

Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees 28 September 2026

Central Otago District Council Chamber
1 Dunorling Street
Alexandra



This meeting will be recorded and uploaded to the [ORC Official YouTube Channel](#).

REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEES MEMBERSHIP

OTAGO

Cr Kate Wilson (ORC, RTC Chair)
Cr Matt Hollyer (ORC, RTC Deputy Chair)
Cr Stuart Duncan (CODC)
Cr Steve Walker (DCC)
Cr Quentin Smith (QLDC)
Cr Bruce Graham (CDC)
Cr John McCone (WDC)
Mr James Caygill (NZTA)

SOUTHLAND

Cr Phil Morrison (ES, RTC Chair)
Cr Alistair Gibson (ES, RTC Deputy Chair)
Cr Christine Menzies (SDC)
Deputy Mayor Joe Stringer (GDC)
Cr Ria Bond (ICC)
Mr James Caygill (NZTA)

Meeting support: Kylie Darragh, Governance Support (ORC)

28 September 2026 10:00 AM - 03:00 PM

Agenda Topic	Page
1. WELCOME - HAERE MAI Opening karakia.	
2. APOLOGIES - NGĀ PA POURI No apologies have been received at the time of publication.	
3. PUBLIC FORUM - HE HUINGA TUKU KORERO There were no requests to speak at public forum.	
4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA - RAUPAPA O NGĀ TAKE Note: Any additions must be approved by resolution with an explanation as to why they cannot be delayed until a future meeting.	
5. PRESENTATIONS - WHAKATAKOTORANGA A presentation will be given by Whoosh.	4
5.1 Whoosh - Open Up Queenstown Presentation	4
6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - TE WHAKAU I NGĀ MENETI That the minutes of the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees' meeting held on 22 June 2026 be received and confirmed as a true and accurate record.	50
6.1 Minutes of the 22 June 2026 Meeting	50
7. ACTIONS ITEMS - NGA MEA MAHI There are no open actions for the Committees.	
8. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - NGĀ PŪRONGO Ā TUMUAKI Update from Chair, Councillor Kate Wilson.	
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The purpose of this report is to provide KiwiRail the opportunity to provide an update on its activities, including the development of the Rail Network Investment Plan (RNIP).

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NZTA will provide an update on its activities.

9.8 **South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group Activities Update** 96

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the activities of the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group, and to provide the unconfirmed minutes from its most recent meeting.

9.8.1 **Unconfirmed Minutes South Island RTC Chairs Group - 13 July 2026** 99

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9.8.3 **FINAL - The South Island's contribution to the New Zealand economy** 107

10. **EXTRAORDINARY AND URGENT BUSINESS - PANUI AUTAIA HEI TOTOIA PAKIHI**

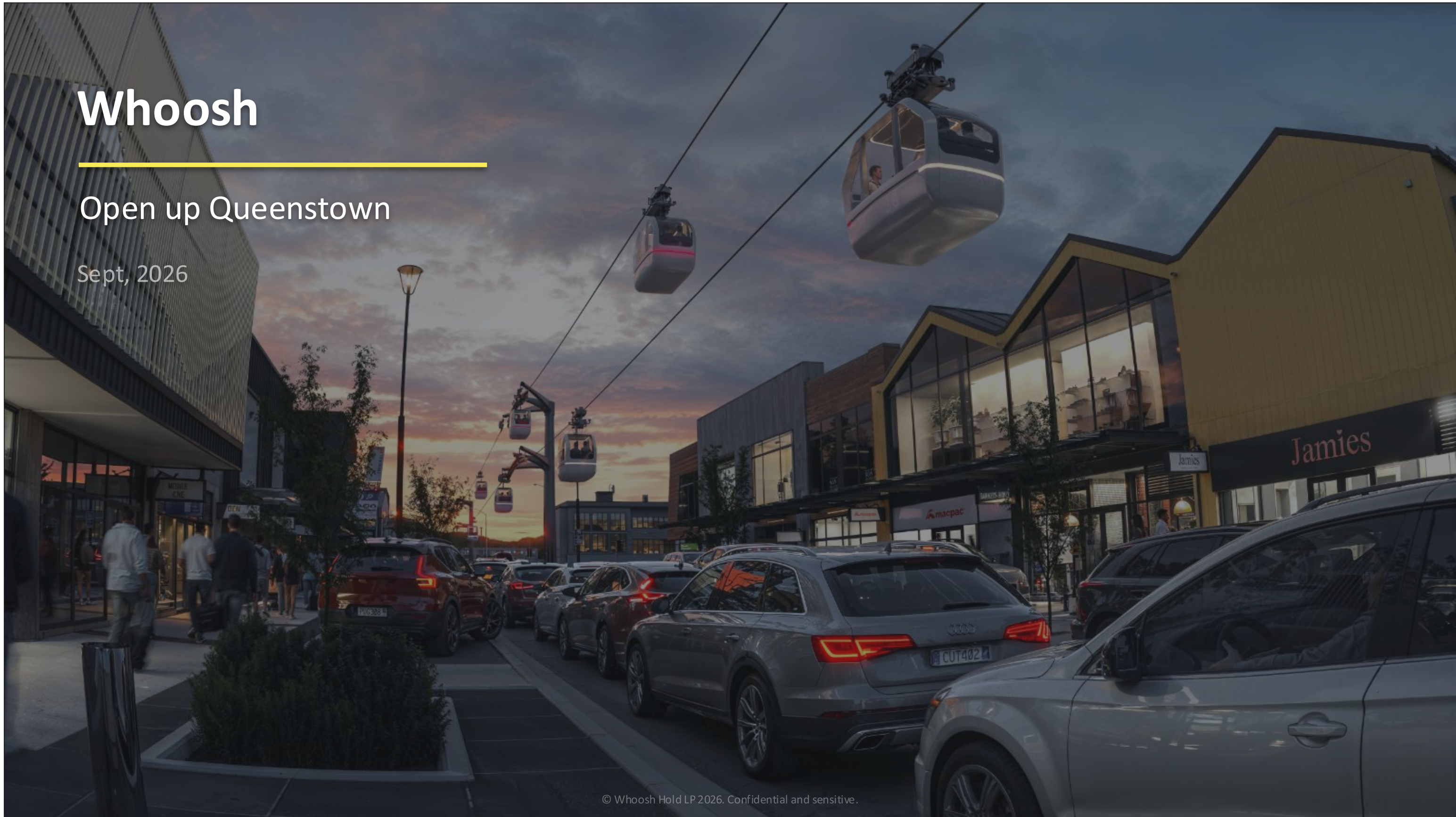
Urgent business items to be addressed at the meeting.

11. **CLOSING - KARAKIA KATI**

Whoosh

Open up Queenstown

Sept, 2026



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QPTBC – Problem Statement

Problem One



Current capacity of Queenstown's transport network means the public transport service will not accommodate the future mode share targets (40 percent).

Problem Two

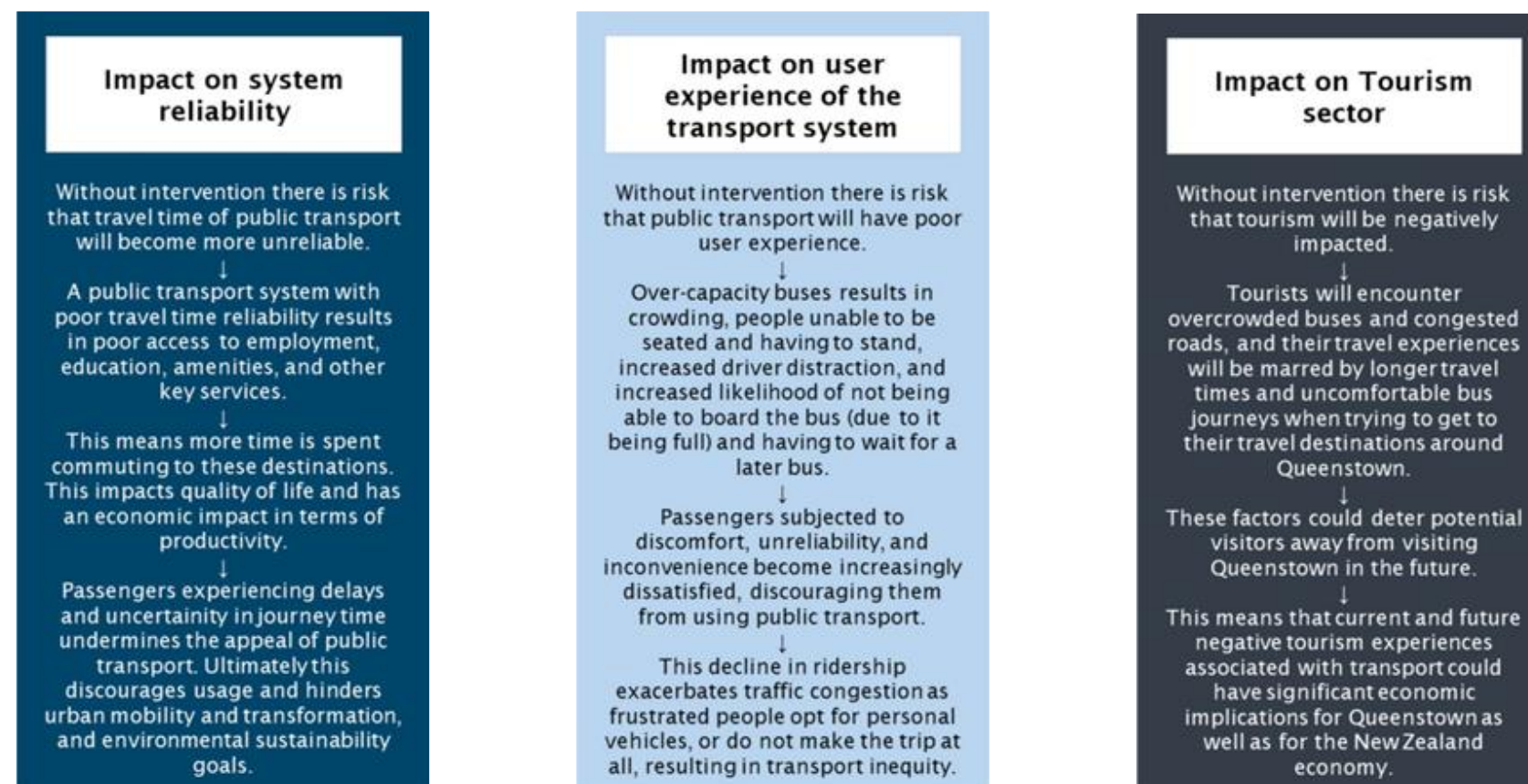


Current Queenstown public transport service does not provide an attractive alternative to private car travel, leading to low public transport usage in Queenstown (60 percent).

Forecast capacity increase from 260 pph to 1,000 pph by 2039

Consequences - *QPTBC*

“Bus trips are affected by the same congestion issues experienced by general traffic”



“Quality of life survey shows public transport routes are not aligned with their needs”



QPTBC – Investment Objectives



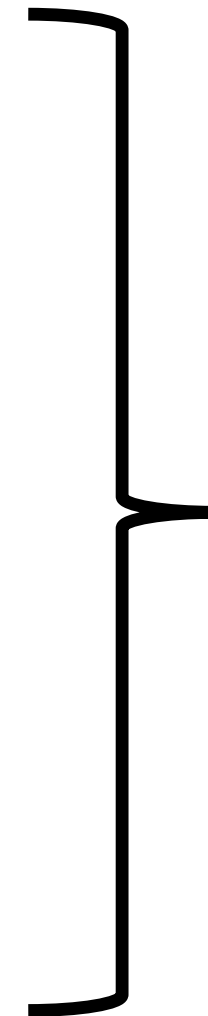
Investment Objective 1: Increase public transport patronage and mode share in Queenstown to maintain a functional network.



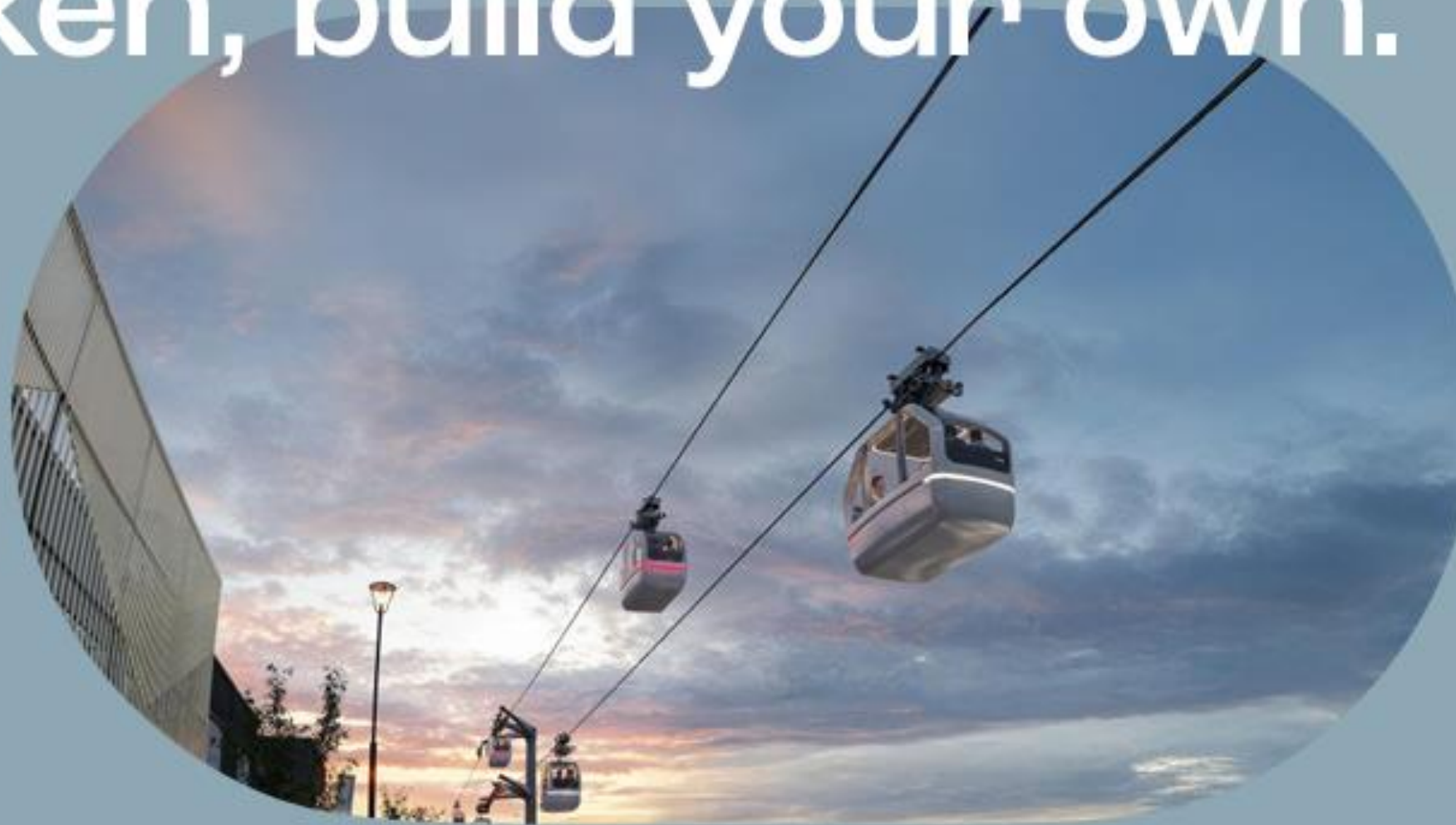
Investment Objective 2: Reduce public transport CO₂ emissions in Queenstown to meet Government policy.



Investment Objective 3: Increase the number of jobs and social destinations accessible by public transport in line with Queenstown spatial planning.



When the system's broken, build your own.



Transcend every existing transportation frustration. Whoosh above it all.

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**What if
traffic
wasn't?**

- 1. Net additive transport options**
- 2. Service that exceeds expectations**
- 3. Minimise negative impact**
 - other transport modes
 - road users
 - land use
 - community

Create the journeys people want to take

useful

Connecting key locations
Convenient stops
On-demand
Consistent travel time
Fit with existing transit

+

useable

Easy to use
Simple to pay
Affordable
Minimal disruption
Simple to install and maintain

+

desirable

Desired level of service
Non-stop travel
Minimal wait and travel time
Ride alone or share?
Environment and Low cost

Six requirements for people to choose transit options

- 1 Easily accessible** Stations within 400m → Many small stations
- 2 Network coverage** Connect all destinations → Interconnected routes
- 3 On-demand service** Match demand patterns → Frequency that adapts
- 4 No transfers** Every transfer loses 40% of riders → Direct journeys
- 5 Certainty** Certainty in cost, total travel time, vehicle quality, trip safety
- 6 Level of Service** Delightful travel experience → Travel alone, bring a friend, share with others

QPTBC –Design Principles



Ridership
versus
Coverage



Frequency



Walking
catchments



Transfers



Branching



Open
versus
Closed BRT



Specialist
versus
Generalist
services

 LetsWhoosh



Let's reconsider
the "freeway."



Let's Whoosh



10435 Likes

LetsWhoosh Welcome to Whoosh. A network of autonomous, app-enabled electric cars immune to traffic, delays, and every other hassle associated with transportation and commuting today. Each Whoosh journey glides you above the chaos on a guideway, quietly bypassing everything that used to slow you down. Clean. Monitored. Moving you and the world forward.

8 MINUTES AGO



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Micro Point

Minimum Footprint & Land Use

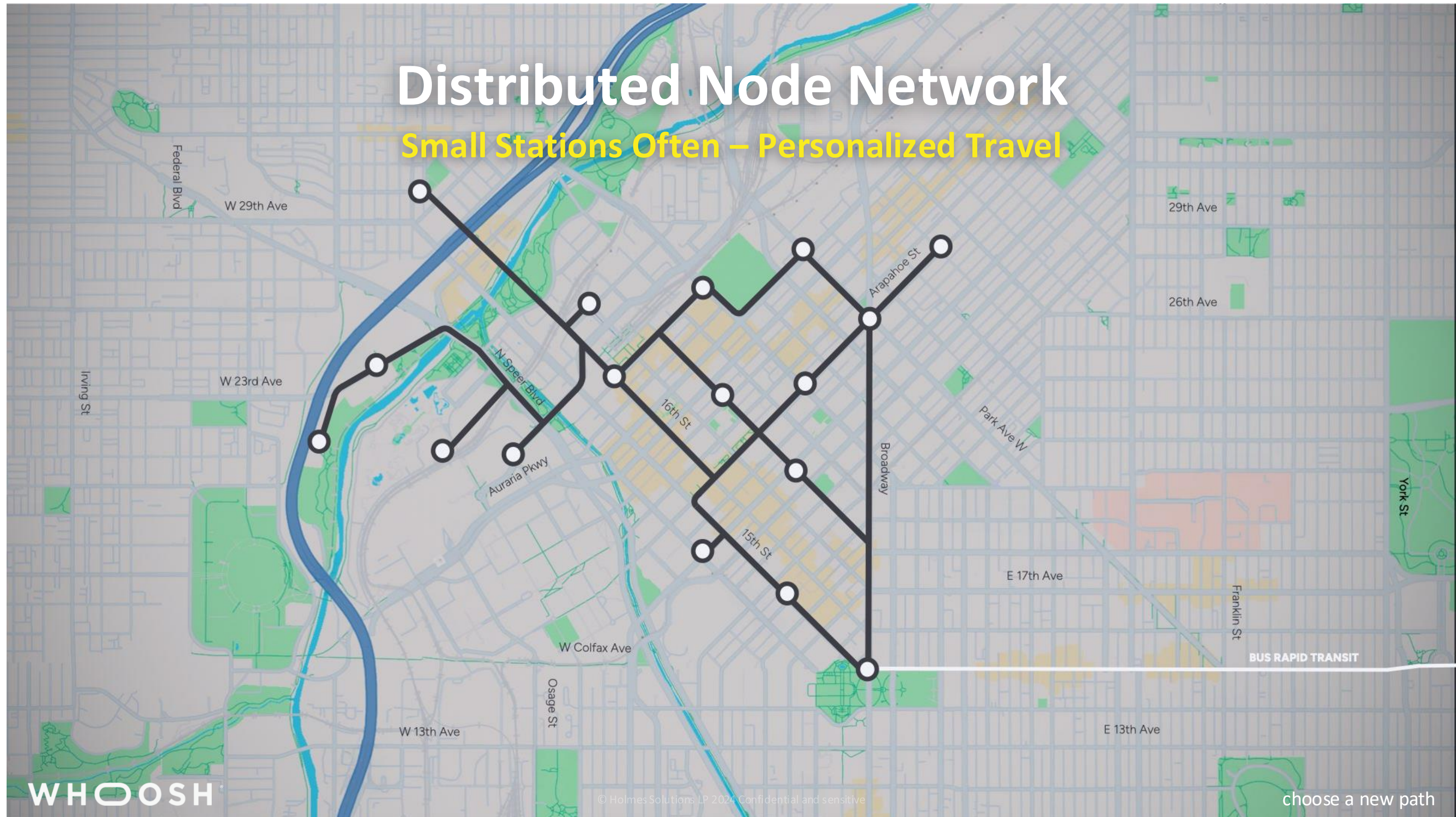
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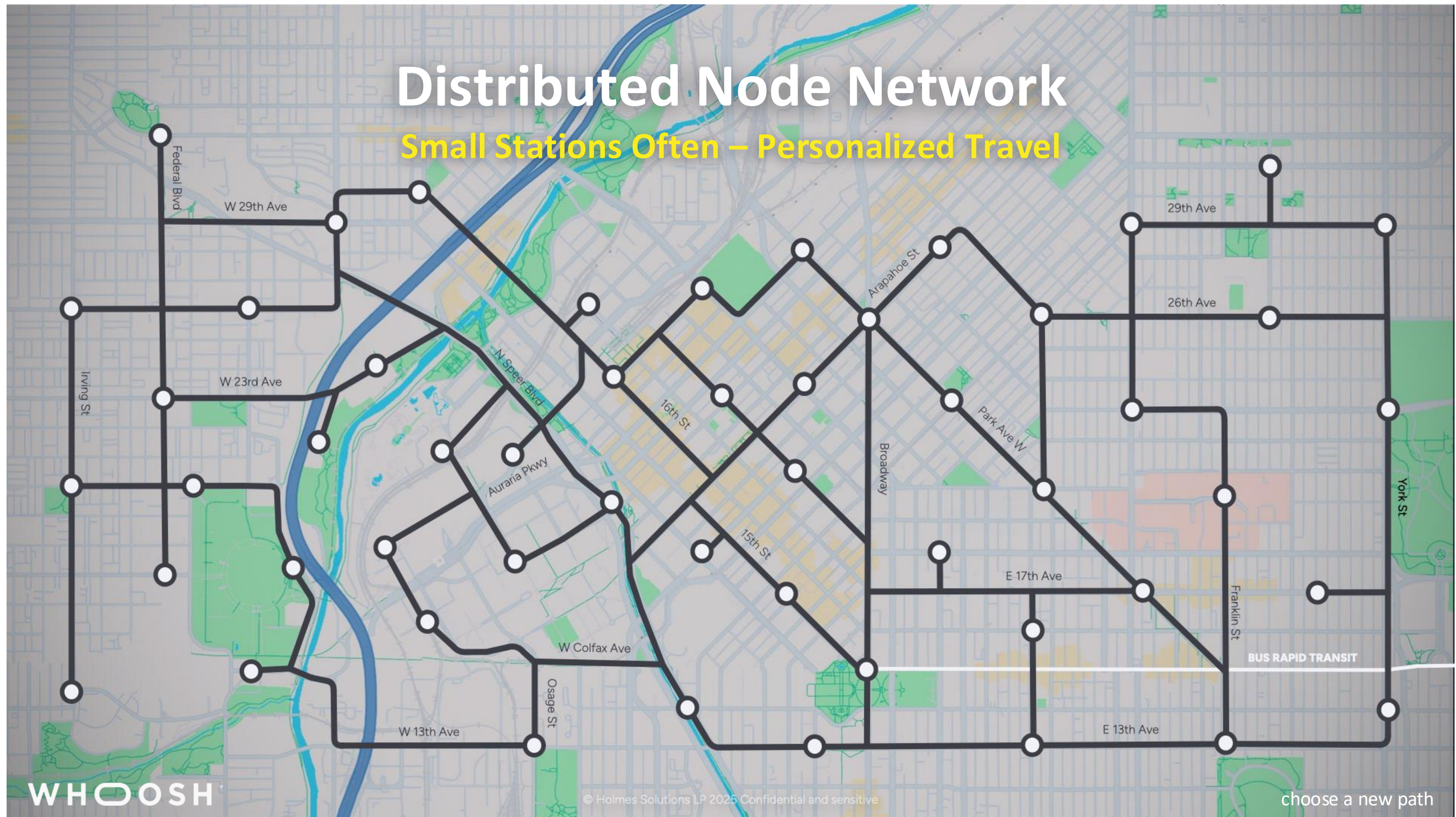
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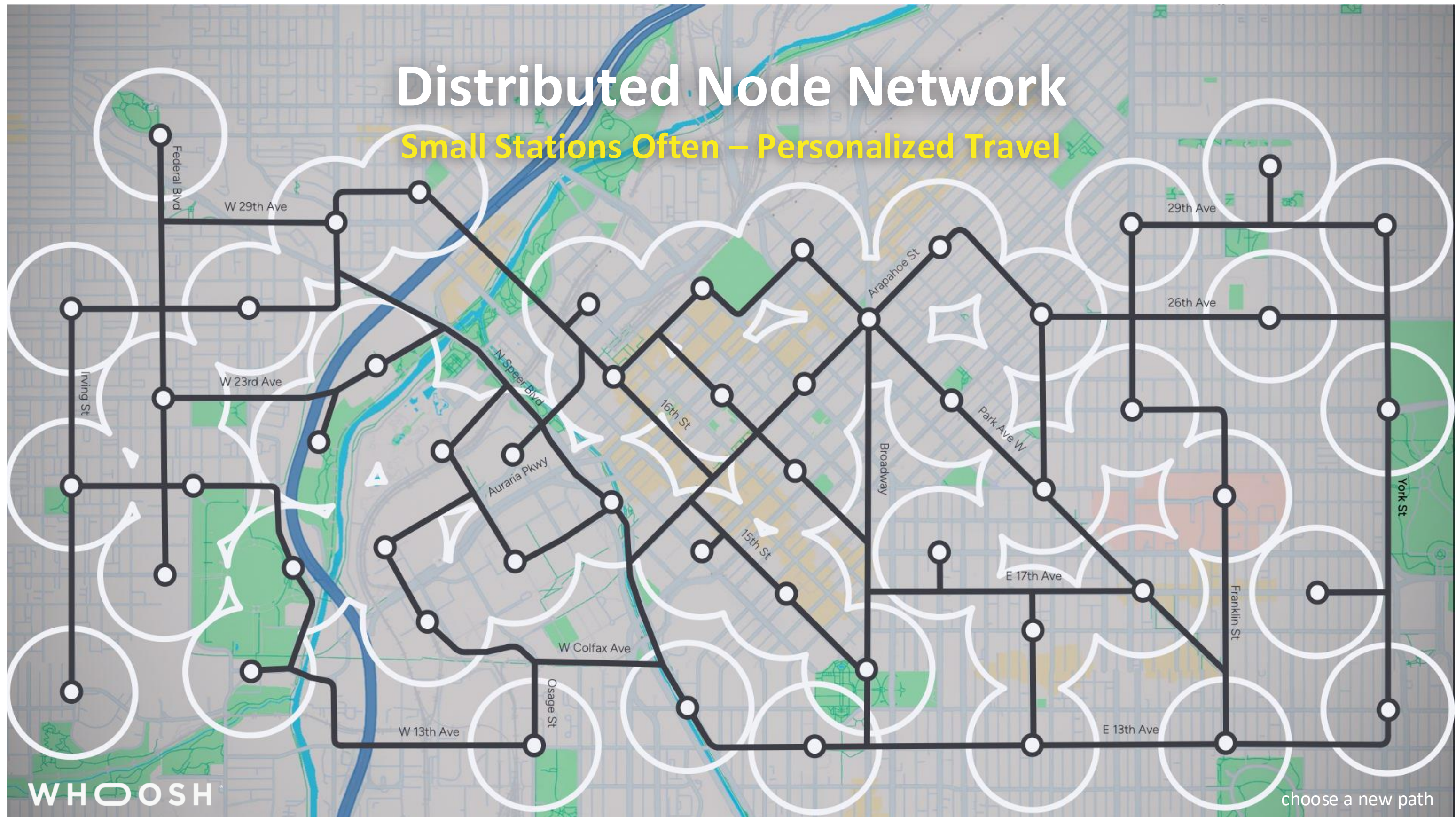
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Distributed Node Network

