Notice of Council Workshop Briefing Session

A workshop briefing session of the Tararua District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, 156 High Street, Dannevirke on **Wednesday 15 April 2026** commencing at **1:00 pm**.

Corin Haines
Chief Executive

Agenda

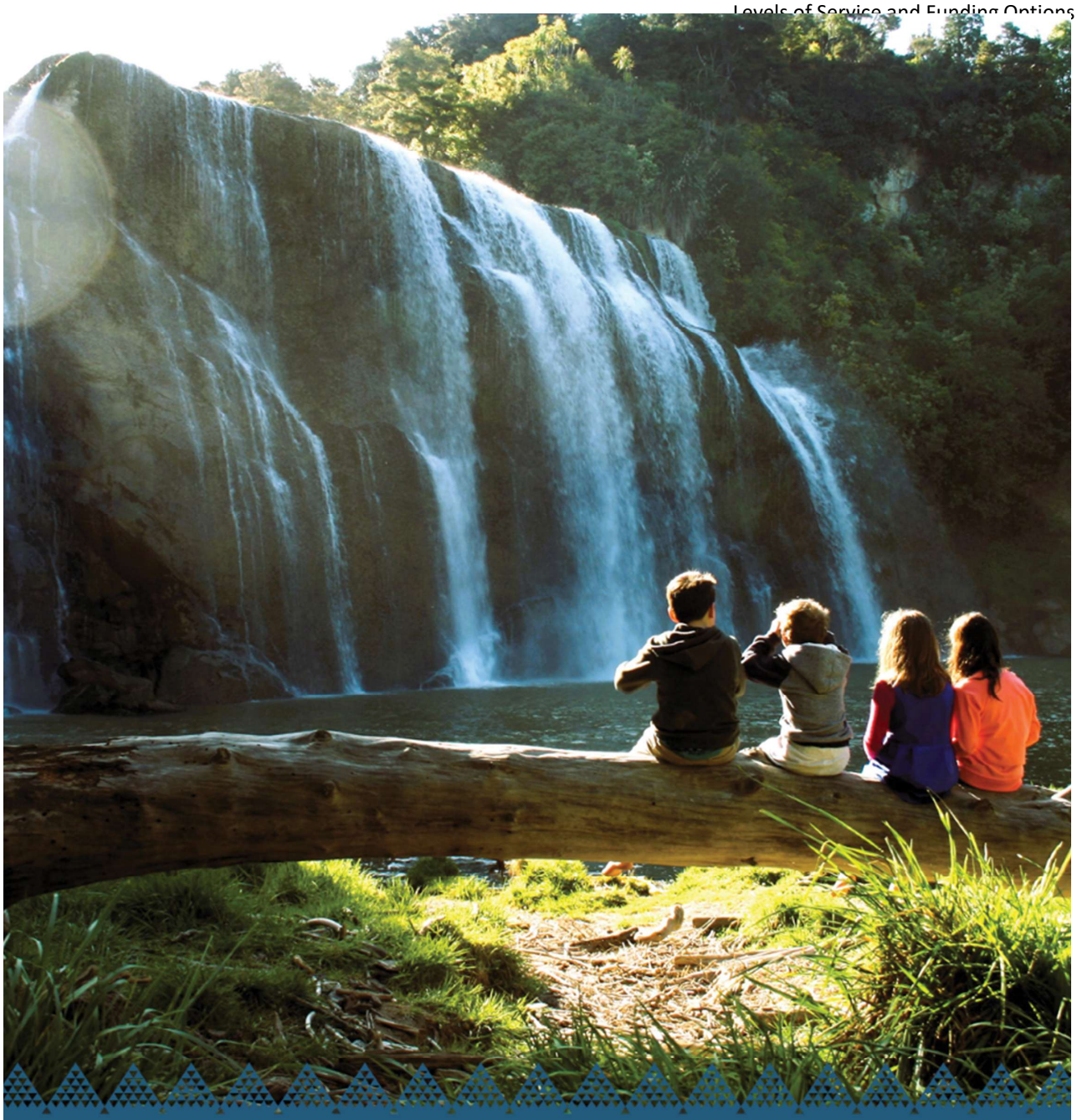
1. Welcome and Workshop Opening

2. Briefing Paper

2.1 Transport Activity Management Plan - Strategic Priorities and Levels of Service **2**

3. Closure

Note: This workshop briefing session meeting is being held solely for the purpose of information and discussion, and no resolutions or decisions shall be made.



