for a period not less than three years in advance, but not more than ten years in advance. The Council may review the Plan from time to time but the Plan must be reviewed and, if necessary, renewed or varied, after the public

transport service components of a RLTP are approved or varied.

D.2 Changes to guiding Act

In August 2023, the LTMA was amended with the passing of the Land Transport Management (Regulation of Public Transport) Amendment Act 2023 (the Amendment Act). The amendments to the LTMA mean:

- There are new objectives for the planning, procurement and delivery of public transport to be established and embedded in the LTMA
- That in-house delivery of public transport services is enabled
- That there is transparency around aspects of service delivery including the procurement and contractual arrangements
- Different asset ownership, including public transport authorities owning assets directly, is enabled
- Greater collaboration is encouraged between regional councils and territorial authorities in preparing regional public transport plans
- The framework for exempt services has changed, expanding the scope to include commercial and inter-regional public transport services
- The definition of Public Transport is expanded to include On-Demand public transport services and shuttle services
- That regional councils can procure, contract, and deliver on-demand services separately to timetabled services.

The Amendment Act acknowledges the need for public transport investment to be efficient and provide better value for money. It facilitates stronger measures for Territorial Authority involvement in the RPTP development process. The changes acknowledge that the previous operating model created a barrier for decarbonisation targets and improvement of employee terms and conditions.

The amendments place greater emphasis on Public Transport Authorities planning and delivering

public transport in consultation and collaboration with territorial authorities, and public transport operators.

This recognises, that to deliver consistently good journey experiences and attract and retain passengers requires a wide range of elements such as land use, network planning, infrastructure provision and efficient and effective operation of services. These elements must come together in an integrated way.

D.3 Principles guiding review

This review of our RPTP is based on five principles from section 115(1) of the LTMA:

- Well-used public transport services reduce the environmental and health impacts of land transport, including by reducing reliance on single-occupant vehicles and using zero emission technology:
- Public transport services support a mode shift from private motor vehicle use and equitable access to places, facilities, services, and social and economic opportunities if they are coordinated, integrated, reliable, frequent, accessible, affordable, and safe:

- Fair and equitable employment or engagement of people in the public transport workforce should ensure that there is a sufficiently robust labour market to sustain and expand public transport services:
- Regional councils, territorial authorities, and public transport operators should work together to co-ordinate public transport services, the provision of infrastructure, and land use as necessary —
 - to meet the needs of passengers
 - to encourage more people to use the services.
- public transport services should be provided in a way that assists —
 - public transport investment to be efficient
 - public transport investment to give value for money.

These principles have guided TRC in the development of this RPTP. TRC is therefore satisfied that these principles, and requirements for collaboration and consultation with key partners and stakeholders (LTMA s.125), have been applied through development of the RPTP.

D.4 Links to other planning documents

The RPTP 2025 considers and gives effect to a range of national and regional policies, strategies and legislation – key ones of which are noted in Table 9.

Table 9: Links to other planning documents

Legislation	Central government	Regional and local
Land Transport Management Act 2003	GPS on Land Transport 2024	TRC's Long-Term Plan 2024
Land Transport Act 2017	Ministry of Transport Outcomes Framework	Taranaki Regional Land Transport Plan 2024 (RLTP)
Local Government Act 2002	National Policy Statement on Urban Design	Tapuae Roa
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987	Ministry of Transport's 2016 Accessibility of Public Transport for those with a Disability	New Plymouth Future Development Strategy (FDS)
Resource Management Act 1991	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by NZ in 2018)	New Plymouth Integrated Transport Framework (ITF)
	Emissions Reduction Plan	TA plans and strategies
	NZTA's Public Transport Framework	

Government Policy Statement (GPS)

The Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) determines how investment into the land transport system from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) will contribute to achieving overall government outcomes. It outlines central government's strategy to guide land transport investment over the next 10 years. It also provides guidance to decision-makers about where and under what conditions government will focus resources.

Through the GPS 2024, "The Government's overarching goal for transport is an effective, efficient, safe, secure, accessible, and resilient transport system that supports the growth of our country's economy in order to deliver greater prosperity, security and opportunities for all New Zealanders". The four strategic priorities for GPS 2024 are:

- Economic growth and productivity
- Increased maintenance and resilience
- Safety
- Value for money.

Public transport is funded through both private and public sources. The private share reflects the individual benefits to users and includes fare substitutes and commercial revenue, such as advertising, while the public share accounts for the broader societal benefits of public transport, including reduced road congestion, environmental sustainability, and overall community outcomes.

The GPS 2024 set a clear expectation to increase the 'private share' for the costs of providing public transport, in order to reduce the 'public share' required from taxes and rates. To achieve the targets set for the Taranaki region, a fare increase is required due to limited opportunities for additional revenue generation. Therefore, a 25% increase in adult fares and a 13.5% increase in youth fares is proposed for 2025/2026 - refer to Appendix G. This will help ensure public transport remains financially sustainable while maintaining affordability.

The Ministry of Transport's Transport Outcomes Framework outlines five outcome areas sought from the transport system, as shown in Figure 14.

