Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika
Far North District Council

AGENDA

Supplementary Reports

Ordinary Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships Meeting

Tuesday, 14 July 2026

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Council Chamber
Memorial Ave
Kaikohe

MEMBERSHIP:

Heamana Tāmati Rākena
Heamana Tuarua Mane Tahere
Kahika - Mayor Moko Tepania
Kohepu - Deputy Mayor Chicky Rudkin
Cr Arohanui Allen
Cr Hilda Halkyard-Harawira
Cr Davina Smolders
Cr Kelly Stratford
Wallace Rivers Te Kahu o Taonui
Kipa Munro Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia
Pita Tipene Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine
Mike Te Wake Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa
Thomas Hohaia Te Roroa Hapū
Rukuwai Allen Te Whiu Hapū
Nyze Manuel Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa

Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika Far North District Council	**Authorising Body**	Council
	Status	Standing Committee
COUNCIL COMMITTEE	**Title**	Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships Terms of Reference
	Terms of Reference Adoption	11 December 2025 and revised 5 March 2026 , 15 April & 29 April 2026
	Responsible Officer	Manuhautū Te Hono - Group Manager Te Hono

Kaupapa / Purpose

To provide strategic leadership and guidance that strengthens Te Ao Māori perspectives within Council decision-making, ensuring genuine Te Tiriti-based partnership and leadership between FNDC and iwi/hapū, and to provide recommendations to full Council. This includes strengthening Council's relationship with Iwi and Hapū by promoting effective partnership models, improving engagement practices, championing shared decision-making, and adding value to relationships with Māori.

Ngā Huānga / Membership

The Committee will comprise of no less than 4 elected members and external representation.
Kahika / Mayor Moko Tepania is an ex-officio member of all Committees.
All committee members will have full speaking and voting rights.

Cr Tāmati Rākena (Chairperson)

Mane Tahere (by Council resolution 15 April 2026) (Deputy Chairperson)

Kohepu / Deputy Mayor Chicky Rudkin

Cr Arohanui Allen

Cr Hilda Halkyard-Harawira

Cr Kelly Stratford

Cr Davina Smolders (by Council resolution 5 March 2026)

Wallace Rivers - Te Kahu o Taonui Representative (by Council resolution 15 April 2026)

Nyze Manuel – Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa Representative (by Council resolution 29 April 2026)

Kipa Munro – Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia Representative (by Council resolution 29 April 2026)

Mike Te Wake – Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa Representative (by Council resolution 29 April 2026)

Pita Tipene – Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine Representative (by Council resolution 29 April 2026)

Thomas Hōhaia – Te Roroa Hapu (by Council resolution 29 April 2026) - Darren Beatty (alternate)

Rukuwai Allen – Te Whiu Hapu (by Council resolution 29 April 2026)

Kōrama / Quorum

The quorum at a meeting of the Committee is 4 members.

Ngā Hui / Frequency of Meetings

The Committee shall meet 8 weekly.

Ngā Apatono / Power to Delegate

The responsibilities, duties and powers of the Committee are subject to the prohibition on delegation of powers under Clause 32(1), Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002, and any other restrictions on delegation under any other relevant legislation.

Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships may not delegate any of its responsibilities, duties or powers however it may establish working groups to consider issues within the committee's areas of responsibilities noting that working groups have no decision-making powers.

Ngā Herenga Paetae / Responsibilities

The Committees responsibilities are described below:

1. Build and sustain genuine, high-trust relationships based on He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
2. Continue with the development and implementation of Te Kuaka - Te Pae ki Tawhiti 2040 Strategic Intent.
3. Support strategic partnerships that empower communities, Hapū, and Iwi to shape their own development.
4. Oversee Te Pae o Uta Te Ao Māori Framework
5. Facilitate collaboration across sectors to invest in quality infrastructure and initiatives.
6. Develop and approve frameworks for partnership, engagement, monitoring and reporting.
7. Identify and prioritise strategic relationships with Iwi, Hapū, Government agencies, and key stakeholders.
8. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships.
9. Provide direction to the Council on relationship strategies and opportunities.
10. Ensure Te Ao Māori perspectives inform Council strategic and operational work.
11. Recommend to Council, aspects of importance to Māori for incorporation into the development of the Strategic documents (e.g. Te Ao Māori Framework, Annual Plan, Long Term Plan, District Plan)
12. Recommend to Council aspects that the Far North District Council could pursue to develop and or enhance Māori capacity to contribute to Council's decision-making processes.

Ngā Ture / Rules and Procedures

Council's Standing Orders and Elected Member Code of Conduct apply to all meetings.

Reporting and Review of Committee Terms of Reference

In December of each year, the Responsible Officer alongside Democracy Services will submit a report to Council. The report will summarise the activities of the Committee and how it has contributed to the Council's governance and strategic objectives. This will look at whether the Council are meeting the full requirements of the Committee Terms of Reference and whether any amendments are required to the Committees terms of reference to increase efficient and effective decision making.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee will be reviewed as part of this report but can be amended by Council at any point throughout the term.

Te Paeroa Mahi / Order of Business

6 NGĀ PŪRONGO TAIPITOPITO / INFORMATION REPORTS

6.6 NORTHLAND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN REPORT

File Number: **A5865422**

Author: **Tanya Proctor, Head of Infrastructure**

Authoriser: **Guy Holroyd, Chief Executive Officer**

TAKE PŪRONGO / PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships with an overview of the draft Northland Infrastructure Plan and its relevance to Māori development, regional infrastructure investment and partnership opportunities across Te Tai Tokerau.

WHAKARĀPOPOTO MATUA / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northland Infrastructure Plan has been developed through the Northland Forward Together programme to provide a coordinated, long-term approach to infrastructure planning across Te Tai Tokerau. The Plan is a non-statutory, region-led framework that aims to improve infrastructure resilience, enable economic growth, support housing and community development, and strengthen connectivity across the region.

The Plan identifies four key priorities:

- Building resilient infrastructure systems.
- Improving access to places, services and markets.
- Supporting climate resilience.
- Delivering affordable, value-for-money infrastructure.

The Plan recognises iwi and hapū as critical partners, investors and kaitiaki and includes opportunities for Māori economic development through infrastructure investment, renewable energy, housing and whenua-based development initiatives.

TŪTOHUNGA / RECOMMENDATION

That Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships receive the report Northland Infrastructure Plan Report.

TĀHUHU KŌRERO / BACKGROUND

Development Context

The development of the Northland Infrastructure Plan (Plan) is an initiative that arose out of the Northland Forward Together (NFT) strategic workshop held in July 2024. Previous economic development strategies and the Regional Deal proposal highlighted the importance of infrastructure and the need for a clear, actionable, overarching Northland Infrastructure Plan that identifies infrastructure needs and gaps and guides development and sequencing.

It was also identified in the Regional Deal proposal that Northland would undertake the development of a Regional Infrastructure Plan as part of what the region would bring to a regional deal:

"Security of core infrastructure is key to Northland's future prosperity. Northland's topography and demographics – a long thin area with relatively scattered population – is a challenge to those looking to ensure provision of services across all infrastructure areas. Coordinating infrastructure planning, decision-making and investment is key. Taking a collaborative approach will provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the required investments and ensure a robust and sustainable planning,

prioritisation and delivery process occurs. The region has committed to completing a Regional Infrastructure Strategy which is underway."

The Plan is a non-statutory, region-led framework designed to complement existing council, sector and national strategies. Its purpose is not to replace or override established plans, but to articulate a shared infrastructure story for Northland and clarify how investment can be most effectively directed over time. It is underpinned by a 30-year horizon, with a shorter-term (10-year) focus on stabilising lifeline systems, unlocking growth-ready land, and building momentum through early, high-impact enabling investments.

Governance and Funding

The CEO/Mayoral Forum, which retains oversight of the Northland Forward Together programme, considered that the Joint Regional Economic Development Committee (JREDC) was the most appropriate governance body to oversee this work. Northland Inc was identified as the most appropriate organisation to manage the project, supported by relevant staff from the four councils, including council infrastructure managers.

MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA / DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Northland Infrastructure Plan has been provided to the Committee for information. The Plan recognises the importance of working in partnership with iwi and hapū and identifies the role of Māori in supporting the region's long-term social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing.

The Plan includes a regional framework for infrastructure investment and development across Te Tai Tokerau and identifies opportunities for collaboration between councils, iwi and hapū, central government, and the private sector.

The General Manager will provide an overview of the Plan and outline the proposed next steps. The Committee is invited to receive the report only.

PĀNGA PŪTEA ME NGĀ WĀHANGA TAHUA / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROVISION

There are no direct financial implications associated with receiving this report.

Any future funding commitments arising from projects identified within the Northland Infrastructure Plan will be subject to separate Council decision-making processes and budget considerations

ĀPITIHANGA / ATTACHMENTS

1. Toward a Northland Infrastructure Plan - Finals (Rev 4) 17 April 2026 - A5864731 ⇩

Sensitivity: General

Towards a Northland Infrastructure Plan

Unlocking Northland's Potential

Prepared for Northland Inc
Prepared by Beca Limited

14 April 2026

Contents

Appendices

Sensitivity: General

Document History and Status

Revision N°	Prepared By	Description	Date
1	Patrick McVeigh, Stacey Sharp	Draft framework for PSG review	19 December 2025
2	Patrick McVeigh, Stacey Sharp	Draft for PSG review	2 March 2026
3	Patrick McVeigh, Stacey Sharp	Final draft of Towards a Northland Infrastructure Plan for PSG review	14 April 2026
4	Patrick McVeigh, Stacey Sharp	Towards a Northland Infrastructure Plan for April JREDC	17 April 2026

Document Acceptance

Action	Name	Signed	Date
Prepared by	Patrick McVeigh Stacey Sharp		14 April 2026
Reviewed by	Blair Masefield		14 April 2026
Approved by	Blair Masefield		17 April 2026
on behalf of	Beca Limited		

Sensitivity: General

Executive Summary

Northland at a Strategic Inflection Point

Northland stands at a critical juncture in its development trajectory. The region has the combination of advantages: globally competitive natural and environmental assets; a young, growing Māori population with deep land and enterprise connections; proximity to Auckland and Upper North Island markets; and established strengths in primary production, construction, marine industries, and food processing. These fundamentals create a strong foundation for long-term growth and community wellbeing.

