

Wairarapa Corridor Plan

July 2010

The Wairarapa Corridor

This multi-modal corridor follows State Highway 2 from north of Te Marua, Upper Hutt, over the Rimutaka Hill through to Mount Bruce north of Masterton; and the Wairarapa railway line from north of Maymorn, Upper Hutt through to Masterton; and includes State Highway 53 between Featherston and Martinborough.

Introduction

There are many significant factors that influence travel in the region, and in Wairarapa. There is some uncertainty as to the outlook for some of these factors. Therefore this Plan has been developed to commit to short term measures that address pressing needs and to signal the likely changes needed to address longer term requirements. The timing of longer term measures will be reviewed as significant trends become evident.

Key transport pressures

Population Growth

The population of Wairarapa is about 40,000 and has been relatively static over the last decade. According to Statistics New Zealand estimates, the projections for 2031 for the whole of Wairarapa range from an additional 3,200 people in the high scenario, to a decline in population of 4,500 in the low scenario. The medium scenario sees no significant change in population. However, the population is aging and the number of households and rateable properties is increasing. This is likely to affect the demand for transport even with a relatively static population growth.

Economic Growth

Both employment and economic growth are expected to be fairly static over the next 20 years. Projections to 2026 under a historical scenario suggest a growth rate of 0.8% per annum¹.

Primary and manufacturing industries are likely to remain key economic drivers in Wairarapa, however the growth is likely to occur mostly in the accommodation, café and restaurant areas. This increase in tourism sector means more visitors to Wairarapa with associated pressure on the transport network, particularly at weekends and during special events.

Freight Growth

Freight movements are expected to double in the Wellington region by 2031². In Wairarapa, a significant growth in forestry and timber products is expected from 2015 onwards³ and this will result in associated increases in freight movement, placing pressure on the transport network. The mode share for freighting logs and wood chips is currently 94% by road and 6% by rail. **The need to move a greater proportion of log freight by rail is therefore a significant issue for this transport corridor.**

Car Ownership and Use

Research shows that the region's level of car ownership has been increasing steadily for decades, with ownership rates in Wairarapa higher than the rest of the region. This is strongly related to people's need to travel for work, social and recreational purposes. For Wairarapa in particular, it is not realistic for public transport to serve many trips and there is a need to ensure the community's requirements for accessing what they need by private vehicle transport are reasonably provided for. Volatile fuel prices and the availability of alternative fuels or electric vehicles will also affect demand for private vehicle use.

¹ BERL (November 2008) Economic profile and projections for the Wairarapa region.

² Ministry of Transport (2008) National Freight Demands Study.

³ Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (2008) Central North Island Wood Availability Forecast.

Current transport trends

- Road traffic volumes are slowly but steadily increasing on State Highway 2 and 53.
- On a daily average, around 5,000 vehicles (of which 300 are heavy vehicles) travel over the Rimutaka Hill Road. However, on weekends when major events occur the number of vehicles can exceed 10,000 per day.
- Heavy commercial vehicle volumes are generally showing an increase, although a drop off in 2008 may be attributed to the current economic recession.
- Road safety trends are getting worse, as is the case with the rest of the region, with Wairarapa often over-represented in some statistics.
- Cyclist and motorcyclist crash rates are getting worse, with these vulnerable road users over-represented compared with the rest of the region – particularly cyclists in Masterton.
- Masterton has the highest cyclist journey to work mode share in the region (3.7% in 2006).
- The Wairarapa areas have the highest proportion of journey to work trips made by walking in the region after Wellington City.
- Patronage on Wairarapa rail and bus services has been steadily increasing over recent years.
- 91% of journey to work trips made by Wairarapa residents were within Wairarapa⁴. However there is an increasing trend for people who live elsewhere in the region to have a second home or ‘weekend retreat’ in Wairarapa with associated weekend trip making.
- Wairarapa has the highest proportion of people who work from home (13% in 2006) compared with other parts of the Wellington region.

This plan defines a number of packages for improvements to the transport network within the Wairarapa Corridor to respond to the current trends and key pressures as identified above.