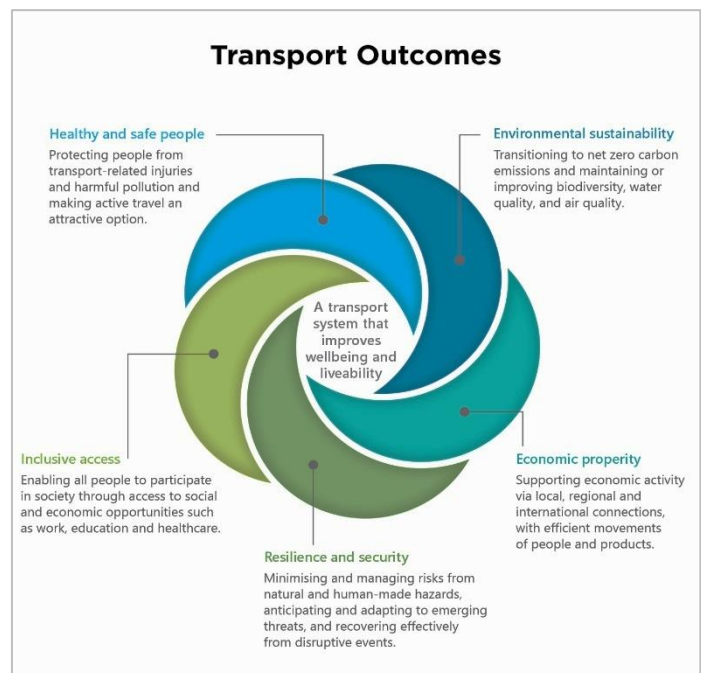


Figure 14: Ministry of Transport Outcomes Framework

Public transport contributes to these outcome areas, and the priorities of GPS 2024 in various ways. For example, public transport can:

- Enable efficient and productive use of high value urban space (economic prosperity, environmental sustainability)
- Improve access to markets, employment and areas that contribute to economic growth (economic prosperity, inclusive access)
- Enable access to employment, education, healthcare, social and cultural opportunities (economic prosperity, inclusive access, healthy and safe people)
- Ensure access to essential services for those unable to drive (economic prosperity, inclusive access, healthy and safe people)
- Provide resilience to rising transport and energy costs by providing an alternative to private motor vehicles (resilience and security, inclusive access, economic prosperity)
- Reduce harmful emissions to the environment and human health (environmental sustainability, healthy and safe people)
- Reduce deaths and serious injuries as public transport is among the safest form of transport (healthy and safe people).

- Strong public transport corridors and destinations (such as town and city centres) enable housing, employment, and retail development to be clustered around highly accessible locations, thereby reducing the need to own and run a car.
- Mode shift from private car to bus, and reduction in traffic volumes, can reduce wear and tear on the roading network and result in lower maintenance costs.
- Buses can transport more people than cars per unit of road space, and can therefore help to reduce traffic congestion that can impact on reliable journey times for freight.
- If well-used, buses reduce levels of carbon emissions travelled per passenger kilometre, which can be further improved by using low or zero emission vehicles.

The role of public transport and the benefits it can offer differ by location and spatial context.

Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP)

The 2024 Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) was released in June 2024 and focuses on the period through to June 2027. Amongst its functions, the RLTP identifies the core problems facing land transport in the region and the benefits of addressing those problems.

Table 10 outlines the problems to be addressed and benefits to be delivered. The first problem and second benefit are specifically related to public transport, and therefore this RLTP is the key policy document for delivering those investment benefits.

As already mentioned in Section 3.2, one of the RLTP's headline targets is for mode shift. The RLTP guides investment, and a step-change in bus service provision was ranked as the second highest priority project for the region through to June 2027. This underscores the importance for the community of improving public transport services, to meet a range of needs.

Table 10: RLTP 2024 problems and benefits of addressing

Problem statement (and weighting)	Benefit of addressing the problem (and weighting)	Investment benefit (from Benefits Framework)
The network is built and operated favouring cars and when coupled with limited alternative options results in low levels of public transport, active modes, and rail use (40%)	Increased safe and connected active mode (walking, cycling and micro mobility) travel choices as well as reduced distances to services and amenities to achieve healthier communities (35%)	Improved community access to travel options and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Improved safety outcomes and perceptions of safety and security.
Dispersed urban development with limited access to local amenities, services and schools resulting in high car dependency, compounding inequitable access for lower socio-economic communities (35%)	Reduced reliance on private vehicles through increased use of public transport (40%)	Increase mode shift away from private vehicle use. Improve regional connectivity and multi-modal options for all users.
The condition of the region's primary roading network (including state highways and key local roads) is inconsistent, and in some parts poor, resulting in declining outcomes (increased operating costs and delays) for inter and intra-regional travel and freight, as well as declining safety for all road users (25%)	Safe, reliable, resilient, and efficient movement goods on road and rail (25%)	Improve primary roading network safety, connectivity and efficiency. Improve network resilience and reliability.

New Plymouth Integrated Transport Framework (ITF)

The purpose of the [New Plymouth Integrated Transport Framework](#) (ITF) Programme Business Case is to demonstrate the case for change to establish a comprehensive and integrated transportation system for the New Plymouth District over the next 30 years. The ITF was finalised and approved by NPDC in December 2024 and identifies improvements to public transport (PT) as key needs/outcomes to address the issues in the district.