LONG TERM PLAN 2027-37

Transportation AMP Workshop #2

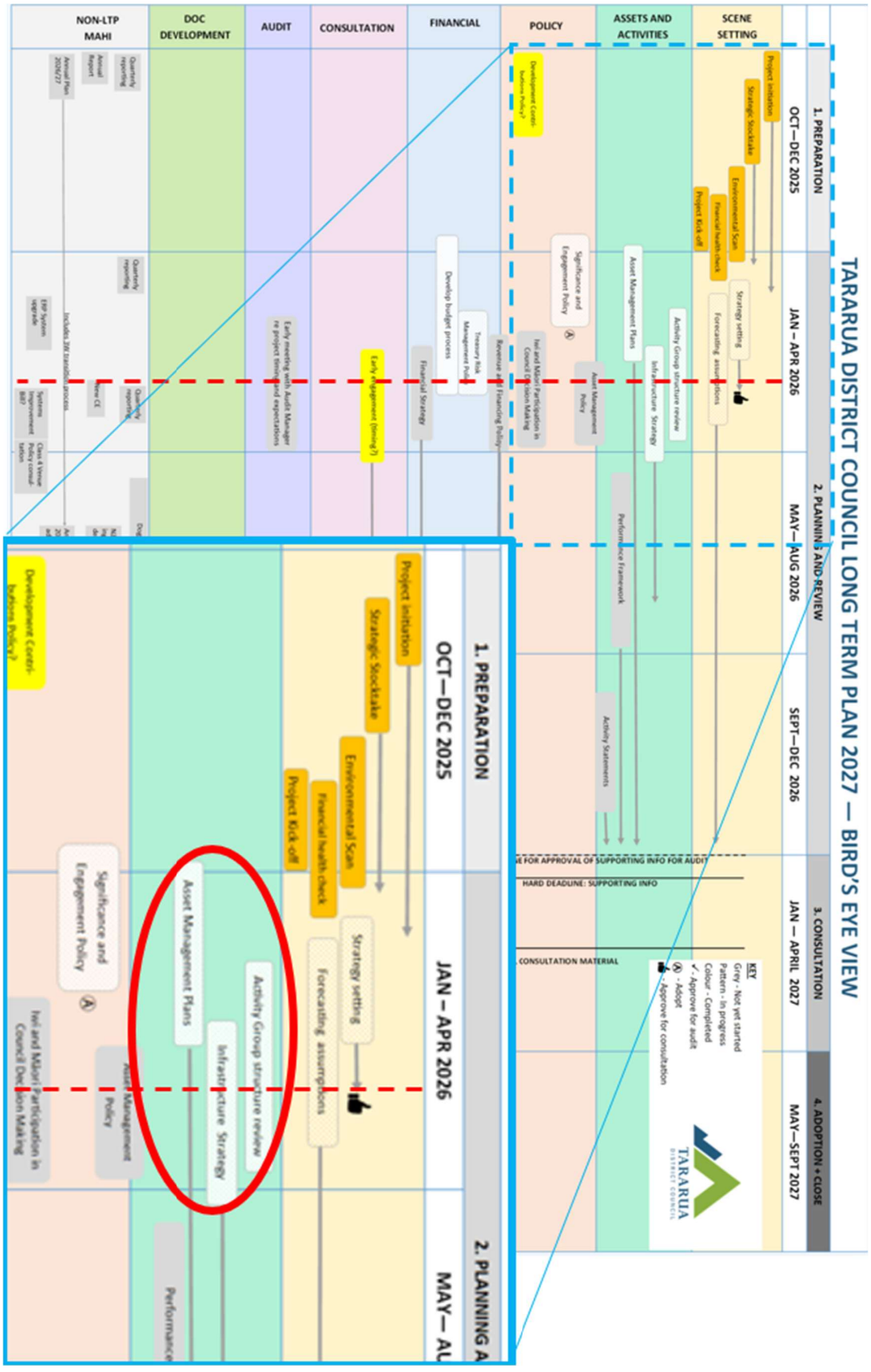
WEDNESDAY, 15 APRIL 2026

LTP 2027 Workshop Reader

Link to presentation

TARARUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Timing – where does this discussion sit in the context of the wider project?



Workshop purpose:

- Confirm the **key problems** shaping the 2027 Transportation AMP
- Introduce Tararua District's **Road Hierarchy** that is used to manage levels of service
- Explore **service level expectations** linked to the hierarchy
- Discuss overall **funding options** and the trade-offs they create

Guidance needed from Elected Members

- Provide feedback and/or endorsement of draft Problem Statements for Transportation AMP
- Provide feedback on service level expectations and potential funding scenarios to give us a good steer for our detailed optioneering for next workshop

Strategic alignment

Previous workshop covered alignment within wider local and central government planning environment for roading. The planning being undertaken as part of the Transportation AMP provides key inputs into the Infrastructure Strategy and the Long Term Plan.

Related forecasting assumptions and risk

- Options presented are based on operating within a constrained financial environment based on the desire for Council to cap total rates increase at 2%.
- No assumptions have been made with regards to risks to national fuel supply at this stage.

Discussion

Draft Problem Statements:

Following on from Workshop 1 where we presented information on some of our key challenges, we have reviewed the outcomes from the Elected Member strategy day and incorporated these into draft problem statements, as appropriate.

Each draft problem statement is able to be directly link back to the current Government Policy Statement key priorities which will support our investment bid and business case to NZTA.

We have detailed each problem statement below, along with potential strategic response options that we can implement to address these problems.

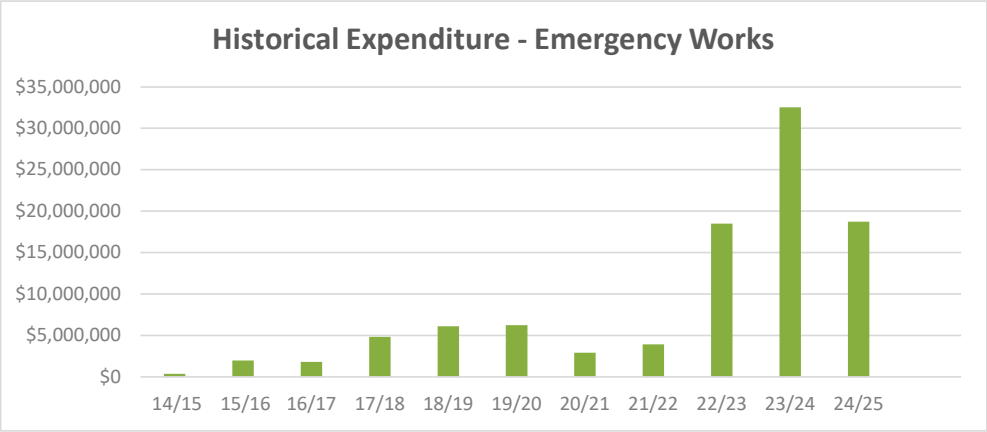
No decisions are required on the strategic responses; we are seeking direction on overall funding approaches, we will bring recommended programme approaches and detailed options to our next workshop.

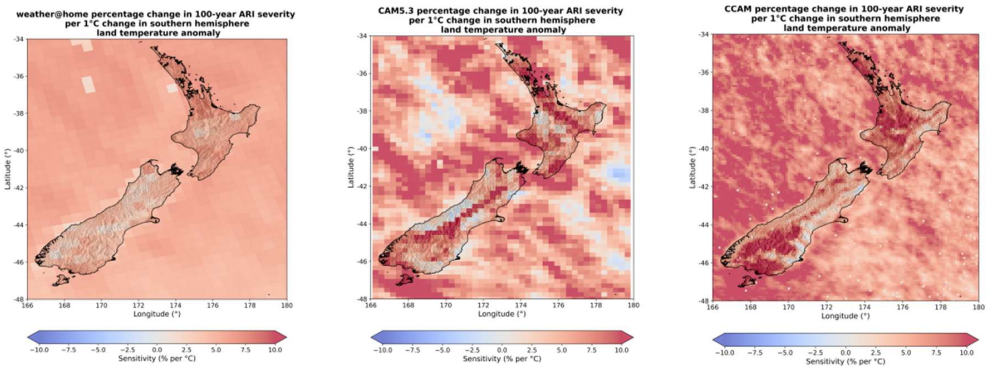
Problem Statement 1: Network Reliability and Resilience
Increasing high-intensity rainfall events are accelerating deterioration, overwhelming drainage and slopes, and putting our network reliability and community access at risk.

Background:

Climate projections for Tararua and surrounding areas show increasing extreme rainfall intensity over time. The past 15 years have shown clear evidence of this, with a growing number of high intensity rainfall events recorded across the district. Since the start of 2022, Tararua's roading infrastructure has sustained an estimated $111 million in damage due to weather events, with $90 million attributed to Cyclone Gabrielle.