Immediate priorities

The immediate priorities for this corridor are:

- Improving the safety and reliability of State Highway 2 and 53, and the adjacent local road network to minimise the contribution of road network deficiencies to road crash casualties.
- Improving walking and cycling networks and facilities, with an emphasis on safety improvements in urban areas, particularly in and around Masterton, and on key cycling routes between townships.
- Providing a safe, efficient **and reliable** road **and rail** network for key tourism and freight routes through the corridor.
- Supporting the transfer of freight from road to rail wherever **practical including the need to address current infrastructure and rolling stock constraints between Wairarapa and ports.**
- Maintaining, **and improve where practicable**, the current level of service provided by public transport to/from and within Wairarapa.
- Continuing a programme of travel demand management measures relevant to the relatively rural character of this corridor - to reduce the number of car trips (particularly sole occupant to work) and encourage alternatives such as commuting by train, walking, cycling, car pooling, telecommuting, and working from home.

⁴ NZ Statistics – Census data 2006.
WGN DOC #742948

Strategic Context

The long term vision for this corridor described in the RLTS 2007-2016 is:

The local road network will provide local access to the State Highways and the rail network, which in turn will connect these areas with the Wellington City CBD and other regional centres. Basic, but reliable, local passenger transport (and Total Mobility) services will be easily accessible.

The key outcome for the corridor, identified in the RLTS is - *A safer, more reliable road and rail corridor.*

The RLTS also contains the following region wide strategic outcomes:

- Increased peak period passenger transport mode share
- Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced severe road congestion
- Improved regional road safety
- Improved land use and transport integration
- Improved regional freight efficiency.

The following inter-regional outcome has been developed as part of the current RLTS update⁵:

- Improved safety, efficiency and reliability of strategic road and rail links to the north.

What we plan to do

Road safety and road network management

NZTA together with Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils will carry out road network improvements on State Highway 2, State Highway 53 and adjacent local roads including safety improvements, intersection upgrades, bridge replacements, and seal extensions. The plan also calls for partner agencies to advocate for improved connections to Palmerston North via the Pahiatua Track **and for targeted safety improvements for motorcyclists.**

Freight

The plan recognises the need to accommodate an expected doubling of freight movement generally, and a potential ‘wall of wood’ as a result of significant increases in total log production and associated freight.

Over the first ten years of the plan, measures include, **advocating for and working with key organisations to support shifting log freight onto rail where practical, supporting the development of** a log transfer station at Waingawa, reviewing the likely impact of freight growth on the **state highway** network, and a heavy vehicle bypass east of Masterton, **and consideration of other potential heavy traffic bypass routes.** Road network improvements on Rimutaka Hill Road will also be important as heavy vehicle volumes increase.

⁵ This outcome has yet to be formally adopted.
WGN DOC #742948

Walking and cycling

The plan aims to improve the level of service for walking and cycling through implementation of the relevant initiatives in the regional walking and cycling plans. It largely relies on local councils developing and implementing programmes to improve their local networks and NZ Transport Agency and local councils ensuring adequate shoulder widths and quality are provided for cyclists on state highways and open roads.

The plan supports upgrade of the Rimutaka Rail Trail to provide a safe option for cyclists between Upper Hutt and Featherston, with the aim of removing cyclists from the Rimutaka Hill Road.

The plan also identifies several intersection locations on State Highway 2 in Masterton which have been subject to high cyclist crash rates, where safety improvement works are to be progressed.

Passenger transport

Greater Wellington is the primary agency responsible for the provision of passenger transport services throughout the region. Greater Wellington has recently implemented a number of improvements to Wairarapa's passenger transport services including new Wairarapa rail carriages, station upgrades, park and ride improvements and improved bus services and connections.

Six additional rail carriages are expected to be available for use on Wairarapa rail services over the next few years, which will provide additional capacity. Greater Wellington will also carry out another public transport service review for Wairarapa in 2011. This review will include consideration of things like train timetable and capacity issues, how services might be provided for sports and other events, improving bus and train connections, and issues around carriage of bikes on trains/buses. In addition, Greater Wellington will continue to look for opportunities to improve park and ride facilities at Wairarapa railway stations.

Advocacy to KiwiRail for newer locomotives to be used for passenger services on the Wairarapa line is also identified. This is to ensure locomotive breakdowns do not result in poor reliability of Wairarapa train services.

