



Title: **Testing our thinking - Developing an enduring National Infrastructure Plan**

Reference: **NIPC24-0003006** | Submitted: **09/12/2024 10:25 pm** | Submitted by:

Summary of information submitted

Page 1 - Introduction

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We're seeking feedback

Our Discussion Document, [Testing our thinking: Developing an enduring National Infrastructure Plan](#), sets out our thinking as we begin work to develop a National Infrastructure Plan. The Discussion Document sets out what we expect the Plan will cover and the problem it's trying to solve, as well as the approach we're proposing to take to develop it.

We're sharing this now to test our thinking and give you the chance to share your thoughts. Let us know if we've got it right or if there are issues you think we've missed.

We'll use your feedback as we develop the Plan. We'll be sharing our thinking by presenting at events around the country, hosting workshops and webinars, and sharing updates through our website, newsletter, and social media. We'll also seek feedback on a draft Plan before publishing the final Plan in December 2025.

Submission overview

You'll find 17 main questions that cover the topics found in the Discussion Document. You can answer as many questions as you like and can provide links to material within your responses. On the final page (6. Next steps) you can provide any other comments or suggestions that you would like us to consider as we develop the National Infrastructure Plan. Submissions are welcomed from both individuals and organisations.

A few things to note:

- You can save progress using the button at the top right of this form.
- A red asterisk (*) denotes a mandatory field that must be completed before the form can be submitted.
- We expect organisations to provide a single submission reflecting the views of their organisation. Collaboration within your organisation and internal review of your submission (before final submission), is supported through our Information Supply Platform. You'll need to be registered with an Infrastructure Hub account, and be affiliated with your organisation to utilise these advanced features. Many organisations will already have a 'Principal respondent' who can manage submissions and assign users at your organisation with access to the draft responses.
- Submissions will be published on our website after the closing date. The names and details of organisations that submit will be published, but all personal and any commercial sensitive information will be removed.

Further assistance

Each submission that is started is provided a unique reference identifier. These identifiers are shown in the top right of each application page. Use this identifier when seeking further assistance or communicating with us about this submission by using one of the following methods.

- Use info@tewaihanga.govt.nz to contact us with any questions relating to our Discussion Document and consultation.
- Use inform@tewaihanga.govt.nz for help managing roles and permissions of user accounts affiliated with your organisation in the Information Supply Platform (ISP).

Submission method

Our preferred method is to receive responses through this form. However, we anticipate some submitters will wish to upload a pdf document, especially where their submission is complex or long. If this submission method is necessary, please use [this word template](#) and save as a pdf. We ask that you retain the structure and headings provided in the template as this will support our processing of responses.

Select a submission method

To continue, select the method you will be using.

[Online form](#)

The Discussion Document includes five sections. Below we're seeking feedback on why we need a National Infrastructure Plan. We also want to test our thinking on our long-term needs and make sure we have a clear view of what investment is already planned.

Section one: Why we need a National Infrastructure Plan

A National Infrastructure Plan can provide information that can help improve certainty, while retaining enough flexibility to cancel or amend projects as circumstances or priorities change.

1. What are the most critical infrastructure challenges that the National Infrastructure Plan needs to address over the next 30 years?

1. Politicisation of infrastructure, particularly transport. When governments bias one form, or focus only on existing modes (in the transport context) it constrains what is possible and means New Zealand will fail to address its issues.

To deal with climate change and congestion most, if not all, roading projects are not needed in our cities. Any substantial investment needs to go into climate friendly, active, and mass transit modes, and these must be heavily prioritised.

2. Transparency. New Zealand has a fundamental problem with access to information, particularly with large projects. Coupled with a small transport sector it has meant costs are often hidden, increased etc, and people inside the sector are unable to speak out about issues due to (understandable) fears of being blacklisted from the industry.