- Improve PT infrastructure and travel time to make PT more attractive and accessible
- Significantly improve PT frequencies, and levels of service to make PT a more attractive option
- Align PT routes with key destinations and make PT more accessible.

Specific actions were identified for phased implementation alongside district growth and available funding:

Short term –

- Improved bus stops
- Bus route to New Plymouth Airport
- Improved bus connections and frequencies with Inglewood, Oākura, Ōkato, Urenui, and the Airport.

Medium term –

- Bus interchange in selected growth areas
- On-demand PT shuttles in smaller centres of Inglewood, Oākura, Ōkato, and Urenui
- Bus priority measures on key corridors
- Park and Ride in fringe areas
- Upgrade active mode links to PT.

Long term –

- Improved bus hubs
- Extend priority bus lanes.

NPDC and TRC are working together to meet their combined goals for improving PT. A key aspect of this is the creation of a new PT Committee with elected representatives from both councils which is anticipated to start in 2025.

D.5 The regulatory system

The previous RPTP was prepared under the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM), a system for planning, procuring, and funding public transport, which aimed to increase patronage with less reliance on public subsidies, through improved collaboration between operators and Regional Councils.

Appendix F sets out the unit design principles. Services which do not form part of the core public transport network (outlined in Appendix E) are exempt from operating under contracts. This currently includes long distance services provided by InterCity.

PTOM has been replaced by the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF), which is underpinned by new objectives prioritising mode-shift, fair and equitable treatment of employees, and improved environment and health outcomes. The basic structure of PTOM has been retained, whereby all bus services are divided into units and provided under contracts to TRC.

The amended LTMA enables Regional Councils to operate public transport services in-house or to continue to outsource the operation of services to private operators. This change acknowledges that outsourcing of services to private operators may not always align with wider objectives for public transport services, for example, improving the terms and conditions of employees or accelerating the decarbonisation of the bus fleet. At this point in time, TRC is not looking to assume direct responsibility for a large number of services, but reserves the right to use its new powers if necessary.

The amended Act establishes a new requirement for public transport services to be planned, procured, and operated in an open and transparent manner - in relation to operating costs, service performance, vehicles used to deliver services, aggregate employee terms and conditions, and financial performance of operators.

Regional and local councils are required to prepare RPTPs in collaboration with Territorial Authorities, in particular to identify the infrastructure (such as bus stops, hubs and priority measures) necessary to support public transport services.

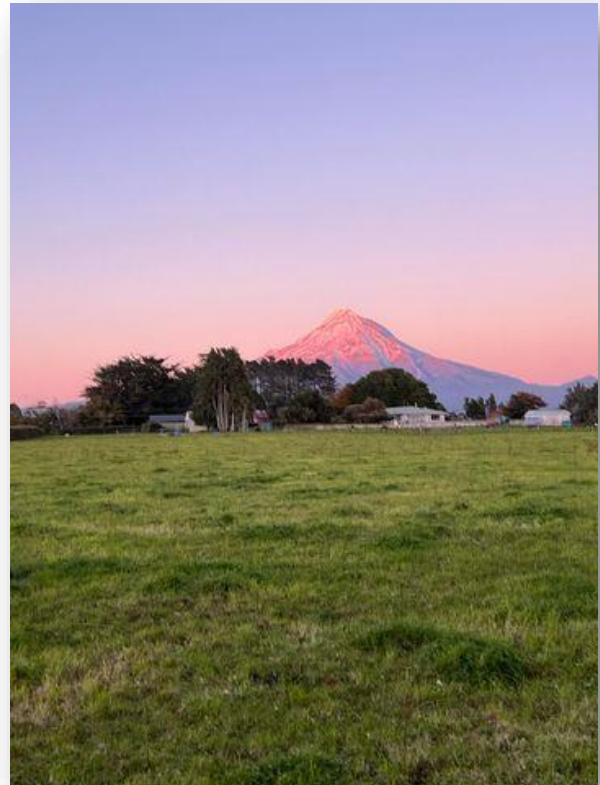
Under the SPTF, the definition of public transport includes on-demand and shuttle services which do not run to a fixed schedule. Therefore Regional Councils are able to provide any form of passenger transport service through any mode, other than air transport, whether delivered to a timetable or not. Regional Councils can procure, contract, and deliver on-demand services separately to timetabled services, by amending the definition of a unit, and removing the requirement for every unit to be contracted on an exclusive basis.

“Exempt services”, which are not integral to the public transport network, include commercially operated buses, on-demand, and shuttles. Some exempt on-demand, and all exempt shuttle services, can be operated without being registered with TRC. A smaller subset of commercially operated passenger transport services will be subject to registration requirements – limited to those services more likely to affect public transport services provided by Regional Councils.

Inter-regional bus services, which cross a boundary between two Regional Councils, are no longer automatically classed as “exempt”, and treated the same as services within a region. Inter-regional services would only be automatically exempt if they are not identified as integral in an RTP and operate without a subsidy, or if the regions that they operate between are not required to have RTPs. Subsidised inter-regional services that are identified as integral in an RTP would need to be provided in a specified unit.

