



LOCAL GOVERNMENT POSITION STATEMENT ON TRANSPORT

// Aotearoa New Zealand needs a comprehensive strategic approach to transport investment. Local government will advocate for a new commitment from central government that embraces localism, and prioritises resilience building and better asset management for the long term - beyond three-year cycles.

// AUGUST 2023





INTRODUCTION

Transport planning and infrastructure impacts the daily lives of all New Zealanders. It connects our cities, towns and rural communities locally, and provides access to services and vital freight pathways to support the economic prosperity and productivity of our regions and nation.

The critical challenges our transport network faces cannot be ignored. The collective impact of more frequent extreme weather events, climate adaptation, urgent maintenance needs, population growth and the need to collectively reduce our emissions has shown that the current approach to investment and planning is not working, nor fit for the future. We need an integrated multimodal system that gives New Zealanders options that work in their local context.

That's why we're calling for a rethink of the way we approach transport planning and investment. All councils (city, regional, district and unitary) play crucial roles in developing and maintaining transport infrastructure. They do this by working closely with their communities, delivering solutions based on local priorities and strengths. This approach, which is centred on localism, is essential to tackle these critical challenges and requires councils to be better supported with the right tools - including funding tools.

Localism requires a strong partnership between central and local government that delivers joined up investment and planning that puts local priorities front and centre while not losing sight of the bigger picture.

Through discussions and workshops with our members, we've identified the key issues that matter most to councils. This statement outlines local government's priorities for the future and the outcomes that we want to work with the Government to achieve.

Key actions we want to progress

1. A cross-party commitment to transport planning and investment that replaces the three-year cycle with agreed long-term goals and funding that prioritise resilience building.
2. Engage with the Ministry of Transport and Waka Kotahi on the development of the GPS on land transport to advocate for investment decisions that align with regional and local needs.
3. An independent review of current transport funding arrangements in the next 12 months to determine appropriate levels of funding and revenue streams for Waka Kotahi, and how it will be prioritised to meet the existing and future challenges of rural and urban communities.
4. Targeted funding for adapting to and mitigating the effects of a changing climate on our transport network that can be delivered at the local level to increase the resilience of our roading networks and enable mode shift where practical.
5. Engaging with the incoming Government on transport to build understanding of the key issues for local government and agree to priorities for the term ahead.

OUR PRIORITIES

These priorities describe what we want to work together with the Government to achieve to make sure that our transport network is fit for the future.

1. A strategic, long-term approach to planning that joins up central and local government decision-making to address maintenance and climate adaptation needs.

A three-year planning cycle cannot achieve the long-term results that are needed to ensure our transport network is fit for the future and adapting to a changing climate. The current cycle not only creates a disconnect between central government and local government planning, but also leads to changing investment priorities following election cycles. We want to see local people and priorities at the centre of government services. Local communities are best placed to decide on shared priorities and understand their needs when it comes to our transport network. The cost and impact at the local level of everchanging investment priorities following elections has been overlooked for too long.

Councils are already planning across 10 and 30-year horizons. The Spatial Planning Act aims to improve integration between spatial planning, land transport and community infrastructure through the development of 30 year Regional Spatial Strategies and associated Implementation Agreements. We want to see central government planning and investment take a longer-term approach to ensure that our existing transport networks are better maintained, and new developments prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation.

Key actions:

- ➔ A cross-party commitment to transport planning and investment that replaces the three-year cycle with agreed long-term goals and funding that prioritise resilience building.

2. Sufficient, long-term transport investment that prioritises resilience building, safety and better asset management across both new developments as well as maintenance and renewals.

The Government has increased investment in our transport network, but there are still major gaps. Funding for the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) is constantly being asked to do more without an adequate increase – including investment in rail, shipping, and active modes of transport, and we saw emergency works funding exhausted with 20 months still remaining in the 2021-2024 funding cycle.

This means that different needs and priorities - such as new developments, maintenance and renewals, and mode shift - are forced to compete with one another. And local funding isn't enough to bridge the shortfall. Smaller councils with a declining rating base cannot pay for the services and

upgrades needed for their communities, and growing populations also lack the funding and financing tools to meet increasing demand on their transport infrastructure.