The district's dispersed settlements and reliance on rural roads make it particularly vulnerable to climate-driven disruptions. Topography and geology play a key part in this, with many of our roads being built across steep terrain with erosion, subsidence and sediment risks. These environmental factors, combined with relatively underdeveloped road formation, simple structures and drainage systems, are major contributors to the costly damage experienced by our road network. Our roads within hill country areas are often constructed across slopes without effective water diversion or channelling.





NIWA high intensity rainfall modelling: *each scenario shows an increase in 'Annual Return Interval' severity for rainfall across NZ, including Tararua*

Climate and Resilience was one of our four problem statements from our 2024 Activity Management Plan, and we have been making solid progress toward building more resilience into our roading network. A summary of actions was detailed in the EM Workshop Reader from the 11th of February 2026 workshop.

Moving forward, to continue to enhance the resilience and performance of our network, a number of strategic response options exist, based around:

- reinstating functional drainage
- strengthening vulnerable structures
- mitigating slope and river hazards
- improving overall network reliability, particularly on our key routes.

Problem Statement 2: Supporting Local Economy & Access
Many rural roads were constructed to historic design standards intended for lighter vehicles and lower traffic volumes. Increasing freight movements are accelerating pavement deterioration and increasing maintenance pressures across key economic routes.

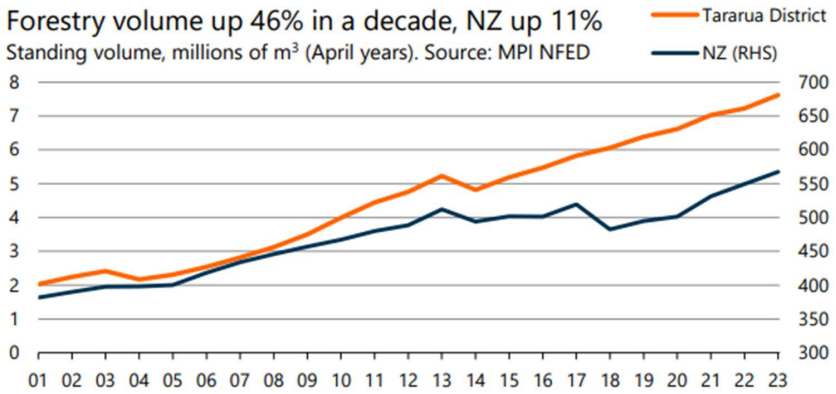
Background:

Many parts of our road network were never built for the loads they now carry. Much of the network was originally constructed for light rural traffic, not the modern axle weights or freight volumes we see today. As a result, the network is increasingly under strain.

Forestry harvesting, agricultural intensification, and general freight growth are driving more frequent and heavier truck movements, often on roads that were previously low-use. Gravel roads are particularly vulnerable — they deteriorate rapidly under heavy loads, especially in wet conditions, which increases grading and maintenance demand. Harvest cycles and logging rotations also create short, intense surges in heavy traffic that accelerate pavement wear.

Because of long-standing funding constraints, many roads have not been upgraded to match current usage. This has created a growing mismatch between demand and capability. Local industries depend on reliable, efficient transport routes, but deteriorating roads increase travel times, vehicle operating costs, and reduce overall productivity.

The below graph from the Infometrics Report - Outlook for the Tararua District Economy Recovery 2024 shows the standing volume of wood in Tararua District rose considerably in the last decade, up 46% to around 7.6 million cubic metres. Nationally, the increase in standing volume was much slower, up just 11% over the decade since 2013.



It is unknown what % of this volume relates to carbon vs production forestry but with lower timber market prices over recent years, as the market increases, we will potentially see an increase in forestry harvesting activity, putting further pressure on our roads.

A number of strategic response options exist to respond to this challenge, including:

- Pavement strengthening on freight/forestry routes
- Updated road hierarchy and access management
- Coordinated planning with forestry operators
- Targeted upgrades on high-use unsealed roads

Problem Statement 3: Affordable & Efficient Investment

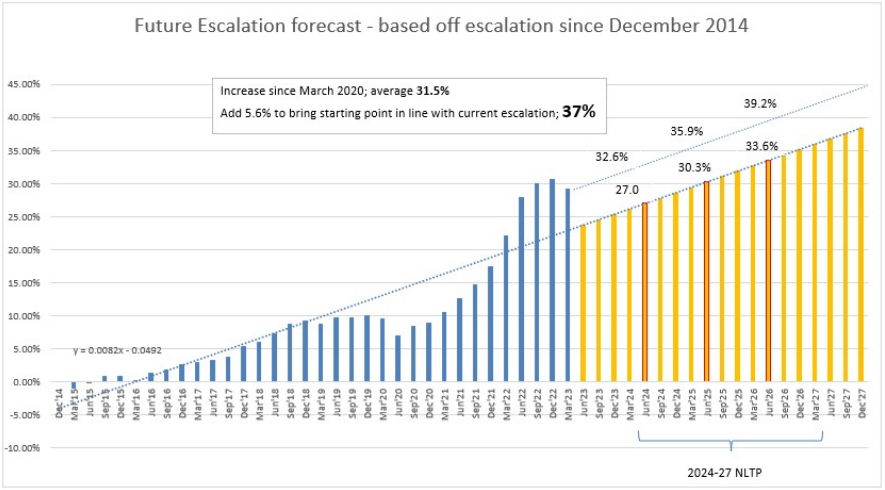
Tararua maintains a large and geographically dispersed rural road network relative to its population and rating base. Rising construction costs and ageing infrastructure are increasing pressure on maintenance and renewal budgets across the network.

Background:

Tararua maintains a large, dispersed, and historically under-developed road network, but has a small rating base. This means available funding cannot keep pace with growing maintenance demand. Heavy vehicle growth, land-use change, and climate pressures are accelerating deterioration across the network.

Historic constrained renewal funding has created a backlog of ageing assets now reaching end-of-life. As renewals fell behind, spending shifted towards reactive maintenance, which is more expensive and less efficient. Many roads also serve small populations or low traffic volumes, making it difficult to justify higher-cost upgrades.

At the same time, construction, materials, labour, and compliance costs have risen sharply. The same dollar now buys less maintenance and fewer upgrades than in previous years, further widening the gap between what the network needs and what current funding can deliver.



Escalation forecast for last LTP (to be updated for next AMP)

Strategic response options include:

- Preventative maintenance to slow deterioration (using condition and severity-based programming to target the right treatment at the right time)
- Risk-based renewal timing ("sweat the asset")
- Multi-year programming and procurement efficiencies
- Aligning service levels to hierarchy and affordability
- Planned asset retirement aligned to affordability – intentionally reducing service expectations on selected low-priority assets, accepting run-to-failure outcomes.