D.6 New national guidelines

Waka Kotahi’s issued new national [Guidelines for Developing Regional Public Transport Plans](#) on 20 September 2024. Given the timing of the release of these guidelines, they will be integrated into the 2028 review to a greater extent than was possible in this RTP.



Appendix E: Services integral to the network

An RTPP must outline the services that are considered integral to the public transport network in the region. Due to the suite of new contracts coming in for the new network in 2026, both current and the proposed services are outlined.

E.1 Current (2024) integral services

New Plymouth Citylink

Type	Days of operation	Service number	Route
Urban	Monday to Friday 7:10am – 6:20pm	1	City Centre – Moturoa
		2	City Centre - Whalers Gate
		3	City Centre – Lynmouth – Marfell
		4	City Centre - Westown – Hurdon
		5	City Centre - Frankleigh Park – Ferndale
		6	City Centre – Vogeltown – Brooklands
		7	City Centre - Welbourn - Highlands Park
		8	City Centre – Merrilands - Highlands Park
		9	City Centre - The Valley - Glen Avon
		19	Waitara Express
		20	City Centre - Bell Block – Waitara
School	Saturday 9:30am – 2:10pm	10	Western loop of city
		11	Eastern loop of city
	School days only 7:30am – 8:45am 3:00pm – 4:20pm	12	Merrilands to Spotswood College
		21	Waitara to Spotswood College
		22	Lepperton / Motunui to New Plymouth Boys High School
		23	Urenui / Tikorangi to Highlands Intermediate School
		24	Waitara to Francis Douglas Memorial College
		30	Bell Block to Highlands Intermediate School
		31	Lepperton / Bell Block to Highlands / Vogeltown / Woodleigh
		32	Bell Block to New Plymouth Girls High School
		33	Bell Block to Francis Douglas Memorial College
		34	Bell Block to Francis Douglas Memorial College
		35	Bell Block to New Plymouth Boys High School
		40	Ōkato to New Plymouth Boys High School
		41	Ōmata to Highlands Intermediate
		42	Oākura to Francis Douglas Memorial College
		43	Oākura to New Plymouth Girls High School
		44	Oākura to Highlands Intermediate
		45	Oākura to New Plymouth Boys High School
		51	Orbiter
		52	Orbiter
		53	Orbiter

Type	Days of operation	Service number	Route
		54	Orbiter
		91	New Plymouth Girls High School to city centre*
		92	New Plymouth Girls Boys School to city centre*
		93	Sacred Heart Girls College to city centre*
		95	Highlands Intermediate School to city centre*
		98	Inglewood High School

* Operates afternoons only

Regional Services

Type	Days of operation	Route
Connector	Monday to Friday 5:50am – 7:15pm	Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood, New Plymouth
Your Connector	School Days 7:00am – 8:40am 3:20pm – 5:10pm	Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood, New Plymouth (various schools)
Southlink	Thursday 9:00am – 9:45am 2:00pm – 2:45pm	Ōpunake to Hāwera via Kaponga & Manaia (& Ohawe on demand)
	Tuesday 8:35am – 9:20am 3:30pm – 4:15pm Thursday 9:00am – 9:45am 2:00pm – 2:45pm	Waverley – Pātea – Hāwera
	Friday 6:55am – 6:00pm	Ōpunake – Oakura - New Plymouth

Total Mobility

Approved provider	Area	Wheelchair accessibility
Taranaki Executive Taxis	New Plymouth	
Driving Miss Daisy New Plymouth	New Plymouth (other areas by request)	Wheelchair ramp
Driving You Taranaki Limited	All of Taranaki	Wheelchair ramp
Freedom Companion Driving Service	New Plymouth	Wheelchair ramp
Ironside Vehicle Society	New Plymouth/Inglewood/Waitara	Pre-booked hoist assistance
New Plymouth Taxis	New Plymouth	
STOPS	Hāwera/South Taranaki	Wheelchair ramp

E.2 Integral services for new proposed network (from 2026)

New Plymouth Citylink

Type	Days of operation	Service number	Route
Urban	Monday to Friday 7:30am – 6:30pm**	TBC	City Centre – Moturoa/Vogeltown
		TBC	City Centre – Whalers Gate/Glen Avon
		TBC	City Centre – Whalers Gate/The Valley
		TBC	City Centre – Carrington/Govett
		TBC	City Centre – Frankleigh Park
		TBC	City Centre – Hurdon
		TBC	City Centre – Mangorei/Taranaki Base Hospital
		TBC	City Centre – Waitara/Bell Block/Taranaki Base Hospital
		TBC	City Centre – Waitara Express
		TBC	City Centre – Orbiter
	Saturday ** 9:30am – 2:15pm	TBC	City Centre – Orbiter
School	School days only ** 7:30am – 8:45am 3:00pm – 4:20pm	12	Merrilands to NPBHS/Spotswood College/FDMC
		21	Waitara to Spotswood College/SHGC
		22	Waitara/Matarikoriko/NPBHS
		23	Urenui/Tikorangi to Highlands Intermediate
		24	Waitara to NPGHS/SHGC/FDMC
		30	Bell Block to NPBHS/Highlands Intermediate
		31	Lepperton/Bell Block to NPBHS/Highlands Intermediate
		32	Bell Block to NPGHS/Highlands Intermediate
		33	Bell Block to SHGC/Spotswood College/FDMC
		34	Bell Block to SHGC/Spotswood/FDMC
		35	Bell Block to NPGHS/NPBHS
		40	Ōkato to Devon Intermediate/NPBHS
		42	Oākura to Spotswood College/FDMC
		43	Oākura to Devon Intermediate/NPGHS
		44	Oākura to Devon Intermediate/NPGHS/ SHGC/NPBHS/Highlands Intermediate
		45	Oākura to Devon Intermediate*
		46	Oākura to NPGHS/NPBHS
		51	Orbiter
		52	Orbiter
		53	Orbiter
		54	Orbiter
		55	Orbiter
		56	Orbiter*
		91	New Plymouth Girls High School to city centre*
		93	Sacred Heart Girls College to city centre*
		95	Highlands Intermediate School to city centre*
		98	Inglewood High School