However, these **advantages have not yet translated into sustained improvements in productivity, incomes, or resilience.** Persistent infrastructure constraints continue to limit economic performance, raise the cost of doing business, and expose communities and firms to disproportionate disruption. Transport and energy dependencies, constrained servicing capacity, limited redundancy, and uneven investment sequencing have made the region particularly vulnerable to shocks, from extreme weather events to supply-chain disruption.

Recent climate and hazard events have reinforced how integral infrastructure performance is to daily life and regional confidence. When lifeline assets fail, the impacts are immediate and wide-ranging: freight efficiency drops, access to healthcare and education is compromised, tourism activity declines, and investor confidence weakens. These disruptions are not isolated incidents; they reflect underlying system constraints rather than one-off asset failures.

At the same time, **Northland has a clear opportunity,** with strong growth prospects in horticulture, forestry and wood processing, food manufacturing, renewable energy, marine engineering, tourism, and Māori enterprise point to a pathway for lifting regional productivity and incomes. Independent analysis identifies more than $38 billion in latent private investment and a potential pathway to a $60 billion regional economy by 2050, provided enabling infrastructure is delivered in a timely, coordinated and confidence-building way.

The central question is therefore not whether Northland should invest in infrastructure, but **how infrastructure can be planned, sequenced and delivered as a catalyst for system-wide change rather than as a series of disconnected projects**.

Infrastructure as a System

I**nfrastructure operates best as an integrated system**. Transport (including road, air, and coastal shipping), water, energy, digital and social infrastructure are interdependent networks that collectively shape how people move, where housing can be delivered, how industries operate, and how confidently capital is invested.

When infrastructure is planned in silos, the system underperforms. Gaps or delays in one network can erode the value of investments in another, resulting in inefficiency, higher lifecycle costs, and increased vulnerability to disruption. By contrast, when infrastructure investment is coordinated and deliberately sequenced, assets reinforce one another, generating cumulative benefits greater than the sum of individual projects.

A systems perspective enables Northland to shift from reactive responses, often driven by funding cycles or crisis events, to a deliberate, outcome-focused investment approach. It strengthens the alignment between infrastructure provision and spatial planning, clarifies where growth should be enabled, and improves affordability by avoiding over- or under-specification.

Importantly, this approach also strengthens Northland's ability to tell a **coherent investment story**. For central government, iwi partners, and private capital, confidence depends not on isolated assets, but on predictability, resilience and coordination across the system. A region-wide framework that links

infrastructure investment to economic hubs, corridors and sectors is therefore essential to unlocking long-term value.

The Future State Northland Is Working Toward

Looking ahead over the next 30 years, the Plan articulates a future state in which **infrastructure forms an integrated foundation for how Northland's communities live, work and invest**. In this future, people across both urban and rural Northland have reliable access to essential services. Lifeline networks are more robust, climate-resilient and adaptive. Growth is deliberately focused on a small number of well-serviced hubs and towns, where transport, water, energy, housing and social infrastructure are aligned with spatial planning and market readiness.

Primary production remains a strength but is more **effectively connected to higher-value processing, manufacturing and export pathways**, supported by efficient air and coastal shipping options, allowing more value to be retained locally. Energy and digital systems underpin advanced manufacturing, clean tech, logistics and marine industries, strengthening Northland's contribution to national economic performance.

Infrastructure also plays a central role in **reducing climate and hazard risk**. Investments in water security, flood protection, energy resilience and transport redundancy lower exposure for communities and industries, while supporting the transition to a low-emissions economy. Māori enterprise capability is strengthened through equitable access to enabling infrastructure, targeted procurement, and long-term asset stewardship aligned with whenua-based development.

This future state is consistent with Te Rerenga, the Northland Regional Deal proposal, and national infrastructure objectives. It is underpinned by a 30-year horizon, with a deliberate 10-year focus on stabilising lifeline systems, unlocking growth-ready land, and building momentum through early, high-impact enabling investments.

Why Coordination and Sequencing are Critical

Historically, infrastructure **investment in Northland has often been shaped by short-term funding cycles**, reactive responses to disruption, and agency-specific priorities. While this has delivered important assets, it has also resulted in fragmented outcomes, where large, visible projects dominate attention while essential enabling infrastructure is unevenly prioritised.

The consequence has been a system that struggles to deliver cumulative value. Freight efficiency depends not just on individual road upgrades, but on coordinated performance across roads, rail, ports and energy supply. Housing delivery relies on timely water, wastewater, transport access and workforce availability. Energy investment delivers far greater value when planned alongside land use, transport corridors and industrial demand, rather than in isolation.

This Plan therefore places **coordination and sequencing at the centre of regional decision-making**. Sequencing is treated not as a technical afterthought, but as a primary mechanism for reducing risk, improving affordability, and unlocking cross-sector benefits. Delivering enabling infrastructure in advance of or alongside major builds avoids costly rework, smooths funding pressures, and creates clearer pathways for co-investment by iwi, private capital, and central government.

Through coordinated sequencing, infrastructure investment shifts from managing symptoms to addressing underlying system constraints, supporting more durable and confident development outcomes across the region.

Strategic Infrastructure Priorities

The Plan identifies four strategic infrastructure priorities that provide a clear framework for investment decisions and programme sequencing.

1. **Build system resilience and long-term investment confidence**
   Strengthen lifeline networks, transport, health, water, energy, digital, to reduce vulnerability, improve reliability and support investment and community confidence.
2. **Improve access to places, services and markets**
   Enhance multimodal connections within Northland and to Auckland, Northport and economic hubs, improving freight efficiency and access to essential services.
3. **Build climate resilience and responsive infrastructure**
   Protect communities, land and supply chains from climate and hazard risks while leveraging renewable energy and natural climate advantages.
4. **Deliver right-sized, value-for-money infrastructure**
   Invest in solutions that reflect Northland's scale and needs, concentrating growth and infrastructure in strategic hubs where it delivers the greatest long-term value.

Together, these priorities provide a consistent lens for project identification, sequencing and advocacy, enabling Northland to move from a diffuse pipeline to a coherent set of investable programmes.

Regional infrastructure objectives

Following from the strategic priorities, the Plan defines **three clear objectives** that articulate what success looks like in practice and how infrastructure investment will translate into measurable regional outcomes. These objectives provide the bridge between vision and delivery. They guide sequencing decisions, shape programme design, and form the basis for investment discussions with councils, central government, iwi partners and the private sector.

Together, the objectives sharpen focus on **system performance, place-based growth and sector enablement**, ensuring infrastructure investment delivers enduring value rather than short-term or fragmented gains.

Objective 1: Strengthen Lifeline System Resilience - *Build a more resilient and better-connected Northland.*

The first objective is to strengthen the reliability, redundancy and performance of Northland's lifeline networks so people, goods and services can move efficiently within the region and connect reliably to national and global markets.

This objective responds directly to Northland's exposure to disruption from climate events, natural hazards and asset failure. It prioritises investments that reduce isolation, improve safety, and ensure continuity of essential services during shocks, particularly for rural, remote and Māori communities.

Key outcomes sought under this objective include more reliable transport corridors and utilities, reduced vulnerability to single-point failures, stronger performance during extreme weather events, and improved confidence for households, businesses and investors that critical infrastructure will function when it is most needed. This includes consideration of how people and goods can move efficiently across the region, and between the region and national markets.

By strengthening lifeline systems first, the region establishes a stable platform for growth, rather than layering new demand onto fragile networks.

Objective 2: Unlock Regional Economic Hubs and Corridors - *Target investment to the places and corridors that drive regional value.*

The second objective focuses infrastructure investment on the locations where it can generate the greatest cumulative economic impact, Northland's primary hubs, growth towns and strategic corridors.

This objective recognises that dispersing infrastructure investment too widely increases cost and weakens outcomes. Instead, it prioritises coordinated investment along the Whangārei–Northport–Marsden Point corridor and in identified growth nodes such as Otiria–Moerewa, Kaikohe–Ngawha and other servicing-ready towns where land, labour and market demand can be aligned.

By concentrating investment, the Plan seeks to unlock serviced industrial land, enable housing supply, improve freight efficiency, and create clearer pathways for iwi-led and private investment. Transport, water, energy and digital infrastructure are deliberately sequenced together so that each reinforces the others, allowing hubs and corridors to function as integrated economic systems rather than isolated assets.

The intended outcome is a small number of well-functioning, connected economic engines that lift productivity, retain value locally and strengthen Northland's contribution to the national economy.

Objective 3: Prioritise Investment in High-Value Sectors - *Accelerate growth in Northland's highest-potential industries.*

The third objective ensures that infrastructure investment is deliberately aligned with the sectors most likely to deliver long-term regional prosperity. These include advanced manufacturing, clean and renewable energy, primary production and value-added processing, marine engineering, logistics, and tourism.

Infrastructure under this objective is designed not just to support current activity, but to **enable sector transformation**, for example through energy-enabled industrial precincts, improved logistics chains (including airfreight and coastal shipping), reliable water and biosecurity systems, and digital connectivity that supports innovation and productivity.

This objective places strong emphasis on Māori economic development, recognising iwi and hapū as landowners, investors, employers and kaitiaki. By aligning infrastructure provision with whenua-based development opportunities and procurement pathways, the Plan supports inclusive growth and intergenerational wealth creation.