3. Certainty. New Zealand suffers from the stop starting of major projects, meaning everything we do is bespoke. This increases cost and means things take longer to build

4. Scope Creep. Often our projects will grow and grow as they do not have defined or refined scopes.

5. Overfocus on big projects. Given the scale of infrastructure challenges and the cost involved, many lower cost initiatives need to be undertaken. Particularly in transport, especially related to the reallocation of space.

6. Institutional bias. Often New Zealand's institutions are biased towards one way of doing things, and the NIP has the potential to introduce new ideas or ways of doing things, for example projects that align with the Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway strategy in Auckland.

2. How can te ao Māori perspectives and principles be used to strengthen the National Infrastructure Plan's approach to long-term infrastructure planning?

Te ao Māori perspectives and principles can be used to develop a more holistic view - to ensure that a wide range of needs, problems, and benefits are realised, outside of the usual business case process.

Additionally, it should push long-term infrastructure planning to be more sustainable over the long term.

Section two: Our long-term needs

The National Infrastructure Plan will reflect on what New Zealanders value and expect from infrastructure. To do this, the Plan needs to consider New Zealanders' long-term aspirations and how these could be impacted over the next 30 years.

3. What are the main sources of uncertainty in infrastructure planning, and how could they be addressed when considering new capital investments?

Politics - by introducing a 'menu' or programme of needed projects, that are loosely agreed by parties, there is the potential to reduce the risk of stop starting when governments change. Additionally, a higher priority and resourcing needs to be given to local government to enact their own vision for their cities and areas - as they are often best suited to understand what's needed.

Scope Creep - without knowing how much funding we have to spend, and what needs to be done, single major projects are vulnerable to scope creep and cost blowout - as we don't place cost constraints on project problem solving. Getting an accurate view on what's needed means solutions can be cost constrained and ideally be more realistic.

Clients (ie governments) lack of knowing what they want - by providing a broader plan to show the infrastructure challenges, it should enable better refinement of how much money is to be spent to solve a certain problem. This means that project development is directed at producing a realistic solution, rather than endless planning as objectives and outcomes change.

Section three: What investment is already planned

We already gather and share data on current or planned infrastructure projects through the National Infrastructure Pipeline. This data, alongside other information gathered by the Treasury or published by infrastructure providers, helps to paint a picture of investment intentions.

4. How can the National Infrastructure Pipeline be used to better support infrastructure planning and delivery across New Zealand?

By providing certainty, transparency, and shaping prioritisation of investment, it ideally would create a steady stream of projects that will continue regardless of political switch.

Additionally, if the broader context of areas are understood, then costs can be constrained in each individual project to ensure realistic designs are developed.

The identification of smaller projects is ideal, however also doing things differently IE to reduce cost of maintenance, when renewals of transport corridors occur (ie roads), space can be reallocated to more efficient, climate friendly, and less damaging modes of transport such as cycling. This 'build back better approach' is a win-win, but requires mindset shift in politicians and institutions, otherwise we will continue to maintain high cost, low value transport infrastructure.

Section four: Changing the approach

We have used our research and publicly available information on infrastructure investment challenges to identify key areas for change. The next question and the following three pages seek further detail on the three themes in section four of our paper. Within each of the three themes, we explore some topics in more detail, outlining the evidence, discussing the current 'state of play', and asking questions about where more work is needed.

5. Are we focusing on the right problems, and are there others we should consider?

Transparency is an extremely important problem. Countries overseas, can have far more transparent project development and costings while still delivering projects with a thriving private sector.

When projects remain opaque, bad things happen.

Page 3 - Capability to plan and build

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Changing the approach — Capability to plan and build

Section four looks at changes that we can make to our infrastructure system to get us better results. We've broken these changes down into three themes: capability to plan and build, taking care of what we have, and getting the settings right.

For the first theme, we look at three key areas:

- Investment management: Stability, consistency, and future focus
- Workforce and project leadership: Building capability is essential
- Project costs: Escalation means less infrastructure services.

Investment management: Stability, consistency, and future focus

We're interested in your views on how we can address the challenges with government infrastructure planning and decision-making.