Local government wants to see greater transparency around how funding decisions are made and prioritised by the Government. Not only will this build communities' trust that public funds are being appropriately used, it will also allow communities to fund the projects and maintenance most important to them. There's real concern about vital maintenance and renewals for our roading networks being forced to compete with other important priorities for the land transport system.

Key actions:

- ➔ An independent review of current transport funding arrangements in the next 12 months to determine appropriate levels of funding and revenue streams for Waka Kotahi, and how it will be prioritised to meet the existing and future challenges of rural and urban communities.

3. Integrated transport and freight networks that support placemaking by connecting our rural communities, towns and cities and making them great places to live and work.

While clear, long-term direction is needed at a national level, there must also be processes for considering how national plans apply to local areas. Local people understand the transport challenges they face and should be central to developing solutions to make sure their town or city is a great place to live, work, and visit. The Government will need to partner with councils to understand community priorities and deliver transport and freight networks that play to local strengths and address local concerns.

Understanding regional and local contexts is also crucial as the Government continues to develop policy around areas like mode-shift and state highway speeds. For example, when it comes to public transport the lack of sustainable routes and ongoing driver shortages are major challenges for our cities. But for rural and provincial areas, it's inter-regional public transport that is most important for connecting them to other towns and cities and enabling economic development – which mustn't be at the cost of vital maintenance and renewals, since roads remain the only option in many areas.

For transport and freight networks to support placemaking, the current allocation of roles and functions should also be reviewed. In some cities, the local council is responsible for bus shelters, but the regional council operates the buses. These arrangements can cause unnecessary inefficiencies and make it more difficult to take a joined-up approach to investment and planning. Replacing the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) with the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF) is a step in the right direction to enabling a more joined up approach, but more can be done to align planning and service delivery. Councils want to see more holistic planning and investment across rail, road and shipping – as well as active transport options for walking and cycling.



Key actions:

- ➔ Engage with the Ministry of Transport and Waka Kotahi on the development of the GPS on land transport to advocate for investment decisions that align with regional and local needs.

4. A transport network that can adapt to the future climate and prioritise decarbonisation.

The increased frequency and impact of threats associated with a changing climate and natural hazards have shown how vulnerable many of our communities are to being cut off at any time when roads are damaged. Significant proactive investment and a joined-up approach to long-term planning are vital to increase the resilience of the transport networks that connect our communities.

Transport greenhouse gas emissions have doubled since 1990 and are New Zealand's fastest growing source of emissions. As well as reducing our transport emissions, we also need to make sure that our transport networks are resilient to the impacts of climate change, which are being felt by communities with increasing frequency and intensity. For our urban areas, in particular, this means enabling mode-shift in our transport networks. Central and local government have a key role to play in mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

Councils already work closely with communities to develop solutions that are right for their local context and can deliver mitigation and adaptation solutions at place. But they need support beyond the existing funding and financing tools to deliver the level of change that is needed.

Key actions:

- ➔ Targeted funding for adapting and mitigating the effects of a changing climate on our transport network that can be delivered at the local level to increase the resilience of our roading networks and enable mode shift where practical.

LGNZ's Transport Work

What we've done

- // [Wrote to Minister Wood](#) to call for an independent review of Government transport funding in response to a remit supported by 96% of councils at LGNZ's 2022 AGM.
- // [Submitted on Land Transport Management Amendment Bill](#), to support the replacement of the Public Transport Operating Model with the Sustainable Public Transport Framework.
- // [Commissioned research](#) on road transport funding to understand trends and key challenges across the New Zealand roading network.



// Contributed to the [Te Ringa Maimoa](#) Transport Excellence partnership by providing governance oversight, evidence, and insights to ensure the Government's transport objectives are being met and supporting the implementation of the One Network Framework.

What we'll do next

We'll continue to work with our members to identify ways to progress these priority outcomes. Here's a snapshot of some of the initial opportunities we've identified.

- // Work with the Ministry of Transport to shape the development of the next GPS on land transport (2024).
- // Work with Waka Kotahi to inform the implementation plan for Tiro Rangi, their first Climate Adaptation Plan.
- // Undertake research to explore potential future revenue streams that could address some of the funding shortfalls across our transport networks.
- // Engage with the incoming Government on transport to build understanding of the key issues for local government and agree to priorities for the term ahead.