Success under this objective is measured by higher-value jobs, stronger sector clusters, increased export capability, reduced emissions intensity, and a more diverse and resilient regional economy.

Individually, each objective addresses a critical dimension of Northland's infrastructure challenge. Collectively, they ensure the Plan remains disciplined and outcome-focused:

- **Resilient lifelines** provide the confidence and stability needed for investment.
- **Unlocked hubs and corridors** ensure infrastructure effort is concentrated where it delivers the greatest return.
- **High-value sector enablement** translates infrastructure capacity into productivity, jobs and incomes.

From Objectives to Action: Regional Transformers

To translate strategic intent into delivery, the Plan introduces **Regional Transformers** as the core implementation mechanism. Transformers group interdependent projects and initiatives into outcome-focused programmes that deliver system-level change rather than isolated gains.

Transformer 1: Connecting Northland

Deliver a resilient, integrated road, air, rail, port, digital and energy corridor connecting Northland to Auckland and national markets.

Transformer 2: Northport–Marsden Point Energy and Logistics Precinct

Position Marsden Point and Northport as a nationally significant logistics, manufacturing and clean energy gateway.

Transformer 3: Resilient Growth-Ready Towns and Liveable Communities

Enable housing delivery, workforce capacity and climate resilience.

Trasnformer 4: Processing, Advanced Manufacturing and Integrated Logistics

Support export industries and retain greater value within Northland by linking primary production, processing hubs, inland logistics facilities, manufacturing and marine engineering precincts.

Transformer 5: Clean and Resilient Energy System — The Energy Bridge
Accelerate the transition to a clean, secure and affordable energy system that powers industrial growth and regional resilience.

Each Transformer clarifies dependencies, sequencing and enabling actions across transport, water, energy, digital and housing systems. This structure provides a clear line of sight from long-term outcomes to near-term delivery and creates a platform for coordinated engagement with central government, iwi and investors.

Funding, Financing and Delivery Pathways

Delivering Northland's infrastructure ambitions requires more than capital funding; it requires strong coordination, investable propositions, and effective mobilisation of diverse funding and financing tools.

Public funding will remain essential for lifeline and resilience assets, but it will not be sufficient on its own. The Plan therefore adopts a disciplined value-for-money approach aligned with the National Infrastructure Plan and the Government's Funding and Financing Framework. This includes prioritising asset maintenance and renewals, testing non-build and lower-cost options first, applying cost benchmarking, and strengthening project readiness through robust business case development.

User and beneficiary pays mechanisms are emphasised where appropriate, alongside tools such as targeted rates, demand management, levy-based financing, and blended public–private–iwi investment models. The Plan also provides a framework for engaging with national funding mechanisms and coordinating advocacy through a single regional narrative.

From Strategy to Implementation

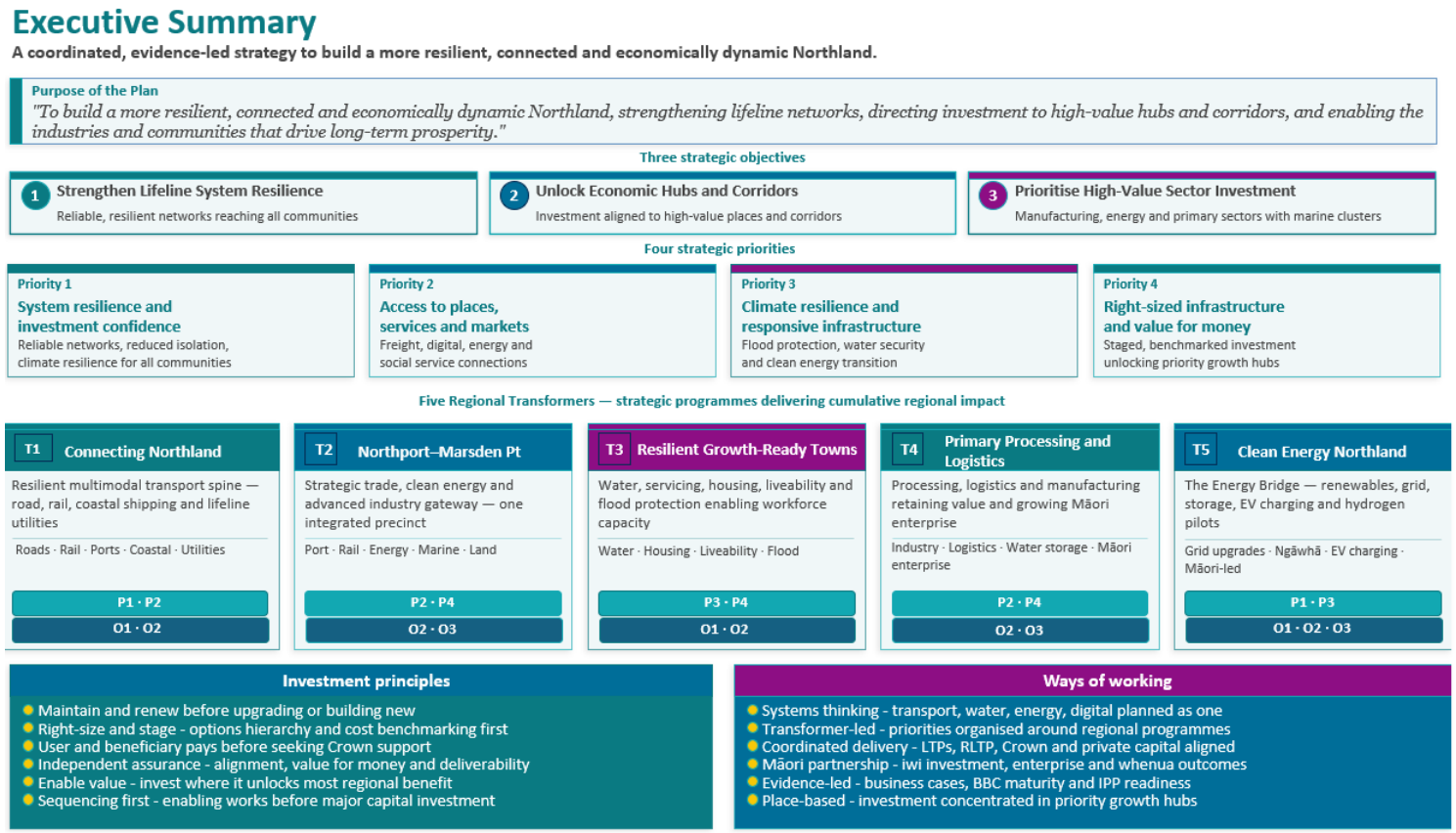
The Northland Infrastructure Plan is a living, action-oriented framework. Its success depends on disciplined implementation, strong regional coordination, and ongoing alignment with statutory planning processes.

Northland Inc will play a central coordination role, working with councils, iwi and hapū, central government and the private sector to steward the regional programme, align sequencing, and support investment readiness. Implementation will focus on embedding priorities into council Long Term Plans and the Regional Land Transport Plan, strengthening business case development, and mobilising early enabling investments through the Regional Transformers.

By focusing on systems, outcomes and sequencing, the Plan positions infrastructure as a catalyst for resilience, inclusive economic growth and long-term wellbeing, ensuring that Northland's natural, cultural and economic strengths are translated into enduring prosperity for current and future generations.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 1: Northland Infrastructure Plan Summary



1 Infrastructure as a Catalyst for Northland's Future

1.1 Northland at a Turning Point

Northland is at a pivotal point in its long-term development. The region has globally competitive natural assets; a growing and youthful Māori population; proximity to Auckland markets; and established strengths in horticulture, forestry, construction, food processing and marine industries. Together, these characteristics provide a **strong foundation for sustained economic growth and improved wellbeing**.

However, these advantages have **not yet translated into long-term improvements** in regional productivity, incomes or resilience. Persistent infrastructure constraints continue to dampen economic performance, raise the cost of doing business, restrict access to opportunity and expose communities to heightened climate and natural hazard risk. For many households and businesses, infrastructure reliability directly shapes daily experience, influencing access to employment, education, healthcare and markets.

Recent extreme weather events have reinforced how closely **infrastructure performance is linked to community wellbeing and economic confidence**. Northland's reliance on a small number of transport and energy corridors, combined with constrained servicing capacity and limited redundancy, results in disproportionate impacts when disruption occurs. Asset failure or network outages have immediate consequences for freight efficiency, emergency response, tourism activity and investor confidence.

At the same time, **Northland has a clear window of opportunity**. Growth in horticulture, forestry and wood processing, food manufacturing, renewable energy, marine industries, tourism and Māori enterprise provides a pathway to lift regional incomes and build a **more resilient, diversified and inclusive economy**. Realising this potential depends on the timely delivery of enabling infrastructure that is reliable, right-sized and deliberately aligned with spatial and economic development outcomes.

This opportunity is reinforced by analysis from the Northland Corporate Group, which identifies more than $38 billion in latent private investment and a pathway to a **$60 billion regional economy by 2050**[1]. That analysis highlights the central role that transport, energy and logistics infrastructure must play in unlocking nationally significant growth and positioning Northland as a stronger contributor to New Zealand's future prosperity.

1.2 Infrastructure as a System, Not a Set of Projects

When considering the role that infrastructure plays in unlocking Northland's potential, it is important to recognise that **infrastructure functions as a system**, not as a collection of discrete assets. Transport (including road, air, rail, and coastal shipping), water, energy, digital and social infrastructure operate as interconnected networks that collectively shape how people move, where housing can be delivered, how industries operate and how confidently investment capital is committed.