Travel demand management

While managing travel demand has a lesser significance in this corridor than the other transport corridors in the region due to lesser traffic volumes and very little congestion, there are still appropriate measures that encourage efficient transport or access choices to contribute to regional objectives and outcomes relating to affordability, economic growth, fuel use, CO₂ emissions, and health and wellbeing.

The main areas of potential in Wairarapa are around uptake of school travel planning, walking and cycling for short trips, tools like the 'lets carpool' programme, and technologies that enable working from home or reduced travel such as access to fast broadband services.

The relevant measures in the region wide Travel Demand Management (TDM) Plan (October 2009) will be implemented by all agencies. Access to technology and communications such as fast broadband can lead to a reduced need to travel. The plan therefore includes an action for all agencies to support the roll out of the government's Rural Broadband Initiative in Wairarapa.

Measures within the corridor

This section of the corridor plan defines a number of measures for improvements to the transport infrastructure within the corridor. The measures have been grouped into those that should be completed over the next ten years, and longer term measures that should be developed over the next ten years and then programmed to be implemented as conditions and funding allows. Timing has taken account of the 'immediate priorities' set out above.

Funding for the measures will normally be a mix of national and local sources. Larger projects may also require funding from the regional and crown funding sources. Funding sources are determined through the Regional Land Transport Programme and National Land Transport Programme in accordance with the requirements of the Land Transport Management Amendment Act 2003 (as amended in 2008).

