

Draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan

October 2009

The Wairarapa Corridor

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

Introduction

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

Key transport pressures

Population Growth

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

Economic Growth

Both employment and economic growth are expected to be fairly static over the next 20 years. The growth is likely to occur mostly in the accommodation, café and restaurant areas, with primary and manufacturing industries likely to continue to decline. Projections to 2026 under a historical scenario suggest a growth rate of 0.8% per annum¹.

Freight Growth

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

Car Ownership and Use

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

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

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

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

Current transport trends

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

This plan defines a number of packages for improvements to the transport network within the Wairarapa Corridor to respond to the current trends and key pressures as identified above. The plan identifies measures that should be completed over the next ten years, as well as longer term measures that should be developed over the next ten years and then programmed to be implemented as conditions and funding allows.

Immediate priorities

The immediate priorities for this corridor are:

- Improving the safety of State Highway 2 and 53, and the adjacent local road network to minimise the contribution of road network deficiencies to road crash casualties.
- Improving walking and cycling networks and facilities, with an emphasis on safety improvements in urban areas, particularly in and around Masterton, and on key cycling routes between townships.
- Providing for freight and tourism trips as safely and efficiently as possible through improvements to the road network and supporting the transfer of freight to rail where practical.
- Maintaining the current level of service provided by public transport for commuting to other parts of the region (bus and rail) and within the Wairarapa for shopping trips and access to community facilities and health care (bus services).
- Continuing a programme of travel demand management measures relevant to the relatively rural character of this corridor - to reduce the number of car trips (particularly sole occupant to work) and encourage alternatives such as walking, cycling, car pooling, telecommuting, and working from home.

Strategic Context

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

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

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

The RLTS also contains the following region wide strategic outcomes:

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

The following inter-regional outcome has been developed as part of the current RLTS update⁴:

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

What we plan to do

Road network management

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

Freight

The plan recognises the need to accommodate an expected doubling of freight movement generally, and a potential 'wall of wood' as a result of significant increases in total log production and associated freight. Over the first ten years of the plan, measures include reviewing the likely impact of this freight growth on the strategic transport network, developing a log transfer station at Waingawa to support shifting log freight onto rail where practical, a heavy vehicle bypass east of Masterton and intersection improvements at Norfolk Road/State Highway 2. Road network improvements on Rimutaka Hill Road will also be important as heavy vehicle volumes increase.

⁴ This outcome has yet to be formally adopted.
WGN DOC #705237

Walking and cycling

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

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

Passenger transport

Greater Wellington is the primary agency responsible for the provision of passenger transport services throughout the region. Greater Wellington has recently implemented a number of improvements to Wairarapa's passenger transport services including new Wairarapa rail carriages, station upgrades, park and ride improvements and improved bus services and connections. Over the next ten years Greater Wellington expects to deliver 6 additional SE rail carriages to Wairarapa rail services to provide additional capacity, to carry out another bus service review for Wairarapa, and will continue to look for opportunities to improve park and ride facilities at Wairarapa railway stations.

Reliability issues on Wairarapa rail services as a result of issues with locomotive breakdowns have recently diminished some of the level of service improvements provided by the new carriages. Advocacy to KiwiRail for newer locomotives to be used for passenger services on the Wairarapa line is identified in this plan.