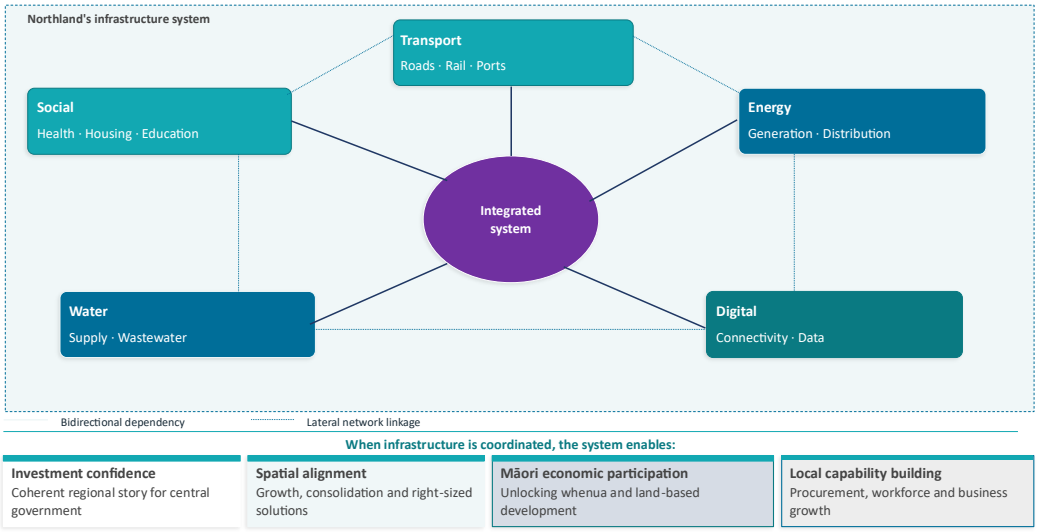
When infrastructure is planned and delivered in isolation, the system underperforms. Gaps in one network can undermine investments in another, creating inefficiencies, increasing costs and amplifying vulnerability to disruption. By contrast, **when infrastructure investment is coordinated and deliberately sequenced, individual assets reinforce one another**. This creates cumulative benefits that no single project can achieve on its own, enabling higher value outcomes across housing, industry, logistics and community wellbeing.

---

[1] NZIER (2025). Ka Tutuki i a Te Tai Tokerau: He Mana Whakahī ā-Rohe mō te Oranga Rawa ā-Motu — Te Tai Tokerau Northland Delivers: A Regional Powerhouse for National Prosperity. Report to the Northland Corporate Group, July 2025.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 2: Understanding Infrastructure as a System



Infrastructure systems in Northland are interdependent. Coordinated planning and sequencing create outcomes that no single project can deliver on its own.

A systems approach allows the region to shift from reactive responses to asset failure or growth pressure toward a more intentional, outcome-focused investment strategy. It strengthens the **alignment between infrastructure provision and spatial planning**, clarifying where growth should be supported, where consolidation is more appropriate and where affordability pressures require tailored, place-specific solutions. It also improves the region's ability to present a **coherent investment story** to central government and funding agencies, replacing fragmented project advocacy with a clear, region-wide narrative.

Importantly, viewing infrastructure as a system also **enhances Northland's attractiveness to private and institutional investors**. Precinct-based development, energy-enabled industry and export-oriented manufacturing all rely on multiple forms of infrastructure working together. Confidence in investment decisions depends not only on individual assets, but on the predictability, resilience and coordination of the system as a whole.

1.3 The Future State Northland Seeks

Looking out over the next 30 years, Northland requires the infrastructure that can **enable a connected, resilient and productive regional system** that supports long-term social, cultural and economic wellbeing. In this future state, infrastructure acts as an integrated foundation for how people live, work and invest across the region.

In this future, communities across both rural and urban Northland have **reliable access to essential services**, regardless of location. Primary production and natural resource strengths are better connected to higher value processing, innovation and market pathways, supported by efficient air and coastal shipping options, allowing more value to be retained locally. Growth is focused in a small number of well-serviced hubs and towns where infrastructure **investment is intentionally aligned with spatial planning**, housing supply and industry needs, rather than being dispersed in ways that increase cost and risk.

Infrastructure investment in this future Northland also plays a critical role in **reducing exposure to climate and natural hazard risk** and supporting the transition to a clean energy economy. Transport, energy, water and digital systems are more resilient and adaptive, enabling communities and businesses to withstand disruption and respond confidently to change. **Māori enterprise capability is strengthened** through

equitable access to enabling infrastructure, targeted procurement and investment that supports whenua-based development and long-term asset stewardship.

This future vision **aligns with existing regional strategies** and with the aspirations articulated by the Northland Corporate Group. It is grounded in a 30-year horizon, recognising that reshaping regional systems takes time, and is supported by a 10-year investment focus aimed at stabilising the system, reducing immediate constraints and building momentum. **Over the next decade, infrastructure must strengthen lifeline networks**, unlock housing and serviced industrial land, and improve freight efficiency to create a platform of certainty for communities, iwi and investors.

1.4 Why Coordination and Sequencing Matter

Historically, infrastructure **investment in Northland has often been shaped by short-term funding cycles**, reactive responses to disruption and agency-specific priorities. While this approach has delivered important individual assets, it has also produced fragmented investment patterns in which highly visible capital projects dominate attention, while **essential enabling infrastructure is unevenly prioritised or underfunded**.

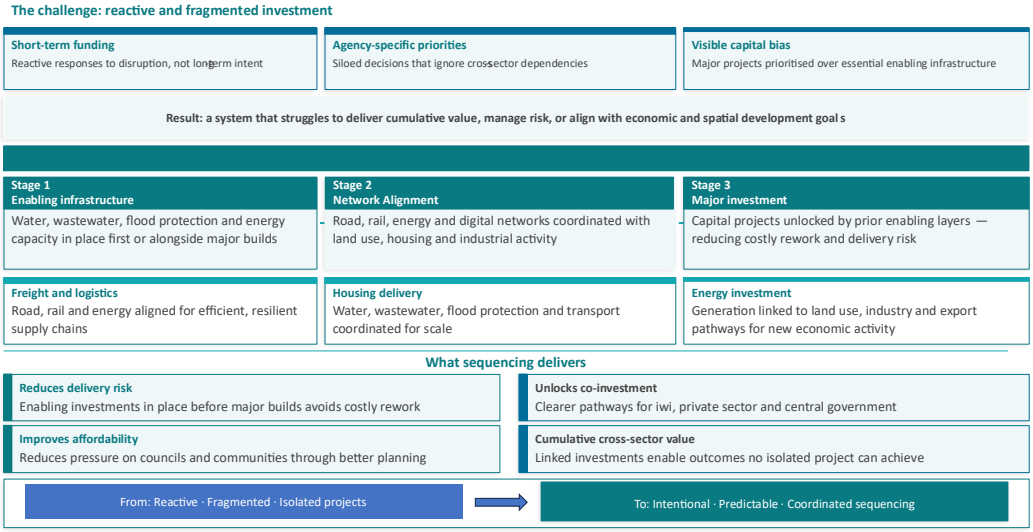
The result has been a **system that struggles to deliver cumulative value or manage risk effective**ly. Freight performance depends not just on individual road upgrades, but on the coordinated functioning of road, rail, port and energy systems. Housing delivery relies on the timely availability of water and wastewater capacity, flood protection, transport access and an accessible workforce. Energy generation and distribution achieve far greater value when planned alongside land use, transport and industrial development, rather than in isolation.

The Northland Infrastructure Plan responds by placing **coordination and sequencing at the centre of regional decision-making**. Sequencing is not simply a technical or timing consideration; it is a mechanism for reducing delivery risk, improving affordability and unlocking cross-sector benefits. Ensuring that enabling investments are in place before or alongside major builds reduces pressure on councils and communities, avoids costly rework and creates clearer pathways for co-investment by iwi, the private sector and central government.

Through coordinated sequencing, infrastructure investment shifts from managing symptoms to addressing underlying system constraints, supporting more durable and confident development outcomes across the region.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 3: Sequencing Infrastructure Investment



Infrastructure delivers the greatest value when enabling investments are sequenced correctly. Coordinated sequencing reduces risk and unlocks outcomes that isolated projects cannot achieve.

1.5 Addressing Inequity Through Infrastructure

Given Northland's specific socio-economic context[2], **infrastructure investment in the region must play a different and more deliberate role** than in regions where baseline service provision is already secure. The region faces deep-seated socio-economic disparities, both within Northland and relative to the rest of New Zealand, including gaps in income, service quality, health outcomes and digital access.

A younger and rapidly growing Māori population, alongside higher levels of deprivation in many communities, underscores the **importance of infrastructure as a catalyst for change rather than a neutral input**. Investment must be designed to expand access to opportunity, support pathways into employment and enterprise, and **strengthen intergenerational wellbeing**. Without targeted, place-based solutions, there is a risk that infrastructure delivery unintentionally reinforces existing disparities rather than reducing them.

This perspective aligns strongly with Te **Rerenga, Northland's Economic Wellbeing Pathway**[3], which positions infrastructure as the backbone of a wellbeing economy grounded in people, place and the environment. Te Rerenga reinforces the need for investment that is sequenced, inclusive and responsive to the priorities of whānau, hapū and iwi, while also applying affordability discipline and avoiding over-specified solutions that are unsustainable over the long term.

Addressing long-standing inequity is therefore not a secondary outcome of infrastructure investment in Northland. It is a central test of whether the system is working as intended.

[2] See supporting Regional Profile report prepared by MartinJenkins

[3] Northland Inc. (2024). Te Rerenga: Taitokerau Northland Economic Wellbeing Pathway. Northland Inc., Whangārei.

Sensitivity: General

1.6 Role and Purpose of the Northland Infrastructure Plan

The Northland Infrastructure Plan is a non-statutory, **region-led framework** designed to complement existing council, sector and national strategies. Its purpose is not to replace or override established plans, but to **articulate a shared infrastructure story for Northland and clarify how investment can be most effectively directed** over time.