Overview diagrams

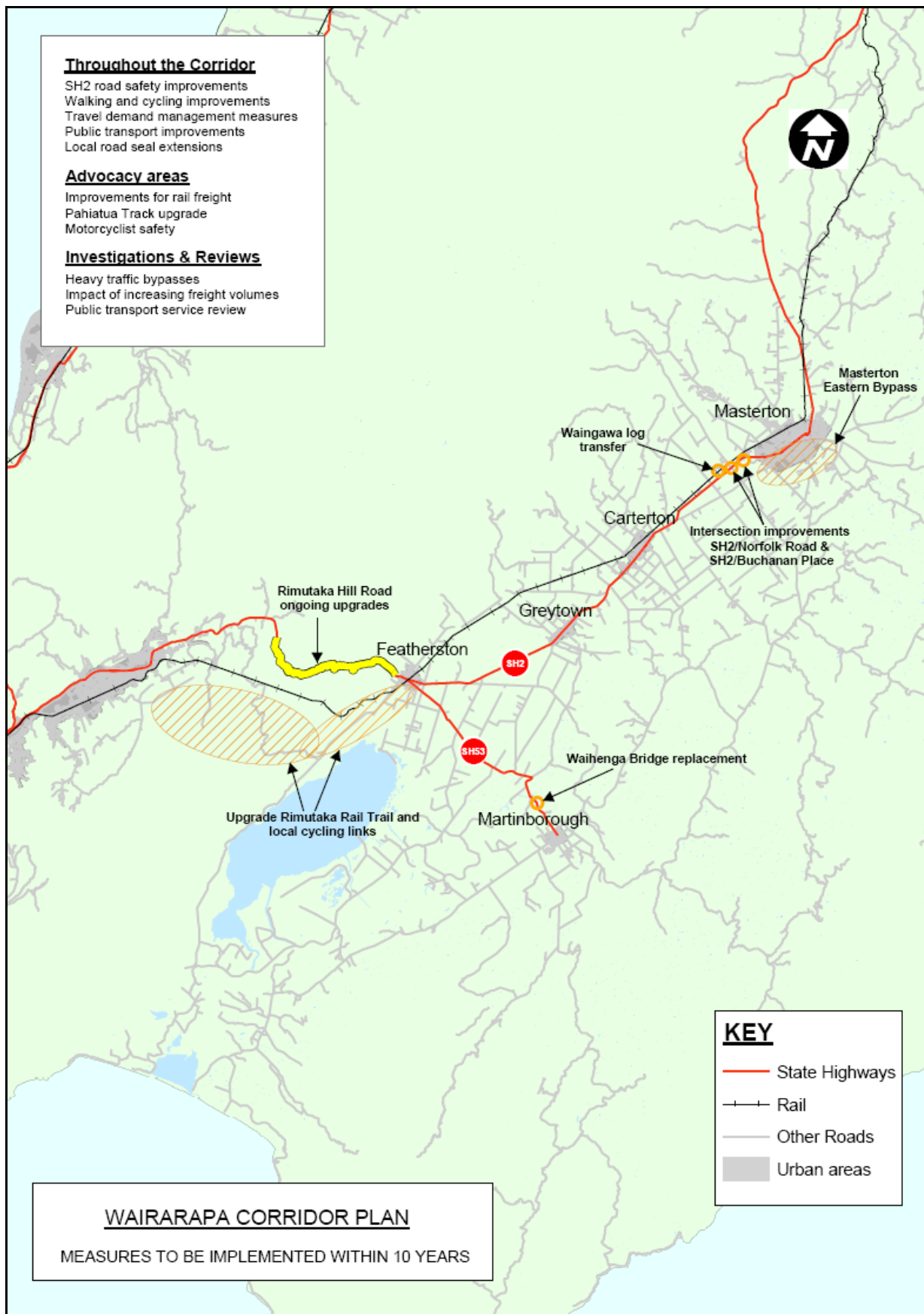


Figure 1: Wairarapa Corridor - Measures to be implemented within 10 years.