* Operates afternoons only

** Schedules and service frequency will be finalised upon contract appointment.

Regional Services

Type	Days of operation	Route
Connector	Monday to Friday ** 6am – 6:30pm	Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood, New Plymouth
Your Connector	School Days 7:00am – 8:40am 3:20pm – 5:10pm	Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood, New Plymouth (various schools)
Southlink	Tuesday and Thursday ** 9:00am – 9:40am 2:00pm – 2:40pm	Ōpunake - Manaia - Hāwera
	Tuesday ** 9:00am – 9:45am 2:00pm – 2:45pm	Waverley – Pātea – Hāwera
	Monday to Friday ** 7:00am – 8:00am 5:00pm – 6:00pm	Ōpunake – Oākura - New Plymouth

** Schedules and service frequency will be finalised upon contract appointment.

Total Mobility

Noting that no major change is proposed to Total Mobility Services for the duration of the RTP, though additional operators are always sought to ensure sufficient supply and improved regional coverage.



Appendix F: Units and their establishment principles

F.1 What is a public transport 'unit'?

All services which are considered integral to the public transport network in a region must be organised into 'units' that provide a logical structure for procurement, monitoring and reporting.

F.2 Establishment principles

TRC manages bus service contracts according to the following principles:

- **Network and service review** – Before identifying units, the Council defines routes and services that are integral to the region's public transport network (see Appendix E). The proposed unit design considers Council's ability to undertake future service reviews in consultation with operators and stakeholders. Changes to services aim to meet foreseeable local community needs to be delivered within a unit.
- **Marketable whole** – Units should be potentially deliverable by operators either as stand-alone operations, or as part of a wider suite of services. Under the Sustainable Public Transport Framework there is no automatic exclusivity for a single operator within each unit.
- **Customer market** – Units should have readily identifiable customer markets for services, enabling operators and the Council to apply the right commercial behaviours to growing the market. A customer market might generally be thought of as a geographic area, but could also be generated by a particular activity or use – for example, an airport, shopping precinct, hospital, major employer, or university.
- **Whole-route operation** – Each unit must comprise a service or group of services that operates on the entire length of one or more routes.
- **Unit attractiveness** – Units should be attractive to a tenderer, and enable competition from a range of operators. Units should be efficient groups of services in terms of management, vehicle utilisation, operational feasibility, service efficiency etc.
- **Opportunities to group units in tenders** – Opportunities for operators to tender for units in groups to encourage efficiencies and, therefore value for money, will be considered.
- **Mode specific** – Units must be single-mode specific, so a unit cannot include both a bus and a ferry or train route.
- **School services consideration** – School services not provided by the Ministry of Education will be arranged into units. School services operating on a timetabled route are logically allocated to that unit.
- **Wider network consideration** – This includes considering connections between routes and achieving higher frequencies by services overlapping on parts of a trunk route.



F.3 Current (2024) units

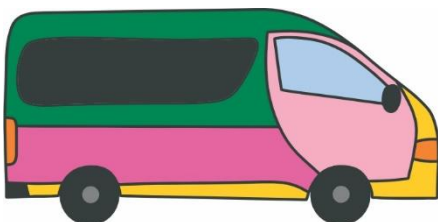
Table 11: Current (2024) Public Transport Units

Current unit	Current arrangement (2024)
Citylink	Combined contract for New Plymouth's urban and school services. 10 weekday urban services. 2 Saturday urban services. 27 school services.
Connector	One contract. Four weekday services per day.
Your Connector	One contract. Two weekday services per day.
Southlink	Three contracts. Four return journeys per week.

F.4 Future (from 2026) units

Table 12: Units for the network proposed from 2026

Unit	For new contracts in 2026	Future options
Citylink	Combined contract for New Plymouth's urban and school services. 10 weekday urban services. 2 Saturday urban services. 27 school services.	Retain a single unit, and better integrate urban and school services. Split urban and schools into separate units. Split urban services into separate units.
Hāwera to New Plymouth	Connector - Four weekday services per day. Your Connector - Two weekday services per day.	Retain separate units, or combine into a single unit for all regional services.
Coastal	Comprises three service routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ōpunake to New Plymouth • Ōpunake to Hāwera • Hāwera to Waverley Four return journeys per week in total.	Replacement of some services with Community Transport.



Appendix G: Fares and ticketing systems

Per Section 3.5, Policy P4 and related actions –

P4 - Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.