By taking a regional, systems-based perspective, the Plan identifies where coordinated investment will have the greatest impact, rather than dispersing resources across disconnected projects. It strengthens engagement with central government and funding agencies by **improving clarity around priorities, sequencing and affordability**. It also enhances investment readiness by presenting a more coherent pipeline of regional programmes, while creating a stronger platform for iwi partnership, private capital participation and co-investment.

The Plan works backwards from the **outcomes Northland seeks for its communities, economy and environment to identify the enabling infrastructure required to achieve them**. Detailed project-level information sits in supporting appendices, allowing the main report to focus on strategic direction while maintaining a robust evidence base for decision-making.

Taken together, the Plan provides the structure, coordination and intent needed to move from fragmented, project-by-project delivery toward a more confident, integrated and regionally aligned infrastructure system, capable of supporting Northland's long-term development over coming decades.

Further detail on the strategic context governance, development process and alignment with existing strategies is provided in Appendix A.

2 Strategic Infrastructure Priorities for Northland

2.1 Purpose of this Section

This section identifies three **strategic infrastructure priorities** for Northland. These priorities, which are informed by and aligned with **Te Rerenga** and the **Northland Regional Deal Proposal**, provide clarity on where coordinated infrastructure investment will deliver the greatest regional impact. They establish a framework for prioritising and sequencing programmes and projects and guide both strategic decision making and practical investment pathways across **Councils, iwi and hapū, central government and the private sector**

Priority 1: Build system resilience and long-term investment confidence

Northland's development depends on lifeline networks, including **transport, energy, water, digital end telecommunications,** that are reliable, resilient and capable of withstanding disruption. Key areas of focus include strengthening the reliability of **state highway and local road corridors**, critical bridges and rail connections; improving the resilience of **energy transmission and distribution**; ensuring **water services** are robust and well managed; and lifting the coverage and reliability of **digital connectivity**.

An integrated approach is required, recognising interdependencies across **roads, bridges, rail, ports, airports and digital**. **Aviation** and **coastal shipping** play important roles in resilience, tourism, freight flexibility and emergency response, supported by enabling settings such as **customs and border capability** where required.

This priority aligns with the focus in Te Rerenga on **resilient, well-functioning infrastructure** systems that uphold Te Taiao and ensure reliable access to essential services across all communities. It also reinforces the Regional Deal proposal by strengthen**ing the performance and redundancy of transport, energy, water and digital networks,** building long term investment confidence and ensuring benefits are realised for rural, remote and Māori communities as well as major economic and employment centres.

The **intended outcomes** of this priority include: improved reliability of key corridors and utilities; reduced isolation during disruption; safer and more efficient movement of goods and people; stronger system performance in climate and hazard events; and higher investor confidence based on predictable infrastructure performance.

Priority 2: Improve access to places, services and markets

Reliable and efficient access within Northland and to the wider Upper North Island underpins equitable participation and competitiveness. This priority focuses on **maintaining and improving connections** between towns, rural communities and industry locations and clusters, strengthening freight pathways to Northport, Auckland and key economic hubs, improving digital and energy access, and supporting continued access to social infrastructure and transport hubs.

Investment will improve **multimodal connectivity** through targeted upgrades to road and rail corridors, enhanced **port and airport capability**, and better **first and last mile** connections. Access to health, education and social services is a core consideration, alongside the needs of key sectors and population groups, including the **primary sector, tourism and marine engineering** supply chains.

This priority aligns with the emphasis in Te Rerenga on **ensuring people and enterprises can reliably reach the services, opportunities and markets that support wellbeing**, with transport, digital and energy access treated as essential enablers of equitable participation. It also reflects the Regional Deal focus on strengthening **multimodal connections within Northland and to the Upper North Island**, improving access

for rural, remote and Māori communities, and supporting key sectors by enhancing road, rail, port, airport and first and last mile links to lift productivity and competitiveness.

The **intended outcomes** of this priority include: more reliable and resilient access to places, services and markets; improved freight efficiency to Northport and regional processors; better digital and energy access; and clearer pathways for people and businesses to participate fully in the regional economy.

Priority 3: Build climate resilience, readiness and responsive infrastructure

Northland faces growing climate and natural hazard risks that affect communities, productive land, supply chains and long-term investment confidence. Addressing these risks is essential to safeguarding people and places, protecting key industries, and ensuring infrastructure systems can withstand more frequent and severe weather events. At the same time, Northland's geography and climate present **distinct advantages** that, if deliberately enabled through infrastructure, can support productivity, diversification and long-term wellbeing.

This priority focuses on **strengthening resilience** while also leveraging Northland's evolving climate conditions to support future economic opportunities. As temperatures rise and growing conditions shift, the region is increasingly positioned to support a wider range of **subtropical and climate-resilient crops**, building on existing horticultural strengths and opening pathways for diversification within primary production and processing.

Realising these opportunities depends on **secure water storage and distribution systems**, resilient land and catchment management, and access to **safe, flood-protected areas** for orchards, processing facilities and supply-chain infrastructure. The water storage and servicing investments currently underway and planned across Northland are therefore central not only to managing climate risk, but to enabling climate-adapted production systems that can respond to change with confidence and scale over time.

This priority emphasises proactive investment in **flood resilience and catchment-based responses**, improved water security, and strengthening transport, energy and digital networks to withstand disruption,w while also avoiding investment in flood prone locations. It also supports the transition to a **low-emissions, renewable energy system**, reducing long-term exposure to climate risk while enabling energy-dependent industries and rural production. Together, these investments position Northland to respond to climate change not only as a risk to be managed, but as a **strategic inflection point** in the region's long-term development, aligned with Te Taiao priorities in *Te Rerenga* and the Regional Deal's focus on climate resilience and future energy.

The **intended outcomes** of this priority include reduced disruption and emergency response and recovery costs; more diversified economic base; improved security and reliability of water and energy systems; more resilient transport and supply chains; and greater ability to attract and retain investment by lowering risk and providing long-term certainty.

Priority 4: Deliver right sized infrastructure and value for money for Northland

Northland requires infrastructure solutions that reflect the **scale, character and needs** of its communities and **available resources**. This priority focuses on **right sizing, sequencing and tailoring** investments so they deliver value for money, remain affordable, and directly support existing and emerging **growth markets** and opportunities.

The focus should be on unlocking a small number of **regional economic hubs** and enable town development where serviced land, housing, utilities and transport access can be provided efficiently. Priority locations include **Northport and Marsden Point**, and towns such as **Whangārei, Dargaville, Maungaturoto, Kaikohe–Kawakawa, Kerikeri–Waipapa and Kaitaia**, where coordinated investment can catalyse inclusive, place-based growth and strengthen sector performance.

Delivery depends on alignment between infrastructure investment, **spatial planning** and **forward works programmes**. Transport, water, energy and social infrastructure need to be sequenced with **land use** and **market readiness** to avoid overbuilding, reduce lifecycle costs and ensure timely, sustainable growth.

This priority aligns with the focus in Te Rerenga on ensuring that infrastr**ucture investment is purposeful, efficient and grounded in the actual needs of communities,** supporting a wellbeing economy by directing resources to where they deliver the greatest impact. It also reflects the Regional Deal commitment to right **sized, value for money infrastructure that is tailored to place**.

The **intended outcomes** of this priority include: smarter, right sized investment that stretches every dollar further by prioritising affordable solutions, reducing over specification, and directing spend to the highest value regional outcomes; increased housing and industrial capacity in targeted locations; improved investment readiness of growth precincts; clear sequencing that maintains affordability and value for money; and stronger alignment between infrastructure delivery and regional and district spatial plans.

2.2 How these priorities will be used

These priorities provide the **lens through which programmes are identified, projects are selected, and investment is prioritised and sequenced** throughout the Plan. They are intended to have enduring value beyond this document and can be applied over time as part of future **business and investment case processes**.

By applying these priorities, the region can move from a broad and often diffuse pipeline of potential infrastructure projects to a **clear and coherent set of investable programmes** This enables more transparent investment decisions and strengthens **evidence-based advocacy**, allowing the region to articulate not only what it is seeking investment in, but why those investments matter and how they contribute to regional and national outcomes.

The priorities also support **more effective regional negotiation with central government**, particularly in relation to transformational investments and enabling regulatory settings. At the same time, they recognise the ongoing importance of local infrastructure provision and the role of **private sector and iwi-led development pathways**, ensuring that national engagement complements rather than displaces local and regional initiative. By providing a shared framework, the priorities help align different investment actors around a common understanding of sequencing, impact and readiness.