Travel demand management

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

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

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

Measures within the corridor

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

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

Overview diagrams

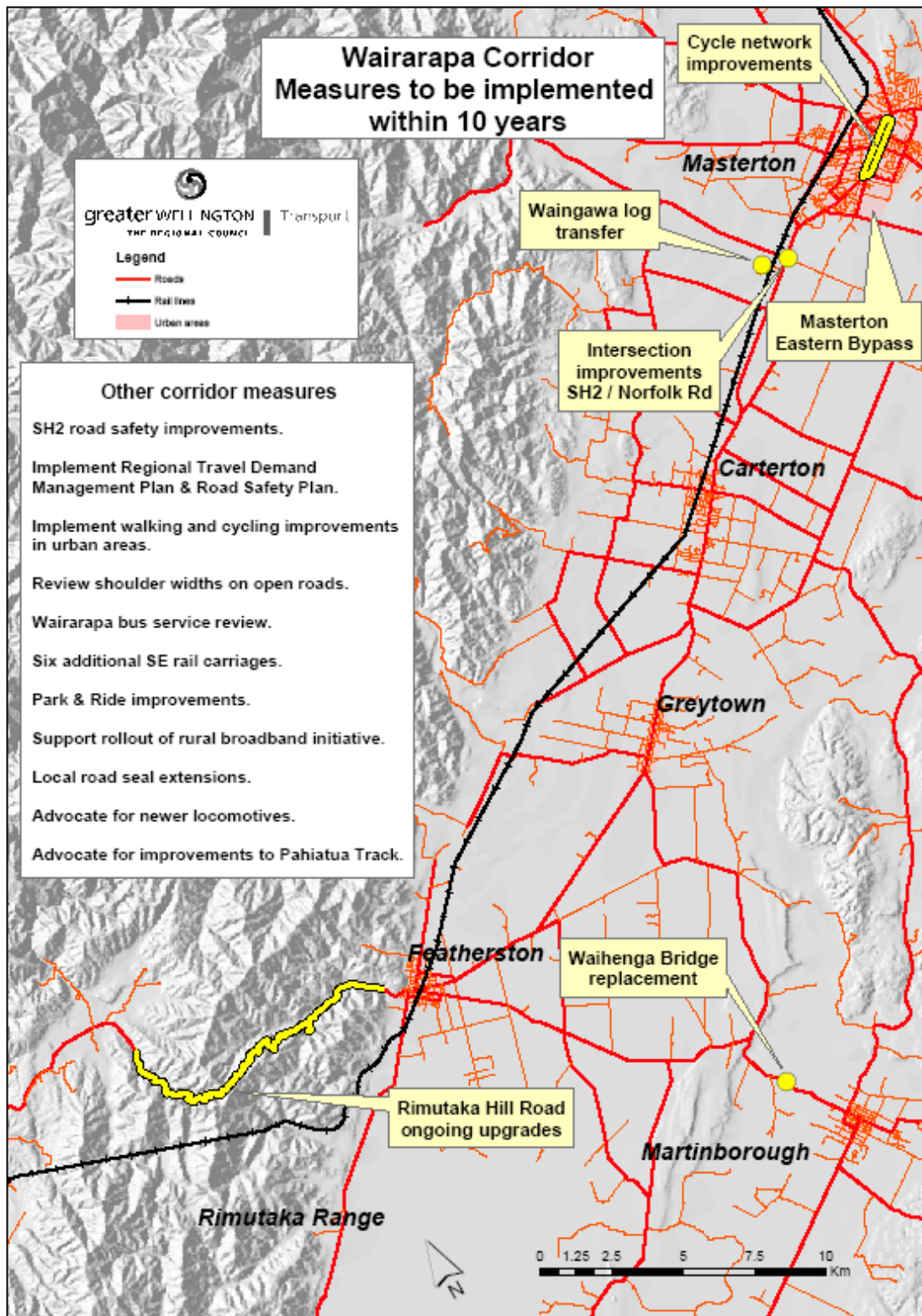


Figure 1: Wairarapa Corridor - Measures to be implemented within 10 years.