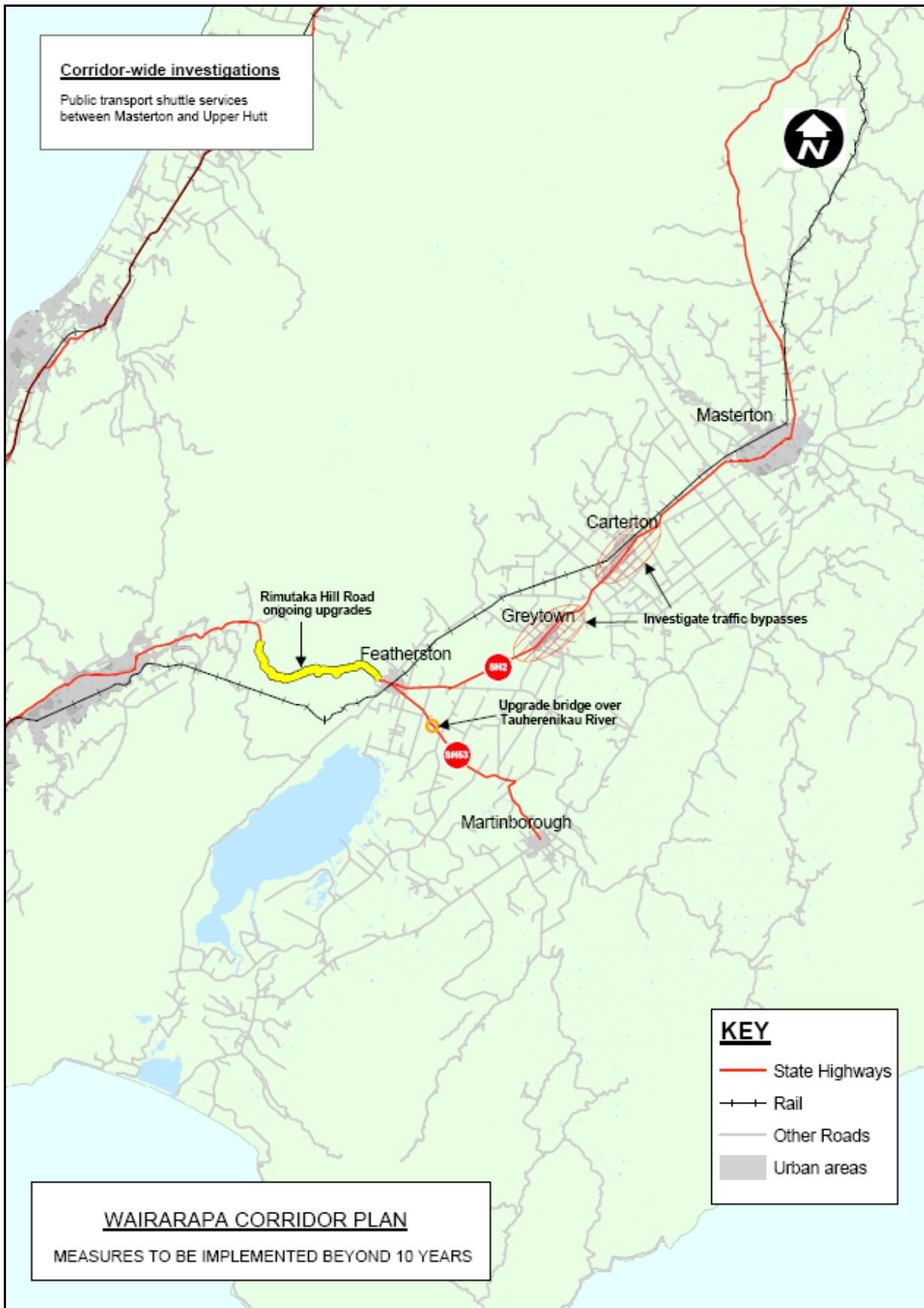


Figure 2: Wairarapa Corridor - Measures that may be implemented (beyond 10 years).

Measures to be implemented within 10 years

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Road Safety and the Road Network				
Construct safety improvements identified in the relevant crash reduction studies on State Highway 2 between Te Marua and Mt Bruce.	NZTA	Ongoing	As identified in crash reduction studies	Reduced crash rates
Make progress towards the long term goal of a 55km/h design standard for the Rimutaka Hill Road by implementing the projects identified through the State Highway 2 Featherston to Upper Hutt study (2008), as funding allows.	NZTA	Ongoing	To be determined	Improved travel times Reduced crash rates
Construct intersection improvements at Norfolk Road/State Highway 2 and Buchanan Place/State Highway 2 to ensure the increasing number of heavy vehicles movements at this location can be safely and efficiently accommodated.	NZTA	By 2014	To be determined	Intersection improvements completed
Replacement of the Waihenga Bridge over the Ruamahanga River.	NZTA	By 2016	\$9M	New bridge open
Extend the seal on rural local roads of special tourist significance where cost effective.	MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Seal extended
Advocate for improvements to the Pahiatua Track and key connecting links, as an important route for Wairarapa residents accessing services and facilities in Palmerston North, other parts of Manawatu, and beyond.	Greater Wellington, MDC, CDC, SWDC	At all appropriate opportunities	Administrative	Pahiatua Track and local connections upgraded
Advocate for the Rimutaka Hill Road and State Highway 2 through Wairarapa to be included as part of the NZ Transport Agency's 'National Motorcycle Black Route' to be targeted for associated safety improvements.	Greater Wellington, MDC, CDC, SWDC	At all appropriate opportunities	Administrative	Rimutaka Hill Road and SH2 through Wairarapa included as part of this route
Freight				
Design and construct a heavy vehicle bypass east of Masterton	MDC	By 2016	\$11M	Eastern Bypass open
Investigate the potential for other heavy traffic only bypasses, where opportunities exist to remove heavy vehicles from SH2 through Wairarapa townships.	MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	Administrative	Heavy traffic bypass opportunities considered

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Advocate to central government to encourage investment in the rail network that supports the use of rail as a safe, sustainable, and efficient solution for the movement of freight to/from and through the Wairarapa corridor	GWRC NZTA TAs	Ongoing	Administrative	Improved provision and support for rail freight
Work with KiwiRail, Ontrack, CentrePort, NZTA and forestry companies to investigate removal of identified infrastructure and rolling stock constraints affecting rail freight movement between the Wairarapa corridor and key freight hubs, such as CentrePort	GWRC MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	Administrative	Significant constraints for rail freight removed
Ensure provisions in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan that facilitate the development of a log transfer and storage site at Waingawa are retained.	MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	Administrative	Provisions in District Plan maintained
Support commercial development of a log transfer and storage site at Waingawa.	GWRC NZTA TAs	Ongoing	Administrative	Site operational
Review the potential impacts of a significant increase in freight volumes (and likely increases in heavy vehicle dimensions) on the state highway network within the Wairarapa Corridor. Identify any new projects or initiatives needed to accommodate this demand in a safe and efficient manner (for example – visibility around corners, adequate lane widths and slow vehicle lanes on Rimutaka Hill Road).	NZTA	By 2013	To be determined	Review complete and any projects in response identified
Walking and Cycling				
Improve the cycle network in accordance with best practice guidance ⁶ , particularly in urban areas and at identified worst cyclist crash locations ⁷ in Masterton.	NZTA MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Safety improvements implemented Reduced cyclist crash rate
Review shoulder widths and quality on open state highways and open local roads (in accordance with best practice guidance ⁸) to ensure sealed road shoulders provide for adequate space between cyclists and passing vehicles on these high speed rural roads.	NZTA SWDC CDC MDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Improve cycling safety and use