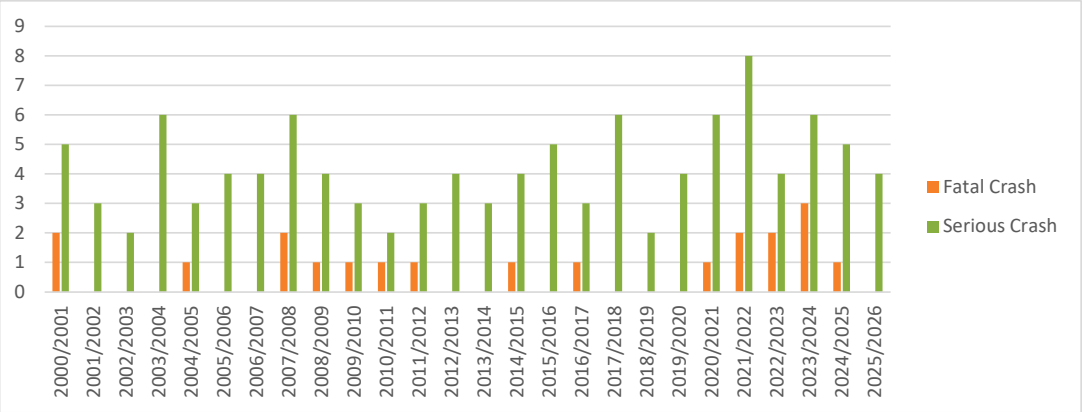
Problem Statement 4: Hazard & Safety Management

Our rural road network contains inherent safety risks – narrow widths, poor surfaces, limited shoulders, and inconsistent hazard protection that fall short of modern safety expectations and require increasingly expensive interventions.

Many of our rural roads were built to historic low-volume standards and were never designed for today's traffic speeds, vehicle sizes, or modern safety expectations, and road widths. Increased travel speeds combined with narrow carriageways and limited shoulders leave little room for error, increasing the likelihood of run-off-road crashes, particularly on curves and unsealed sections.

Safety assets across the network are ageing and inconsistent, with limited signage, safety rails and guardrails, and variable delineation reducing driver guidance and protection. These risks are amplified by a mixed traffic environment where heavy trucks, farm machinery, school buses, cyclists, and light vehicles all share constrained rural roads.

The consequence of limited funding having to be spread across a large network drives encourages reactive approaches to hazard management, or improvements only possible alongside certain renewal activities. This delays interventions, and allows safety risks to escalate before they can be addressed.



Crash Analysis Data for Tararua

Strategic response options include:

- Prepare and submit a strong, evidence based Low-Cost Low-Risk safety programme to NZTA
- Surface and drainage hazard mitigation in highest risk areas
- Renewal and standardisation of safety assets
- Proactive hazard monitoring

Potential Weightings for Problem Statements

Weightings have been proposed for each Problem Statement, which feedback will be sought from Elected Members on. Weightings help us focus effort when developing our detailed funding options (for Workshop 3) and help us justify investment when we take our programme submissions and AMP to NZTA.

The below are potential weightings for discussion. These are provided by the team based on understanding of the GPS funding priorities, funding environment, and asset risks and needs.

Problem Statement	Weighting (%)
Network Reliability & Resilience	30
Supporting Local Economy & Access	25
Affordable & Efficient Investment	30
Safety & Hazard Management	15

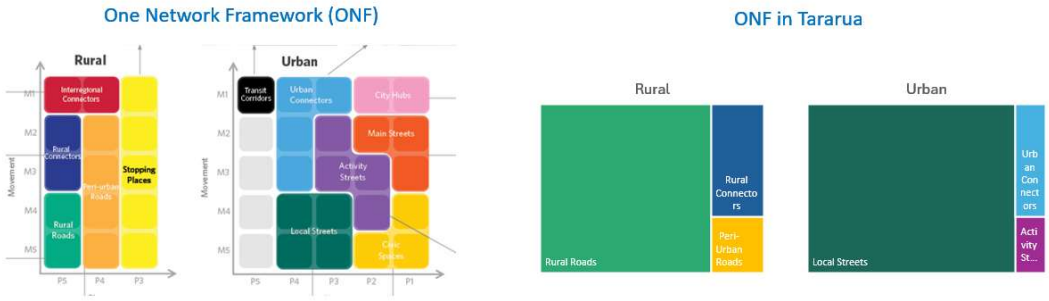
Road Hierarchy and Levels of Service

The workshop presentation outlines Tararua's Road Hierarchy and draft Service Statements and explains how this may link with our Levels of Service for the upcoming 2027 AMP period.

NZTA are in the process of rolling out a new national road classification system, called the One Network Framework (ONF) which is a broad tool that has been developed to manage the wider variety of roads across New Zealand.

Tararua Alliance have been actively working to implement the ONF, with all Councils required to fully implement this during the 2027 AMP period.

While the overall framework has been developed NZTA is still working to define how the framework should actually be used by Councils. NZTA are currently working on a Service Outcomes and Performance (SOaP) Framework for ONF and we waiting to see what this will mean for Tararua.



With most of our road network being low-volume rural roads, we currently have around 74% of our network classified as "Rural Roads", which doesn't provide us with much opportunity to differentiate our service levels and investment using the ONF.

Our focus therefore is to use a simplified version of the ONF for Urban, and the "General Traffic" class of the ONF for rural (shown below).

Class	Related ONRC Class	Strategic Significance	ONRC Metric / class differentiator (VPD)
GT1	ONRC - High Volume.	The high-volume movement of people nationally or to nationally significant locations. Nationally significant routes.	Urban > 35,000 Rural > 20,000
GT2	ONRC – National	The movement of people nationally or to nationally significant locations	Urban > 25,000 Rural > 15,000
GT3	ONRC – Regional	Connectors providing significant movement of people between cities and regions.	Urban > 15,000 Rural > 10,000
GT4	ONRC – Arterial	Connectors providing significant movement of people through or between neighbourhoods and towns.	Urban > 5,000 Rural > 3,000
GT5	ONRC – Primary Collector	Major collectors that link neighbourhoods to townships/districts.	Urban > 3,000 Rural > 1,000
GT6	ONRC – Secondary Collector	Minor collectors that link local areas to neighbourhoods.	Urban > 1,000 Rural > 200
GT7	ONRC – Access	Movement within a local area or to access areas outside the local area.	Urban < 1,000 Rural < 200
GT8	ONRC – Low Volume	Low volume movement within a local area	Urban < 200 Rural < 50

With a large number of Low Volume Rural Roads (GT8), we have introduced additional 'sub-categories' for the very low volume roads. A number of other councils are also looking to take the same approach this next LTP period, given the funding pressures and the need to better prioritise investment.

The following table details the proposed hierarchy for Tararua.