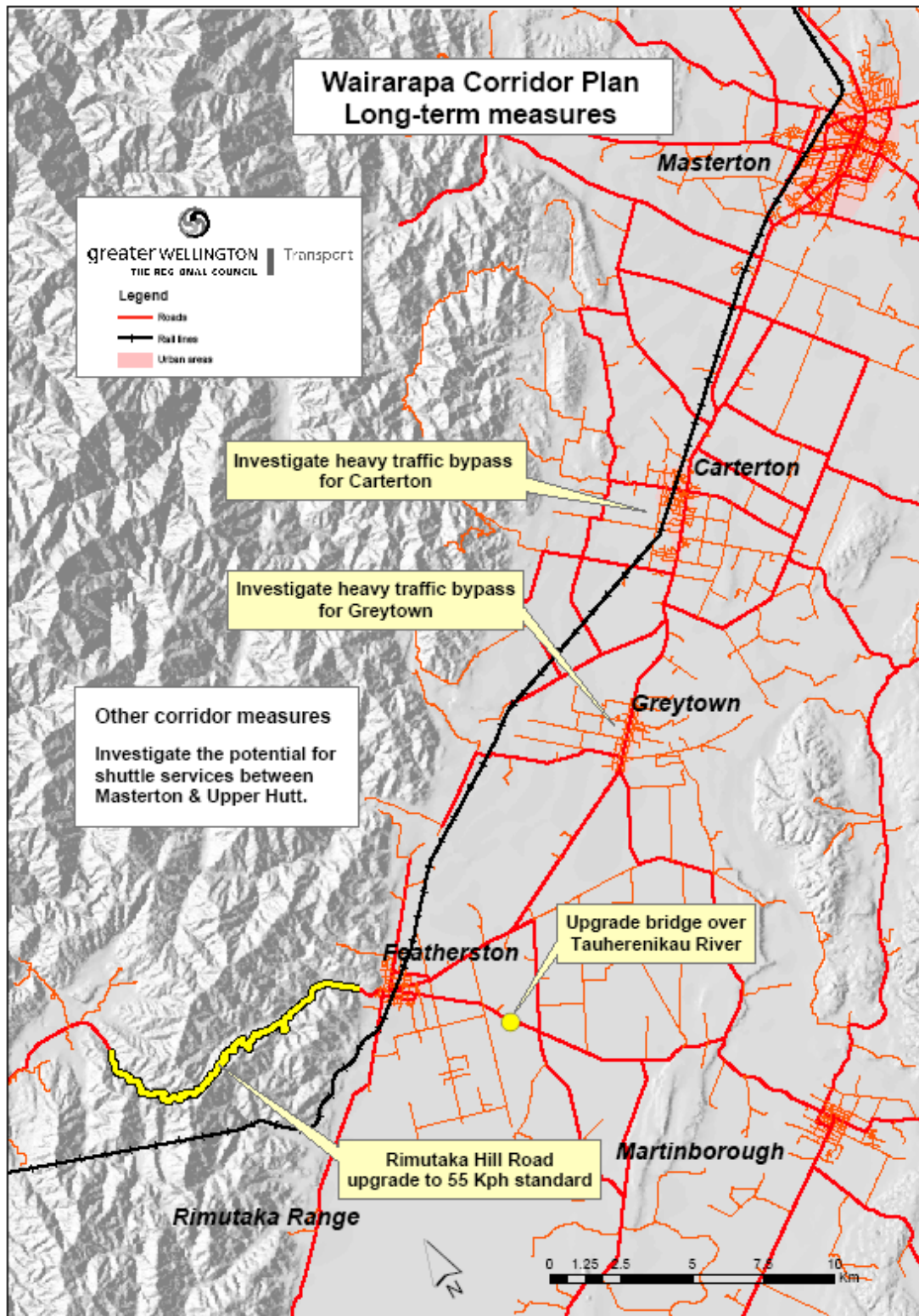


Figure 2: Wairarapa Corridor - Measures that may be implemented (beyond 10 years).

Measures to be implemented within 10 years

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Road Safety and the Road Network				
Construct safety improvements identified in the relevant crash reduction studies on State Highway 2 between Te Marua and Mt Bruce.	NZTA	Ongoing	As identified in crash reduction studies	Reduced crash rates
Make progress towards the long term goal of a 55km/h design standard for the Rimutaka Hill Road by implementing the projects identified through the State Highway 2 Featherston to Upper Hutt study (2008), as funding allows.	NZTA	Ongoing	To be determined	Improved travel times Reduced crash rates
Replacement of the Waihenga Bridge over the Ruamahanga River.	NZTA	By 2016	\$9M	New bridge open
Extend the seal on rural local roads of special tourist significance where cost effective.	MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Seal extended
Advocate for improvements to the Pahiatua Track as a key route for Wairarapa residents accessing specialist health services and other facilities in Palmerston North.	All agencies	At all appropriate opportunities	Administrative	Pahiatua Track is upgraded
Freight				
Construct intersection improvements at Norfolk Road/State Highway 2 to ensure the increasing number of heavy vehicles movements at this location can be safely and efficiently accommodated.	NZTA	By 2015	To be determined	Intersection improvements completed
Design and construct a heavy vehicle bypass east of Masterton	MDC	By 2016	\$11M	Eastern Bypass open
Ensure provisions in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan that facilitate the development of a log transfer and storage site at Waingawa are retained.	MDC CDC SWDC	Ongoing	Administrative	Provisions in District Plan maintained
Develop a log transfer and storage site at Waingawa as a commercial partnership	Commercial joint venture	As soon as commercial circumstances allow	To be determined	Site operational