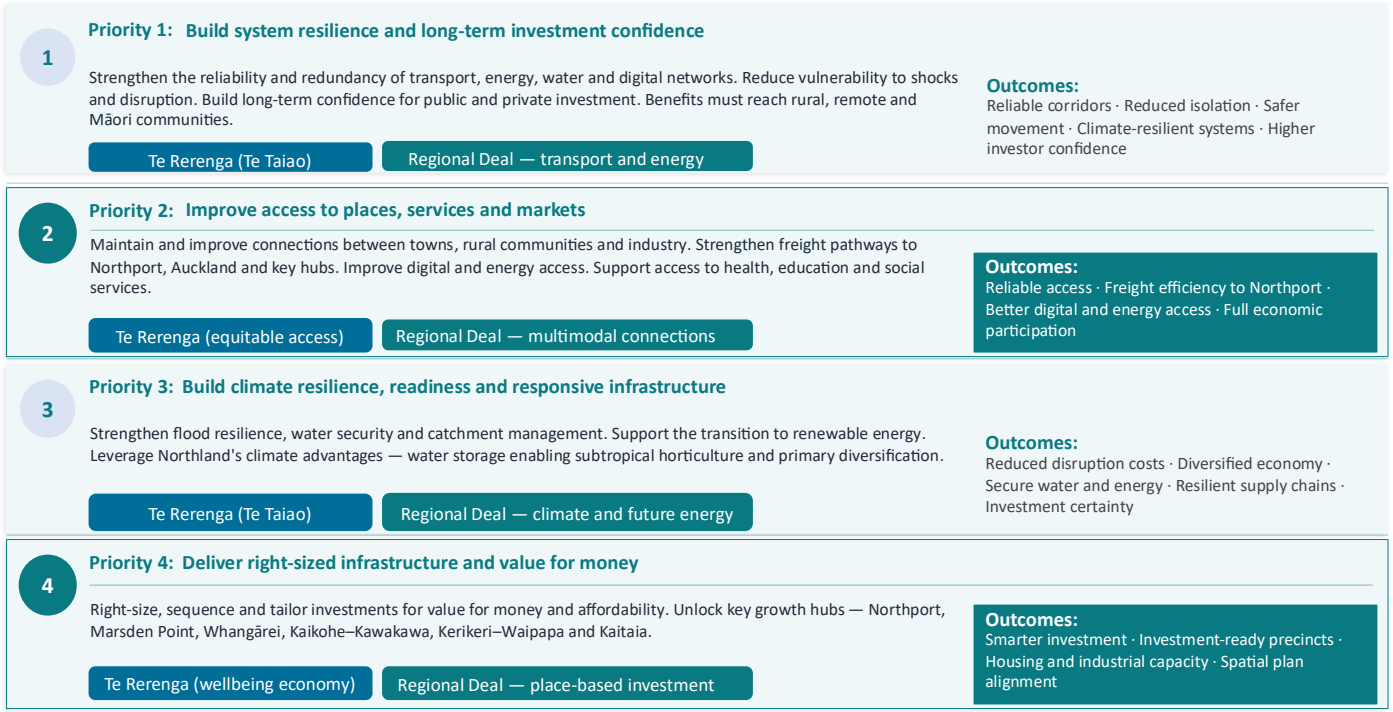
In addition, the priorities strengthen Northland's positioning for **foreign direct investment and broader investment attraction**. By sequencing early enabling infrastructure and signalling where future capacity will be unlocked, the region can create clearer pathways for follow-on investment and precinct-based development. This improves confidence for investors and partners, who require predictability and alignment across infrastructure, land use and regulatory settings before committing capital.

Finally, the priorities inform the development of a **targeted regional procurement framework**. By aligning procurement practices with agreed priorities, including clear targets, guidelines and capacity-building initiatives, infrastructure investment can translate more directly into **regional wealth creation, skills development and employment**, particularly for Māori enterprises and local suppliers. In this way, prioritisation not only shapes what is built, but also how value is retained within the region.

As the Plan moves into implementation, further engagement will be critical. This will test and confirm the priorities, validate which programmes and projects best deliver against them, and identify where shifts in emphasis or structure may be required. Through this iterative process, the priorities become a **living framework**, capable of guiding decision making as Northland's development context evolves while maintaining a clear line of sight to long-term outcomes.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 4: Strategic Infrastructure priorities for Northland



The four strategic priorities provide the framework for selecting, shaping and sequencing infrastructure investment across the region.

3 Purpose and Objectives of the Northland Infrastructure Plan

3.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Plan is:

"To build a more resilient, connected, and economically dynamic Northland by strengthening lifeline networks, directing investment to high-value hubs and corridors, and enabling the industries and communities that will drive the region's long-term prosperity."

Alongside the priorities, the purpose and objectives of this Plan are aligned with **Te Rerenga** and the **Northland Regional Deal** proposal, as well as with the **National Infrastructure Plan**.

Te Rerenga frames **infrastructure as the backbone of an intergenerational wellbeing** economy and calls for region-led, future-focused investment across transport, energy, water, digital and community assets to lift living standards and achieve economic equity by 2040, which this Plan operationalises through sequenced, place-based delivery.

The **Regional Deal** proposal provides the partnering, governance and investment mechanisms to accelerate that delivery, linking enabling infrastructure such as the Energy Bridge, the Northland Corridor and Local Waters Done Well with sector initiatives in future energy, marine manufacturing, primary industries and the visitor economy, so public and private capital move in step.

Together with the priorities of the **National Infrastructure Plan** around resilience, access, climate adaptation and value for money, this alignment ensures Northland's programme is coherent, fundable and outcomes-focused: strengthening lifeline connectivity, unlocking economic hubs and corridors, and prioritising investment into high-value sectors and markets to drive a more resilient, connected and prosperous Northland.

The Plan sets out a clear, long-term infrastructure pathway that strengthens resilience, improves regional connectivity and supports a more dynamic and productive economy. It provides a **shared regional framework** for understanding what infrastructure is required, why it matters, where investment delivers the greatest impact, and how development is sequenced and delivered over time. It guides **coordinated decision making** across councils, iwi, central government and the private sector, and supports **investment discussions** grounded in an evidence-led regional development narrative.

By focusing on **systems, outcomes and investment pathways** rather than individual projects, the Plan positions infrastructure as a catalyst for regional resilience, inclusive economic growth and enduring community wellbeing.

3.2 Objectives of the Plan

Flowing from this purpose, are three clear objectives:

Objective 1: Strengthen Lifeline System Resilience - *Build a more resilient and better-connected Northland.*

Strengthen the reliability, redundancy and performance of transport, water, digital and energy networks so people, goods and services can move efficiently and connect to wider markets. **Enhance state highways, local roads, rail and coastal shipping, while improving water services and airport capacity and choice**. Protect infrastructure from climate and hazard risks and ensure rural, remote and Māori communities gain more reliable access and reduced isolation.

Sensitivity: General

Objective 2: Unlock Regional Economic Hubs and Corridors - *Target investment to the places and corridors that drive regional value.*

Focus infrastructure investment on the primary growth corridor from Whangārei to Northport–Marsden Point and accelerate development in Otiria–Moerewa and Kaikohe–Ngawha. Align transport, water, energy, digital and social infrastructure sequencing to unlock cumulative benefits, enable Māori-led development and attract private and iwi capital.

Objective 3: Prioritise Investment in High-Value Sectors - *Accelerate growth in Northland's highest-value sectors.*

Channel investment into sectors and markets with strong export potential, established capability and high-quality job creation, including advanced manufacturing, energy, primary production and value-added processing, marine engineering and tourism. Support skills, infrastructure and innovation pathways that grow economic diversity, strengthen sector clusters and enable Māori economic development and community participation.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 5: Summary of the Plan's purpose and objectives

Setting the direction for a resilient, well-connected Northland with strong lifeline networks and thriving economic corridors.

4 Priority Programmes and Investment Pathways

4.1 From Objectives to Regional Transformers

The objectives set out what Northland needs to achieve and where early effort will have the greatest impact. The next step is to bring these elements together at a regional scale so individual infrastructure investments create system change rather than isolated gains. The **Regional Transformers provide that bridge**.

Regional Transformers group individual infrastructure projects and initiatives into outcome-focused programmes that deliver cumulative regional impacts. They provide a clear line of sight from long-term intent to near-term delivery, enabling confident sequencing, coordinated investment, and inter-agency alignment.

The Transformers clarify dependencies between hubs and corridors, identify where enabling infrastructure must occur first, and connect local and regional delivery to national partners and funding pathways. Together, they align infrastructure investment with the outcomes needed to support Northland's long-term economic, social and environmental wellbeing:

Transformer 1: Connecting Northland: Deliver a resilient, integrated road, air, rail, port, digital and energy corridor connecting Northland to Auckland and national markets.

Transformer 2: Northport–Marsden Point Energy and Logistics Precinct: Position Marsden Point and Northport as a nationally significant logistics, manufacturing and clean energy gateway.

Transformer 3: Resilient Growth-Ready Towns and Liveable Communities: Enable housing delivery, workforce capacity and climate resilience.

Transformer 4: Processing, Advanced Manufacturing and Integrated Logistics: Support export industries and retain greater value within Northland by linking primary production, processing hubs, inland logistics facilities, manufacturing and marine engineering precincts.

Transformer 5: Clean and Resilient Energy System — The Energy Bridge: Accelerate the transition to a clean, secure and affordable energy system that powers industrial growth and regional resilience.