Small Stations Often – Personalized Travel







WHOOSH

(Autonomous)

Electric vehicles
move freely across
a guideway of
static cable
& rail.

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Gondola

(Attached)

Cabins must
be attached
to a moving
ropeway to
travel.

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Accessible for All



Everyone deserves safe
and accessible travel with
connected communities.

Transit journeys to replace

More than moving people

People

- ✓ Public Projects
- ✓ Campus / Airport
- ✓ Private Developers

Goods

- ✓ Distribution Centers
- ✓ Last Mile Delivery
- ✓ Lockers

Services

- ✓ Factory Movement
- ✓ Emergency Services
- ✓ Agriculture

Static guideway, intelligence vehicle and network

GUIDEWAY	Static structure above the road corridor. No moving parts along the route.
VEHICLES	Light electric autonomous eEVs. Five passengers plus luggage, bikes, prams or cargo.
DISPATCH	On demand on the full platform: vehicles wait for passengers, not the other way around.
ROUTING	Point to point. Direct journeys, no transfers, no timetable.
NETWORK	Routes branch and merge; vehicles route dynamically. The network grows in increments.
STATIONS	Small, medium or large. At grade or elevated. Standalone or integrated into buildings.
OFFLINE STATIONS	Stations sit off the main line. Through-vehicles never stop.
KIT OF PARTS	Corners, stacks, U-turns and spans. Standard components, certified once.



WHOOSH

3,000 pphpd. 30-35km/h. \$10M/km installed.

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Transit designed around two customers

More than moving people

FOR YOUR PASSENGERS

- ✓ A door-to-door trip that skips traffic entirely elevated, on demand, no timetable to catch
- ✓ Constant 35–40 km/h travel speed, unaffected by congestion below
- ✓ Small cabins, short waits — closer to a private ride than a scheduled service
- ✓ Step-free, accessible boarding at street level

FOR YOUR CITY

- ✓ New transit capacity without new land or impacting existing transport options
- ✓ A fraction of the cost of building a road, expanding bus or light rail
- ✓ Fully deployed in 2–3 years & moving people as it is built.
- ✓ Adds passengers to existing PT rather than competing with it

Open up your city

Open up access to jobs

Open up places that are hard to access

Open up time in your day

Open up a new layer of movement

Open up choices





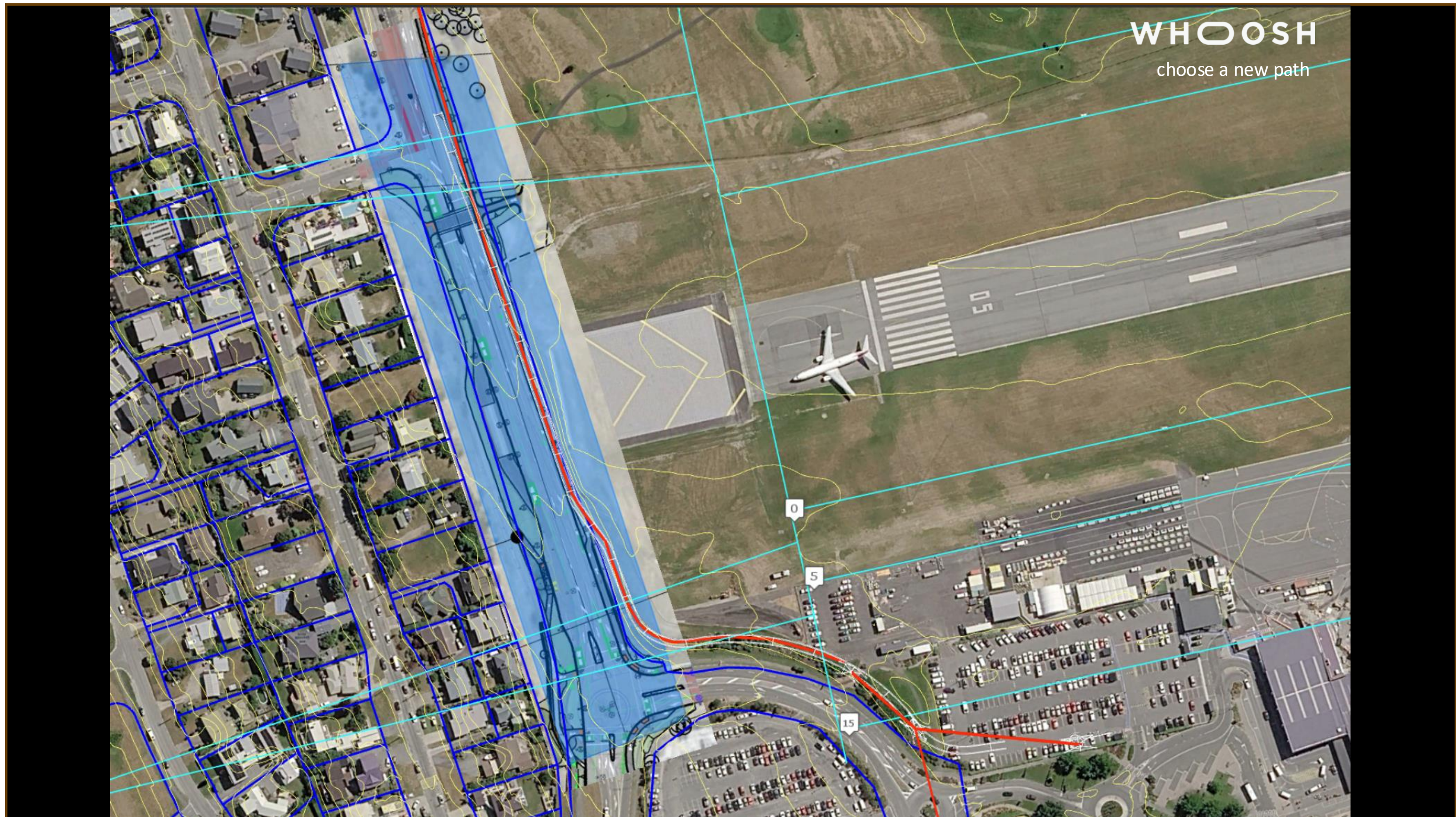




Stage 1 Development

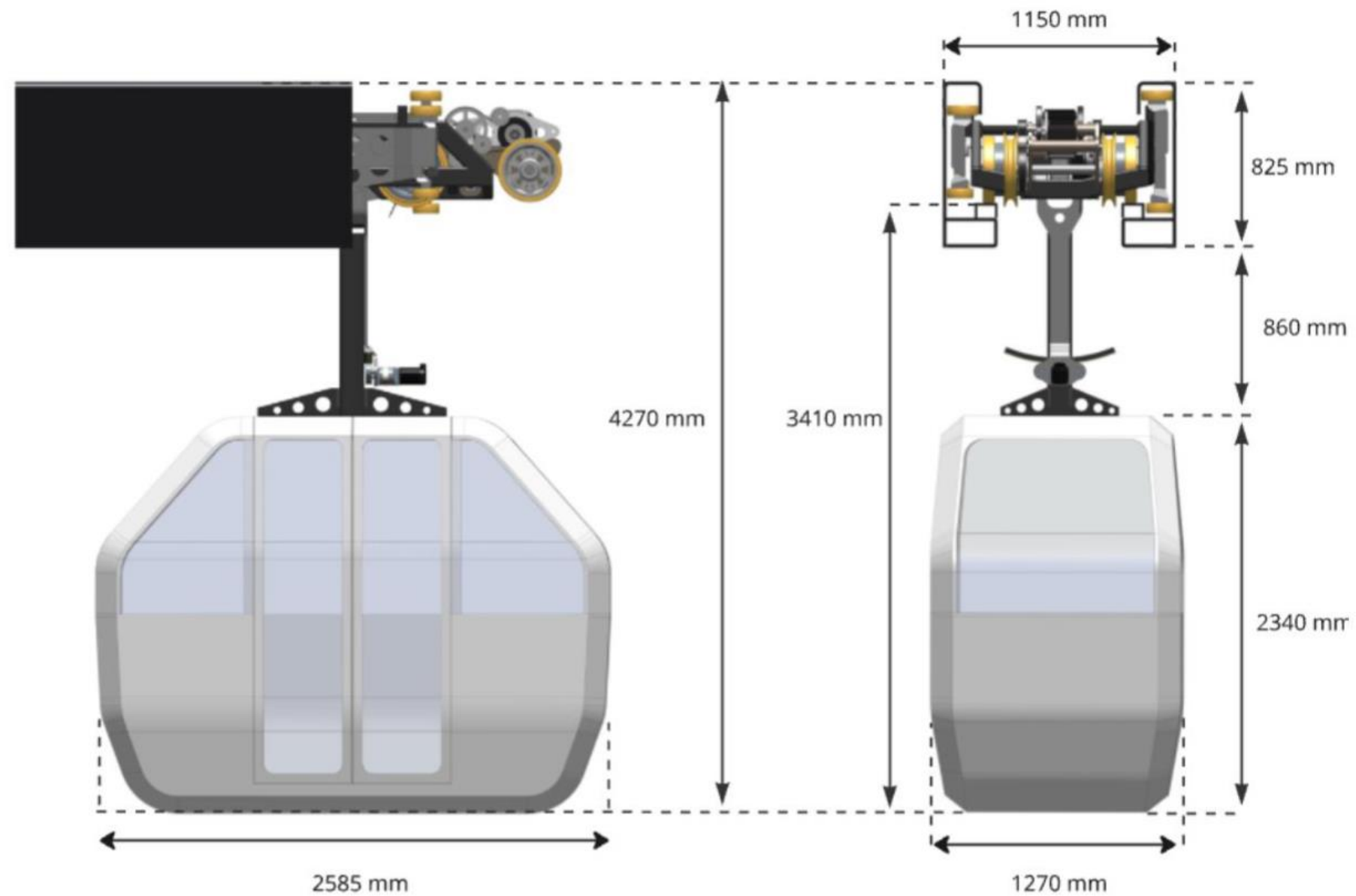






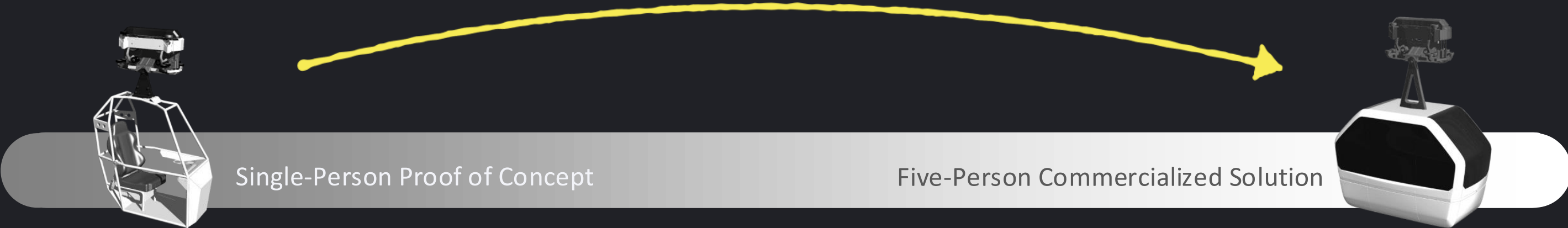
Compact vehicles

Designed to fit in urban environments



WHOOSH®

Development: Timeline



POC2

Develop core technology



Location:
Holmes Solutions Test Labs
Christchurch, NZ

Proving Ground

Scale up overall size



Location:
Christchurch International Airport
Christchurch, NZ

PILOT

Reliability & Community feedback



Location:
Remarkables Park
Queenstown, NZ

PRODUCT

Volume manufacture & low headway



Location:
Selection Process Ongoing
TBD

Whoosh Proving Grounds

Christchurch Airport Partnership



Alpha Validation Demonstration Site Build Updates

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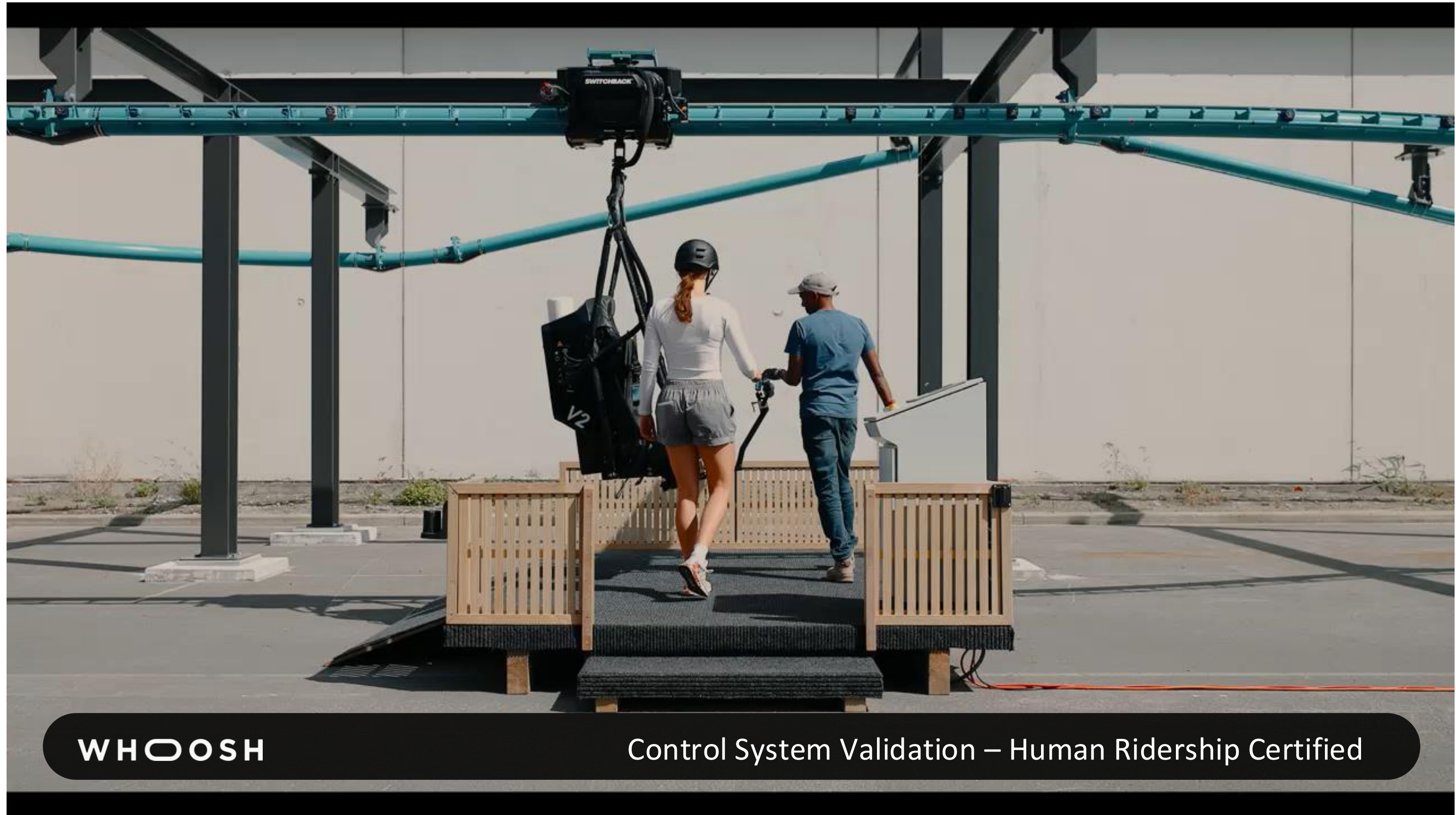
Full scale validation

System certification and compliance testing
Human-Ridership outcome

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Control System Validation – Human Ridership Certified



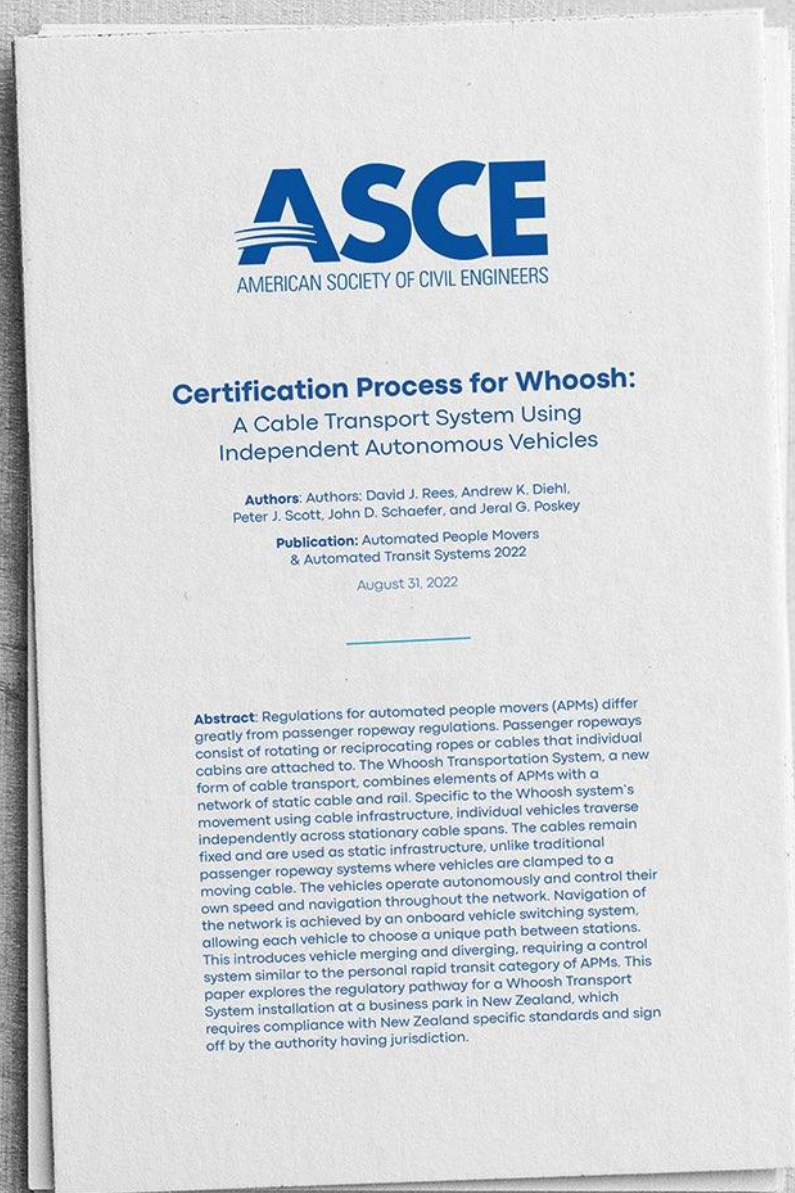
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Cabin Mock-ups