6. What changes would enable better infrastructure investment decisions by central and local government?

More resourcing and power to local government, with less meddling by central government. Additionally, for transport, changes in New Zealand's institutions to remove the bias they have towards low value roading and car focused infrastructure.

7. How should we think about balancing competing investment needs when there is not enough money to build everything?

Prioritise decarbonised, resilient and high value investment. For transport this is consistently shown to public transit and active modes.

Additionally, ensure that programmes are developed and overall costs are understood - therefore projects and be constrained to certain costs to avoid scope creep and cost escalation.

Workforce and project leadership: Building capability is essential

We're interested in your views on how we can build capability in the infrastructure workforce.

8. How can we improve leadership in public infrastructure projects to make sure they're well planned and delivered? What's stopping us from doing this?

We need better working relationships between political leaders and institutional leaders.

Political leaders are in charge of developing public support and social licence. They need institutions that give them good advice and are not biased.

Institutional leaders need to understand project delivery, and also be driven to deliver, while also understanding wider plans and strategies.

Right now politicians either do not lead, or meddle in projects and plans, whereas many project and institutional leaders are not driven to deliver projects or listen to well developed, evidence based, and supported plans.

It's creating a catch 20/20 where you need both, but rarely get more than one and projects (particular major ones) will go around in circles. Additionally, our institutions are biased towards certain outcomes (roads in transport, and low density in housing), which skews advice and slows progress.

9. How can we build a more capable and diverse infrastructure workforce that draws on all of New Zealand's talent?

Providing consistency in funding and project certainty, that enables the long term retention of a workforce. This is most importantly needed as we (ideally) rapidly shift to do things in a more sustainable, climate friendly way.

For example, developing a capable workforce to build rapid transit projects requires long term commitment to these projects, and certainty that workforces are going to have work in NZ.

Project costs: Escalation means less infrastructure services

We're interested in your views on further opportunities to improve our ability to deliver good infrastructure at an affordable cost.

10. What approaches could be used to get better value from our infrastructure dollar? What's stopping us from doing this?

Transparency - enables corruption and hidden costs. Projects, particularly public ones, need to be daylighted to ensure fair process.

Better bidding processes - as New Zealand has a small infrastructure sector, it is easy for one particular organisation to get head starts if they are already working on a project. This means they can bring together a bid quicker and more easily than those who do not have previous information.

Build back better - when renewals occur they should change the infrastructure. ie when roads are renewed they should reallocate space for active modes. Politics and institutional bias prevents this.

More focus on delivery, less on planning - institutions are often punished for trying something and failing, rather than endlessly planning.

Avoiding scope creep, and avoiding focus on major projects - often large projects suck up funding, and if cancelled or failing to eventuate lead to wasted spend. This requires a change in politics and more certainty on total funding and long term plans.

The second theme in section four looks at how we can get better at taking care of what we have. It looks at three areas:

- Asset management: Managing what we already have is the biggest task
- Resilience: Preparing for greater disruption
- Decarbonisation: A different kind of challenge.

Asset management: Managing what we already have is the biggest task

Asset management means looking after our infrastructure. We are interested in your views on how we can improve planning for this.

11. What strategies would encourage a better long-term view of asset management and how could asset management planning be improved? What's stopping us from doing this?

Build back better, and more sustainable.

With growing extreme weather events, when replacing or repairing infrastructure, it needs to be replaced with more resilient infrastructure.

This requires a change of thinking in how and what is done, to reduce costs and reduce damage (ie porous surfaces, reallocation, green space).

Politics and institutional bias stop us from doing this.

Resilience: Preparing for greater disruption

We are interested in your views on how we can better understand the risks that natural hazards pose for our infrastructure.

12. How can we improve the way we understand and manage risks to infrastructure? What's stopping us from doing this?

See 11 - requires a change in thinking and prioritisation.

Politics and institutional bias stop us from doing this.

Decarbonisation: A different kind of challenge

We're interested in your views on how we can improve understanding of the decarbonisation challenge facing infrastructure.