Description	Average Daily Traffic	Service Statement	Example
Urban Streets (4% of total network)	**>50**	• Tararua's main (non-state highway) urban streets with high multi-modal use • Road formation is typically two-lane sealed carriageways and includes footpaths, crossings, parking, kerb and channel • Proactive maintenance approach to ensure maximum asset life and resilience – users experience a consistently smooth, comfortable ride with minimal defects	
Local Streets (.5% of total network)	**<50**	• Typically low-use streets where access and safety take priority over ride comfort and amenity • Intended to provide safe, low-speed access to residential houses with minimal through-traffic and low pedestrian use • Maintained using a predominantly reactive, risk-based approach focused on keeping routes safe and passable	
Urban Service Lanes (0.1% of total network)	**<10**	• Typically narrow, low-use service lanes which provide access to one or two businesses or residential properties and a very low number of pedestrian users • Predominantly reactive maintenance approach with focus on maintaining access rather than comfort and amenity	
Peri Urban Roads (2% of total network)	**All**	• Providing access to residential properties on the urban fridge, but at a lower density than urban areas • These roads often see a mix of people using the roads for recreation, and those traveling for work or accessing services in urban areas – some pedestrian and cyclist activity catered for through signage and wider berms • Road formation varies depending on traffic volumes, but users generally experience a smooth ride, with occasional roughness tolerated - proactive maintenance approach	

Rural Connector Routes (10% of total network)	**200+**	• Highest-function rural roads - key connecting routes between rural communities and urban areas • Two lane, full width sealed roads - fairly straight alignment, well drained • Full centre and edgeline marking, safety hazards managed through barriers, signage and edgemarker posts • Smooth, reliable ride with proactive maintenance approach to achieve maximum asset life and resilience	
Rural Access Routes (33% of total network)	**50 - 200**	• Still important through-routes carrying school buses, dairy tankers and general rural traffic, linking small farming communities • Two lane, slightly narrower roads with some windy sections and inconsistent shoulder width and grades • Centre and edgeline marking, sight rails and marker posts are hazard specific • Reliable, reasonably smooth ride with generally proactive maintenance approach (some non-hazardous surface defects)	
Rural Low Volume Roads (12% of total network)	**30 - 50**	• Roads typically serving farms and forestry with 10+ residential houses. • Mixed sealed/unsealed across hilly and mountainous terrain. Generally two-way but narrower sections • No linemarking, safety features hazard specific only • A basic but safe ride with a more reactive maintenance approach; non-hazardous road surface defects possible for moderate length of time	
Rural Local Roads (35% of total network)	**<30**	• Lower volume, often no-exit roads typically serving up to 10 properties • Mix of sealed / unsealed, often narrow and crossing hilly / mountainous terrain, making them more challenging for inexperienced drivers • No linemarking, safety features hazard specific • Lower level of ride comfort, with roughness and defects common - maintenance + renewals undertaken to achieve minimum standard at least cost; non-hazardous surface defects may be present for moderate periods	
Rural Service Tracks (2% of total network)	**<10**	• Not intended for general access, servicing 1 or no residential houses • Essentially unsealed, one lane farm tracks with limited to no scheduled maintenance • Very low ride comfort, access only	

Heavy Access Roads **Pending classification*	**N/A**	• Roads with a regular volume of heavy vehicle volumes, typically serving forestry or large farming operations • Sealed or unsealed which ideally have wider formations and stronger pavement layers to support axle loads • Ride comfort lower than other rural routes due to pavement stress, but surfaces maintained to remain safe, stable and fit for purpose • some defects occur between maintenance cycles and require increased monitoring to avoid structural degradation	

Service Levels and Performance Measures

Service levels describe what users can reasonably expect from each road category in terms of:

- Condition (surface, pavement strength)
- Reliability (open/closed, recovery time)
- Safety (hazard management, geometry)
- Amenity (ride quality, dust, drainage)

We currently set targets and measure our overall performance across key outcome areas, but these don't differ by road type. These measures are set through each LTP and reported on through Council's Annual Report. We also have internal performance measures that we use to monitor whether specific activities are contributing effectively to our key service outcomes.

LTP Measures relating to Transportation:

Service Outcome	Performance Measure	Target	24/25 results
Our roading network is safe	The change (expressed as a number) from the previous financial year in the number of fatalities and serious injury crashes on the local road network*	< 0	3
Our customers are responded to in a timely manner	Customer service requests relating to roads are responded to within 3 working days*	90%	94.56%
Our roads are maintained to an appropriate standard	Percentage of Residents rating Urban roads as "quite satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" in community survey	75%	51%
	Percentage of Residents rating Rural roads as "quite satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" in community survey	60%	51%
	The average quality of the ride on the sealed road network as measured by smooth travel exposure*	>95%	95%
Our transportation network is being maintained effectively	The percentage of road network that is resurfaced*	>5%	6%
Consent compliance	Consents with Horizons achieving environmental compliance	100%	100%
Achieving the base preservation renewal quantities as set out in the AMP	Our NZTA Annual Achievement reports against forecast renewals^	Baseline measure	85%
Our footpaths are maintained to an appropriate standard	Percentage of residents rate footpaths as "fairly satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" in the community survey	75%	62%
	The percentage of footpaths within the district fall within the footpath condition standards set out in the Asset Management Plan	90%	98.75%

These LTP measures and targets will be reviewed in coming months as part of the wider LTP process.

Using our Road Hierarchy to Better Prioritise Investment

We can start to better use our road hierarchy to prioritise investment during the 2027 AMP period, and examples of this will be touched on in the presentation. More detailed information will then be provided in Workshop 3, once overall funding scenarios have been discussed and feedback obtained.

There are multiple levels at which 'Differential Levels of Service' can be applied, and we aim to use the next LTP period to establish start to better monitor how we're currently performing across each road category, so we can establish clear baselines for each.

We can also start communicating more clearly with our customers around different road categories and improve transparency around what can be expected for each road type (for example having clearer service provision information on TDC's website including GIS maps where customers can look up their road and understand the service outcomes we aim to achieve and why).

Funding Scenarios

The workshop presentation will then take you through the current investment levels for each core asset / activity type, and what this current achieves, and high-level funding options for the upcoming LTP and what impact each option would have.