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Compliance

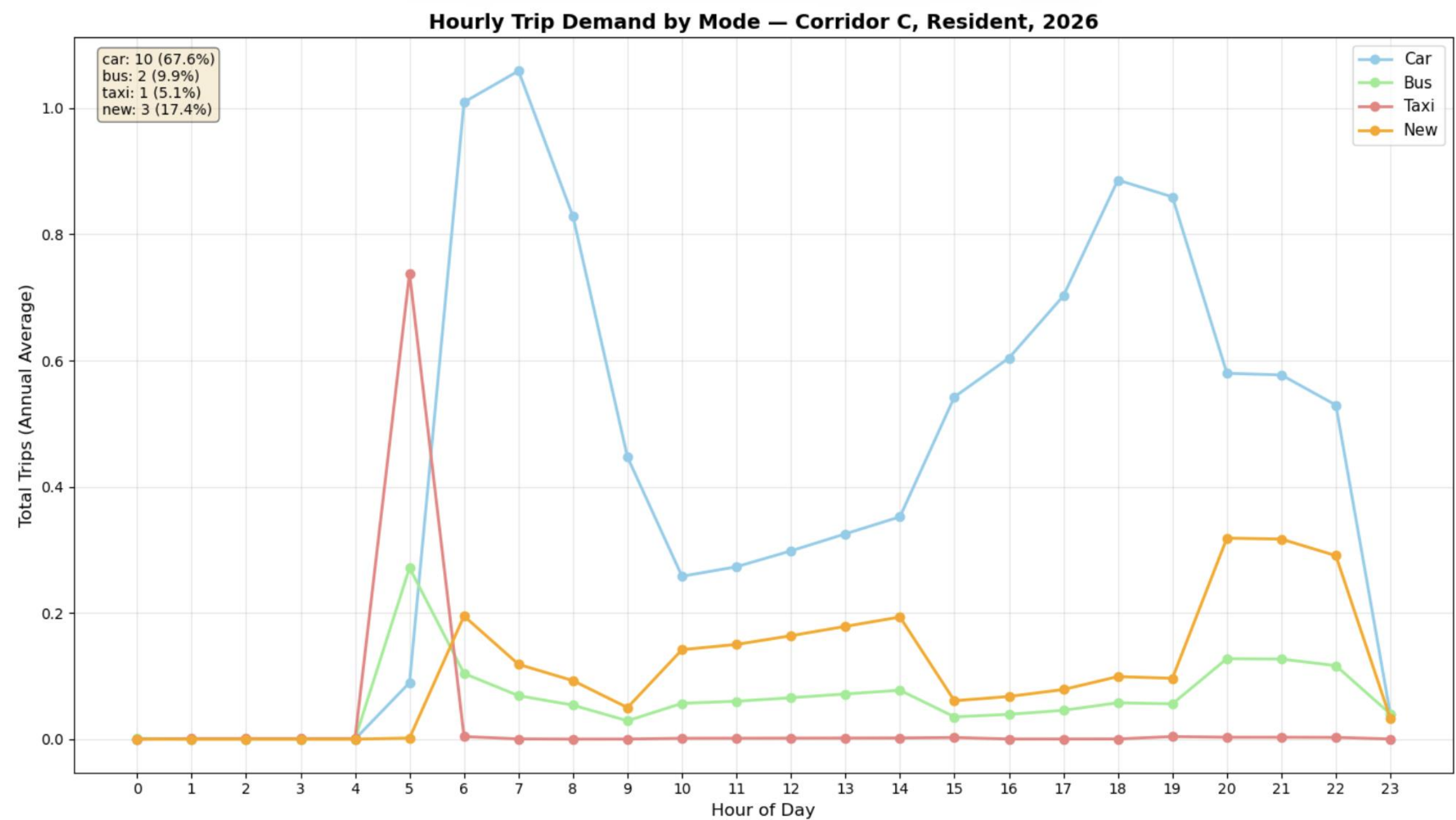
Overview



New technology with no single governing standard. Some relevant standards include:

- ASCE 21
- ANSI B77.1
- NFPA 130
- ISO 12100
- IEC 61508/62061
- ETCS (ERTMS)
- IEE 1474
- OSHA
- ADA Standards for Accessible Design

Economic Modelling



QPTBC – Investment Objectives



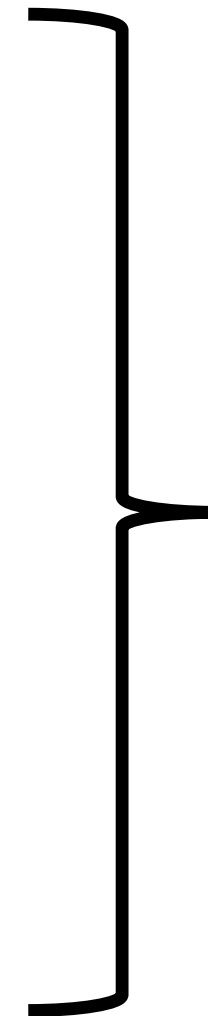
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Investment Objective 2: Reduce public transport CO₂ emissions in Queenstown to meet Government policy.



Investment Objective 3: Increase the number of jobs and social destinations accessible by public transport in line with Queenstown spatial planning.



WHOOSH[®]

**Creating
journeys
people want
to take**

Create the journeys people want to take

useful

Connecting key locations
Convenient stops
On-demand
Consistent travel time
Fit with existing transit

+

useable

Easy to use
Simple to pay
Affordable
Minimal disruption
Simple to install and maintain

+

desirable

Desired level of service
Non-stop travel
Minimal wait and travel time
Ride alone or share?
Environment and Low cost





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Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees (RTC) MINUTES

**Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees
held in the Gore District Council Chamber, 29 Bowler Ave, Gore on Monday 22 June 2026
commencing at 12:30 pm.**

MEMBERSHIP

Otago Regional Transport Committee

Cr Kate Wilson (RTC Chair)	<i>Otago Regional Council</i>
Cr Matt Hollyer (RTC Deputy Chair)	<i>Otago Regional Council</i>
Cr Bruce Graham	<i>Clutha District Council</i>
Cr Stuart Duncan	<i>Central Otago District Council</i>
Cr Steve Walker	<i>Dunedin City Council</i>
Cr Quentin Smith	<i>Queenstown Lakes District Council</i>
Cr John McCone	<i>Waitaki District Council</i>

Southland Regional Transport Committee

Cr Phil Morrison (RTC Chair)	<i>Environment Southland</i>
Cr Alistair Gibson (RTC Deputy Chair)	<i>Environment Southland</i>
Cr Christine Menzies	<i>Southland District Council</i>
Cr Ria Bond	<i>Invercargill City Council</i>
Deputy Mayor Joe Stringer	<i>Gore District Council</i>

Otago & Southland Regional Transport Committees

Mr James Caygill	<i>NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi</i>
------------------	--

Councillor Phil Morrison was designated as this meeting’s Chairperson.

1. WELCOME

Chair Cr Phil Morrison welcomed Councillors, members of the public and staff to the meeting at 12:30 pm.

Committee members present were Cr Kate Wilson (Otago Regional Council), Cr Matt Hollyer (Otago Regional Council), Cr Steve Walker (Dunedin City Council), Cr Quentin Smith (Queenstown Lakes District Council), Cr Bruce Graham (Clutha District Council), Cr John McCone (Waitaki District Council, online), Cr Phil Morrison (Environment Southland), Cr Alistair Gibson (Environment Southland), Cr Christine Menzies (Southland District Council, online), Cr Ria Bond (Invercargill City Council, online), Deputy Mayor Joe Stringer (Gore District Council, online) and James Caygill (New Zealand Transport Agency).

Other attendees included Hartley Hare (Southland District Council), Dean Lowry (Otago Regional Council), Anita Dawe (Otago Regional Council), Stacey Hitchcock (Otago Regional Council), Murray Hasler (Gore District Council), Lesley McCoy (Environment Southland), Liz Devery (Environment Southland), Helen Chapman (Dunedin City Council), Jeanine Benson (Dunedin City Council), Rose Wunrow (Dunedin City Council), Russell Hawkes (Environment Southland), Paul Fleet (Central Otago District Council), Grant Fisher (Invercargill City Council), Tony Pickard (Queenstown Lakes District Council, online), Gary Woock (Waitaki District Council, online), Cosmus Makuvise (Clutha District Council, online) and Cara Jordan (Otago Regional Council, Governance Support).

2. APOLOGIES

Resolution: Mr James Caygill Moved, Cr Alistair Gibson Seconded:

That the apologies for Cr Stu Duncan, Cr Joe Stringer and for the early departure of Cr Ria Bond, be accepted.

MOTION CARRIED

3. PUBLIC FORUM

[YouTube 2.15] Rebecca Shepherd, Chair of the Mosgiel-Taieri Community Board, joined the meeting online and spoke on traffic issues and alternative access points for Mosgiel.

4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The agenda was confirmed as published.

5. PRESENTATIONS

[YouTube 15:30] A presentation was given by Ben Sheriff from Southern Infrastructure on the Queenstown Cable Car proposal and its current project status.

Ben Sheriff left the meeting at 1.30pm.

[YouTube 1:00:25] Ben Johnston from KiwiRail gave an update on recent activities and presented on the Rail Network Investment Programme, the Maitua level crossing project and the Gore rail bridge.

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Resolution: Cr Kate Wilson Moved, Cr Bruce Graham Seconded

That the minutes of the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees' meeting held on 23 February 2026 be received and confirmed as a true and accurate record.

MOTION CARRIED

7. ACTIONS

There were no open actions for the Committees.

8. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

8.1. Chairperson's Report

{YouTube 1:24:19} Chair Phil Morrison gave an update on transport related issues with respect to wider government reform. The Committees still have a statutory responsibility to formulate the Regional Land Transport Plan 2027-2037 which remains a key focus.

Resolution RTC26-108: Mr James Caygill Moved, Cr Kate Wilson Seconded

That the Committees:

1) Note this report.

MOTION CARRIED

9. STAFF REPORTS

9.1. Regional Land Transport Plan Development

[YouTube1:25:30] This report provided information on the development of the draft Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2027-2037 (RLTP). Early engagement results have been incorporated into the draft vision, objectives and policies. Investment priority areas were discussed. Changes from the RLTP workshop 22 June 2026 were reviewed. Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council) was available for questions.

Resolution RTC26-109: Cr Kate Wilson Moved, Cr Steve Walker Seconded

That the Committees:

1) Note this report.

2) Provide direction on any changes required to the draft vision, objectives, policies and investment priorities.

3) Adopt the draft vision, objectives, policies and investment priorities subject to changes identified in Recommendation 2.

4) Provide feedback on the draft RLTP sections in the attachment: Draft Sections for the RLTP.

MOTION CARRIED

9.2. New Zealand Transport Agency General Update

[YouTube 1:43:00] An update was provided on the New Zealand Transport Agency's (NZTA) recent activities. The National Land Transport Programme timeline was outlined. Funding assistance rates will be updated in August 2026. The State Highway Investment Proposal was reviewed. The Motu Move rollout is planned for Invercargill in quarter 4 of 2026. Average speed safety cameras were discussed. South Island project updates were reviewed. Mr James Caygill from NZTA was available for questions.

Resolution RTC26-110: Cr Matt Hollyer Moved, Cr Alistair Gibson Seconded

That the Committees:

- 1) Note this report.**

MOTION CARRIED

9.3. South Island Regional Transport Committee Chair's Activities Update

[YouTube 2:06:25] An update on the activities of the South Island Regional Chair's Group meeting was provided by Lesley McCoy (Senior Transport Planner - Transport, ES) who was available for questions.

Resolution RTC26-111: Cr Kate Wilson Moved, Cr Alistair Gibson Seconded

That the Committees:

- 1) Note this report.**
2) Note the unconfirmed minutes of the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group meeting held on 13 April 2026.

MOTION CARRIED

10. EXTRAORDINARY AND URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business for the meeting.

11. CLOSURE

Chair Morrison acknowledged the retirements of Murray Hasler and Russell Hawkes. A vote of thanks was given for their extensive contributions and length of service to the regional transport committees.

There was no further business and Chair Morrison declared the meeting closed with a mantra at 2:53 pm.

Chairperson

Date

9.1. Otago and Southland Expenditure to June 2026

Prepared for:	Regional Transport Committee
Report No.	RTC2619
Authors:	Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council) Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Approved by:	Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)
Endorsed by:	Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council) Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Date:	28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to update the Regional Transport Committees on National Land Transport Programme expenditure to the end of June 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The report summarises transportation expenditure across Approved Organisations in Otago and Southland, tracking spending against their 2024-27 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) allocations to the end of June 2026.
- [3] The drawdown charts provided by NZTA show NLTP funding allocations and expenditure across activity classes. They show spend to date, the estimated run-rate spend required to claim the full allocation, and the 2024-27 baseline allocation. **Note:** State Highway expenditure is not included in this report and the accompanying charts.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.

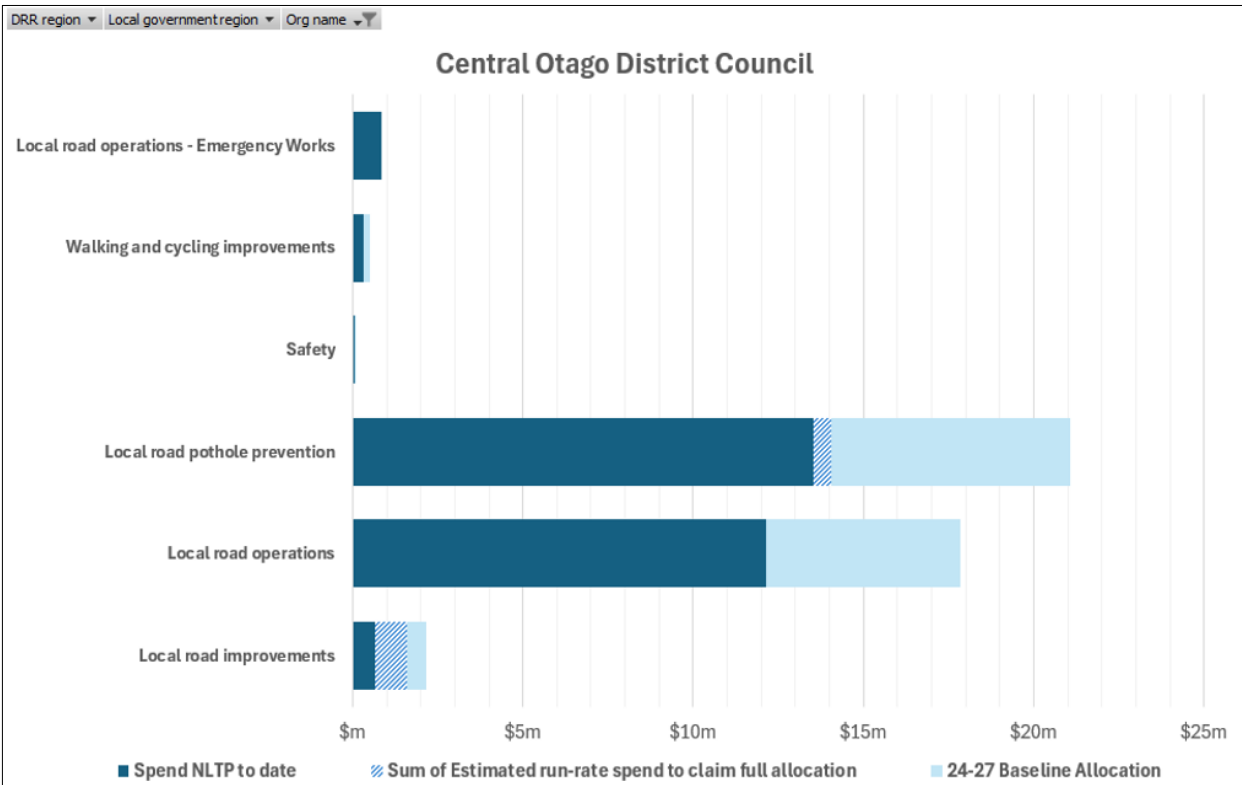
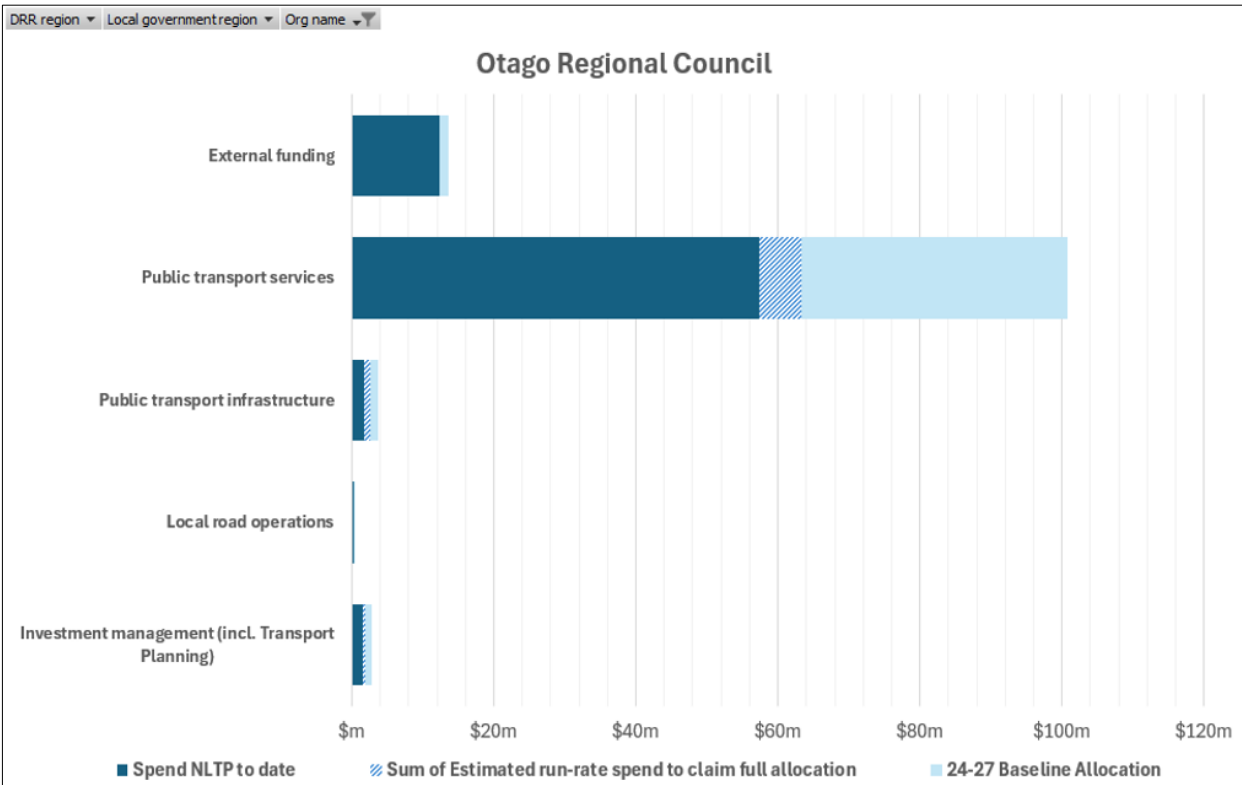
BACKGROUND

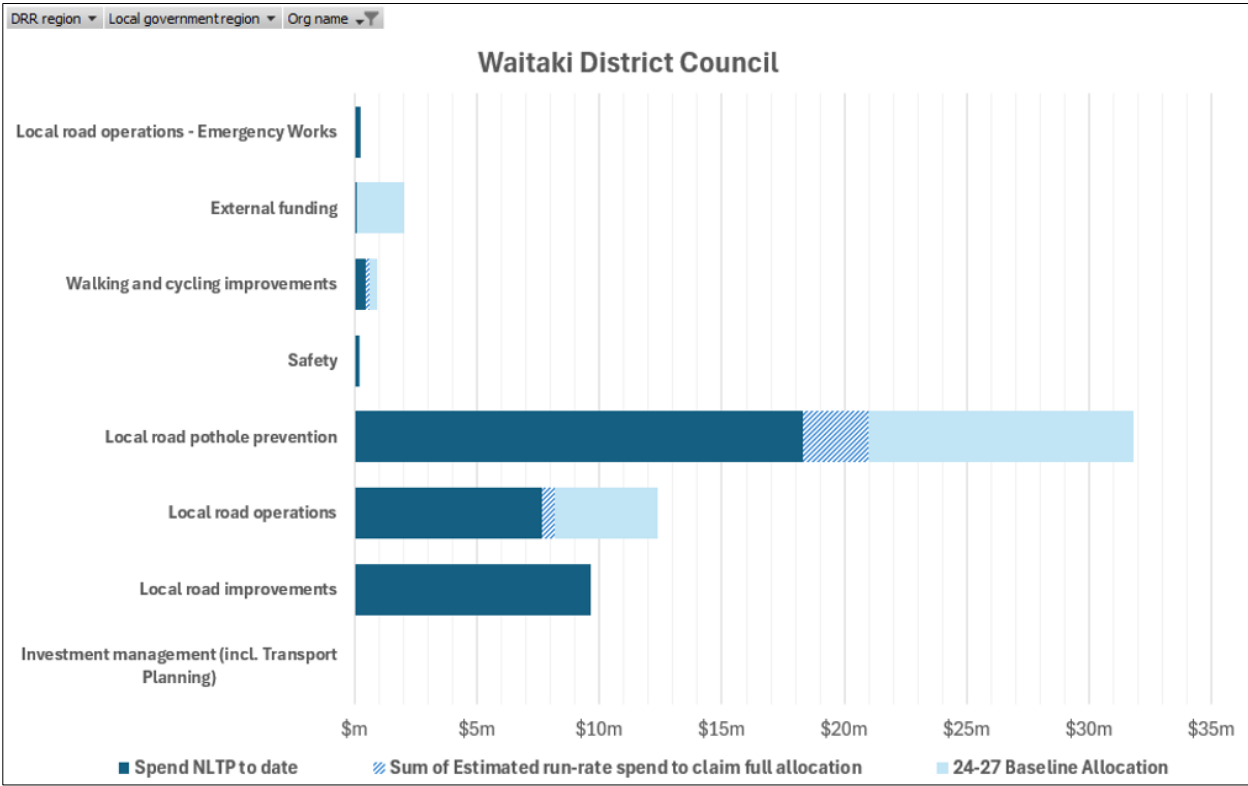
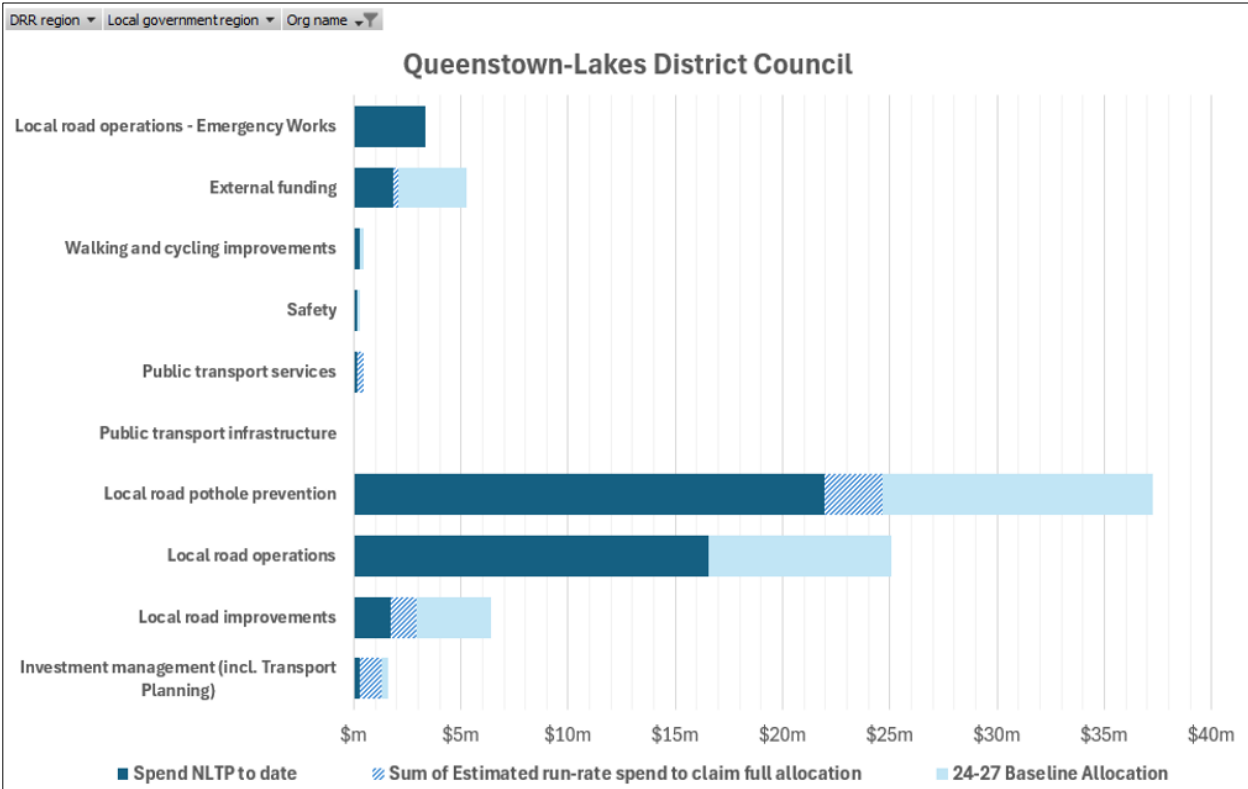
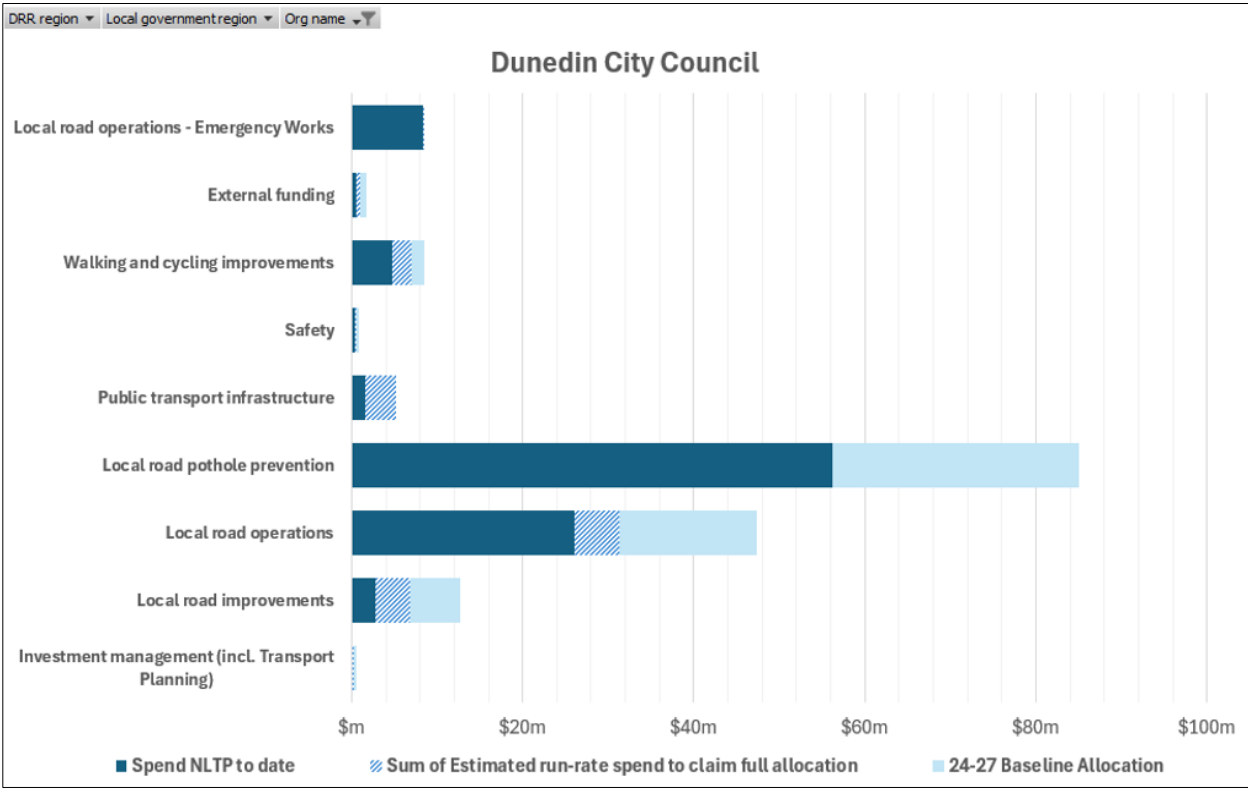
- [4] The National Land Transport Programme 2024-27 was released in September 2024. The Regional Transport Committees are periodically provided with updates on expenditure by Approved Organisations and have previously been briefed on their respective programmes of work.
- [5] The Land Transport Management Act 2003 requires Regional Transport Committees to monitor the progress of activities included in their Regional Land Transport Plans. This report provides an update to support that monitoring.