13. How can we lower carbon emissions from providing and using infrastructure? What's stopping us from doing this?

A change of thinking and priorities - ie the Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway is a good example of this, and how the below factors have prevented it's implementation.

Instituional bias, lobbying, and politics prevents this.

Page 5 - Getting the settings right

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Changing the approach — Getting the settings right

The third theme in section four looks at how we can get our settings right to get better results from our infrastructure system. It looks at three areas:

- Institutions: Setting the rules of the game
- Network pricing: How we price infrastructure services impacts what we think we need
- Regulation: Charting a more enabling path.

Institutions: Setting the rules of the game

We're interested in your views on what changes to our infrastructure institutions would make the biggest difference in giving us the infrastructure we need at an affordable cost.

14. Are any changes needed to our infrastructure institutions and systems and if so, what would make the biggest difference?

Rewarding and protecting those who try new things even if they don't work out.

Drive away from endless planning and failure to make decisions, and instead to delivery.

Paradigm shift in how they think, and ejecting those who don't (this is very relevant in transport see TERP and endless cases of it).

Network pricing: How we price infrastructure services impacts what we think we need

We're interested in your views on further opportunities to improve network infrastructure pricing.

15. How can best practice network pricing be used to provide better infrastructure outcomes?

Congestion charging can make better use of transport networks. Additionally, emission based pricing can also lead to more sustainable use of infrastructure.

Regulation: Charting a more enabling path

We're interested in your views on further opportunities to improve regulation affecting infrastructure delivery.

16. What regulatory settings need to change to enable better infrastructure outcomes?

Less onerous consenting is ideal, and better zoning (in regards to housing).

There still needs to be regulation to ensure sustainable projects and the natural environment are protected, however enabling the infrastructure industry to receive faster consenting with more sustainable methods could be an option.

Page 6 - What happens next?

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Additional information to support our development of the Plan

Section five in the Discussion Document is on the next steps. In this section, we're asking you for any additional comments, suggestions, or supporting documentation that we should consider in our development of the National Infrastructure Plan.

17. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that you would like us to consider as we develop the National Infrastructure Plan?

Click 'Add another' to add multiple suggestions or comments.

Item 1

The politics of NZ play a big part of why our infrastructure is like it is. However, it is not divorced from the institutional biases, nor the lobbying that occurs by established industrys.

Without understanding that in many industries, particularly transport, there is a risk any National Infrastructure Plan enshrines status quo thinking, which is unaffordable and will not address climage change.

Item 2

Programmes that change the way we use space are ideal for cost efficient solutions. However, because of institutional bias and inertia these often don't get implemented, nor cheaper more rapid action undertaken.

Access for Everyone in Auckland City Centre is a prime example of this, where despite large public support in 2020, the core concept of circulation plans has not been implemented due to inertia and resistance by Auckland Transport.

18. Attach any documents that support your submission

Click 'Add another' to add multiple attachments in PDF format.

Document 1



[transport-emissions-reduction-pathway.pdf](#)

Last modified 2024-8-21 14:26:34 pm, file size 5.71 MB

Document 2



[Access for Everyone Programme Business Case 2022 final.pdf](#)

Last modified 2024-8-19 12:2:29 pm, file size 15.58 MB

Thank you for your response

Thank you for providing feedback on our Discussion Document. We'll use your comments as we continue to develop the Plan. This will not be the only opportunity for you to provide feedback, but it is an important way to test our emerging thinking on the development of an enduring National Infrastructure Plan.

If you have prepared a submission on behalf of an organisation, you'll need to be an authorised *respondent* to make the final submission. If you entered a new organisation during sign-up, or your organisation does not already have a *Principal respondent* assigned, you will have been asked to nominate yourself or someone else for this role as you started this submission. Our team will have worked to verify these accounts allowing *Principal respondents* to manage access and assignment of requests for information to people within your organisation.

If you require any assistance please reach out to our team at inform@tewaihangagovt.nz.