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
<p>Review the potential impacts of a significant increase in freight volumes (and likely increases in heavy vehicle dimensions) on the state highway network within the Wairarapa Corridor.</p> <p>Identify any new projects or initiatives needed to accommodate this demand in a safe and efficient manner (for example – visibility around corners, adequate lane widths and slow vehicle lanes on Rimutaka Hill Road).</p>	NZTA	By 2012 – to enable any new projects to be included in the next RLTP	To be determined	Review complete and any projects in response identified
Walking and Cycling				
<p>Improve the cycle network in accordance with best practice guidance⁵, particularly in urban areas and at identified worst cyclist crash locations⁶ in Masterton.</p>	NZTA MDC	Ongoing	To be determined	<p>Safety improvements implemented</p> <p>Reduced cyclist crash rate</p>
<p>Review shoulder widths on open state highways and open local roads (in accordance with best practice guidance⁷) to ensure sealed road shoulders provide for adequate space between cyclists and passing vehicles on these high speed rural roads.</p>	NZTA SWDC CDC MDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Improve cycling safety and use
<p>Consider the needs of pedestrians in townships along SH2 – including appropriate speed limits, pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, and any need for town centre enhancement programmes – to provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.</p>	NZTA SWDC CDC MDC	Ongoing	To be determined	Improve pedestrian safety and attractiveness
Public transport				
<p>Advocate for new locomotives to be used for Wairarapa passenger rail services – to improve service reliability and to ensure the benefits of the new Wairarapa carriages are not lost.</p>	GWRC	Ongoing	Administrative	Improved reliability of Wairarapa rail services

⁵ Land Transport NZ (2004) Cycle Network and Route Planning Guide

⁶ Intersection of SH2 with Renall Street, Jackson Street, Russell Street, Lincoln Road. The road network in the vicinity of SH2/Te Ore Ore Road. Intersection of Dixon Street with Church Street and Worksop Road, and QueenStreet/Lincoln Road intersection. Refer to NZTA Crash Analysis Database for details.

⁷ Land Transport NZ (2004) Cycle Network and Route Planning Guide
WGN DOC #705237

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Deliver six additional SE rail carriages for the Wairarapa rail services to provide increased capacity – to address existing capacity issues on some services and accommodate future growth.	GWRC	By 2012/13	To be determined	Improved capacity of Wairarapa rail services
Identify opportunities to continually improve the provision of park and ride facilities at rail stations within the Wairarapa corridor.	GWRC	Ongoing	To be determined	Improved park and ride availability and facilities
Undertake a review of Wairarapa bus services to ensure existing services are operating effectively and assess the need for any new services to meet demand.	GWRC	2016	Administrative	Review complete
Travel Demand Management (TDM) and other regional plans				
Support rollout of the government's Rural Broadband Initiative in Wairarapa, to improve broadband access and facilitate reduced travel demand.	All agencies	Ongoing from 2010	Administrative	Improved broadband speeds and coverage in Wairarapa
Implement relevant initiatives of the: - Regional TDM Plan (Oct 09) - Regional Road Safety Plan (Oct 09) - Regional Walking Plan (Oct 08) - Regional Cycling Plan (Dec 08)	All agencies	Ongoing	As set out in the relevant regional plans	Reduced travel demand Reduced crash rates Increased pedestrian and cyclist volumes and safety

Measures that may be implemented (beyond 10 years)

Measure	Responsibility	Timing	Indicative cost	Performance measure(s)
Upgrade the SH53 bridge over the Tauherenikau River.	NZTA	Likely to be beyond 10 years	To be determined	Bridge upgrade completed
Upgrade Rimutaka Hill Road to 55kph design standards.	NZTA	Likely to be beyond 10 years	To be determined	All identified ⁸ upgrade projects completed
Investigate the need for heavy traffic bypasses of Greytown and Carterton - taking account of increases in heavy traffic volumes and travel time delays through these towns.	NZTA CDC SWDC	Likely to be beyond 10 years	Administrative	Progress reported to RTC
Consider the potential for shuttle services, either bus or rail, between Masterton and Upper Hutt to improve the availability of public transport and better connect Wairarapa residents with the rest of the region.	GWRC	Likely to be beyond 10 years	To be determined	Issue considered and reported to GWRC

⁸ NZ Transport Agency (Duffill Watts&Tse Ltd) (2008) State Highway Plan from Featherston to Upper Hutt. WGN DOC #705237