DISCUSSION

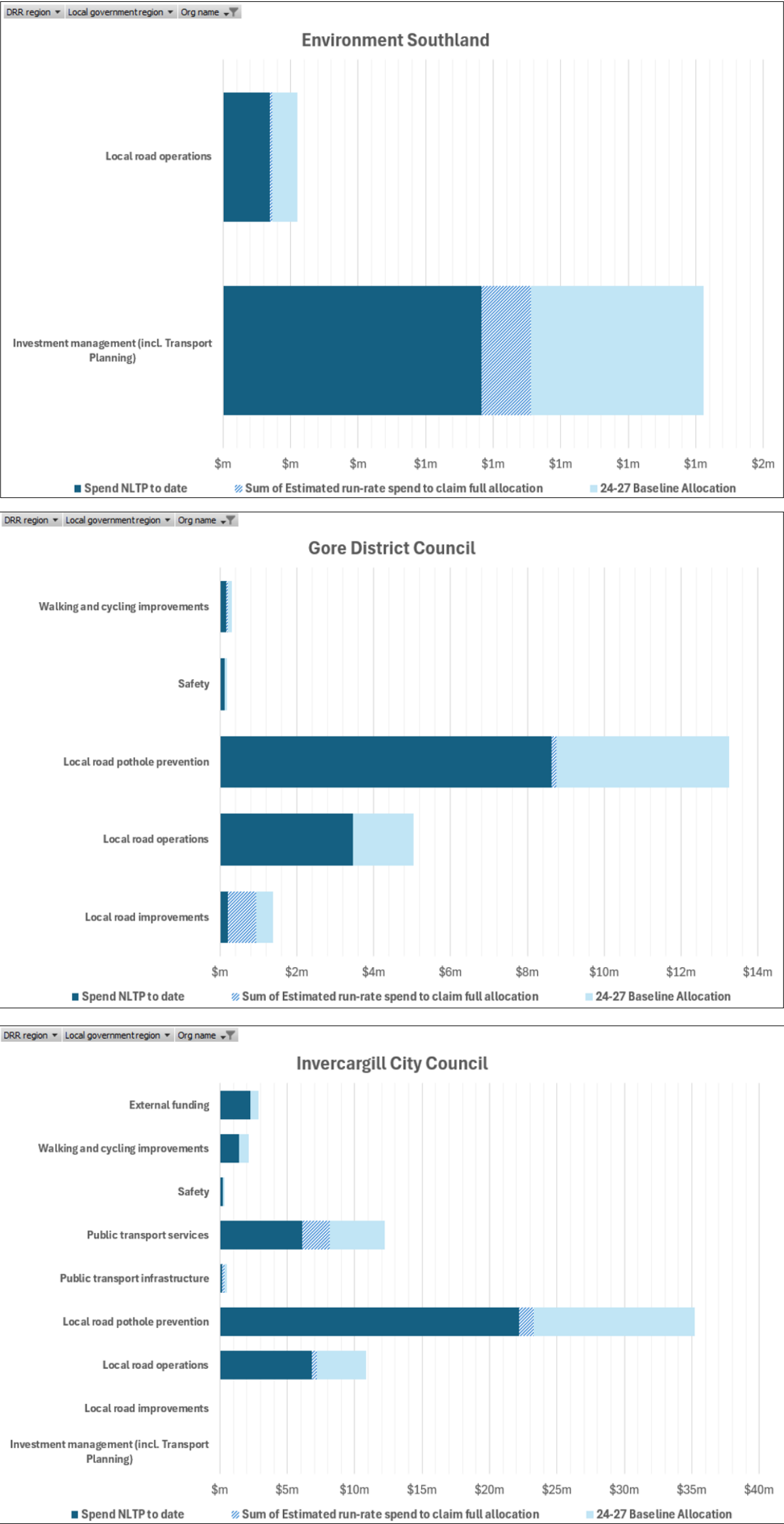
[6] The NZTA drawdown charts for each Approved Organisation (detailed below) track progress up to the end of June 2026, they capture expenditure for the first two-thirds of the 2024–27 period.

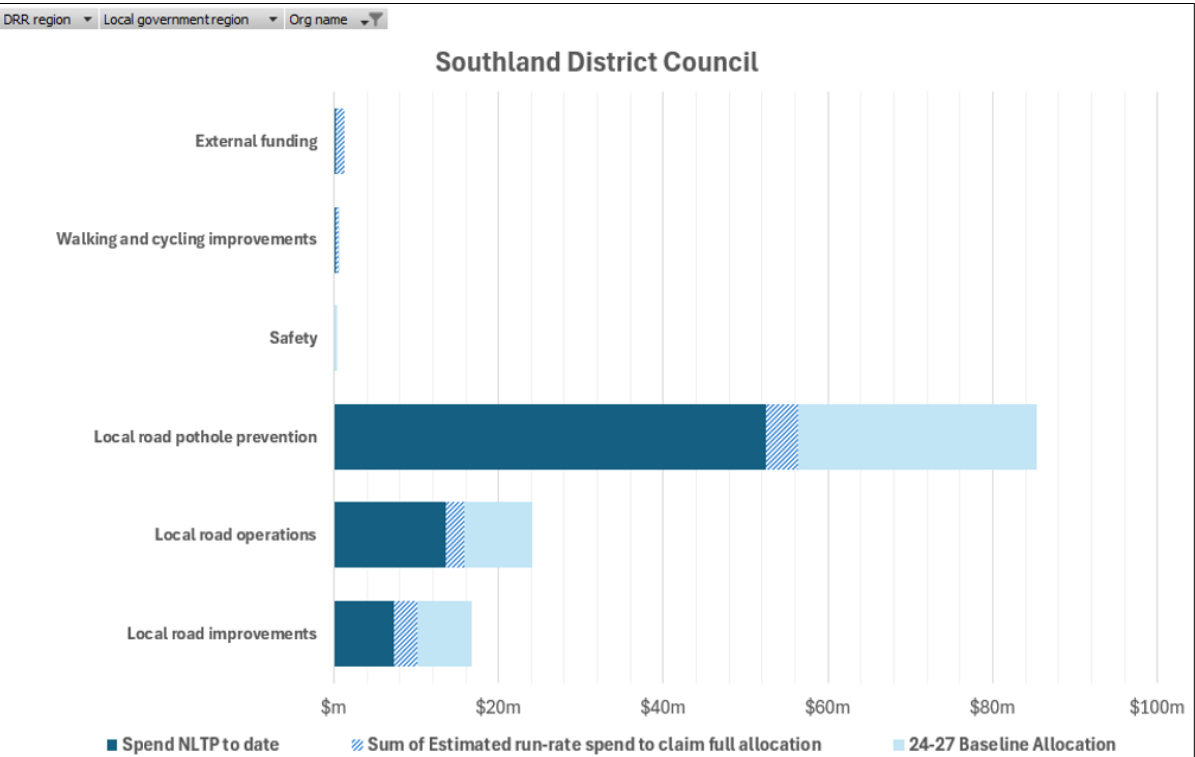
Otago





Southland





[7] With two-thirds of the 2024–27 period now complete, the level of expenditure against baseline allocations provides an indication of whether delivery is progressing at a pace that supports full utilisation of available funding. Expenditure progress will continue to be monitored throughout the final year of the 2024–27 period.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[8] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present strategic framework and policy implications.

Financial Considerations

[9] This report presents information on Approved Organisation expenditure. However, it does not present direct financial implications.

Significance and Engagement

[10] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[11] This report does not raise legislative and risk implications. Programme delivery risks continue to be managed through individual Approved Organisations.

Climate Change Considerations

[12] This report does not present climate change implications.

Communications Considerations

[13] No communications considerations arise from this report

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

9.2. Regional Land Transport Plans Improvement Projects Status

Prepared for:	Regional Transport Committee
Report No.	RTC2614
Authors:	Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council) Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Approved by:	Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)
Endorsed by:	Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council) Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Date:	28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to support the Regional Transport Committees in fulfilling their responsibility to monitor the progress of projects included in the Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The report provides an update on progress across the improvement projects included in the RLTP, covering projects that are underway, progressing through development, or did not secure funding from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.

BACKGROUND

- [3] The RLTP was submitted to the NZTA in July 2024 as the region's bid for funding from the NLTF and inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme. The Land Transport Management Act 2003 requires Regional Transport Committees to monitor the progress of activities included in their RLTPs.
- [4] A change in central government occurred in October 2023 during the development of the RLTP, leading to a new Government Policy Statement on land transport being released in June 2024 with different strategic priorities. The change in strategic priorities ultimately affected the funding of projects. As inclusion in the RLTP does not guarantee NLTF funding, several projects did not secure funding.

DISCUSSION

- [5] The following tables summarise the improvement projects included in the current RLTP by Approved Organisations and provide an update on their status.

Approved Organisation: NZTA - Otago		
Project	Regional Priority	Current Status
SH1 Dunedin City and Hospital	6	In Detailed Design and Consenting phase. Note this project is now being managed as a single project combined with the SH88 Dunedin City and Hospital project.
Katiki resilience (rock armouring)	37	Implementation phase
SH1 Lake Waihola CVRSC	33	No longer a priority for delivery.
Oamaru to Dunedin – (Hampden to Palmerston)	19	Project not included in 2024-27 NLTP and has been closed out. Any future safety activities part of VFM safety improvement programme.
SH6 Albert Town Bridge Improvement	13	Identified for consideration through the End of Life bridge programme for 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme.
SH6 Cromwell to Frankton Resilience	13	In Detailed Design and Consenting Phase.
SH6 Frankton to Kingston Resilience	13	Proceeding into Implementation phase.
SH6 OTA Haast to Hawea RESIL IMPR	13	In Detailed Design and Consenting phase.
SH6/6A Queenstown Offline High-Capacity PT IMP	2	Not included in 2024-27 NLTP
SH88 Dunedin City and Hospital	6	In Detailed Design and Consenting phase. Note this project is now being managed as a single project combined with the SH1 Dunedin City and Hospital project.
OTA Share VFM Safety improvement programme	18	Funding approved. In progress
Speed Management - Otago	28	Part of OTA Share VFM Safety Improvement Programme.

Small Projects - Otago	38	Part of OTA Share VFM Safety Improvement Programme.
SH1 Oamaru to Dunedin - Herbert to Hampden	19	Project not included in 2024-27 NLTP and has been closed out. Any future safety activities part of VFM safety improvement programme.
SH1 Mosgiel to Balclutha	24	Some safety physical works to be completed in 2026/27 construction season. Other components will be coordinated and delivered with maintenance pavement rehabilitation planned in two years.
SH1 Oamaru to Dunedin - Hampden to Palmerston (Refer to above)	19	Project not included in 2024-27 NLTP and has been closed out. Any future safety activities part of VFM safety improvement programme.
Futures Activities - Otago	39	Part of OTA Share VFM Safety Improvement Programme.
Stanley St Corridor Improvements (Queenstown Town Centre DBC	11	Not included in 2024-27 NLTP
SH1 and SH87 Mosgiel optimisation improvements	Not prioritised	In Investment Case phase.
SH6 Frankton Flats network improvements	Not prioritised	Included in 2024-27 NLTP as a “Possible” activity. Will be considered for 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme.
Otago State Highway bridge upgrades	Not prioritised	Superseded by the End of Life bridge programme for 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme.
OTA Share Pre-Imp 2027-30 Bridge replacement	Not prioritised	Planning for the End of Life bridge programme for 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme is underway.

Approved Organisation: NZTA - Southland		
Project	Regional Priority	Current Status
SH94 Homer Tunnel Rockfall/Avalanche Protection	7	Detailed Design, Consenting and Implementation being managed and delivered through the Milford Roads Alliance.
SH94 Milford Road to Te Anau Downs	1	In Detailed Design and Consenting phase.

STLD Share of VFM safety improvement programme	4	Funding approved. In progress
Speed Management - Southland	4	Part of STLD Share VFM Safety Improvement Programme.
Small Projects - Southland e.g. SH1/93 intersection	2	NZTA working with KiwiRail to see whether the scope of the rail work can be value-engineered as part of the project
SH1 Clinton to Mataura	3	Project not included in 2024-27 NLTP and has been closed out. Any future safety activities part of VFM safety improvement programme.
SH6 Invercargill to Winton	4	Project not included in 2024-27 NLTP and has been closed out. Any future safety activities part of VFM safety improvement programme.
Futures Activities - Southland	9	Part of STLD Share VFM Safety Improvement Programme.
Crown Resilience Programme LCLR STLD (Under Review/External Funding)	Not prioritised	Funding approved. In progress
Southland Site 1 CVRSC	8	No longer a priority for delivery.
STLD Share Pre-Imp 2027-30 Bridge replacement	Not prioritised	Planning for the End of Life bridge programme for 2027-30 National Land Transport Programme is underway.

Approved Organisation: ORC		
Project	Regional Priority	Current Status
Dunedin PT Improvements - PT services	6	Not included in 2024-27 NLTP
Dunedin PT Improvements - PT Infrastructure	6	Not included in 2024-27 NLTP
Queenstown PT Improvements - PT Services	1	Queenstown PT service improvements were funded through LCLR and have been implemented, including new services and increased frequency for Arrowtown, Kelvin Heights and Jacks Point.
Queenstown PT Improvements - PT Infrastructure.	27	Not included in 2024-27 NLTP. The proposed Queenstown bus depot is no longer being progressed by ORC.

Approved Organisation: DCC		
Project	Regional Priority	Current Status
Bus infrastructure improvements	24	Not included in NLTP
CERF-TC-Safer Streets	n/a	Not included in the NLTP
Central City Plan Upgrade	34	Not included in the NLTP
City to harbour cycle/pedestrian connection	39	Not included in the NLTP. Included in the DCC 9 YP in 2033/34
Dunedin Urban Cycleways	26 & 2 & Future	Not included in the NLTP. Work completed with local share funding to deliver 1.7 km from Gladstone North Road through Chain Hills Tunnel. Construction of this section was completed in December 2025. DCC continuing work on making Caversham Tunnel ready for use, with the Dunedin Tunnels Trail Trust receiving \$2m from MBIE to complete stages 2 and 3.
Inner Harbour seawall renewals	28	No Update
Mosgiel Freight improvements	Future	Not included in the NLTP
Portobello north resilience	Future	Not included in the NLTP. Funding included in DCC 9YP from 2025/26 – 2028/29
Rail and freight improvements	28	Not included in the NLTP
SFDT - Central City Parking Management plan	34	Static wayfinding has been installed. Procurement is underway for Electronic parking wayfinding signs with real time parking availability. Licence plate recognition parking enforcement has been paused due to privacy concerns. The updated Traffic and Parking Bylaw was adopted in July 2026 with a date of effect of 1 August 2026.
SFDT - Central Cycle and Pedestrian Improvements	Future	Albany St bidirectional cycleway and pedestrian improvements are under construction and expected to be completed by December 2026.
SFDT - Harbour Arterial Efficiency Improvements	11	Construction of a Roundabout at the Ōtaki/Orari Street intersection is complete, and work is underway on Strathallan Street.
SFDT - Park and Ride Facilities	Future (Also Committed)	Construction is underway and due to be completed in December 2026.

SFDT - Princes Street Bus Priority and Corridor Safety Plan	5	Procurement is about to commence for construction of stage one which includes a new roundabout at the intersection of Princes Street, South Road and Maitland Street. Stages two and three are subject to funding confirmation and public consultation.
Shore St/Teviot St safety improvements	28	Not included in the NLTP
Strategic Walking and Cycling network upgrades	6	Not included in the NLTP. Indicative local share funding from 2027/2028. Engagement on the strategic vision and public facing plan, Ōtepoti Dunedin pathways: A walking and cycling plan, is expected to occur in September/October 2026
Tertiary Precinct Improvement Project	Future	Not included in the NLTP. Included in DCCs 9YP in 2033/34
VKT reduction plan programme	19	Not included in the NLTP

Approved Organisation: QLDC		
Project	Regional Priority	Current Status
Arthurs Point Bridge Pre-implementation	4	Declined for funding in 24-27 NLTP. QLDC progressing early works with local share with NZTA involvement. We are working with NZTA investment advisors, Arthurs Point Crossing (APC) is going in front of the NZTA board on the 10 September. If NZTA approve (and contribute money this FY) this will be used for land purchase and GeoTech investigations and may also start detailed design. Council has \$800k this FY.
Capell Avenue Road Formation	28	Received funding through the NZTA Targeted Fund - to be delivered under LCLR. Construction of the road is being delivered by the Developer under a DA. Designs are complete and with QLDC for Engineering Approval. Works are anticipated to commence late 2026. Subdivision services must be installed before the road can be formed, sealing will not occur until after winter 2027.
Shepherds Creek Hut Bridge Resilience	19	Approved for funding under Crown Resilience fund, 76%. To be delivered as LCLR, >\$2m. Road Safety Audit with Designers for comment. Additional Ecological Assessments to begin along with DoC concession and Consent processing. Physical works tender in October, for construction from end January 2027.

Travel Demand Management	N/A	No 24-27 funding received, budget from previous 21-24 funding carried forward and being utilised in 24-27 Period. QLDC Parking Management Plans (Qtown CBD, Frankton & Wānaka) are continuing and will be completed this FY. Wayfinding for Upper Clutha is underway. Travel Plan (tranche 3 Travel Plan's) Transport Management Associations (Tranche 4 TMA's)
Remaining projects in RLTP were all future projects and not prioritised.		

- [6] The tables summarise the improvement projects included in the current RLTP and provide an update on their status. While some projects have not secured NLTF funding, their inclusion in the RLTP reflects their importance to the regions and the transport outcomes they are intended to support.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [7] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present strategic framework and policy implications.

Financial Considerations

- [8] This report does not present direct financial implications.

Significance and Engagement

- [9] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [10] The report does not raise legislative or risk-related matters.

Climate Change Considerations

- [11] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present climate change implications.

Communications Considerations

- [12] This report does not present communication implications.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

9.3. Ministerial Statement on Land Transport

Prepared for: Regional Transport Committee

Report No. RTC2618

Authors: Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council)

Approved by: Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)

Endorsed by: Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council)

Date: 28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Transport Committees with an update on the Ministerial Statement on Land Transport, released on 13 August 2026, and to outline its relevance to the development of the Otago and Southland Regional Land Transport Plans.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] On 13 August 2026, the Minister for Transport released a Ministerial Statement on Land Transport to inform development of the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2027 (GPS 2027).
- [3] The statement signals a constrained transport funding environment and highlights the importance of prioritising value for money, maintenance and renewals, resilience, economic productivity and safety.
- [4] These priorities are highly relevant to the development of the draft Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2027-37 (RLTP) and broadly align with its strategic direction and issues identified through regional engagement.
- [5] The statement provides an early indication of the framework likely to be reflected in GPS 2027 and therefore the environment in which future transport investment decisions will be made.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.

BACKGROUND

- [6] The Government intends to release a draft GPS 2027 for public consultation in early 2027. In advance of this process, the Minister released the Ministerial Statement to assist local government, NZTA and transport stakeholders as they prepare Regional Land Transport Plans, Long Term Plans, Activity Management Plans and investment proposals.

DISCUSSION

- [7] The Ministerial Statement highlights that the National Land Transport Fund faces increasing financial pressure as expenditure commitments exceed forecast revenue growth and previous Crown funding support reduces over time.
- [8] The statement indicates that future investment is likely to prioritise:
- Maintenance, operations and renewals of existing transport assets;
 - Critical resilience investments;
 - Economic growth and productivity outcomes;
 - Safety improvements;
 - Transit-oriented development; and
 - Strong value-for-money assessment across investment decisions.
- [9] These themes align closely with transport issues identified across Otago and Southland, including the importance of maintaining extensive rural transport networks, supporting freight connectivity, improving network resilience, and ensuring communities can access essential services during and following disruption events.
- [10] The Ministerial Statement also signals that funding for new improvement projects may be limited during the next National Land Transport Programme period, with priority expected to be given to continuous programmes, resilience activities and projects already committed.
- [11] This is an important consideration for development of the draft RLTP. It reinforces the need for investment proposals to clearly demonstrate strategic fit, economic benefits, resilience outcomes and value for money.
- [12] Officers will continue to monitor the development of GPS 2027 and NZTA guidance and will consider these signals as the draft RLTP is refined.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [13] The Ministerial Statement provides an early indication of the policy direction likely to be reflected in GPS 2027 and suggests a focus on resilience, productivity, maintenance and value-for-money outcomes, which are consistent with the draft RLTP.