- Review fares on an annual basis and implement any changes in response to passenger numbers and financial performance.
- Encourage and prioritise payment for bus travel by electronic card-based methods - especially groups benefitting from concessions, who will be required to use a card for their journey, or else pay cash.
- Provide concessionary fares in line with national government policy.
- Investigate fare capping to reward frequent public transport usage.

G.1 Ticketing system

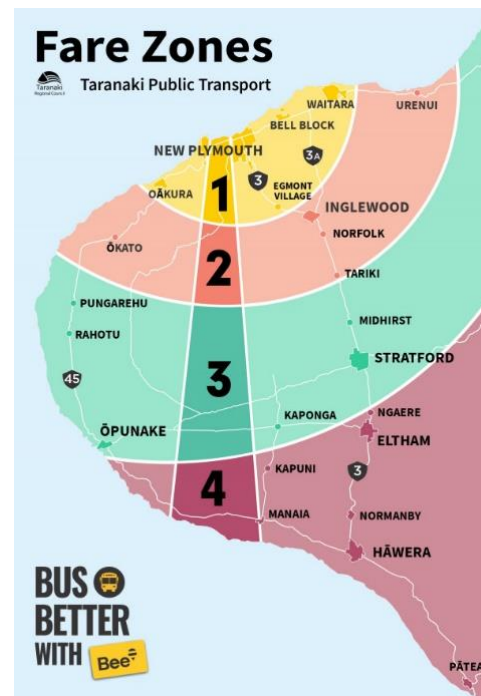
The Bee Card was introduced in October 2020, making public transport in Taranaki easier and more efficient. The tag-on, tag-off prepaid card system sped up boarding times, helping buses run more smoothly. People appreciated the convenience of topping up online, setting up automatic top-ups to always have credit, checking their transaction history, and managing multiple cards in one place. Seamless transfers between services also made getting around the region much simpler.

The Bee Card is being replaced region by region with a national ticketing system called Motu Move which enables passengers to use one single method of payment for council-operated public transport journeys across Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim is to introduce the national ticketing system in Taranaki at the time of new service contracts in 2026, however this is dependent on national rollout timing.



G.2 Fare zones

Fares are based on the fare type a passenger is eligible for (adult or a concession) and how many zones a passenger travels through. In January 2022, a simpler fare zones system was introduced, streamlining travel across the region.



Assessing/adjusting the appropriateness of the fare zones is part of annual fare reviews.

G.3 Setting fares

Fare setting is a balance between making services affordable for people on lower incomes (accessibility), providing an attractive savings compared with running a private car (mode shift) and ensuring that services are as (financially) sustainable as possible. Services in the region currently only cover around 25% of their operating costs. Increasing the level of fare revenue would enable more investment in improve services that will benefit everyone.

Increasing the number of people using the bus can be achieved both by gaining new passengers and increasing journey frequency by existing passengers. In both cases, the use of innovative fares and ticketing products can increase customer loyalty.

G.4 Fare levels and structure

Base bus fares across the region have remained fairly constant over the last seven years, which means that with the effect of inflation they have become significantly cheaper over time.

The existing structure of bus fares is shown in Table 13. Concession information is loaded directly onto the customer's Bee Card.

Figure 15 sets out the current fares and those proposed for the 2025/2026 financial year. Like other regions, TRC is required to increase 'private share' (see G.5), which for the majority of councils necessitates fare increases.

Other (third-party) funding for bus services:

- Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) fund travel for their students. From 1 January 2025, WITT reduced their funding so that this now covers only the Connector. WITT students now pay via the registered payment method (currently Bee Card) for all urban, school and SouthLink services. On the Connector, students showing eligible ID travel for free.
- Te Whatu Ora fund travel for nurses, student nurses, patients and visitors on the Connector service between hospitals in Hāwera and New Plymouth. The Connector also couriers Te Whatu Ora packages including to Avon Medical Centre in Stratford.

Table 13: Bus fare structure

Concession type	Passenger category	Fare
Adult	19-64 years old	Base fare
Youth Proposed for 2025/26	5-18 years old	Discounted fare at all times with registered payment method
Infant	Under 5	Free at all times
WITT Connector bus only	WITT student	Free at all times, student ID required
SuperGold	SuperGold Card holder (65+)	Free between 9am-3pm with registered payment method
Community Connect	Community Services Card holder	Half price fare at all times with registered payment method

					
Taranaki Zones	2024/2025	2025/2026		2025/2026	
	Current fares (one way)	Youth	% increase	Adult	% increase
1 New Plymouth/ <u>Oākura/Bell Block/Waitara</u>	\$2	\$2.25	12.5%	\$2.50	25%
2 Inglewood/Norfolk/ <u>Tariki</u>	\$3	\$3.40	13.33%	\$3.75	25%
3 <u>Stratford/Midhirst</u>	\$4	\$4.55	13.75%	\$5.00	25%
4 <u>Ngāere/Eltham Normanby/Hawera</u>	\$5	\$5.70	14%	\$6.25	25%

Figure 15: Current and proposed fares

G.5 Increasing 'private share'

As signalled in GPS 2024, in November 2024 NZTA released to public transport authorities, requirements on increasing the 'private share' of public transport revenues. Private share is a measure of cost recovery and represents the proportion of public transport operating expenditure funded from private revenue sources like passenger fares and advertising. It is current Government policy to work on increasing private share to support increased levels of public transport expenditure with the stated aim of reducing pressure on ratepayers and taxpayers. TRC is actively working with NZTA on approaches to implement the Government's private share policy while continuing to maintain service levels and keep fares affordable and an attractive alternative to private vehicle travel.