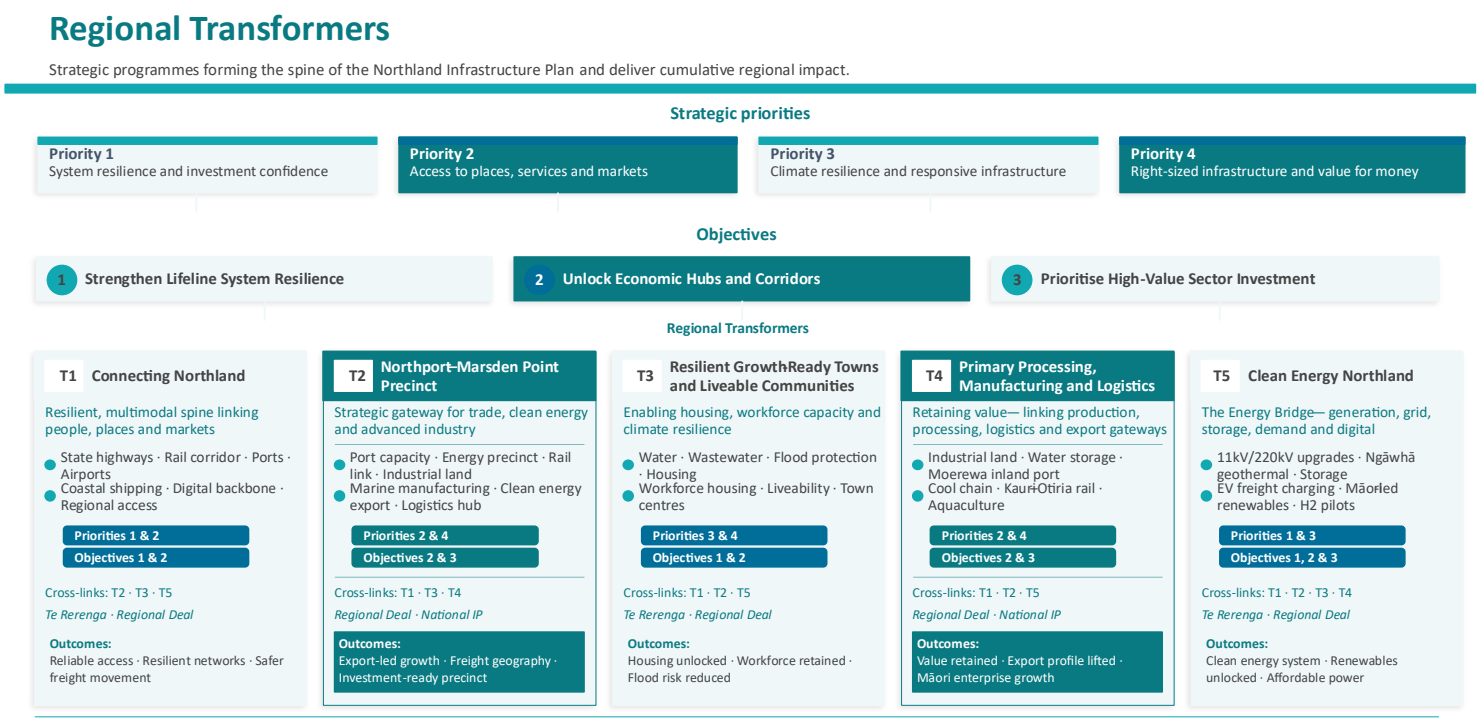
Each Transformer consolidates projects and enabling actions, sequencing, and dependencies into a single, **outcome-based programme**. This provides the organising framework for aligning investment across transport, water, energy, digital, housing and sector enablers.

The Transformers also serve as a mechanism for aligning infrastructure with **Te Rerenga**, the **Northland Regional Deal**, and the region's **priority sectors** (primary production, clean energy, tourism and marine engineering). This supports long-term wellbeing and sector-led growth ambitions by timely, coordinated and sequenced enabling infrastructure.

Designed to support **place-based delivery**, Transformers identify local opportunities that **contribute to and align with regional priorities**. They align infrastructure with current and future spatial plans, town growth strategies, iwi and hapū aspirations, regional value chains and investment attraction priorities. This approach recognises that different parts of Northland require tailored combinations and sequencing of infrastructure, while maintaining a consistent regional agenda that supports collaboration across councils, CCOs, iwi and hapū entities, central government, investors and industry.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 6: Northland Infrastructure Plan – Regional Transformers



4.2 Transformer 1: Connecting Northland

Connecting Northland requires a resilient, integrated transport and lifeline corridor that reliably links communities, industries and gateways to Auckland and national markets. Economic participation, emergency response, labour mobility and tourism all depend on infrastructure systems that function during disruption as well as under normal conditions. The focus is therefore on **strengthening the reliability and redundancy of the Northland–Auckland spine**, particularly across high-risk corridors such as the Brynderwyn Hills, while treating road, rail, port, aviation, coastal shipping, energy and digital networks as a single interconnected system rather than separate assets.

Further work is also required on **Northland's aviation and coastal shipping systems**, including resolving the long-term role and optimal location of regional airport infrastructure to support future population growth, tourism demand, aircraft evolution and city expansion

Sequencing is critical to reducing risk and maintaining connectivity. **Early investment must prioritise safety, resilience, operational improvements and demand management** ahead of major capacity expansion, including interim detours, bridge strengthening, drainage and slope risk treatments on critical routes. Local road connections that support forestry, farming and processing are integral to corridor performance, as are readiness upgrades to the North Auckland Line to stabilise journey times and enable higher axle loads. Rail, road and port access to Northport and the Marsden Point industrial hub are addressed together to reduce single-point-of-failure risk and improve freight resilience and efficiency.

Lifeline utilities are essential enablers of corridor performance and emergency response. **Energy, water, digital and telecommunications infrastructure underpin safe operations, coordinated incident management and recovery during disruption.** As demand grows, investment is scaled only where justified by need and value for money, supported by integrated operations, data sharing and intelligent transport systems.

Over time, this approach enables a robust multimodal system, with road, air, rail and coastal shipping working together, supported by durable funding and maintenance strategies that preserve reliability and long-term affordability.

Sensitivity: General

Transformer 1 – Phased Implementation and Delivery Action Plan

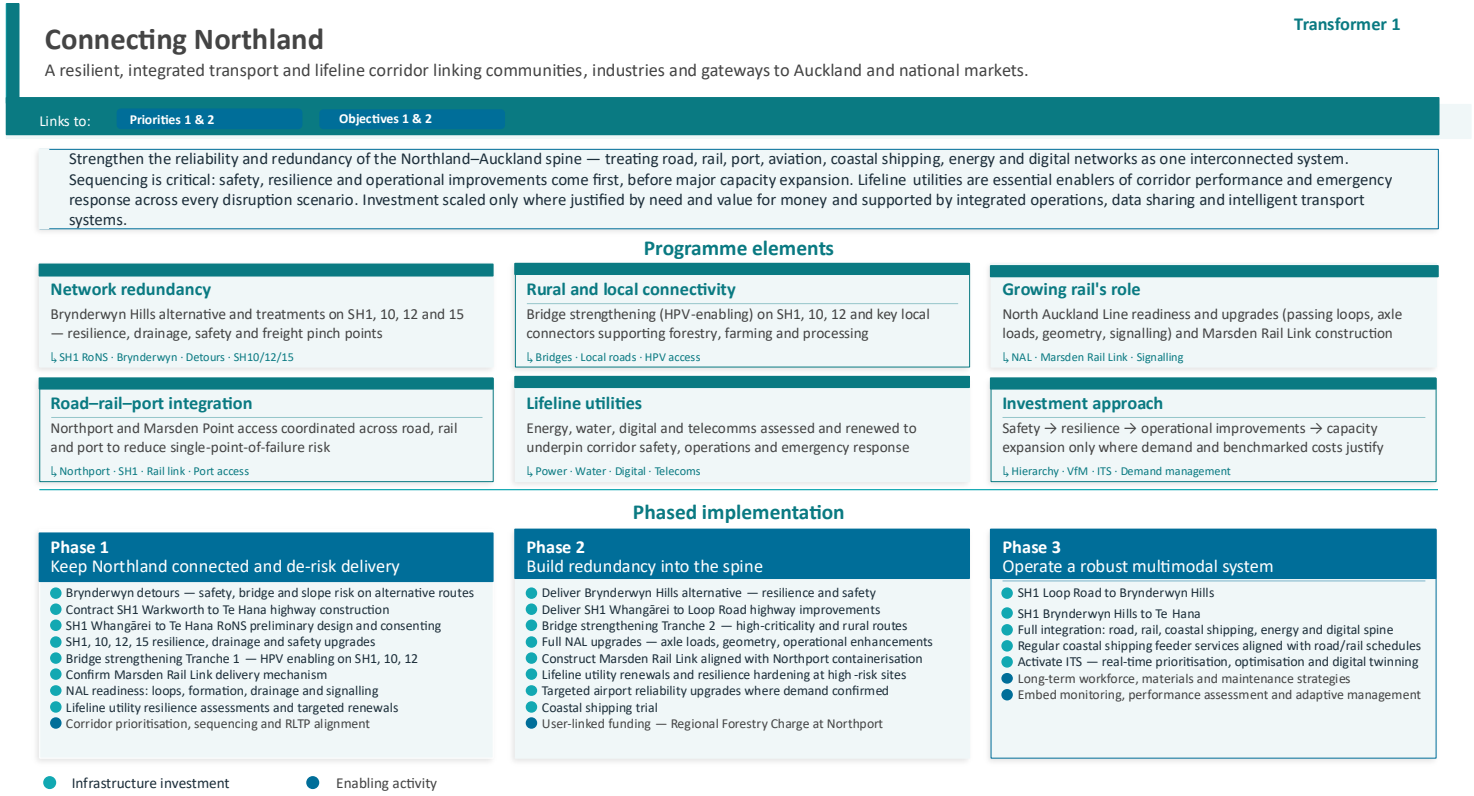
Phase	Investment and Interventions Aligned to Transformer 1	Other Enabling Activities
Phase 1 – Keep Northland Connected and De-risk Delivery	• **Local road Brynderwyn detours -** safety improvements, bridge strengthening, and slope risk treatments on Paparoa–Oakleigh and Cove Road alternative routes. • Contract for **construction of the Warkworth to Te Hana SH1 highway** • Preliminary design, consenting and staging for **State Highway 1 Whangārei to Te Hana Highway RoNS** (includes Brynderwyn Hills Alternative). • Early **SH1, 10, 12, and 15** resilience, drainage and safety upgrades targeting failure points, flooding sites and **freight** pinch points. • **Bridge strengthening** (Tranche 1) on SH1, 10, and 12 and key local connectors to enable High Productivity Motor Vehicles (HPVs). • Confirm delivery mechanism for **Marsden Rail Link**. • **North Auckland Line** readiness works: passing loops, formation stabilisation, drainage and signalling improvements. • Targeted renewals informed by lifeline utility resilience assessments (11KV asset replacement programme, Water Service Delivery Plans, digital).	• Confirm corridor prioritisation and sequencing via **RTC/RLTP** for road corridor staging and bridge upgrades, aligning priorities with the findings of the **Regional Transport Resilience Study.** • Apply the intervention hierarchy to **regional waters and roading investment Plans** (Long Term Plans, Regional Land Transport Plans, Water Service Delivery Plans); safety, resilience, operational fixes and demand management before major builds; increase capacity where justified by demand and benchmarked costs; and reconfirm locational Levels of Service that reflect demand and present value for money. • Develop a **Delivery Readiness Plan** that identifies aggregate and supply demand, quarry consenting constraints, materials logistics and availability, workforce and supplier capacity. • Commission **Regional Airport and Coastal Shipping feasibility and demand studies**. • Action **coastal adaptation planning programmes on priority residential and tourism hubs** to inform a Regional Spatial Plan and to identify where infrastructure investment should be targeted or wound-back over the long-term.
Phase 2 – Build Redundancy into the Spine	• Deliver **Alternative to the Brynderwyn Hills** with resilience and safety treatments. • Deliver **State Highway 1 Whangārei to Loop Road Highway (urban section)** improvements. • **Bridge strengthening** (Tranche 2) across remaining high-criticality routes and rural roads that support export goods. • **Full NAL upgrades**: axle load increases, geometry corrections, operational enhancements. • Construct **Marsden Rail Link** to align with and enable containerisation at Northport and supply to the North Auckland market.	• **Implement user-linked funding tools**, including a Regional Forestry Charge at Northport, to support renewals and upgrades on freight routes. • Secure **statutory protections** for key resilience and utility corridors and industry supply (including quarry zoning and associated reverse sensitivity protections) through District Plan changes and a future Regional Spatial Plan. • Initiate **coastal shipping trials** to assess viability and resilience value. • Establish a durable **central government partnership,** such as an Urban Growth Partnership or Regional Deal, with multi-year budgeting and delivery certainty.