Financial Considerations

- [14] There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Ministerial Statement does, however, provide an indication of future investment risks associated with funding constraints.

Significance and Engagement

[15] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[16] The report does not raise legislative and risk implications.

Climate Change Considerations

[17] The Ministerial Statement identifies resilience as a key investment priority. However, there are no direct climate change implications.

Communications Considerations

[18] This report does not present communication implications.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ministerial Statement on Land Transport -13 August 2026 [**9.3.1** - 3 pages]

Statement on land transport investment

This statement will inform the development of the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2027 (GPS 2027). The Government intends to release a draft GPS 2027 for public consultation in early 2027.

A high-performing land transport network is critical to our economy and way of life. But current planned investment outstrips expected revenue, and with competing demands across government, the Crown is constrained in what it can contribute in the coming years. Value for money and addressing the critical needs of the system will be front of mind in considering investment priorities.

Providing the sector with a credible and stable investment pipeline remains my focus. I am undertaking further work to determine how we can return land transport investment to a more sustainable position, in line with the recommendations in the National Infrastructure Plan (NIP).

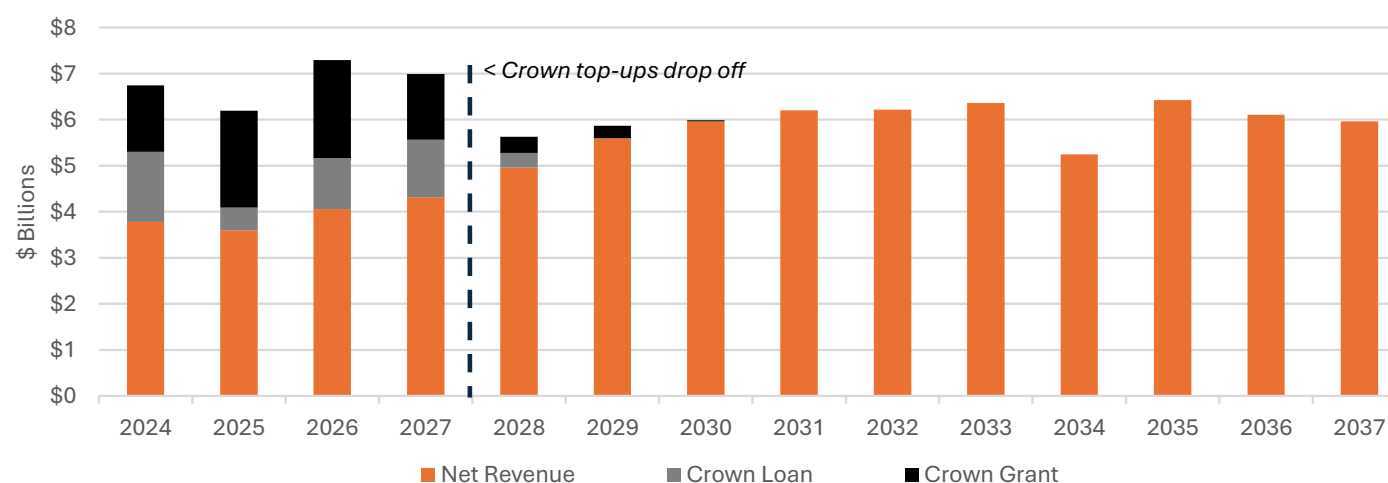
I am conscious that the sector is starting to prepare for the 2027–30 period. The purpose of this statement is to provide clarity on the fiscal context and how it is shaping ongoing policy development, to support the sector in its planning for Long Term Plans, Regional Land Transport Plans and the National Land Transport Programme absent a draft GPS 2027.

The case for a more sustainable system

Land transport investment needs a long-term, credible funding path. Major infrastructure takes years to plan and deliver, and councils, NZTA and the market need stable signals. But we cannot keep relying on deferred revenue decisions or Crown top-ups to sustain the programme.

The National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) is expected to face significant pressure over the coming decade. GPS 2024 included \$8 billion of Crown funding and financing, but that support will expire. Increases to Fuel Excise Duty and Road User Charges will take time to build revenue, while the National Land Transport Fund must also repay debt from the 2021–24 and 2024–27 programmes.

Figure 1: Land Transport Revenue Actuals & Forecast¹



Over 2027/28–2036/37, NLTF revenue is likely to be enough only for continuous programmes (for road maintenance, operations and renewals, rail, public transport services, safety), critical resilience activities, debt repayments and projects already underway. New improvements will require savings, reprioritisation, higher user charges, or further Crown funding. These are hard choices. They either require the system to stop or defer lower-value work, ask users to pay more, or place further pressure on the Crown at a time when fiscal constraints are already significant.

¹ Net Revenue = NLTF Revenue (such as FED and RUC) – any debt servicing that is required in that year.

Recent steps

Through Budget 2026, the Government has already made some targeted choices reflecting this context. Funding was allocated to progress Cambridge to Piarere, strengthen resilience on critical state highway corridors, and support overdue metropolitan rail renewals. These investments point to the kinds of activity that will matter most in a constrained fiscal environment: protecting critical connections, reducing avoidable disruption, supporting productive movement, and looking after the networks we already rely on.

On 9 July 2026, the government released an updated major transport projects pipeline, setting out a long-term view of major roading and public transport projects, including the remaining Roads of National Significance. The pipeline outlines what can be afforded within current revenue and provides a stable and credible delivery signal to the sector. It should help agencies, local government, and industry partners align investment planning, workforce development, and capability over time.

The Government has also progressed demand management and pricing tools, to help ease congestion and avoid network delays, especially where these would impose costs on businesses, workers, and freight movement. We look forward to seeing time-of-use schemes, tolling and new infrastructure financing tools progress in the future.

The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) has now been established, with the aim of ensuring better policy coordination and engagement with local government. Alongside existing system reforms, MCERT has also been tasked with reviewing the land transport funding system as part of the response to the NIP. Key to this will be focusing on restoring the balance so that user charges pay for the system.

What this means for future investment

It will be critical that central and local government remain jointly focused on what priority investment needs to be progressed over the next few years, taking into account critical asset needs, wider long-term benefits and overall affordability.

With this in mind, the draft GPS 2027 will likely focus on the following:

Value for money and investment and cost discipline (overarching focus) – making better use of existing network, service and system capacity before committing to new infrastructure, and ensuring investments are high value, appropriately sequenced, and supported by robust analysis.

Maintenance, operations and renewals – looking after the existing network, supported by stronger asset management and better information on asset condition and risk.

Resilience – targeting the most critical parts of the network, where disruption would have the greatest consequences for communities, freight, emergency response and the economy.

Transit-oriented development – supporting housing growth through alignment with spatial plans and concentrating development around transit nodes, key corridors, and strategic connections.

Economic growth and productivity – supporting access to jobs and markets, housing and urban development, improving travel time reliability, protecting key freight routes, and making better use of public transport and existing capacity.

Safety – continuing to focus on targeted, cost-effective interventions that reduce deaths and serious injuries and avoid major network disruption.

New Zealand already has most of the transport assets it will rely on over the coming decades, and improving how we use the current network is quicker and more cost-effective than expanding capacity. NZTA's intervention hierarchy provides a practical way to test this: integrate land use and

transport planning, maintain and operate what already exists, manage demand, optimise current networks through technology and better network operations, and consider new infrastructure only where the problem cannot be addressed more efficiently.

Continuous programmes – including maintenance, operations, renewals, public transport services and safety activities – remain important. High-value low-cost investments, and those that benefit users across different modes of transport will also be important in a financially constrained environment. But these will still need to show strong value for money, clear evidence and careful prioritisation.

The agreed City and Regional Deals, and future Spatial Plans, will also provide another way to align central and local government decisions around growth, infrastructure, housing and economic development, while still needing to be considered alongside wider affordability, value for money and sequencing choices.

Next steps

The draft GPS 2027 will continue to be developed, with public consultation expected in early 2027. NZTA will release separate guidance about how it will prioritise bids for inclusion in the next National Land Transport Programme. In the meantime, I look forward to continuing to work with the sector to ensure land transport investment delivers lasting value for New Zealanders.

Statement on land transport investment

This statement will inform the development of the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2027 (GPS 2027). The Government intends to release a draft GPS 2027 for public consultation in early 2027.

A high-performing land transport network is critical to our economy and way of life. But current planned investment outstrips expected revenue, and with competing demands across government, the Crown is constrained in what it can contribute in the coming years. Value for money and addressing the critical needs of the system will be front of mind in considering investment priorities.

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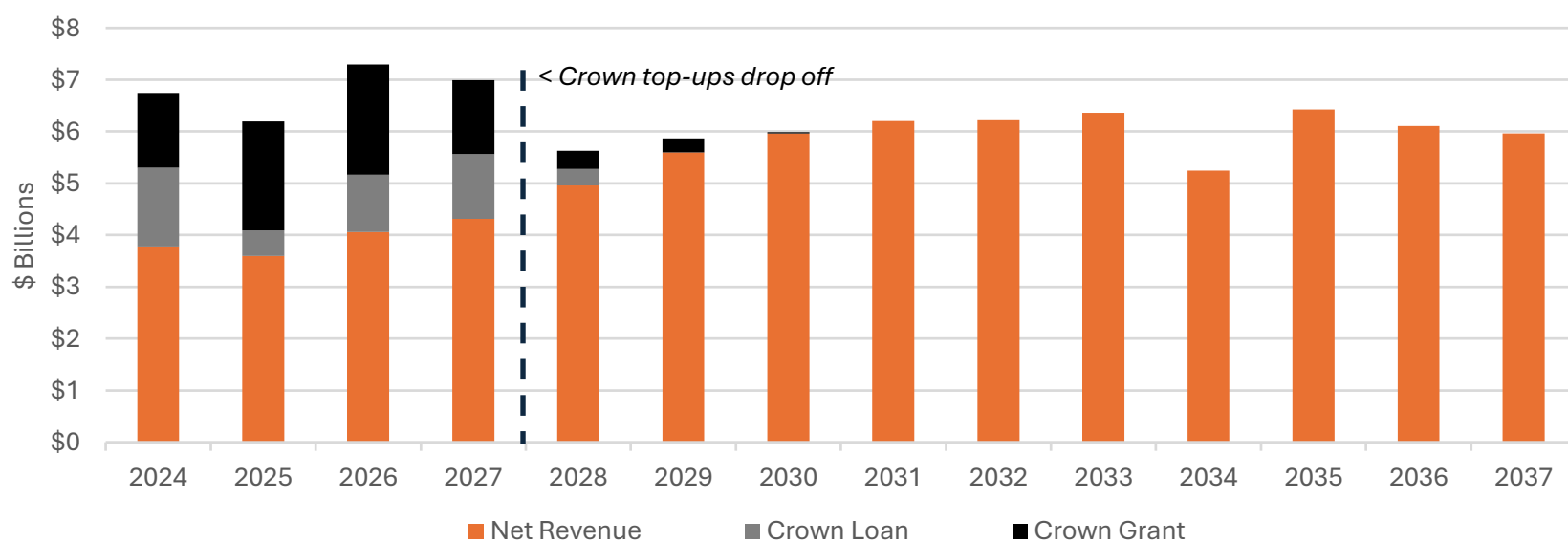
I am conscious that the sector is starting to prepare for the 2027–30 period. The purpose of this statement is to provide clarity on the fiscal context and how it is shaping ongoing policy development, to support the sector in its planning for Long Term Plans, Regional Land Transport Plans and the National Land Transport Programme absent a draft GPS 2027.

The case for a more sustainable system

Land transport investment needs a long-term, credible funding path. Major infrastructure takes years to plan and deliver, and councils, NZTA and the market need stable signals. But we cannot keep relying on deferred revenue decisions or Crown top-ups to sustain the programme.

The National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) is expected to face significant pressure over the coming decade. GPS 2024 included \$8 billion of Crown funding and financing, but that support will expire. Increases to Fuel Excise Duty and Road User Charges will take time to build revenue, while the National Land Transport Fund must also repay debt from the 2021–24 and 2024–27 programmes.

Figure 1: Land Transport Revenue Actuals & Forecast¹



Over 2027/28–2036/37, NLTF revenue is likely to be enough only for continuous programmes (for road maintenance, operations and renewals, rail, public transport services, safety), critical resilience activities, debt repayments and projects already underway. New improvements will require savings, reprioritisation, higher user charges, or further Crown funding. These are hard choices. They either require the system to stop or defer lower-value work, ask users to pay more, or place further pressure on the Crown at a time when fiscal constraints are already significant.

¹ Net Revenue = NLTF Revenue (such as FED and RUC) – any debt servicing that is required in that year.

Recent steps

Through Budget 2026, the Government has already made some targeted choices reflecting this context. Funding was allocated to progress Cambridge to Piarere, strengthen resilience on critical state highway corridors, and support overdue metropolitan rail renewals. These investments point to the kinds of activity that will matter most in a constrained fiscal environment: protecting critical connections, reducing avoidable disruption, supporting productive movement, and looking after the networks we already rely on.

On 9 July 2026, the government released an updated major transport projects pipeline, setting out a long-term view of major roading and public transport projects, including the remaining Roads of National Significance. The pipeline outlines what can be afforded within current revenue and provides a stable and credible delivery signal to the sector. It should help agencies, local government, and industry partners align investment planning, workforce development, and capability over time.

The Government has also progressed demand management and pricing tools, to help ease congestion and avoid network delays, especially where these would impose costs on businesses, workers, and freight movement. We look forward to seeing time-of-use schemes, tolling and new infrastructure financing tools progress in the future.

The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) has now been established, with the aim of ensuring better policy coordination and engagement with local government. Alongside existing system reforms, MCERT has also been tasked with reviewing the land transport funding system as part of the response to the NIP. Key to this will be focusing on restoring the balance so that user charges pay for the system.

What this means for future investment

It will be critical that central and local government remain jointly focused on what priority investment needs to be progressed over the next few years, taking into account critical asset needs, wider long-term benefits and overall affordability.

With this in mind, the draft GPS 2027 will likely focus on the following:

Value for money and investment and cost discipline (overarching focus) – making better use of existing network, service and system capacity before committing to new infrastructure, and ensuring investments are high value, appropriately sequenced, and supported by robust analysis.

Maintenance, operations and renewals – looking after the existing network, supported by stronger asset management and better information on asset condition and risk.

Resilience – targeting the most critical parts of the network, where disruption would have the greatest consequences for communities, freight, emergency response and the economy.

Transit-oriented development – supporting housing growth through alignment with spatial plans and concentrating development around transit nodes, key corridors, and strategic connections.

Economic growth and productivity – supporting access to jobs and markets, housing and urban development, improving travel time reliability, protecting key freight routes, and making better use of public transport and existing capacity.

Safety – continuing to focus on targeted, cost-effective interventions that reduce deaths and serious injuries and avoid major network disruption.

New Zealand already has most of the transport assets it will rely on over the coming decades, and improving how we use the current network is quicker and more cost-effective than expanding capacity. NZTA's intervention hierarchy provides a practical way to test this: integrate land use and

transport planning, maintain and operate what already exists, manage demand, optimise current networks through technology and better network operations, and consider new infrastructure only where the problem cannot be addressed more efficiently.

Continuous programmes – including maintenance, operations, renewals, public transport services and safety activities – remain important. High-value low-cost investments, and those that benefit users across different modes of transport will also be important in a financially constrained environment. But these will still need to show strong value for money, clear evidence and careful prioritisation.

The agreed City and Regional Deals, and future Spatial Plans, will also provide another way to align central and local government decisions around growth, infrastructure, housing and economic development, while still needing to be considered alongside wider affordability, value for money and sequencing choices.

Next steps

The draft GPS 2027 will continue to be developed, with public consultation expected in early 2027. NZTA will release separate guidance about how it will prioritise bids for inclusion in the next National Land Transport Programme. In the meantime, I look forward to continuing to work with the sector to ensure land transport investment delivers lasting value for New Zealanders.

9.4. Prioritisation Process for Improvement Activities in the Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans

Prepared for:	Regional Transport Committee
Report No.	RTC2613
Authors:	Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council) Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Approved by:	Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)
Endorsed by:	Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council) Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Date:	28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to provide the Regional Transport Committees with an overview of the process for prioritising significant transport improvement activities in the Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs). This report also seeks approval for a minor adjustment to the agreed investment priority weightings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The prioritisation of significant transport improvement activities in the RLTPs involves Approved Organisations scoring their projects against agreed evaluation criteria to enable activities to be ranked. This is followed by the consolidation of all activities and moderation by the Technical Advisory Group, before final consideration and approval by the relevant Regional Transport Committee.
- [3] Core components of the prioritisation method include the investment priorities from the Investment Logic Map (ILM) and their associated weightings. Staff recommend minor adjustments to the investment weightings. The recommended changes are to increase the weighting for “Reduce transport-related harm and improve health and wellbeing across the regional transport network” from 10% to 15%, with a corresponding reduction in the weighting for “Improve accessibility and network efficiency by expanding fit-for-purpose transport choices across the regions” from 30% to 25%.
- [4] For clarity, the prioritisation process is specifically for assessing improvement activities, and therefore the priority “Maintain, renew and strengthen network resilience while managing environmental impacts to protect community access and connectivity” will be applied from a resilience perspective. Approved Organisations' maintenance and continuous programmes are not required to be prioritised within RLTPs to be eligible for National Land Transport Fund allocation and inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme.
-

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.
- 2) **Adopt** the recommended changes to the investment priority weightings.
- 3) **Approve** the prioritisation process.

BACKGROUND

- [5] Although presented as a single combined document with a shared strategic front end, the Otago and Southland RLTPs legally constitute two separate plans containing distinct regional transport programmes. Under Section 16(3)(d) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, a RLTP must list significant transport activities in order of priority.
- [6] The Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees (RTCs) are individually responsible for prioritising the significant transport activities within their respective geographical boundaries. Accordingly, this prioritisation is conducted through a structured, multi-stage process.
- [7] At the June RTC meeting, the RTCs approved the investment priorities and their respective weightings.

DISCUSSION

Prioritisation Process

- [8] An RTC must prioritise the significant transport activities within its RLTP. Table 26 from the Otago Southland RLTPs provides the criteria for what constitutes a “significant activity” under Section 16(3)(d), as shown in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: Significant Activities Criteria

Significant Activities		
Section 16 (3)(d)	Significant activities to be presented in order of priority	All new improvement activities in the region where funding from the National Land Transport Fund is required within the first three years of the Regional Land Transport Plan other than : • maintenance, operations and renewal programmes; • public transport programmes (existing services); • low cost/low risk programmes; • road safety promotion programmes; • investment management activities, including transport planning and modelling; and • business cases that are not part of a package.

- [9] The prioritisation process follows a structured approach and begins by extracting data for each significant activity from Transport Investment Online. Individual Approved Organisations then use a prioritisation spreadsheet to score and rank their own specific projects first. Within this spreadsheet, projects are scored against the eight evaluation criteria, which include the four investment priorities for the RLTPs.
- [10] The evaluation criteria are weighted and proportionally scaled for this process. Each criterion is assigned a score from 1 to 4, which is multiplied by its assigned weighting and then divided by the maximum possible score of 4. The individual results are then summed to produce an overall weighted score out of 100. Table 2 demonstrates how the score assigned to a project is converted into a weighted score for each criterion. The full evaluation criteria table is included in the attachment: Improvement Projects Prioritisation Evaluation Criteria.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria Weighted Scores

Score	C1 10%	C2 15%	C3 15%	C4 20%	C5 15%	C6 5%	C7 10%	C8 10%
1	2.5	3.75	3.75	5	3.125	1.875	2.5	2.5
2	5	7.5	7.5	10	7.5	2.5	5	5
3	7.5	11.25	11.25	15	11.25	3.75	7.5	7.5
4	10	15	15	20	15	5	10	10

- [11] Once the initial local rankings are complete, the data from each Approved Organisation is consolidated into a single master list of prioritised projects that then go through moderation by the relevant Technical Advisory Group to ensure regional consistency. Finally, the moderated list is presented to the individual Regional Transport Committees as a recommendation for formal approval.

Investment Priorities

- [12] At the June RTC meeting, the Committees approved the investment priorities and their respective weightings. Following the meeting, ORC and ES staff reviewed the weightings to consider their implications. Attention was given to the reduction in the weighting for the priority “Reduce transport-related harm and improve health and wellbeing across the regional transport network” to 10%.
- [13] At the current weighting this priority becomes marginal for an investment priority, and this is evident in the prioritisation process as illustrated in Table 2. Staff recommend making a minor adjustment to increase this weighting to at least 15%. To achieve this, a corresponding 5% reduction is proposed for the priority “Improve accessibility and network efficiency by expanding fit-for-purpose transport choices across the regions,” as this area retains a strong overall emphasis at 25%.
- [14] This adjustment would result in the following weightings for the investment priorities:
- Maintain, renew and strengthen network resilience while managing environmental impacts to protect community access and connectivity – 40%
 - Improve accessibility and network efficiency by expanding fit-for-purpose transport choices across the regions – 25% (Previously 30%)
 - Reduce transport-related harm and improve health and wellbeing across the regional transport network – 15% (Previously 10%)

- Improve access to key regional destinations, gateways, growth areas and critical community services – 20%

- [15] The Otago and Southland Technical Advisory Group has met to discuss the investment priorities and prioritisation process. Increasing the investment priority weighting is supported.
- [16] There was also discussion concerning the investment priority “Maintain, renew and strengthen network resilience while managing environmental impacts to protect community access and connectivity” and how it functions as part of the evaluation criteria.
- [17] As maintenance, operations, and renewal programmes are excluded from the regional prioritisation process, the criterion is primarily applied to improvement projects to assess their contribution to network resilience.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [18] The prioritisation process is underpinned by strategic direction and does not materially introduce any new strategic or policy matters.

Financial Considerations

- [19] Prioritising projects within the RLTP influences their ranking for national co-investment but does not guarantee funding from the National Land Transport Fund. This report does not present direct financial implications.

Significance and Engagement

- [20] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [21] The development of RLTPs and the prioritisation of significant improvement activities are required to comply with the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

Climate Change Considerations

- [22] The prioritisation process may influence climate change outcomes, as projects prioritised for potential funding may, if funded, have differing implications for climate change.

Communications Considerations

- [23] This report does not present any significant communication implications.