We are presenting 3 options for consideration based primarily around the Problem Statement covering Affordability. The options are;

A. Maintain the current level of investment with an allowance for inflation.
B. Increase investment to address gaps in level of service / better align with asset needs
C. Mixed approach dependent on asset type – either decrease investment to reduce level of service, purposefully "sweat the asset" or better align with asset needs,

Asset Type - Sealed Pavements

Managing sealed pavements is one of the most critical decisions in the AMP because these assets are long-lived, capital-intensive, and highly sensitive to the timing of interventions. The level of investment chosen will directly influence network condition, resilience, safety, and whole-of-life cost. The three options below reflect different approaches to maintenance, reseals, and rehabilitation, and each has clear implications for deterioration rates, risk exposure, and long-term affordability.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option continues the current level of maintenance, reseals, and rehabilitation, adjusted only for inflation. It broadly maintains the existing level of service in the short term and supports proactive maintenance on higher-use routes. Reseals remain at current delivery levels, which helps protect surface condition, but rehabilitation funding remains below optimal levels. Because renewals are already under pressure, this option allows the structural renewal backlog to continue growing. Over time, more pavements will fall below optimal intervention points, increasing reactive maintenance, reducing resilience to climate-driven events, and raising long-term costs. This option maintains the status quo but does not address the underlying deterioration pressures highlighted in the problem statements.
Problem Statement link: Contributes to managing freight pressures (PS2), affordability challenges (PS3), or safety risks (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option lifts investment in reseals, drainage, and pavement strengthening, particularly on high-demand freight, forestry, and school-bus routes. Earlier and more frequent reseals slow deterioration and protect the pavement structure, while improved drainage reduces edge break, rutting, and surface failures. Increased rehabilitation funding helps reduce the renewal backlog and restores structural condition where pavements are already failing. This option aligns strongly with the road hierarchy by prioritising the highest-value routes and delivers better resilience, fewer emergency works, and improved lifecycle performance. While it requires a higher Council share (rates, reserves, or loans), it provides the best whole-of-life value by intervening before deterioration accelerates. It is the only option that meaningfully responds to climate pressures, heavy vehicle growth, and ageing assets.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate pressures (PS1), heavier vehicle demand (PS2), ageing assets and affordability (PS3), and safety risks (PS4) by focusing investment where it delivers the greatest value.

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment lowers reseal and rehabilitation activity and shifts the network toward a reactive maintenance model. Surfaces age faster, defects become more frequent, and structural failures increase as pavements fall further below optimal intervention points. Rehabilitation backlogs grow rapidly, and condition declines across all road categories, especially rural primary and community roads. This option significantly increases long-term costs, emergency works, and safety risks. It also reduces resilience to climate-driven events and heavy vehicle loading, and is inconsistent with NZTA expectations for maintaining base levels of preservation. While it may reduce short-term expenditure, it creates substantial long-term financial and service-level consequences.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing deterioration, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Asset Type - Unsealed Pavements

Unsealed pavements are highly sensitive to weather, traffic loading, and material quality. Their performance depends on timely grading, drainage maintenance, metalling, and targeted strengthening. Investment levels directly influence network reliability, customer experience, and long-term cost — especially on high-use rural routes, forestry corridors, and school-bus networks.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option continues the current level of grading, metalling, drainage maintenance, and spot improvements, adjusted only for inflation. It maintains a generally acceptable level of service on most routes and supports timely response to defects on higher-use roads. Current metalling quantities stabilise overall condition but do not reduce long-term asset consumption. However, this option does not address the underlying deterioration pressures caused by heavier vehicles, wet-weather vulnerability, and ageing drainage systems. High-use unsealed routes will continue to experience corrugation, rutting, and shape loss between maintenance cycles, particularly during wet periods or forestry harvest peaks. We would aim to partially offset this by being more targeted in our inspection and maintenance approach, focusing on those higher priority and key freight routes. Overall reactive maintenance would remain high, and resilience to storm events does not materially improve.
Problem Statement link: Partially maintains service but does not resolve climate-driven deterioration (PS1), freight pressures (PS2), affordability challenges (PS3), or safety risks on narrow, constrained rural roads (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option lifts investment in metalling, drainage renewals, and targeted strengthening on high-use unsealed routes. Higher-spec aggregate or stabilisation treatments improve surface durability, reduce corrugation, and extend the time between grading cycles. Increased drainage work reduces wet-weather failures, improves resilience, and lowers emergency works. Targeted upgrades on freight, forestry, and school-bus routes help manage heavy vehicle impacts and reduce the sudden spikes in maintenance demand associated with harvest cycles. This option also supports improved customer experience by reducing dust, potholes, and shape loss on priority routes. Over time, it reduces reactive maintenance and improves whole-of-life performance.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate pressures (PS1), heavier vehicle demand (PS2), affordability and lifecycle cost challenges (PS3), and safety risks from poor surface condition (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment lowers metalling quantities, grading frequency, and drainage maintenance. Surfaces deteriorate faster, with more corrugation, rutting, potholes, and shape loss — especially during wet conditions or periods of heavy vehicle activity. Reduced drainage work increases the likelihood of washouts, scouring, and access disruptions. This option significantly increases reactive maintenance and emergency works, as defects escalate more quickly and require more intensive intervention. Customer complaints rise, school-bus and freight reliability declines, and safety risks increase on lower volume, narrow, winding rural roads. Long-term costs rise sharply as deterioration accelerates and more sections require full reconstruction.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing deterioration, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Asset Type - Drainage

Drainage is one of the most critical components of the roading network because it directly influences pavement life, slope stability, and overall network resilience. When drainage underperforms, water remains on or under the road, accelerating rutting, potholes, edge break, and structural failures. Ageing culverts, undersized systems, and increased rainfall intensity are placing growing pressure on the network, particularly in steep hill-country areas. Effective drainage management reduces emergency works, protects pavements, and improves long-term affordability — but only if renewals and maintenance keep pace with deterioration and climate pressures.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option continues the current level of drainage maintenance and renewals, adjusted only for inflation. It maintains basic functionality on most routes and supports reactive clearing after storms. Routine work such as culvert cleaning, minor replacements, and shoulder drainage maintenance continues at current levels, helping prevent some surface water issues. However, this option does not address the underlying deterioration of ageing culverts, under-capacity systems, or the increasing frequency of high-intensity rainfall events. Many drainage assets remain at or near end-of-life, and known problem sites continue to overload during storms. This results in more surface flooding, scouring, and slope failures, particularly on rural routes with steep terrain. Reactive maintenance remains high, and resilience does not materially improve.
Problem Statement link: Partially maintains service but does not resolve climate-driven deterioration (PS1), freight pressures on vulnerable routes (PS2), affordability challenges from growing emergency works (PS3), or safety risks from flooding and edge failures (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option lifts investment in drainage renewals, capacity upgrades, and proactive maintenance. Replacing ageing culverts, upsizing under-capacity assets, and improving water channels significantly reduces flooding, scouring, and pavement deterioration. Increased investment allows targeted upgrades on high-risk slopes, freight routes, and areas repeatedly affected by storm events. Improved drainage performance slows pavement deterioration, reduces emergency works, and strengthens network resilience. This option also supports better long-term asset management by addressing the renewal backlog and reducing the frequency of reactive interventions. Over time, it lowers lifecycle costs and improves reliability for rural communities and industry.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate pressures (PS1), heavy vehicle impacts on vulnerable routes (PS2), affordability and lifecycle cost challenges (PS3), and safety risks from flooding and slope instability (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment lowers drainage maintenance, renewals, and storm response capability. Culverts block more frequently, channels silt up, and ageing assets fail more often. Water remains on the road surface longer, increasing potholes, edge break, and pavement failures. Slopes become more unstable, and washouts become more common during heavy rainfall. This option significantly increases emergency works, reactive maintenance, and long-term costs. Road closures become more frequent, and access for rural communities, school buses, and freight becomes less reliable. Pavement deterioration accelerates, requiring more extensive reconstruction in future years.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing deterioration, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Asset Type - Structures:

Tararua's structures portfolio includes bridges, retaining walls, and large culverts that provide essential access for rural communities, freight, forestry, and emergency services. Many of these structures were built decades ago and are now reaching the end of their design life. Increasing rainfall intensity, scour risk, seismic vulnerability, and heavier vehicle loads are accelerating deterioration. When structures fail or require weight restrictions, detours are often long or unavailable, significantly affecting community access and economic activity. Timely renewals and strengthening are essential to maintain safe, reliable connections and avoid costly emergency interventions.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option continues current levels of inspections, minor repairs, and limited renewals. It maintains basic safety and functionality on most structures but does not address the growing backlog of ageing bridges and retaining walls. Many structures remain beyond optimal renewal timing, and known vulnerabilities (scour, seismic risk, load capacity) persist. Over time, more structures require weight restrictions, temporary repairs, or reactive interventions. This affects freight efficiency, school bus routes, and community access, particularly in areas with limited alternative routes.
Problem Statement link: Maintains minimum service but does not resolve climate-driven scour and flood damage (PS1), freight growth and load demands (PS2), affordability pressures from ageing structures (PS3), or safety risks from outdated assets (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option increases renewals and strengthening of high-criticality bridges, retaining walls, and large culverts. It enables targeted seismic upgrades, scour protection, and replacement of ageing structures that currently pose access or safety risks. Improved structural performance reduces the likelihood of closures, detours, and emergency works. By addressing the renewal backlog, this option improves long-term resilience and reduces lifecycle costs. It also supports economic activity by maintaining reliable access for freight, forestry, and rural communities.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate-driven structural risks (PS1), freight and heavy vehicle demands (PS2), affordability and backlog challenges (PS3), and safety risks from ageing structures (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment defers renewals and limits repairs to only the most urgent issues. Structural condition declines more rapidly, and more bridges require weight restrictions or temporary closures. Retaining walls fail more often, increasing the risk of road closures and slope instability. Emergency works escalate, long-term costs rise sharply, and access for rural communities and industry becomes increasingly unreliable. This option significantly increases safety risks and is inconsistent with NZTA expectations.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing deterioration, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Asset Type - Traffic Services

Traffic services are the safety and visibility components of the network — including signs, line marking, guardrails, and delineation. These assets guide drivers, reduce crash risk, and support safe travel on narrow, winding rural roads. Many of Tararua's safety assets are ageing, inconsistent, or below modern standards, and climate exposure accelerates fading, corrosion, and deterioration. Maintaining clear, visible, and modern safety devices is essential for reducing run-off-road crashes, improving night-time visibility, and supporting mixed traffic environments that include heavy vehicles, school buses, farm machinery, and cyclists.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option maintains current levels of sign replacement, line marking, and safety device upkeep. It preserves basic safety and visibility but does not address the growing renewal backlog or the inconsistency of safety assets across the network. Line marking quality continues to deteriorate on lower-volume roads, and outdated signage remains in place longer.
Problem Statement link: Maintains minimum safety but does not resolve climate-related wear (PS1), increased heavy vehicle safety needs (PS2), affordability pressures (PS3), or inconsistent hazard protection (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option lifts investment in line marking, signage upgrades, guardrail renewals, and delineation improvements. It modernises outdated assets, improves night-time visibility, and reduces crash risk on rural curves and high-risk sections. Standardising safety assets across the network improves consistency and reduces liability.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate-driven wear (PS1), freight and mixed-traffic safety needs (PS2), affordability and lifecycle cost challenges (PS3), and safety risks from outdated assets (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reduced investment leads to fading line marking, outdated signage, and deteriorating guardrails. Visibility declines, crash risk increases, and customer complaints rise. Safety performance deteriorates, particularly on rural curves, unsealed sections, and high-speed routes.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing deterioration, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Asset Type - Footpaths

Footpaths provide essential access for pedestrians, school children, mobility-impaired users, and older residents. Much of Tararua's footpath network is ageing, with sections showing cracking, uneven surfaces, and trip hazards. Customer satisfaction has been declining, and current investment levels are insufficient to address known condition issues or improve accessibility. As urban areas grow and expectations for safe, walkable environments increase, the level of investment in footpath renewals and maintenance will directly influence safety, comfort, and community wellbeing.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option maintains current footpath maintenance and renewals, keeping the network functional but not improving condition or addressing known gaps. Ageing sections continue to deteriorate, and customer satisfaction remains below target. Accessibility improvements remain limited.
Problem Statement link: Maintains basic service but does not resolve affordability pressures (PS3) or safety/accessibility risks (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option increases renewals, repairs, and accessibility upgrades. It improves surface condition, reduces trip hazards, and lifts customer satisfaction. It also supports safer walking environments in urban and peri-urban areas.
Problem Statement link: Responds to affordability and backlog challenges (PS3) and safety/accessibility needs (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reduced investment increases defects, trip hazards, and customer complaints. Condition declines more rapidly, and long-term costs rise as more sections require full reconstruction.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates PS3 and PS4, increasing deterioration, safety risks, and long-term financial pressure.

Work Activity - Environmental Maintenance

Environmental maintenance covers the vegetation, drainage edges, berms, water tables, and roadside environments that keep the network safe, visible, and functional. This includes mowing, vegetation control, tree management, litter removal, and clearing slips and debris after storms. These activities are essential for maintaining sightlines, preventing drainage blockages, reducing fire risk, and ensuring safe access for all road users.