⁶ Land Transport NZ (2004) Cycle Network and Route Planning Guide

⁷ Intersection of SH2 with Renall Street, Jackson Street, Russell Street, Lincoln Road. The road network in the vicinity of SH2/Te Ore Ore Road. Intersection of Dixon Street with Church Street and Worksop Road, and QueenStreet/Lincoln Road intersection. Refer to NZTA Crash Analysis Database for details.

⁸ Land Transport NZ (2004) Cycle Network and Route Planning Guide
WGN DOC #742948

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Consider the needs of pedestrians in townships along SH2 – including appropriate speed limits, pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, and any need for town centre enhancement programmes – to provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.	NZTA SWDC CDC MDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Improved pedestrian safety and attractiveness
Support and encourage upgrades to the Rimutaka Rail Trail track from Cross Creek through to Cross Creek Road to an easy shared path standard that accommodates a wide range of bicycle types. Identify potential improvements to on-road cycle facilities and off-road paths connecting the Rimutaka Rail Trail and Featherston.	GWRC SWDC	By 2015	To be determined	Improved cyclist safety and attractiveness
Public transport				
Undertake a review of Wairarapa bus and train services. Review to include consideration of train timetable and capacity issues, services for special events, bus and train connections, carriage of bikes on trains/buses.	GWRC	2011	Administrative	Review complete
Advocate for newer locomotives to be used for Wairarapa passenger rail services.	GWRC	Ongoing	Administrative	Improved reliability of Wairarapa rail services
Deliver six additional SE rail carriages for the Wairarapa rail services to provide increased capacity – to address existing capacity issues on some services and accommodate future growth.	GWRC	By 2012/13	To be determined	Improved capacity of Wairarapa rail services
Identify opportunities to improve park and ride facilities (eg. lighting, security) and to provide more park and ride spaces at rail stations within the Wairarapa corridor in line with demand.	GWRC	Ongoing	To be determined	Improved park and ride availability and facilities
Travel Demand Management (TDM) and other regional plans				
Support rollout of the government's Rural Broadband Initiative in Wairarapa, to improve broadband access and facilitate reduced travel demand.	GWRC NZTA TAs	Ongoing from 2010	Administrative	Improved broadband speeds and coverage in Wairarapa

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Implement relevant initiatives of the: - Regional TDM Plan (Oct 09) - Regional Road Safety Plan (Oct 09) - Regional Walking Plan (Oct 08) - Regional Cycling Plan (Dec 08)	GWRC NZTA TAs	Ongoing	As set out in the relevant regional plans	Reduced travel demand Reduced crash rates Increased pedestrian and cyclist volumes and safety

Measures that may be implemented (beyond 10 years)

Measure	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Upgrade the SH53 bridge over the Tauherenikau River.	NZTA	Likely to be beyond 10 years	To be determined	Bridge upgrade completed
Upgrade Rimutaka Hill Road to 55kph design standards.	NZTA	Likely to be beyond 10 years	To be determined	All identified ⁹ upgrade projects completed
Investigate the need for traffic bypasses of Greytown and Carterton - taking account of safety, heavy traffic volumes and travel time delays through these towns.	NZTA CDC SWDC	Likely to be beyond 10 years	Administrative	Progress reported to RTC
Consider the potential for shuttle services, either bus or rail, between Masterton and Upper Hutt (including associated infrastructure needs such as passing loops) to improve public transport frequency and connectivity between Wairarapa and the rest of the region.	GWRC	Likely to be beyond 10 years	To be determined	Issue considered and reported to GWRC and RTC

⁹ NZ Transport Agency (Duffill Watts&Tse Ltd) (2008) State Highway Plan from Featherston to Upper Hutt. WGN DOC #742948