NEXT STEPS

- [24] Following approval, the revised weightings will be incorporated into the prioritisation process applied to the ranking of significant transport activities.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Improvement Projects Prioritisation Evaluation Criteria [9.4.1 - 1 page]

		Strategic Urgency	Contribution to GPS Priorities	Contribution to RLTP Strategic Objectives	ILM Response/Priority Maintain, renew & strengthen network resilience while managing environmental impacts, to protect community access & connectivity (Raw Weight 40%)	ILM Response/Priority Improve accessibility & network efficiency by expanding fit-for-purpose transport choices across the regions (Raw Weight 30%)	ILM Response/Priority Reduce transport-related harm & improve health & wellbeing across the regional transport network (Raw Weight 10%)	ILM Response/Priority Improve access to key regional destinations, gateways, growth areas, & critical community services (Raw Weight 20%)	Constraints (Ability to Execute)
		Definitions: Very Low - Minimal contribution - Provides little to no identifiable contribution to the objective or priority. There is little to no evidence that the investment supports the desired outcome. Low - Minor contribution: Provides limited but identifiable contribution to the objective or priority. There is limited evidence that the investment supports the desired outcome, and the benefits are likely to be indirect, secondary, or limited in scale. Medium - Meaningful contribution: Provides a clear and positive contribution to the objective or priority. There is clear evidence that the investment supports the desired outcome and is expected to deliver measurable benefits. High - Significant contribution: Provides a strong and material contribution to the objective or priority. There is strong evidence that the investment supports the desired outcome. The investment directly aligns with the priority, addresses a significant need, constraint, or opportunity, and is expected to deliver material benefits.							
	Weight	10%	15%	15%	20%	15%	5%	10%	10%
Point Allocation	1	Very Low Urgency Progression can be deferred to a future NLTP period with minimal consequence for transport safety, resilience, accessibility, or reliability and efficiency outcomes.	Very Low Provides minimal contribution to any GPS priorities (Economic Growth and Productivity, Increased Maintenance and Resilience, Safety, Value for Money).	Very Low Provides minimal contribution to any RLTP objective. (Safety, Resilience, Connectivity & Choice, Environmental Sustainability, Future Prosperity).	Very Low Provides minimal contribution to maintaining, renewing or strengthening network resilience, and protecting community access and connectivity.	Very Low Provides minimal contribution to improving accessibility or transport network efficiency through expanded transport choices.	Very Low Provides minimal contribution to reducing transport-related harm	Very Low Provides minimal contribution to improving access to key regional destinations, gateways, growth areas, or critical community services.	High Constraints Significant constraints exist across multiple areas. Constraints prevent the project from commencing or progressing beyond its current stage.
	2	Low Urgency Addresses an emerging issue or risk that that may impact transport safety, resilience, accessibility, or reliability and efficiency outcomes if not managed. Progression within the current NLTP period is desirable.	Low Provides minor contribution to one or more GPS strategic priorities.	Low Provides minor contribution to one or more RLTP objective.	Low Provides minor contribution to maintaining, renewing or strengthening network resilience, and protecting community access and connectivity.	Low Provides minor contribution to improving accessibility or transport network efficiency through limited expansion of transport choices.	Low Provides minor contribution to reducing transport-related harm.	Low Provides a minor contribution to improving access to key regional destinations, gateways, growth areas, or critical community services.	Medium Constraints Constraints exist across one or more areas. Constraints risk delaying the project from commencing or progressing beyond its current stage.
	3	Medium Urgency Addresses an existing deficiency that is actively contributing to declining transport safety, resilience, accessibility, or reliability and efficiency outcomes. Progression within the current NLTP period is a high priority to prevent further deterioration.	Medium Provides meaningful contribution to one or more GPS strategic priorities.	Medium Provides meaningful contribution to two or more RLTP objectives.	Medium Provides meaningful contribution to maintaining, renewing or strengthening network resilience, and protecting community access and connectivity.	Medium Provides meaningful contribution to improving accessibility and transport network efficiency through expanded transport choices.	Medium Provides meaningful contribution to reducing transport-related harm.	Medium Provides a meaningful contribution to improving access to key regional destinations, gateways, growth areas, or critical community services.	Low Constraints Minor constraints exist across standard areas. Project can commence or progress beyond its current stage through normal project activities.
	4	High Urgency Addresses a significant deficiency or risk requiring progression early within the NLTP period to avoid unacceptable impacts on transport safety, resilience, accessibility, or reliability and efficiency outcomes.	High Provides significant contribution to one or more strategic priorities that enables Economic Growth and Productivity.	High Provides significant contributions to two or more RLTP objectives.	High Provides significant contribution to maintaining, renewing or strengthening network resilience, and protecting community access and connectivity.	High Provides significant contribution to improving accessibility and transport network efficiency through substantial improvement or expansion of transport choices.	High Provides significant contribution to reducing transport-related harm.	High Provides significant contribution to improving access to key regional destinations, gateways, growth areas, or critical community services.	Very Low Constraints Minimal constraints exist. The project can immediately commence or progress beyond its current stage following funding approval.

9.5. KiwiRail Update

Prepared for:	Regional Transport Committee
Report No.	RTC2620
Authors:	Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council) Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Approved by:	Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)
Endorsed by:	Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council) Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Date:	28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to provide KiwiRail the opportunity to provide the Regional Transport Committees with an update on its activities, including the development of the Rail Network Investment Plan (RNIP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The session will support information sharing and discussion, particularly to inform the development of the Regional Land Transport Plan and KiwiRail's RNIP.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.
- 2) **Provide** any feedback to the KiwiRail on the matters raised in the update.

BACKGROUND

- [3] KiwiRail's involvement with the Committees supports the integration of rail considerations into regional transport planning, particularly as both organisations move into the next planning and investment cycle.

DISCUSSION

- [4] Topics to be covered in the update include an update on the RNIP development and the upcoming engagement on the draft programme of work, including level crossings.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [5] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present strategic framework and policy implications.

Financial Considerations

[6] This report does not present financial implications.

Significance and Engagement

[7] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[8] This report does not raise legislative or risk implications.

Climate Change Considerations

[9] This report does not present climate change implications.

Communications Considerations

[10] This report does not present communication implications.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

9.6. NZAA 2026 Election Calls Correspondence

Prepared for:	Regional Transport Committee
Report No.	RTC2615
Authors:	Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland) Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council)
Approved by:	Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)
Endorsed by:	Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland) Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council)
Date:	28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to present correspondence from the New Zealand Automobile Association regarding its 2026 Election Calls.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The New Zealand Automobile Association (AA) has written to Regional Transport Committee (RTC) to share and seek support for its 2026 Election Calls. The correspondence outlines five transport priorities that the AA considers practical and nationally beneficial. These priorities focus on maintenance and renewals, long term certainty for major transport projects, road safety enforcement, incentives for safe drivers, and improved access to public transport hubs.
- [3] The RTC may wish to consider supporting one or more of the AA's Election Calls, with its position reflected in a response to the AA. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to simply receive the correspondence and acknowledge its receipt with a letter of thanks.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.
- 2) **Approve** staff to prepare a response to the AA thanking them for providing its 2026 Election Calls and, should the Committees wish to do so, express support for one or more of the Election Calls.

BACKGROUND

- [4] On 16 July 2026, the AA provided correspondence to the Southland Regional Transport Committee seeking support for its 2026 Election Calls. The AA states that the calls are based on member surveys and feedback from AA District Councillors and are intended to improve transport safety, efficiency and affordability.

DISCUSSION

- [5] The AA identifies five key priorities for the next Government:
- Put maintenance and renewals first to maintain safe and reliable transport assets.
 - Provide long term certainty for major transport projects and reduce stop-start investment decisions.
 - Improve road safety through stronger enforcement of seatbelt and mobile phone offences.
 - Reward safe drivers through reduced costs and incentives for ongoing driver education.
 - Improve access to public transport through better connections, park and ride facilities, walking, cycling and shared mobility options.
- [6] In the correspondence provided in the attachment, *NZAA 2026 Election Calls Correspondence*, the AA is seeking support for its 2026 Election Calls. The priorities outlined generally align with priorities commonly supported through regional transport planning processes, including the importance of network maintenance and resilience, road safety, transport choice, and efficient investment.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [7] The Election Calls broadly align with existing regional transport planning priorities.

Financial Considerations

- [8] There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Significance and Engagement

- [9] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [10] The report does not raise legislative or risk-related matters.

Climate Change Considerations

- [11] The report does not raise climate change implications.

Communications Considerations

- [12] The correspondence warrants a response, with the content of the response reflecting the Committee's position on the Election Calls.

ATTACHMENTS

1. NZAA Correspondance - 2026 Election Calls [9.6.1 - 10 pages]



16 July 2026

Southland Regional Transport Committee
C/- Environment Southland
Private Bag 90116
Invercargill 9840

**THE NEW ZEALAND
AUTOMOBILE
ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED.**

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Auckland 1140
New Zealand

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F. +64 9 966 0000
E. staffname@aa.co.nz
W. aa.co.nz

To Whom it May Concern

Re: AA 2026 Election Calls

I am writing to you to share and seek your support for the Automobile Association's 2026 Election Calls for the next Government.

Transport plays a vital role in the daily lives of New Zealanders. It affects how people get to work, education, healthcare, shops, community activities and family commitments. It also underpins freight, tourism, regional growth and economic productivity.

The AA's 2026 Election Calls are practical changes, shaped by the views of AA Members and communities, aimed at making transport safer, more efficient and more affordable over time.

The enclosed booklet outlines the five ways the Government can make transport better. In particular, we ask that you support policies that:

- Put maintenance and renewals first, so existing roads and transport assets are kept safe, reliable and fit for purpose.
- Provide long-term certainty for major transport projects, reducing the stop-start approach that too often delays delivery and increases costs.
- Improve road safety through practical measures, including stronger enforcement of seatbelt and mobile phone rules.
- Recognise and reward safe drivers who follow the rules and continue to improve their driving skills.
- Make it easier for people to access public transport, especially by improving connections to major public transport hubs.



These are not partisan ideas. They are practical, achievable steps that would benefit motorists, public transport users, pedestrians, cyclists, freight operators and local communities across New Zealand.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to engaging on issues that matter to our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Juliana Baxter

District Manager - Southland

New Zealand Automobile Association.

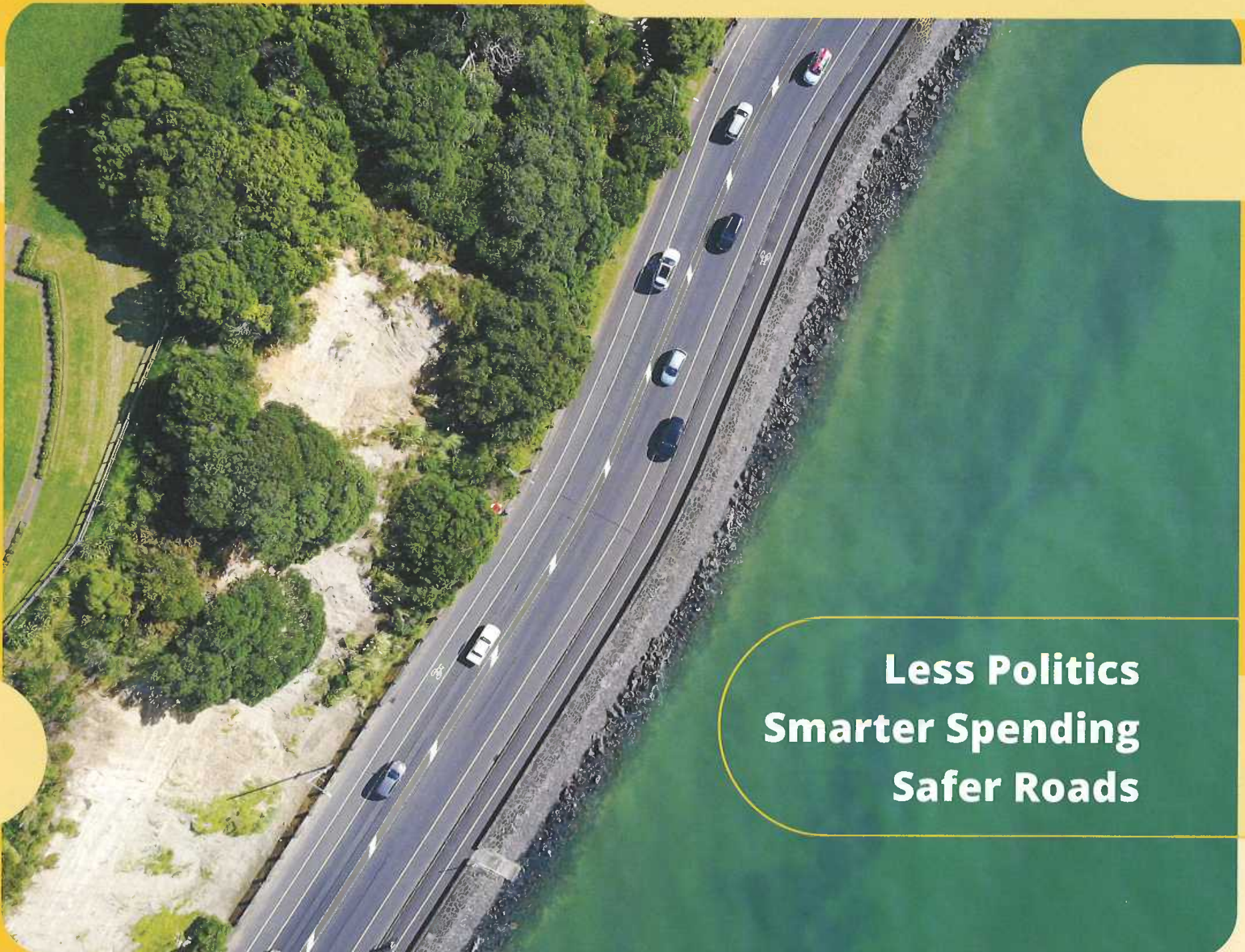
**GUIDING LIFE'S JOURNEYS
FOR OVER 120 YEARS.**
New Zealand Automobile Association



AA

2026

Election Calls



**Less Politics
Smarter Spending
Safer Roads**



Transport shapes how, when and what we can do on any given day.

Every election is a chance to improve New Zealand's transport system.

In this booklet, the AA sets out five Election Calls for the next Government.

These are practical changes, shaped by our Members' views, aimed at making transport safer, more efficient and more affordable over time.

Over the last decade, AA Election Calls have helped deliver significant increases in road maintenance funding, more roadside drug and alcohol testing, speed camera signage, devices that stop drunk drivers being able to start their car and a scheme to environmentally dispose of old tyres.

Our 2026 Election Calls have been built on surveys of our Members, plus views from our community-based AA District Councillors and respond to the funding and delivery challenges transport currently faces in New Zealand.

They set out a focused package of actions that can improve safety, protect the quality of our transport infrastructure and make the system work better for everyone - no matter who forms the next Government.

Simon Douglas

AA Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer

AA

5 ways the Government can make transport better.

1

Put maintenance first. Always.

2

No more stop-go on big transport projects.

3

Belts on. Phones down.

4

Reward drivers doing the right thing.

5

Make it easy to get to public transport.



1

Put maintenance first. Always.



The opportunity

New Zealand is trying to catch-up on a backlog of essential maintenance work from years of under-funding.

There has been a welcome increase in road maintenance investment in recent years but this will need to be sustained for some time after a decade-and-a-half where roads have not had the maintenance needed to stay fit-for-purpose and safe.

Road quality (and the quality and frequency of repairs) is consistently the highest concern across our Members nationwide and the evidence is clear: the quality of the road surface has a real impact on safety.

Even the best drivers can lose control if the road surface they are driving on doesn't provide the vehicle with good grip.



The call

Spending on maintenance and renewals should be treated as the top budgeting priority in transport. It should have the first call on funding.

Regular, well-timed maintenance is significantly more cost-effective than letting assets deteriorate and addressing issues sporadically.

Over time, regular maintenance delivers better value-for-money and frees up revenue for upgrades or other transport investments.

The AA expects authorities to deliver a year-on-year increase in the lane kilometres of resurfacing and renewals delivered, with performance over the next three years surpassing the levels last reached in 2010/11.



No more stop-go on big transport projects.



The opportunity

For decades, major transport projects have been started, stopped, or changed as governments come and go. This has caused delays, blown-out costs and wasted money.

Much of our transport infrastructure is old and needs upgrading to handle growth, safety risks and extreme weather. Roads and public transport are also often argued about as if we must choose one or the other. We need both working together as one system.

The cost of inaction is real. Recent research in New Zealand has shown how big transport projects can reduce crashes and congestion. When projects stall or are cancelled, New Zealanders miss out on these benefits.



The call

The next Government must put an end to the stop-start approach to big transport projects.

New Zealand needs a long-term programme of major transport projects that are delivered no matter who is in power. This programme must cover both roads and public transport and treat them as parts of one connected system.

With long-term agreement, New Zealand can build better, safer transport that lasts.

Without long-term agreement, we will keep wasting money, delaying progress and putting safety and resilience at risk.

We need to rely more on independent analysis to decide which transport projects go ahead, rather than short-term political choices. This would help ensure the right projects are prioritised based on need, value, what people will actually use and what the country can afford.

3

Belts on. Phones down.



The opportunity

Far too many people continue to use their phones while driving, putting themselves and others at completely unnecessary risk.

The largest study carried out in New Zealand has shown that at any given moment, around 1 in 60 drivers is using a phone. This is not a mistake or momentary lapse – drivers must actively choose to pick up their phones and every distracted driver on the road increases the chances that someone will be too slow to react to something unexpected. When many drivers get away with this behaviour, it can also become normalised, encouraging others to do the same. Research consistently shows that drivers are around four times more likely to crash when using a phone.

Seatbelt use is generally high in New Zealand but there is still a concerning group of people who fail to buckle up. In recent years about 1 in 3 of the drivers who die in crashes are not wearing a seatbelt and it is estimated about 25 lives a year could be saved simply through everyone buckling up.



The call

Reducing phone use by drivers and increasing seatbelt compliance must be key road safety priorities for authorities.

The AA wants the introduction of safety cameras that can detect drivers who are using their phones or not wearing seatbelts. This technology is already in widespread use in Australia.

Improving detection and enforcement, combined with strong public awareness campaigns and appropriate penalties are essential to changing driver behaviour. Together these measures can deliver meaningful and sustained improvements in road safety.

4

Reward drivers doing the right thing.



The opportunity

Household budgets are under pressure and transport costs keep rising. At the same time, AA Members are clear that improving road safety must remain a priority.

These aren't competing goals — they go hand in hand. Safer drivers impose fewer costs on the system, so it makes sense to reward that behaviour.

Clear incentives can help shift behaviour over time, encouraging more focus by drivers on sticking to the rules and keeping their skills up to date.



The call

Introduce a 'rewards for safety' programme that links lower costs to safer driving and ongoing learning.

- Reduced annual vehicle registration fees for drivers who go 12 months without any safety-related infringements.
- Discounted driver licence renewals for those who complete an online refresher around road rules and driving behaviour.

These measures would encourage safer habits and ongoing learning, with the added bonus of some modest cost relief to responsible drivers.

The discounts could be funded from the revenue from transport fines — recycling penalties into positive incentives that support safer driving.

5

Make it easy to get to public transport.



The opportunity

Large parts of our cities are still beyond the reach of reliable, frequent public transport.

While ongoing investment is needed as cities grow, it will never be possible to bring public transport to everyone’s doorstep.

That means the journey to and from stations matters. For many people, the first and last leg is the deciding factor in whether public transport is a realistic option — or not.

Improving access extends the reach of high-quality public transport to more people — without needing to build entirely new lines.

The call

The AA wants the next Government to prioritise funding to improve access to major public transport hubs.

This includes:

- Park-and-ride facilities, including safe and efficient pick-up and drop-off areas
- Better connections between public transport services
- Improved walking and cycling access, including for e-scooters
- Support for ridesharing and emerging mobility options

These would maximise the value of existing investment in trains and busways and can ease pressure on congested local roads.

The New Zealand Automobile Association (Incorporated)

EC 2026.

9.7. New Zealand Transport Agency General Update

Prepared for:	Regional Transport Committee
Report No.	RTC2617
Authors:	Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council) Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Approved by:	Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)
Endorsed by:	Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council) Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Date:	28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to allow the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) the opportunity to provide the Regional Transport Committees with an update on its activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The NZTA will provide a presentation and verbal update on its current activities. Topics to be covered include the development of the 2027–2030 National Land Transport Programme, maintenance and operations, the National Ticketing Solution, and relevant project updates.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.
- 2) **Provide** any feedback to the NZTA on the matters raised in the update.

DISCUSSION

- [3] The NZTA update provides the Committees with an opportunity to receive information and to provide feedback on relevant matters. Topics to be covered in the presentation include:

- 2027-2030 National Land Transport Plan development
- Maintenance and operations
- Resilience corridors
- Fuel Excise
- Funding Assistance Rates
- National Ticketing Solution
- Project updates

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [4] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present strategic framework and policy implications.

Financial Considerations

- [5] This report does not carry financial implications.

Significance and Engagement

- [6] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [7] This report does not raise legislative and risk issues.

Climate Change Considerations

- [8] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present climate change implications.

Communications Considerations

- [9] This report does not present communication implications.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

9.8. South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group Activities Update

Prepared for: Regional Transport Committee

Report No. RTC2616

Authors: Lesley McCoy (Senior Regional Planner - Transport, Environment Southland)
Dean Lowry (Senior Transport Planner, Otago Regional Council)

Approved by: Liz Devery (Regional Planning Manager, Environment Southland)

Endorsed by: Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation, Environment Southland)
Anita Dawe (General Manager Regional Planning and Transport, Otago Regional Council)

Date: 28 September 2026

PURPOSE

- [1] The purpose of this report is to update the Regional Transport Committees on the activities of the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group, and to provide the unconfirmed minutes from its most recent meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [2] The South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group continues to provide a forum for regional collaboration and coordinated transport advocacy across Te Waipounamu.
- [3] Since the last update, the Chairs Group has progressed advocacy work highlighting the South Island's contribution to the New Zealand economy and the importance of ongoing investment in transport infrastructure to support productivity, resilience, freight movement, and economic growth.
- [4] This work culminated in a coordinated media release and supporting communications package which secured extensive national and regional media coverage, helping raise awareness of South Island transport investment challenges and opportunities.
- [5] This report provides the Committees with the unconfirmed minutes from the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group meeting held on 13 July 2026 and an update on the outcomes of the advocacy activity.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committees:

- 1) **Note** this report.
- 2) **Note** the unconfirmed minutes of the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group meeting held on 13 July 2026.

BACKGROUND

- [6] The Chairs Group brings together the Chairs of Regional Transport Committees (RTCs) across the South Island to discuss transport matters of regional and inter-regional importance.

The group provides an opportunity to:

- Share information on regional transport priorities and challenges
- Discuss national policy and funding developments
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment across regions

Meetings are held periodically, with outcomes reported back to respective RTCs for information.

DISCUSSION

- [7] At its meeting on 13 July 2026, the Chairs Group considered the report, *The South Island's Contribution to the New Zealand Economy*, and directed officers to finalise the report and prepare a coordinated media release.
- [8] The report and associated communications materials were subsequently released in August 2026. The advocacy highlighted the significant contribution that South Island regions make to national economic performance, while also identifying the importance of continued investment in transport infrastructure, resilience and freight connectivity.
- [9] The media release generated significant interest and achieved widespread coverage across multiple national and regional outlets, including RNZ, Newstalk ZB, The Press, Otago Daily Times and Chris Lynch Media. The RNZ coverage gained traction and was subsequently referenced by a number of other media platforms.
- [10] The successful media engagement has strengthened awareness of South Island transport funding and resilience issues and demonstrated the value of a coordinated South Island voice when advocating for transport investment priorities
- [11] The Chairs Group continues to provide an important forum for collaboration on Regional Land Transport Plans, transport resilience, freight, and national policy matters affecting South Island communities.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

- [12] As this report is for informational purposes, it does not present strategic framework and policy implications.

Financial Considerations

- [13] This report does not present direct financial implications.

Significance and Engagement

- [14] This report does not raise significance and engagement issues.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

- [15] The report does not raise legislative or risk-related matters.