The following targets for increasing of private share were agreed in principle with NZTA in January 2025:

- 2024/2025 - 19%
- 2025/2026 - 22%
- 2026/2027 - 26%.

While TRC has a commercial partnership with a media company to generate advertising revenue from buses, we do not own the infrastructure that would allow us to generate additional income from bus shelters. We also have third-party funding arrangements with WITT and Te Whatu Ora Taranaki (see G.4). However, in the current economic climate, there are limited additional opportunities for revenue generation. Larger PTAs have options like rental income and electricity grid sales, but these avenues are not available to TRC, so our ability to increase private share is constrained.

To achieve the targets a fare increase is required due to limited opportunities for additional revenue generation. Therefore, a 25% increase in adult fares and a 13.5% increase in youth fares is proposed for 2025/2026 to meet the NZTA's target. This will help ensure public transport remains financially sustainable while maintaining affordability.

Investigate fare capping to reward frequent public transport usage

At present, there is no reward for frequent usage by people who pay the full fare and contribute most (in financial terms) to the service. Regular passengers pay the same single fare as occasional users. To encourage more regular usage, consideration will be given to rewarding frequent full fare passengers with a weekly or monthly cap on the fares they pay. This means that any usage over the cap level is effectively discounted and then free for the remainder of the period.



Appendix H: Significance policy

H.1 Purpose

The RPTP can be varied at any time. This policy is required to determine whether any proposed variation to the RPTP is significant for the purpose of section 126 (4) of the LTMA, which refers to the level of consultation that is required before a variation can be adopted.

A more streamlined process may be adopted for matters not considered significant.

For the purpose of this policy:

- Significance is a continuum, from variations of high significance through to variations of low significance. The policy sets a significance threshold, relating to a high degree of significance.
- If a variation is not significant then the consultation requirements under section 125 (1) of the LTMA do not apply. This does not imply that the variation is unimportant or that no consultation will take place.
- The Regional Council fully intends to 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.

H.2 Significant variations

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 and policies 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 assessing the significance of any proposed variation, the Council will consider:

- The reasons for the variation, and the alternatives available.

- The magnitude of the variation in terms of its financial cost to the region.
- The extent to which the proposed variation departs from the strategic direction and guiding principles contained within the RPTP.
- The proportion of the regional community that would be affected to a moderate or greater extent by the variation.
- The likely effect on the overall level, quality, and use of public transport services in the region.
- The extent to which the variation is consistent with the Regional Land Transport Plan, and the Government Policy Statement.
- 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.
- The likely effect on the Council's Long-Term Plan.

The following will always be considered significant and must follow the consultation requirements in section 125 (1) of the LTMA:

- Major reorganisation of units.
- Changes to this significance policy.

The following will generally be considered as not significant:

- Minor changes to units or services.
- Minor changes to fare levels, e.g. annual fare reviews.
- Addition or removal of individual units, including any trial units, consistent with the RPTP.
- Addition, removal or amendment of any matter that has already been the subject of public consultation.
- Changes to the descriptions of services or service groupings following a service review, provided there is no significant increase in cost.

H.3 Targeted engagement

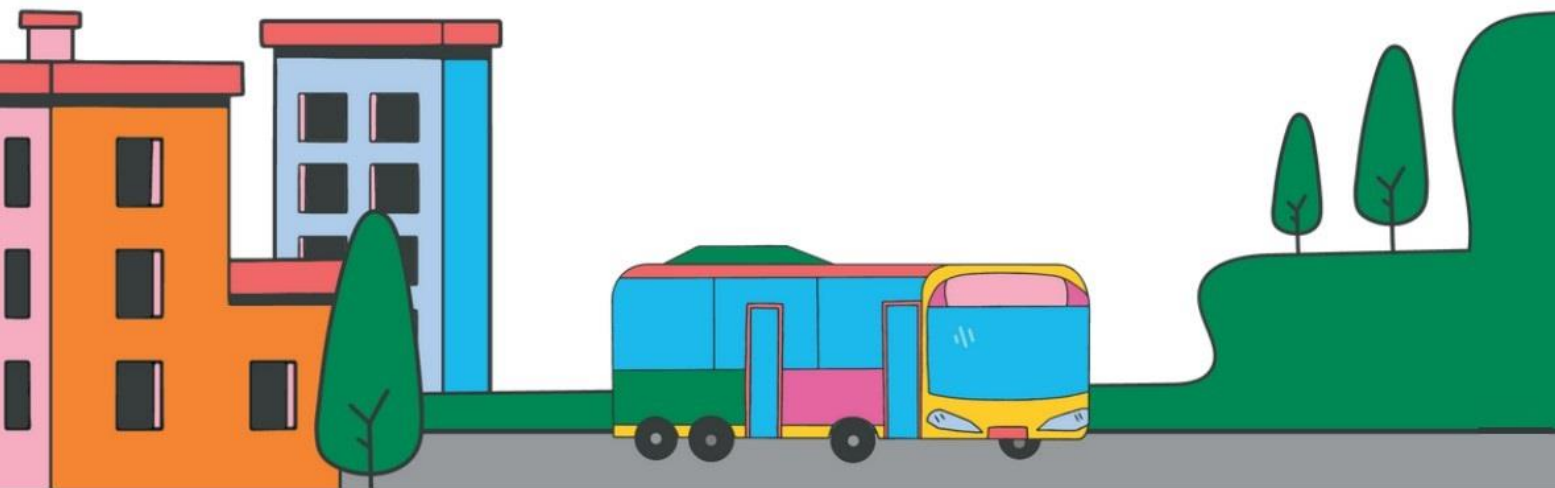
When the Council finds that a proposed variation is not significant, the Council will undertake targeted stakeholder engagement.