Increasing rainfall intensity, faster vegetation growth, and more frequent storm events are placing greater pressure on environmental maintenance programmes. When investment does not keep pace, vegetation encroaches on the carriageway, drainage becomes obstructed, and slopes become more vulnerable to failure — increasing safety risks, reactive maintenance, and long-term costs.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option continues current levels of vegetation control, berm maintenance, tree management, and storm clean-up, adjusted only for inflation. It maintains basic visibility and access on most routes and supports reactive response after weather events. Routine mowing and vegetation trimming continue at current frequencies, which helps maintain minimum safety standards. However, this option does not address increasing vegetation growth rates, more frequent storm debris, or ageing roadside trees. Drainage edges and water tables remain vulnerable to blockage, and vegetation encroachment continues on lower-volume routes. Reactive maintenance remains high, and resilience to storm events does not materially improve.
Problem Statement link: Partially maintains service but does not resolve climate-driven deterioration (PS1), freight pressures on constrained routes (PS2), affordability challenges from rising reactive costs (PS3), or safety risks from poor visibility and tree hazards (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option lifts investment in vegetation control, tree removal, berm maintenance, and proactive storm-readiness work. Increased trimming and mowing improve sightlines, reduce crash risk, and protect drainage systems from blockage. Proactive removal of hazardous trees reduces emergency callouts and improves resilience during high-wind and heavy-rainfall events. Enhanced environmental maintenance also supports better pavement and drainage performance by preventing water retention, shading, and root intrusion. Over time, this reduces reactive maintenance, improves safety, and lowers whole-of-life costs.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate pressures (PS1), freight and mixed-traffic safety needs (PS2), affordability and lifecycle cost challenges (PS3), and safety risks from vegetation and tree hazards (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment lowers mowing frequency, vegetation trimming, and tree management. Sightlines deteriorate, drainage edges block more frequently, and hazardous trees remain untreated. Storm debris accumulates more often, increasing the likelihood of closures and emergency works. This option significantly increases safety risks, reactive maintenance, and long-term costs. Pavement and drainage deterioration accelerates, and customer complaints rise as visibility and access decline.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing deterioration, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Work Activity - Network & Asset Management

Network and asset management activities provide the planning, data, monitoring, and programme development that underpin the entire roading activity. This includes condition inspections, asset data improvements, forward works programming, customer response management, and the systems needed to meet NZTA business case and reporting requirements. These activities ensure that maintenance and renewal programmes are targeted, risk-based, and aligned with the road hierarchy.

However, increasing climate pressures, heavier vehicle use, and ageing assets require more sophisticated monitoring, modelling, and prioritisation to ensure funding is used efficiently. Without adequate investment in network and asset management, the ability to plan ahead, manage risk, and justify funding to NZTA is significantly reduced — leading to higher reactive costs and poorer long-term outcomes.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option maintains current levels of inspections, data collection, forward works programming, and customer response management. It supports basic compliance with NZTA requirements and allows the network to be managed reactively with some targeted planning. However, this option does not improve data quality, modelling capability, or risk-based prioritisation — all of which are increasingly important as climate pressures, heavy vehicle use, and ageing assets accelerate deterioration. Limited investment constrains the ability to optimise renewals, justify funding, or proactively manage risk.
Problem Statement link: Maintains minimum planning capability but does not resolve climate-driven risk (PS1), freight-related asset stress (PS2), affordability challenges from poor optimisation (PS3), or safety risks from inconsistent prioritisation (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option increases investment in inspections, data quality, modelling, and forward works planning. It enables more accurate deterioration forecasting, better targeting of renewals, and stronger business cases to NZTA. Improved asset management capability reduces reactive maintenance, supports hierarchy-based prioritisation, and strengthens resilience planning. Enhanced customer response systems and monitoring also improve service delivery and transparency.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate pressures (PS1), freight and heavy-vehicle impacts (PS2), affordability and lifecycle optimisation needs (PS3), and safety risks from poor asset visibility (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment limits inspections, reduces data accuracy, and weakens forward works planning. Renewals become less targeted, reactive maintenance increases, and the ability to justify funding to NZTA declines. Risk identification becomes less reliable, and long-term costs rise as assets deteriorate faster.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by reducing planning capability, increasing deterioration, and raising long-term financial and safety risks.

Development (Low-Cost Low-Risk)

The Low-Cost Low-Risk (LCLR) programme delivers small-scale, high-impact safety and access improvements across the network. These include signage upgrades, delineation, shoulder widening, minor realignments, pedestrian improvements, and hazard protection. LCLR projects are essential for addressing known safety risks, improving rural road geometry, and reducing crash severity — especially on narrow, winding rural routes with mixed traffic.

In recent years, funding constraints have limited the ability to deliver proactive safety improvements, despite increasing crash risk, ageing safety assets, and growing community expectations. A well-developed LCLR programme is also a critical component of NZTA's business case expectations and supports alignment with national safety priorities.

Option A — Maintain Current Investment + Inflation
This option maintains current levels of small-scale safety improvements such as signage upgrades, delineation, shoulder widening, and minor hazard treatments. It addresses some known risks but does not allow for proactive or widespread improvements. As crash risk increases on rural curves, narrow shoulders, and mixed-traffic routes, this option struggles to keep pace with emerging safety needs. The ability to respond to community requests or new risk areas remains limited.
Problem Statement link: Maintains basic safety improvements but **does not resolve** climate-driven hazard escalation (PS1), freight-related safety pressures (PS2), affordability challenges (PS3), or rural safety risks (PS4).

Option B — Increase Investment
This option enables a more comprehensive Low-Cost Low-Risk programme, targeting high-risk rural curves, intersections, and narrow shoulders. It supports modernisation of signage, improved delineation, hazard protection, and minor realignments. These improvements deliver high safety benefits at relatively low cost. A stronger LCLR programme also aligns with NZTA expectations and strengthens the business case for safety funding.
Problem Statement link: Directly responds to climate-driven hazard increases (PS1), freight and mixed-traffic safety needs (PS2), affordability and lifecycle value (PS3), and safety risks from outdated assets (PS4).

Option C — Decrease Investment
Reducing investment limits safety improvements to only the most urgent issues. High-risk sites remain untreated, signage and delineation deteriorate, and crash risk increases. This option also weakens alignment with NZTA safety priorities and reduces the likelihood of future co-funding.
Problem Statement link: Exacerbates all four problem statements by increasing safety risk, reducing resilience, and raising long-term financial pressure.

Next Steps

Following this workshop we will take away the feedback on funding scenarios and risk appetite from Elected Members and use this information to refine our funding scenarios.

We will then bring more detailed options back for discussion and decision May / June. We have until 28th August to submit our draft programmes and AMP to NZTA.

Management recommendation

- Endorse problem statements
- Provide feedback on road hierarchy and proposed implementation of Differential Levels of Service
- Provide feedback on funding options to inform further optioneering

Next steps

Date	Action	Who
End May 2026	Workshop 3 – Detailed Funding Options – Decisions	Council, Tararua Alliance Staff
End June / July 2026	Approve draft Activity Management Plan	Council
By 28 August 2026	Submit programme bids and draft Activity Management Plan to NZTA	Tararua Alliance Staff