Climate Change Considerations

[16] This report does not raise climate change implications

Communications Considerations

[17] The South Island economic contribution project resulted in a successful coordinated communications campaign, generating widespread media coverage. The initiative has helped elevate awareness of South Island transport and infrastructure priorities with media, stakeholders and decision-makers.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Unconfirmed Minutes South Island RTC Chairs Group - 13 July 2026 [**9.8.1** - 7 pages]
2. South Island's Contribution to New Zealand's Economy - Media Release and Supporting Material [**9.8.2** - 1 page]
3. FINAL - The South Island's contribution to the New Zealand economy [**9.8.3** -]

Meeting Minutes – South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group

Venue: Manapouri 2 Room, Novotel Christchurch Airport, 30 Durey Road, Christchurch

Date: Monday 13 July 2026, 9:30am – 3:35pm

Members Attendees:	<i>Canterbury Regional Council</i> Chair Dr Deon Swiggs Cr Joe Davies (<i>online</i>)	<i>Southland Regional Council</i> Deputy Chair Phil Morrison Cr Alastair Gibson
	<i>Marlborough District Council</i> Cr Scott Adams (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	<i>West Coast Regional Council</i> Cr Andy Campbell
	<i>Nelson City Council</i> Mayor Nick Smith	<i>KiwiRail</i> Lisa de Coek Gary Ikin
	<i>Otago Regional Council</i> Cr Kate Wilson (<i>Chair</i>) Cr Matt Hollyer	<i>NZTA Waka Kotahi</i> Emma Speight James Caygill
Member Apologies:	<i>KiwiRail</i> Adele Wilson Siva Sivapakkiam	<i>Tasman District Council</i> Deputy Mayor Brent Maru
Officers Attendees:	<i>Canterbury Regional Council</i> Jesse Burgess Tiara Thorby Kieran Ireland Carmin Beck Simon Tapp	<i>Otago Regional Council</i> Dean Lowry
	<i>Marlborough District Council</i> Laura Skilton	<i>Southland Regional Council</i> Lesley McCoy
	<i>Nelson City Council</i> Lyndon Hammond	<i>West Coast Regional Council</i> Max Dickens
Officer Apologies:	Chad Barker & Toshi Hodliffe, <i>NZTA Waka Kotahi</i> Bill Rice, <i>Tasman District Council</i>	
Guest Attendees:	Benje Patterson, (<i>Item 3</i>), <i>online</i> Member of Parliament for Palmerston North, Mr Tangi Utikere, <i>Spokesperson for Local Government, Transport, State Owned Enterprise, Racing (Item 5), in person.</i>	

1. Mihi Whakatau – opening, welcome, and apologies

The meeting was opened with a karakia at 9:31am.

- Apologies were received from Siva Sivapakkiam, Adele Wilson, Brent Maru, Chad Barker, and Toshi Hodliffe.
- Chair Peter Ewen has stood down as Chair of the West Coast RTC. A new Chair will be elected at the next council meeting.
- There was an acknowledgement for Russell Hawkes' retirement, the impact he has made on regional transport during his career, including helping to found the Chairs Group. A gift and card were presented for him from the Chairs Group and Officers.

2. Minutes from the previous meeting – 13 April 2026

The minutes were accepted.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

1. **Confirmed the minutes from the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group meeting held on 13 April 2026 with no amendments.**

Cr Kate Wilson / Cr Phil Morrison
CARRIED

3. Economic value of the South Island

Benje Patterson presented an overview of his report on the South Island's contribution to the New Zealand economy. The Chairs Group discussed the report with him, including:

- Reviewing South Island trends over a longer period (5y, 10y, etc.), noting that Covid-19 pandemic and Christchurch earthquake recovery impacts the data strongly during that period and how to tell that story
- The need to rely on other metrics as well as VKT data
- Which transport assets generate the most value?
- How would a greater share of funding impact productivity?
- Need for continued infrastructure investment to ensure physical resilience and economic resilience
- Need to expand and strengthen the narrative supporting the report.

Officers to work with Benje to finalise the report and develop a media release to be release in a few weeks' time. The Chair and Deputy Chair would receive and review the edited reports.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

- 1. Received the presentation and discusses next steps from this work.**
- 2. Requested officers work collaboratively to progress refinement of the report.**

Cr Kate Wilson / Cr Scott Adams
CARRIED

4. Key messages and approach for the discussion with Tangi Utikere – Opposition spokesperson for Local Government and Transport

The Chairs Group discussed and agreed key messages for agenda Item 5 *Discussion with MP Tangi Utikere*. Key messages followed the priorities of the South Island Story and figures raised in the economic report provided in Item 3.

5. Discussion with Tangi Utikere – Opposition spokesperson for Local

MP Tangi Utikere joined the Chairs Group in person. He acknowledged the value of the Chairs Group and the key intersection between his portfolios, experience as spokesperson for transport, and time as deputy Mayor of Palmerston North.

The conversation focused on the value of integrated transport planning, investment and delivery beyond roading to include rail, air, and sea resilience and connectivity. The topography of the South Island, effects of climate change, and extensive local road and state highway network require prioritising pre-emptive resilience maintenance and renewals.

Tangi agreed that there is a need for the next government to provide long term certainty to infrastructure planning and funding across transport and extending that to public infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. He stated the Labour Parties intends to honour projects where funding has been committed and contracts are in place.

ACTION: Southland District Council staff to share recent Call to Action for Southland & Otago.

6. Regional updates

Canterbury

- Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2027-37 (RLTP) – the RTC approved the strategic framework, significance policy, significance criteria, strategic alignment weightings and monitoring framework
- Greater Christchurch public transport network review received 11,800 submissions, staff now working through these
- Significant advocacy work with current ministers, opposition party MPs and industry focused on funding, public transport investment, the fuel crisis and local government reform impacts on transport.

Marlborough

- RLTP process underway; priorities were recently confirmed by the RTC
- School speed limit changes have not met the deadline for 01 July; will go to RTC on 16 July for confirmation
- South Marlborough affected by recent weather event
- Integrated Delivery Models went live 01 July.

Nelson / Tasman

- Hope Bypass is the largest transport issue; designated to be a Stage 3 RoNS project
- Political challenges around implementation of corresponding urban development projects and level of disruption caused by roadworks
- Nelson and Tasman both were well supported by NZTA for recent storm recovery
- Nelson bus services experienced summer uplift as well as fuel shortage uplift – uncertain if that will sustain if fuel prices decrease; aiming to hit 1m passengers
- Heavy electric buses have contributed to increased costs for fixing roads – road user charges reintroduced on electric buses starting 01 July
- Later implementation of MotuMove – keen for lessons learned from others
- Retrofitting cycleways is proving challenging and impacting parking capacity
- RLTP development underway; difficult legislative timing with delayed GPS Land Transport.

Otago

- RLTP timeline has been approved and continuous programmes progressing
- KiwiRail presented at the last RTC meeting on infrastructure; Whoosh is presenting at the next meeting regarding an alternative transport option for Queenstown
- Network changes and resilience across the region are a priority – especially SH6
- Total mobility funding cuts have been difficulty – this piece needs some advocacy support
- Investigating fare capping for PT and the role of cash with regards to the shift to MotuMove.

Southland

- Development of joint Southland/Otago RLTP progressing well with strategic content, priorities, etc. draft Plan highlights freight connectivity, accessibility, and supporting growth
- Refresh of Southland Planning Model will support RLTP development, future business cases, etc.
- Opportunity with Otago to collaborate on Regional Spatial Plan.

West Coast

- A change in representation, Peter Ewen has stepped down, staff will confirm with the Secretariat who is voted as the next Chair of the West Coast Regional Transport Committee and representative on this Group

- RLTP development underway; priorities will be confirmed at the next meeting of the RTC
- NIWA is changing funding models which may affect NZTA emergency funding after significant weather events – concern raised initially by the district council.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

- 1. Received the verbal regional updates from members.**

Mayor Nick Smith / Emma Speight
CARRIED

7. NZ Transport Agency, Waka Kotahi update

James Caygill provided an update for the NZ Transport Agency:

- Tension between GPS and RLTP timings – difficult to align things, unlikely to change
- Five (of nine) resilience corridors progressing in the South Island: SH60 Tākaka Hill, SH 6 Haast to Hāwea, SH6 Cromwell to Frankton, SH6 Frankton to Kingston, SH94 Milford Road
 - Noting this does not include Epitaph Slip; will bid for that next funding cycle
- Major transport project pipeline: projects have been staged, acknowledging major funding gaps
- Public Transport: Total Mobility was originally a subsidy under PT and now operates in spaces that don't have other PT services.

Action: James Caygill to follow up on state and allocation of \$78m for design of Hope Bypass.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

- 1. Received the update from the New Zealand Transport Agency, Waka Kotahi representatives.**

8. KiwiRail update

Lisa de Coek and Gary Ikin provided an update for KiwiRail:

- Currently in the process of reducing the number of locomotive types from eight to four by 2028, to enable efficiency and value for money (fewer types of maintenance specialists reduces pressure on logistics and scheduling)
- Currently seven DM class locomotives in service with six arriving soon
- Three years of funding (3-year programme, 10-year forecast)
- Interviewing customers on travel and freight flow with the aim to improve customer experience
- Crown funding for overdue Metro maintenance in Auckland and Wellington for backlogged renewals
- Involved heavily in ferry replacement planning but Ferry Holdings owns the project; no guarantee who will eventually operate it; currently scheduled for delivery late 2029

- RNIP 2027-30 in progress; balancing minister requests, customer/council engagement, and prioritising work banks.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

1. **Received the update from the KiwiRail representatives.**

9. Secretariat and work programme updates

The group discussed work priorities and advocacy opportunities to central government based on the recent work regarding the economic value of the South Island, including:

- Opportunity to schedule a press release around the recently commissioned economic report (Item 3) and advocating for South Island economic strength / value
- Infrastructure resilience, including: bridges, lifelines, emergency management, etc.
- Coordination across RTC Submissions to central government to ensure consistent messages across South Island submissions
- National Freight Study update – potential challenges and advocacy opportunities.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

1. **Received the updated South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group Collaboration Charter 2025-28.**
2. **Agreed to the finalised work programme for this triennium**
3. **Noted the final report on the South Island Freight Study.**
4. **Received the update on the National Freight Demand Study.**
5. **Received the update on the South Island Lifelines project.**
6. **Noted the budget for this financial year.**

Cr Kate Wilson / Cr Andy Campbell
CARRIED

10. Joint statement for Regional Land Transport Plans

The Chairs reviewed the joint statement and shared some feedback for future iterations:

- Focus on what the South Island is delivering well and then shift into the investment required for maintenance and resilience of network; strengthen economic growth story – demonstrate what is at risk if underinvestment
- Strengthen by using key economic drivers and other data from recent economic report (Item 3)
- Note the importance of KiwiRail, especially for supporting freight movement off roads

- Consistency with press release requests
- Resilience is critical, continue to highlight this.

That the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group:

- 1. Provided comment or direction on any further changes members would like included in the final Joint Statement.**
- 2. Agreed to delegation to the Chair of the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group to approve any minor amendments.**

Cr Kate Wilson / Cr Phil Morrison
CARRIED

11. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Chairs Group is scheduled for Monday, 05 October 2026, in-person in Christchurch.

12. Mihi Whakakapi – closing

The meeting was closed with a karakia at 3:21pm.

South Island's Contribution to the New Zealand Economy: Media Release and Supporting Material

Documents available on Environment Canterbury's [website](#):

- Media release - [South Island economic contribution](#)
- Report - [The South Island's contribution to the New Zealand economy July 2026](#)

Media coverage:

- RNZ: [Bridges not up to scratch, roads to be returned to gravel - South Island counts cost of under investment](#)
- RNZ: [South Island leaders call for fairer funding for roads](#)
- Chris Lynch: [South Island "missing \\$1.8 billion" in transport funding, Environment Canterbury chair says](#)
- Newstalk ZB: ['Out of balance': Concerns raised over under-investment into South Island transport](#)
- The Press: [Bridges not up to scratch, roads to be returned to gravel - South Island counts cost of under investment](#)
- ODT: [Roads failing in 'heartbeat of New Zealand's export market': Southland mayor](#)



July 2026

The South Island’s contribution to the New Zealand economy



Report commissioned by The South Island
Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group

Prepared by: Benje Patterson
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July 2026

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2. Executive summary

This report has been commissioned by the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group to provide evidence of the South Island's contribution to the New Zealand economy and the importance of transport connectivity in enabling this contribution. The Chairs Group represents the chairs the chairs and deputy chairs of each of the South Island's Regional Transport Committees, as well as the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail.

Economic and employment growth is stronger in the South Island than the rest of New Zealand. The South Island represents 22% of New Zealand's GDP, 24% of its population, 33% of goods exports, and 40% of international visitor spending. At the same time, vehicle kilometres travelled (VKTs) on South Island roads represent 27% of national VKTs. Despite such a high contribution, the South Island received only 11% of New Zealand's National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) expenditure in 2025 and 12% over the past three years.

2.1. Key findings

- The South Island is outperforming the North Island, with GDP growing by 1.2% in the March 2026 year compared with 0.2% in the North Island. It generated \$98.1 billion of GDP, or 22% of New Zealand's total.
 - This outperformance has persisted, with South Island GDP growth averaging 0.6 percentage points above the North Island over the five years to 2025.
- South Island employment rose by 0.4%, while North Island employment fell by 1.2%. Southland, the West Coast, Canterbury, and Otago recorded growth, while the top of the South experienced softer conditions. The South Island's unemployment rate is 4.1%, below the North Island's 5.7% and the national rate of 5.3%.
- The South Island has 24% of New Zealand's population and is growing slightly faster than the North Island. Canterbury has 698,200 residents, followed by Otago with 253,900 and Southland with 104,800.
 - Net migration into the South Island reached 7,000 people in the June 2025 year, exceeding the North Island's 6,700. Canterbury accounted for 5,300 of this gain.
 - Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, and the West Coast are New Zealand's only regions with negative natural increase, making migration critical to sustaining their populations and replacing retiring workers.
 - Movement from the North Island to the South Island is increasing, with 31,300 people making the shift over the past five years.
- The South Island contributes an outsized share of New Zealand's export earnings, with goods exports of \$25.5 billion a year, equivalent one third (33%) of the national total.
 - Food and fibre products are the backbone of the South Island's export base, accounting for \$21.5 billion of exports and 84% of South Island goods exports.
 - Dairy exports are \$10.1 billion, meat and wool \$5.0 billion, and horticulture \$2.6 billion.
 - The South Island is particularly important to seafood and aquaculture, arable, meat, and dairy exports, contributing 66%, 58%, 40%, and 37% of national exports respectively.
- International visitors spent \$8.0 billion in the South Island in the March 2026 year, equal to 40% of New Zealand's total international visitor spending.
 - International visitor spending in the South Island is equivalent to one of New Zealand's largest export industries, ranking behind only dairy, meat, and horticulture.

Figure 1 summarises the South Island’s shares of key national economic, population, export, visitor, road-use, and NLTF spending indicators. ¹

South Island at a Glance

Economic contribution, exports, tourism and connectivity

1 Economic strength

-  **\$98.1b GDP**
22% of New Zealand GDP
-  **1.2% annual GDP growth**
North Island: 0.2%
-  **Employment up 0.4%**
North Island: -1.2%
-  **Unemployment: 4.1%**
North Island: 5.7%

2 People and migration

-  **Population: 1,256,700**
24% of New Zealand population
-  **Population growth: 0.8%**
North Island: 0.6%
-  **Net migration: +7,000**
+4,500 internal migrants from the North Island
-  **4 regions already have negative natural increase**
Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, West Coast

3 Exports and tourism

-  **Goods exports: \$25.5b**
33% of New Zealand goods exports
 -  **Food & fibre exports: \$21.5b**
84% of South Island goods exports
 -  **International visitor spending: \$8.0b**
40% of New Zealand total
 -  **Tourism is the South Island's 2nd-largest export earner**
behind dairy (\$10.1b)
- South Island share of NZ exports**

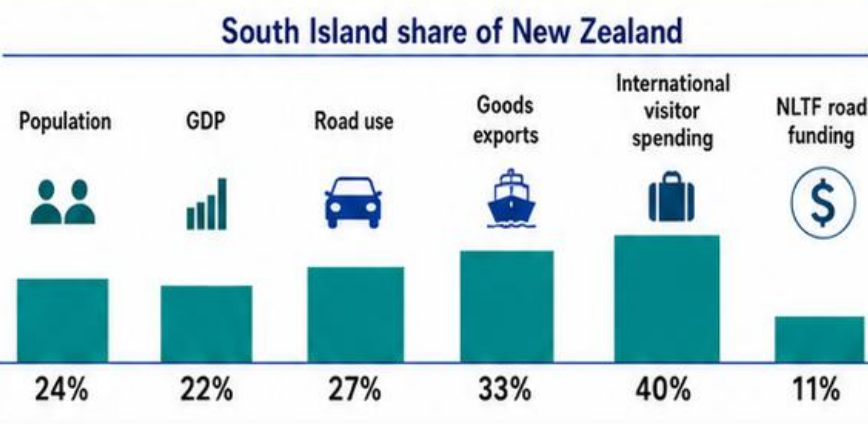
 -  Seafood & aquaculture **66%**
 -  Arable **58%**
 -  Meat & wool **40%**
 -  Dairy **37%**
-  **Otago and Canterbury account for \$6.6b of international visitor spending**

4 Why connectivity matters

-  **Road use: 13,529 million vehicle km**
27% of New Zealand VKT
-  **NLTF road funding: \$1.086b**
11% of New Zealand total
-  **Cook Strait ferries enable:**
 -  **\$10.1b** freight value
 -  **\$1.8b** international visitor spending
-  **South Island ports handle \$22.4b of departing exports**
88% of South Island goods exports
-  **South Island airports: 11.4m passenger movements**
including 2.5m international

5 Key takeaway

 The South Island is outperforming the North Island on growth, jobs, exports and tourism, yet transport investment remains disproportionately low relative to its economic contribution and road use.



Source: Report analysis using Infometrics, Stats NZ, MBIE, NZTA, MPI and airport data.

¹ Economic metrics and total international visitor spending are for the March 2026 year, while all other baseline estimates are annual figures for 2025.

3. Current economic conditions in the South Island

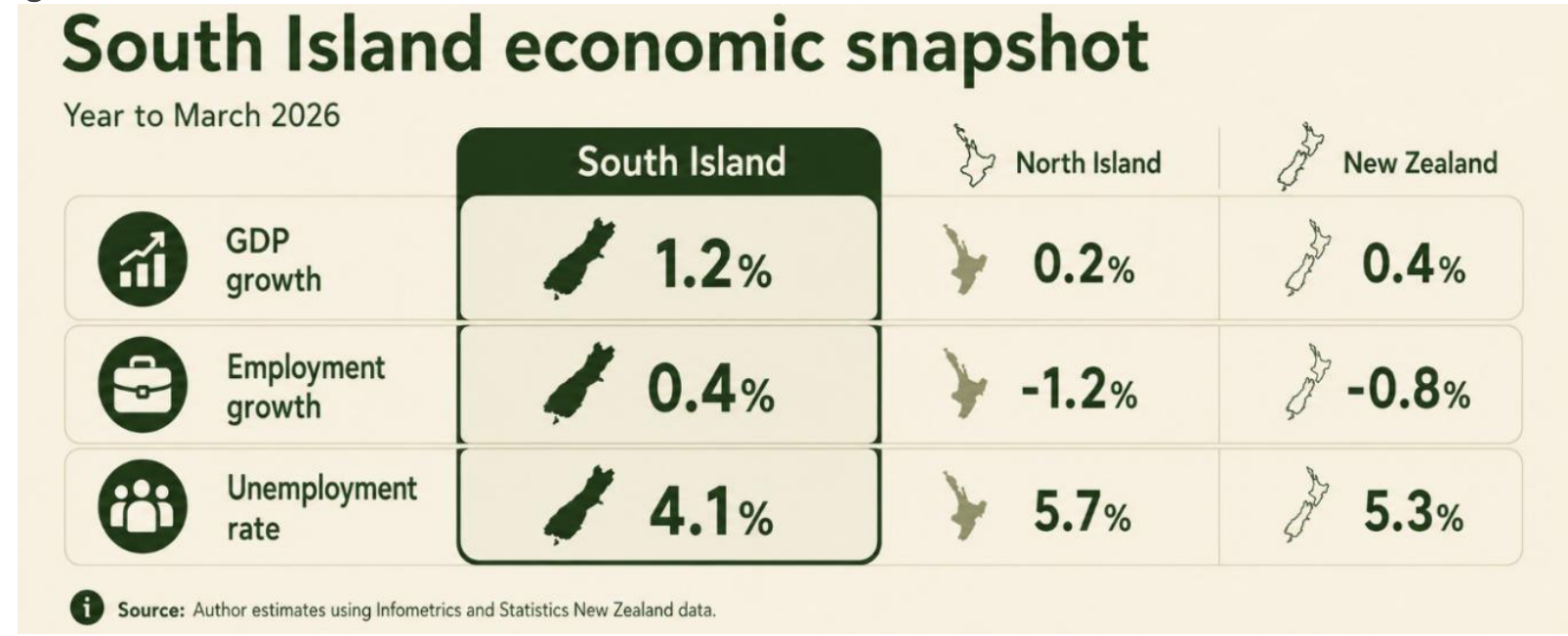
This section provides an overview of current economic conditions in the South Island, which demonstrates the key growth contribution of the South Island to the New Zealand economy.

3.1. Economic overview

The South Island economy is continuing to grow at a time when the North Island economy has struggled to regain momentum following a period of weak economic conditions. In the March 2026 year, GDP in the South Island expanded by 1.2%pa, while in the North Island GDP inched up a mere 0.2%pa.

This outperformance has persisted, with Statistics New Zealand data showing that South Island GDP growth averaged 0.6 percentage points above the North Island over the five years to 2025.

Figure 2



During the March 2026 year, the South Island is estimated to have generated a total of \$98.1 billion of GDP, which is 22% of New Zealand’s GDP (\$451.0b).

The South Island’s largest economy is Canterbury (\$55.6b), followed by Otago (\$19.4b), Southland (\$10.4b), Nelson (\$4.0b), Marlborough (\$3.9b), Tasman (\$3.6b), and West Coast (\$2.9b)².

Employment conditions in the South Island are also better than elsewhere in New Zealand. Job numbers over the past 12 months have crept up 0.4%pa, while employment in the North Island has declined by 1.2%pa. The South Island’s unemployment rate currently sits at 4.1%, which is below the 5.3% unemployment rate in the North Island.

The South Island economy has grown strongly off the back of good returns in the primary and visitor sectors – the South Island’s primary (centred on food and fibre) and visitor sector contributions to the New Zealand economy are explored in detail in Section 4.

Economic and labour market conditions in the South Island are strongest in Canterbury, Otago, Southland, and the West Coast, while Nelson, Tasman, and Marlborough have seen weaker job numbers.

² Author estimates for the March 2026 year using Infometrics and Statistics New Zealand data.

Table 1 – South Island regional metrics, Mar-26 year, author estimates with Infometrics & Stats NZ data

Region	GDP growth (%pa)	Employment growth (%pa)	Unemployment rate (average annual rate %)
Nelson	0.5%	-1.6%	4.3%
Tasman	1.9%	-0.4%	3.9%
Marlborough	0.2%	-0.3%	3.4%
West Coast	1.0%	0.8%	4.9%
Canterbury	1.2%	0.5%	4.4%
Otago	1.5%	0.4%	2.9%
Southland	1.4%	0.9%	4.4%
South Island	1.2%	0.4%	4.1%
<i>North Island</i>	<i>0.2%</i>	<i>-1.2%</i>	<i>5.7%</i>
New Zealand	0.4%	-0.8%	5.3%

Even in parts of the South Island where there has been some downward pressure on jobs, the starting point is better and unemployment rates in every individual South Island region remain well below the North Island average.

3.2. Population growth and migration

Against a backdrop of better economic growth and employment conditions, it is no surprise that the South Island is attracting people. Migrants have been attracted by the lifestyle proposition and relative affordability of some parts of the South Island, as well as investment in urban environments.

The South Island’s population was 1,256,700 people as at June 2025, which was up 0.8%pa from the previous year. The South Island has 24% of New Zealand’s population and is growing at a slightly faster rate than the North Island population (0.6%pa growth).

Figure 3 – Population overview, June 2025, source: Statistics New Zealand

	Population (2025)	Population Growth (%pa)	Share of NZ population
 South Island	1,256,700	0.8%	24%
 North Island	4,067,400	0.6%	76%
 New Zealand	5,324,700	0.7%	100%

Like economic and employment indicators, the South Island’s population growth is concentrated in Canterbury, Otago, Southland, and the West Coast, with growth having stalled or turned negative in the top of the South Island.

Table 2 – South Island regional population, June 2025, author estimates with Stats NZ data

Region	Population (2025)	Population Growth (%pa)	Share of NZ population
Nelson	54,300	-0.4%	1.0%
Tasman	59,900	0.3%	1.1%
Marlborough	50,800	-0.4%	1.0%
West Coast	34,700	0.6%	0.7%
Canterbury	698,200	1.1%	13.1%
Otago	253,900	0.6%	4.8%
Southland	104,800	0.6%	2.0%
South Island	1,256,700	0.8%	23.6%
<i>North Island</i>	<i>4,067,400</i>	<i>0.6%</i>	<i>76.4%</i>
New Zealand	5,324,700	0.7%	100.0%

Population growth in the South Island is primarily reliant on migration rather than natural increase. The South Island had higher net migration (7,000 net migrants) in the June 2025 year than the North Island (6,700 net migrants).