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 service plans are developed, and targeted public engagement will follow when options have been identified.

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 communities who benefit from the services.

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.

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.



Appendix I: Supporting the transport disadvantaged

The Land Transport Management Act 2003 requires that the RPTP, '*consider the needs of persons who are transport-disadvantaged*' and '*describe how the network of public transport services and the services will assist the transport-disadvantaged*'. It provides the following definition for this –

'transport-disadvantaged' means people who the regional council has reasonable grounds to believe are the least able to travel to basic community activities and services (for example, work, education, health care, welfare, and shopping).'

TRC considers the above when creating policies to assist the transport disadvantaged. A range of personal, demographic, social and geographical attributes is likely to restrict access to, and the use of, public transport services and facilities leading to transport disadvantages. These include:

- Age (youth and elderly)
- Disability
- Health conditions
- Low income
- Lack of access to a private vehicle
- Lack of accessible public transport services.

Taking these attributes into account, TRC considers that the following groups are more likely to be transport disadvantaged than the general population:

- People with accessibility needs
- People without driver licences, including children under driving age
- People on low incomes, including beneficiaries
- People in households without private vehicles.

One of the six objectives for RPTP 2025 (refer to Section 3.3) is **Improve public transport accessibility and equity**.

TRC considers both equity and equality.

Equality – an equality approach seeks to ensure public transport is generally available on an equal basis for all. This is an important component of coverage oriented public transport design, but on its own does not necessarily mean people can utilise services.

Equity – an equity approach recognises that what is required to overcome transport disadvantage can vary significantly, and additional support should be targeted to people in greatest need.

We note that **both equality and equity** are important considerations when evaluating the needs of transport disadvantaged.

Our targeted fare concessions, and the provision of accessible services recognises that an equity approach is required to overcome transport disadvantage.

TRC will actively design fare structures, passenger experience, and service development to support equity across the whole network. We will strongly advocate for fully accessible bus stops and related infrastructure to support access to bus services.

Failure to address barriers that prevent people from accessing opportunities will only serve to widen inequality.

Section 3.5 notes these specific actions for Policy P2

P2 - Improve public transport service access for disabled people, so that they have the same transport choices and opportunities as the able-bodied.

- Continue to support Total Mobility provision across the region.
- Introduce accessible buses on Connector and Southlink services as part of new contracts.
- Work with Territorial Authorities to improve accessibility for disabled people at bus stops, and on active travel routes to bus stops.
- Ensure that Community Transport services are supplied with accessible vehicles where feasible.

It is recognised that support is needed for people who cannot use public transport to travel, all or some of the time, due to disability as a result of physical or mental impairment.

An impairment may prevent people from having the confidence to travel at all, getting to a public bus stop, getting onto the bus, riding safely and securely, getting off the bus or getting to their final destination. Most modern buses are well-designed for physically disabled people, as they can kneel to the kerb for level boarding and have space for accommodation of wheelchairs.

Key provisions are in relation to:

- Personal choice for disabled people that is no different to the able-bodied;
- Designing services and information that give confidence to people with conditions such as autism and anxiety; and
- Affordability of service provision for people who are on limited budgets.

Total Mobility services provide an option for disabled people who cannot use standard buses, with staff who are trained to deal with the needs of their customers. There is a 75% subsidy for the first \$40, with any remaining fare over that amount paid for by the passenger. More detail is provided in B.3.

For conventional public transport, there can be no discrimination against people because of their disability, which means that vehicles on TRC-funded services must comply with disability access standards. Although urban bus services are

compliant with Requirement for Urban Buses (RUB) provisions, Connector and Southlink are not required to meet the same standards. This results in a difference between accessibility of urban and rural buses which is increasingly hard to justify when disabled people should be treated equally. Addressing this issue through introduction of accessible vehicles wherever possible is a key focus.

The other major challenge for disabled people, and those with temporary mobility impairments, is access to and from bus stops. Many stops, and routes getting to / from them, are not compliant with modern accessibility design standards including:

- Shelters, with sufficient waiting space away from the footpath;
- Optimum height hand standing for level boarding;
- Safe crossing points close to the stop;
- Tactile paving for blind / partially sighted people; and
- Dropped kerbs for wheelchairs / mobility aids.

A full bus stop location, passenger facility and accessibility audit will enable current challenges and priorities for improvement to be identified.