Table 3 – South Island components of population change, June 2024-2025, Stats NZ data

Region	Natural increase	Net internal migration	Net international migration	Net migration	Population change
Nelson	-50	-230	110	-110	-160
Tasman	-20	380	-250	130	110
Marlborough	-20	70	-190	-120	-140
West Coast	-20	60	170	240	220
Canterbury	2,300	3,700	1,600	5,300	7,600
Otago	350	970	200	1,200	1,500
Southland	170	-430	880	450	610
South Island	2,700	4,500	2,500	7,000	9,700
<i>North Island</i>	<i>18,300</i>	<i>-4,500</i>	<i>11,200</i>	<i>6,700</i>	<i>25,000</i>
New Zealand	21,000	0	13,700	13,700	34,700

Net migration into the South Island is primarily driven by people moving from the North Island. Of the South Island’s 7,000 net migrants in 2025, 2,500 were international migrants, while 4,500 moved from the North Island. The migration south is part of a sustained trend, with a total of 31,300 people making the shift from the North to the South Island over the past five years.

Challenges related to an aging population are confronting the South Island earlier than the North Island.

The only four regions in New Zealand where natural increase is negative are in the South Island, with Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, and the West Coast all in a situation where deaths outweigh births. These regions rely on migration to maintain their populations and replace workers as people retire.

4. Valuing the South Island’s contribution to exports

This section values the contribution of key exports from the South Island to the New Zealand economy. Food and fibre products from the primary sector form the backbone of goods exports modelled, while spending by international visitors to the South Island has also been considered as a key service export.

4.1. Goods exports

Total goods exports from the South Island are estimated at \$25,534 million a year, which is equivalent to one third (33%) of New Zealand goods exports.

Table 4 – South Island total goods exports, June 2025 year, author estimates with Stats NZ & MPI data

Region	Total goods exports (\$m, pa)	Share of NZ total
Nelson	\$617m	0.8%
Tasman	\$1,614m	2.1%
Marlborough	\$1,824m	2.4%
West Coast	\$1,545m	2.0%
Canterbury	\$11,730m	15.3%
Otago	\$4,155m	5.4%
Southland	\$4,049m	5.3%
South Island	\$25,534m	33.4%
<i>North Island</i>	<i>\$50,942m</i>	<i>66.6%</i>
New Zealand	\$76,477m	100.0%

Canterbury’s goods exports are equivalent to 15% of New Zealand’s exports, while Otago and Southland each contribute 5% to the New Zealand total.

Figure 4



The South Island's contribution to the New Zealand

8

Most of the South Island's goods exports are from the food and fibre sector. It is estimated that the South Island accounts for 36% of New Zealand's food and fibre sector exports, and 25% of other goods exports.

Table 5 – South Island goods exports, June-25 year (\$m pa), author estimates with Stats NZ & MPI data

Export type	South Island	North Island	New Zealand
Food and fibre sector exports	\$21,510m	\$38,873m	\$60,383m
<i>Other goods exports</i>	<i>\$4,024m</i>	<i>\$12,070m</i>	<i>\$16,094m</i>
Total goods exports	\$25,534m	\$50,942m	\$76,477m
<i>Food and fibre exports as % of total</i>	<i>84.2%</i>	<i>76.3%</i>	<i>79.0%</i>

The food and fibre sector captures not just value derived from primary production in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, but it also includes the value chain from processing these outputs into food or fibre products suitable for wholesaling or distribution to the final consumer³. This definition is consistent with Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) food and fibre exports definition so that national benchmarking can occur⁴.

Almost three quarters (70%) of the South Island's food and fibre exports are from the dairy and meat industries, with horticulture contributing a further 12% of the South Island's exports. The remaining food and fibre exports are spread across seafood, forestry, processed food, and arable crops.

Table 6 – South Island food & fibre exports, June-25 year (\$m pa), estimates with Stats NZ & MPI data

Food and fibre sub-industry	South Island	New Zealand	As share of NZ
Dairy	\$10,053m	\$27,151m	37%
Meat & wool	\$5,004m	\$12,360m	40%
Horticulture	\$2,635m	\$8,802m	30%
Seafood and aquaculture	\$1,466m	\$2,224m	66%
Forestry	\$1,427m	\$6,170m	23%
Processed food and other	\$729m	\$3,338m	22%
Arable	\$196m	\$338m	58%
Total food and fibre export value	\$21,510m	\$60,383m	36%

The South Island is a particularly important contributor to New Zealand's food and fibre exports from the seafood and aquaculture (66% share of NZ seafood and aquaculture exports) and arable (58% export share) sectors, followed by meat (40% share) and dairy (37%) exports.

³ See: Dalziel, Paul, Caroline Saunders and John Saunders (2018). The New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector: A Situational Analysis. Client report prepared for the Primary Sector Council. Lincoln University.

⁴ A modelling approach has been taken to estimate the South Island's exports. The model has taken New Zealand food and fibre exports by sector from MPI's Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries dataset and other exports from Statistics New Zealand and apportioned these to regions in the South Island using industry employment data for each territorial authority from Statistics NZ, as well as evidence from the agricultural census. The implicit assumption is that each sector in the South Island has a similar propensity to export their outputs as the national economy.

4.2. Visitor economy exports

International visitor spending across the South Island’s regions is a service export. A comparison of this spending in the South Island against key commodity exports shows that foreign exchange earnings from tourism in the South Island are comparable in scale to one of New Zealand’s biggest export industries.

International visitors to the South Island spent \$7,958m in the March 2026 year – equivalent to 40% of spending across New Zealand (\$19,851m).

Table 7 – South Island international visitor spending, March 2026 year, MBIE data

Region	International visitor spending (\$m, pa)	Share of NZ total
Nelson	\$199m	1.0%
Tasman	\$191m	1.0%
Marlborough	\$204m	1.0%
West Coast	\$372m	1.9%
Canterbury	\$2,414m	12.2%
Otago	\$4,209m	21.2%
Southland	\$369m	1.9%
South Island	\$7,958m	40.1%
<i>North Island</i>	<i>\$11,893m</i>	<i>59.9%</i>
New Zealand	\$19,851m	100.0%

International visitor spending in the South Island is concentrated in Otago and Canterbury, with the two regions accounting for a combined \$6,623m of spending, which represented one third of the New Zealand total.

Figure 5



5. Importance of connectivity

Ensuring the flow of economic activity (Section 3.1) within the South Island, getting South Island’s export goods (Section 4.1) to market, and moving international visitors (Section 4.2) requires good transport connections. This section considers the roles of the transport networks in connecting the South Island regions with each other, the rest of New Zealand, and the world. The outsized role of the South Island in supporting economic growth, and export earnings for goods and from the visitor economy, highlights the importance of ensuring the South Island is well connected with adequate transport infrastructure.

5.1. Utilisation of and spending on the South Island’s roads

The roading network is important for connecting people, as well as South Island producers with supply chains and external markets, and enabling the flow of international visitors. NZTA data shows the length of the South Island roading network is 41,446 km, which is 43% of New Zealand’s total. Of the network, 4,936km are State Highways, which represents 45% of New Zealand’s 11,072km of State Highways.

There were around 13,529 million vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) on the South Island’s roads in 2025, which was 27% of the New Zealand total.

Table 8 – South Island vehicle kilometres travelled, June 2025 year, NZTA data

Region	Vehicle kilometres travelled (millions of VKT)	Share of NZ total
Nelson	414	0.8%
Tasman	624	1.2%
Marlborough	670	1.3%
West Coast	602	1.2%
Canterbury	7,007	13.9%
Otago	2,892	5.7%
Southland	1,321	2.6%
South Island	13,529	26.8%
<i>North Island</i>	<i>36,905</i>	<i>73.2%</i>
New Zealand	50,434	100.0%

Over half of VKT on South Island roads are in Canterbury which has a 14% share of VKT nationally. Otago and Southland have a combined 8.4% share.

Despite accounting for such a high share of New Zealand’s vehicle kilometres travelled, the South Island only receives a small share of the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) expenditure.

In 2025, the South Island received \$1,086 million of NLTF expenditure for its state highways and local roads, which was an 11% share of the New Zealand total (\$9,551 million)⁵.

The South Island’s low share of NLTF spending on roads is particularly stark when considered alongside its contribution to the New Zealand economy, as highlighted in Figure 6.

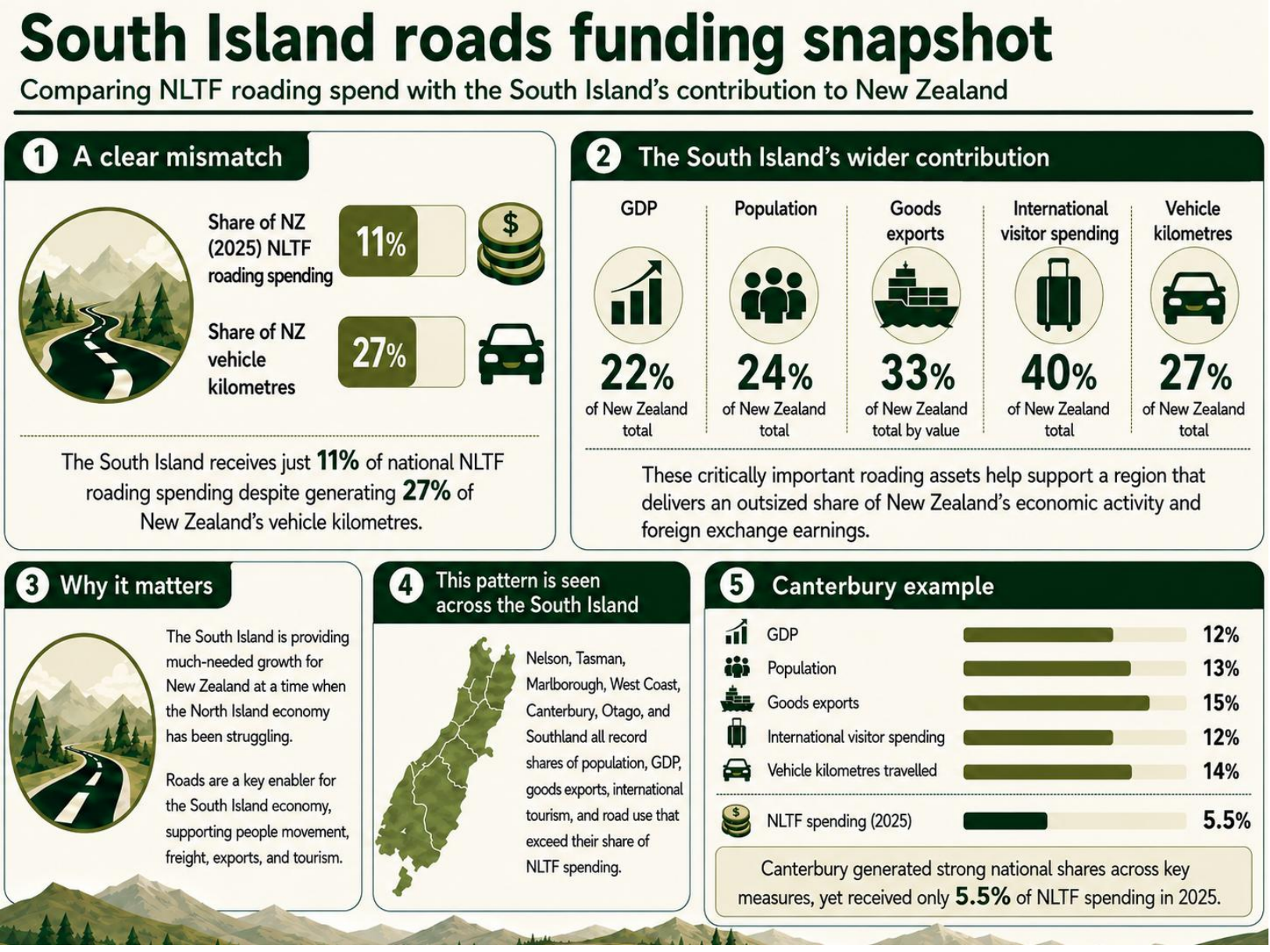
⁵ This low share of spending is not a single year result. Looking across the three years to June 2025, the South Island cumulatively received 12.0% of NLTF expenditure.

Table 9 – South Island National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) spend, June 2025 year, NZTA data⁶

Region	Actual NLTF expenditure (\$m)	Share of NZ total
Nelson	\$20m	0.2%
Tasman	\$29m	0.3%
Marlborough	\$56m	0.6%
West Coast	\$73m	0.8%
Canterbury	\$527m	5.5%
Otago	\$277m	2.9%
Southland	\$105m	1.1%
South Island	\$1,086m	11.4%
<i>North Island</i>	<i>\$8,465m</i>	<i>88.6%</i>
New Zealand	\$9,551m	100.0%

Canterbury received 5.5% of total New Zealand NLTF spending on its roads in 2025, with a further 4.0% of spending in Otago and Southland. The rest of the South Island received just a combined 1.9% of NLTF spending.

Figure 6



5.2. Cook Strait ferry connection to the rest of New Zealand

The Cook Strait ferries provide a 'sea bridge' connection between the South Island and the North Island. The transportation infrastructure provided by the ferries is a critically important economic enabler for the South Island economy and its broader contribution to New Zealand. This enabling role can be measured through valuing the flow of freight facilitated by the ferries, as well as the visitor spending of visitors to the South Island who travel on the ferries.

The freight component is split into southbound and northbound directions. For the South Island, southbound freight is interpreted as inputs coming into the region – which are imports into business and consumer supply chains. Northbound freight is interpreted as goods sold out of the region to customers elsewhere in New Zealand or as exports routed through North Island connections.

An estimated 3.5 million tonnes of annual freight are carried on ferries.⁷ The total value of freight on the Cook Strait ferries is estimated at \$10,109 million in 2025, with \$7,140 million of southbound freight and \$2,969 million of northbound freight⁸.

Although the northbound freight is a mix of exports and domestic sales, it can still be put in perspective against the total goods exports estimated in Section 4.1. It was estimated that the South Island's annual goods exports are about \$25,534 million a year, so the ferry-enabled northbound freight of \$2,969 million is of a size equivalent to 12% of this total. The remaining exports are predominantly sent overseas via the South Island's seaports and airports (See Section 5.3 for an analysis of these ports' activity).

An estimated 1,170,000 people travel on the Cook Strait ferries each year⁹, including 305,000 international visitors¹⁰ and 865,000 domestic travellers.

It is estimated that there was \$1,806 million of international visitor spending in 2025 in the South Island that can be associated with visitors who have taken the ferry. This is equivalent to about 23% of the total international visitor spending that occurred in the South Island over the past year (see Section 4.2), which highlights the critical importance of the ferries as an enabler of international tourism earnings.

⁷ Total tonnages moved between the North and South Islands on the ferries have been estimated by inter-regional road and rail movements data contained in the Ministry of Transport National Freight Demand Study 2017/18. This dataset is the most recent comprehensive model of inter-regional freight flows in New Zealand. Current inter-regional freight tonnages are likely to be similar to this benchmark as an OIA request (20559) to NZTA has shown that 2024/25 road and rail freight total nationwide tonnages (without regional flow estimates) are within 5% of their 2017/18 levels.

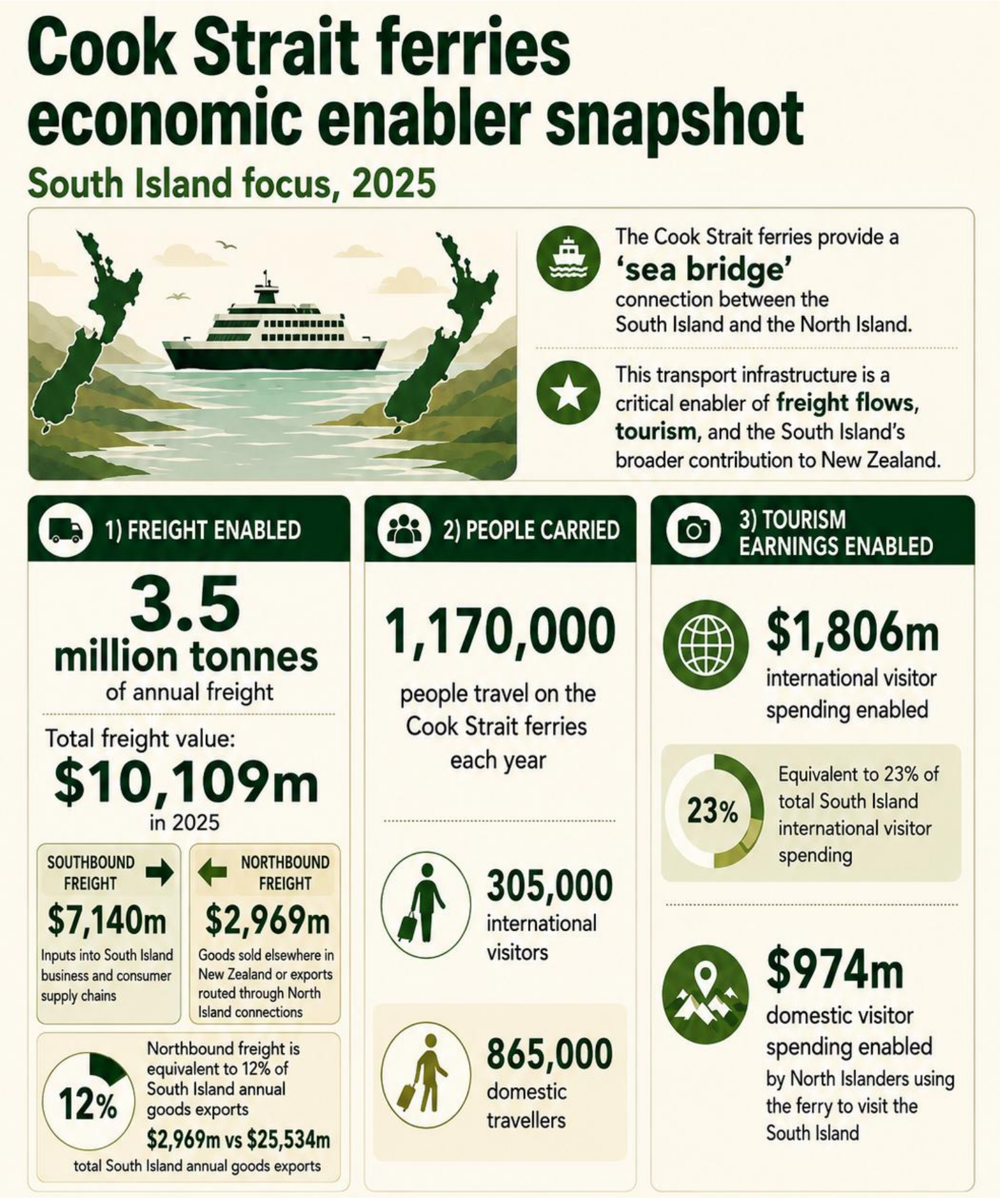
⁸ The average value of freight has been estimated using Statistics New Zealand cargo data from merchandise trade statistics for the December 2025 year. It is assumed that inbound freight is most closely related to the average value of imported goods (\$3,400.15 per tonne), while outbound freight is most closely related to the average value of exported goods (\$2,120.47 per tonne).

⁹ Estimated from Ministry of Transport / Rockpoint Corporate Finance (2023), Domestic Transport Costs and Charges Study (DTCCS), Working Paper C15: Cook Strait Ferries.

¹⁰ International ferry-user behaviour is estimated from MBIE's International Visitor Survey microdata (December 2025 year).

On top of spending associated with international visitors, a further estimated \$974 million of domestic visitor spending in the South Island is enabled by North Islanders using the ferry to visit the South Island¹¹.

Figure 7



5.3. Connecting the South Island to the rest of the world

The South Island’s seaports and airports play an important role in connecting the South Island to the rest of the world. This section considers the value of goods exports which leave the South Island’s ports.

¹¹ Domestic ferry-user behaviour is estimated with Domestic Visitor Survey microdata (October 2025 release).

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There were \$22,374 million of exports that departed directly from the South Island's ports in the June 2025 year, which was equivalent to 88% of the \$25,534 million of total goods estimate for the South Island (see Section 4.1).

The remaining 12% of exports are shifted north by the Cook Strait ferries for export from a North Island port, while a small share will move north on coastal shipping or domestic air freight.

Table 10 – Exports departing a South Island port, June 2025 year, Statistics NZ data

Port	Total value of exports (\$m)
Port Chalmers (sea)	\$7,978m
Lyttelton (sea)	\$7,577m
Bluff (sea)	\$2,602m
Christchurch (airport)	\$1,659m
Nelson (sea)	\$1,315m
Timaru (sea)	\$1,117m
Picton (sea)	\$125m
Total exports departing a South Island port	\$22,374m

In addition to freight that moves through the South Island's ports, the South Island's airports are also a key enabler of the international visitor economy, as well as in facilitating travel around New Zealand for business and leisure.

There were 11.4 million passenger movements through the South Island's airports in the June 2025 year, with 8.9 million of these movements on domestic flights and 2.5 million on international flights. The 2.5 million passenger movements on international flights is equivalent to 19% of the 13.1 million international passenger movements across New Zealand.

Table 11 – Passenger numbers at South Island airports, June-25 year, estimates from airport data¹²

Airport	Domestic flights	International flights	Total passengers
Christchurch	4,834,500	1,560,700	6,395,200
Queenstown	1,657,700	944,200	2,601,900
Nelson	858,300	-	858,300
Dunedin	853,100	900	854,000
Invercargill	338,300	-	338,300
Blenheim	294,400	-	294,400
Hokitika	40,000	-	40,000
Timaru	30,000	-	30,000
Total South Island	8,906,300	2,505,800	11,412,100

¹² Rounded to the nearest 100. Data taken from each airport's annual report or passenger monitoring dashboards for the June 2025 year. The most recent publicly published data for Hokitika and Timaru airports was for 2016. Note that Dunedin Airport has had around 50,000 international passengers over the 12 months since the launching of the Dunedin to Gold Coast service at the end of June 2025.

6. Concluding remarks

The South Island is making a substantial contribution to New Zealand's economic performance at a time when growth has been uneven across the country. In the March 2026 year, the South Island recorded annual GDP growth of 1.2%pa, compared with 0.2%pa growth in the North Island, while the South Island's unemployment rate sat at 4.1% compared with 5.7% in the North Island. The South Island accounts for 22% of New Zealand's GDP and 24% of its population, but its contribution is even more pronounced in areas that generate foreign exchange earnings. Goods exports from the South Island represent one third of New Zealand's total goods exports, while international visitor spending in the South Island accounts for 40% of international visitor spending in New Zealand.

Transport connectivity is fundamental to sustaining this contribution. The Cook Strait ferries provide a critical sea bridge between the South Island and the North Island, carrying an estimated 3.5 million tonnes of freight and 1.17 million passengers each year. The ferries enable an estimated \$3.0 billion of northbound freight from the South Island, representing goods sold to customers elsewhere in New Zealand or exports routed through North Island connections, while a further \$1.8 billion of international visitor spending in the South Island can be associated with international visitors who use the ferries. South Island seaports and airports also provide direct connections to the rest of the world, with \$22.4 billion of exports departing directly from South Island ports in the June 2025 year and 11.4 million passenger movements through South Island airports, including 2.5 million on international flights.

Alongside connections to the outside world, road connectivity is also fundamentally important to enabling this economic activity. The South Island's share of roading expenditure appears disproportionately low relative to its contribution and level of road use. In 2025, the South Island received 11% of NLTF roading expenditure despite generating 27% of national vehicle kilometres travelled, 22% of GDP, one third of goods exports, and 40% of international visitor spending. This imbalance is evident across South Island regions, where shares of population, GDP, exports, visitor spending, and road use generally exceed each region's share of NLTF roading investment. Ensuring that South Island transport infrastructure is adequately maintained and invested in is therefore important not only for the South Island, but for New Zealand's overall economic performance.