Sensitivity: General

	• Targeted **lifeline utility renewals and resilience hardening** in high risk hazard locations– particularly sub stations, pump stations etc. • Deliver **targeted airport reliability upgrades** where demand is confirmed.	
Phase 3 – Operate a Robust Multimodal System	• Deliver **State Highway 1 Loop Road to Brynderwyn Hills highway** improvements with timing linked to traffic demand between Whangarei and Ruakākā-Marsden and/or Northport containerisation if MRL is not constructed. • Deliver **State Highway 1 Brynderwyn Hills to Te Hana highway** improvements with timing linked to safety improvements / traffic demand and / or Northport containerisation if MRL is not constructed. • Regular coastal shipping feeder services aligned with road/rail timetables if feasibility / demand studies are positive.. • Activate ITS for real-time prioritisation, network optimisation, incident coordination and digital twinning.	• Implement integrated transport operations: freight prioritisation, coordinated response and shared data platforms across the Northland–Auckland freight spine. • Implement long-term workforce, materials and maintenance strategies.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 7: Regional Transformer 1 – Connecting Northland



4.3 Transformer 2: Northport–Marsden Point Energy and Logistics Precinct

The **Northport–Marsden Point area represents a nationally significant opportunity** to strengthen freight resilience, unlock advanced manufacturing and enable a clean energy transition through coordinated, precinct-based development. Realising this opportunity depends on treating port expansion, rail connectivity, industrial land servicing, energy systems and logistics infrastructure as a single, integrated system rather than a set of standalone projects. **Investment must therefore be bundled, sequenced and assured at a programme level** to ensure that each component reinforces the performance, scalability and resilience of the whole precinct.

Critical enabling infrastructure sits on the delivery path for the precinct's success. Wastewater capacity at Ruakākā, energy and digital reliability, and **transport access to Northport and Marsden Point are first-order dependencies for port expansion, industrial development and workforce housing**. These assets must be progressed early through consenting, design and funded delivery to remove development holds, provide investor confidence and enable timely commissioning of downstream assets such as the Marsden Rail Link, marine engineering facilities and clean fuels pilots. Sequencing enabling infrastructure alongside port and rail staging reduces risk, avoids rework and supports disciplined, scalable growth aligned with market demand.

A precinct-wide approach also **improves the ability to attract private capital, iwi investment and national partnership** by presenting a clear, investable proposition. Aligning infrastructure delivery with integrated business case development, shared utilities planning and coordinated procurement creates confidence in affordability, value for money and long-term operability. By positioning Northport and Marsden Point as a fully serviced, energy-enabled logistics and manufacturing hub, the region strengthens national supply chain resilience while unlocking high-value industrial growth that cannot be achieved through incremental or uncoordinated investment.

Sensitivity: General

Transformer 2 – Phased Implementation and Delivery Action Plan

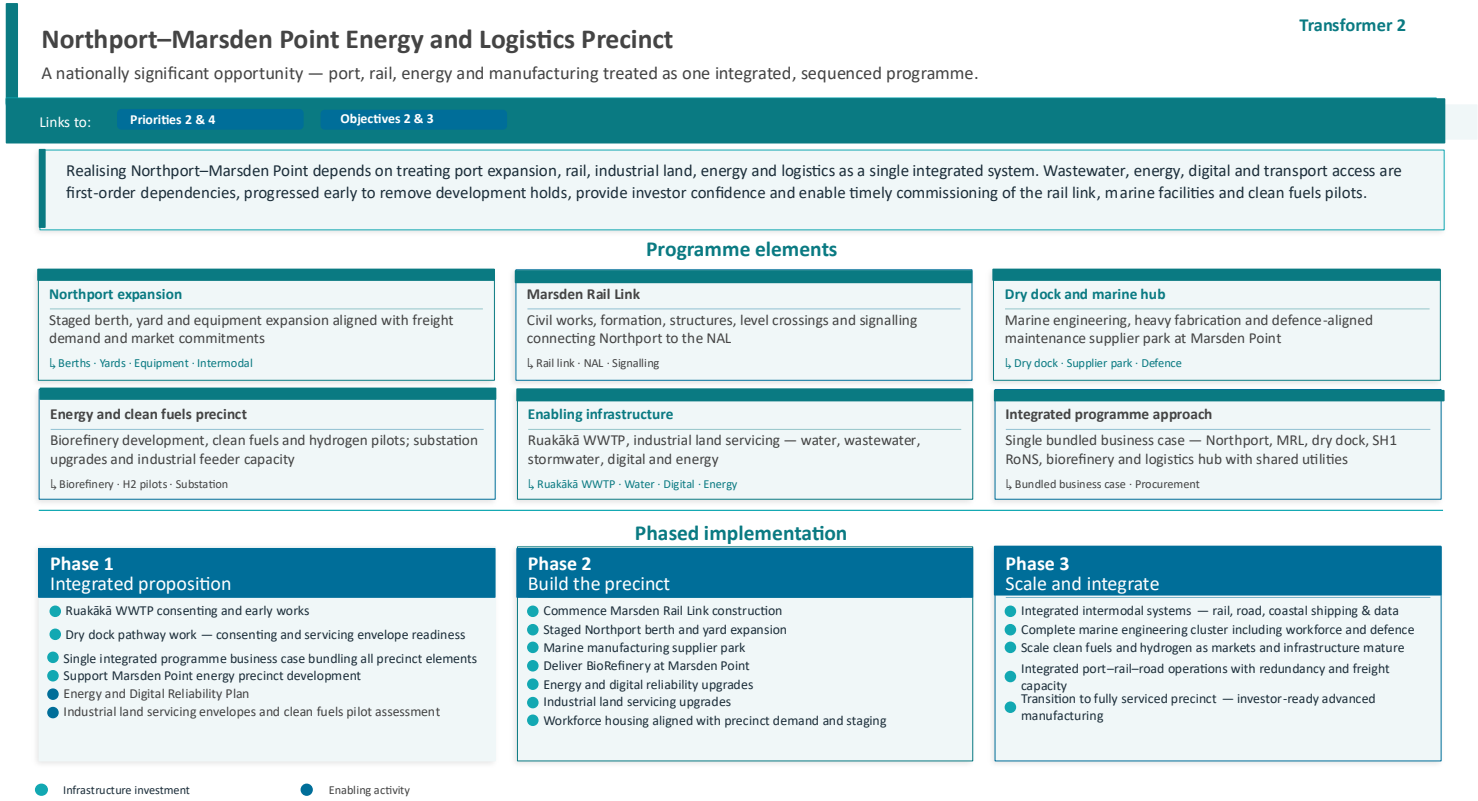
Phase	Investment and Interventions Aligned to Transformer 2	Other Enabling Activities
Phase 1 – Integrated proposition	• Progress **Ruakākā WWTP** consenting and early works to lift development holds for industry and workforce housing. • Construct the **dry dock and marine maintenance facility** to underpin a marine engineering precinct. • Complete a single integrated **Marsden Point programme business case** bundling Northport expansion, MRL, Dry Dock, SH1 RoNS, Biorefinery and logistics hub development with aligned procurement, utilities, staging and assurance. • Support development of the Marsden Point **energy precinct** through regional spatial planning and enabling regulations.	• Develop a coordinated **Energy & Digital Reliability Plan** identifying substation upgrades, industrial feeders and digital backhaul. • Establish **border and customs capability requirements** for streamlined import/export processing. • Build on the recent Housing and Business Land Capacity Assessment to confirm **industrial land servicing envelopes** (water, wastewater, digital, energy) for integration in a future District Plan change and/or Regional Spatial Plan. • Develop an **energy precinct / Special Economic Zone** and clean fuels pilot programme assessing viability, network capacity and port-land sequencing • Northland to support a mandated proportion of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) to unlock advanced industry and biorefinery
Phase 2 – Build the precinct	• Commence construction of the **Marsden Rail Link** (civil works, formation, structures, level crossings, signalling). • Deliver staged **Northport** berth, yard and equipment expansion aligned with freight demand and market commitments. • Develop the **marine manufacturing supplier park** for marine engineering, heavy fabrication and defence-aligned maintenance. • Deliver a **BioRefinery** development at Marsden Point based on SAF mandates. • Implement **energy and digital reliability and capacity upgrades** (substation capacity, industrial feeders, high-capacity backhaul). • Coordinate **housing land supply** at Marsden Point–Ruakākā with precinct workforce demand and infrastructure staging.	• Initiate **coastal shipping pilots** aligned with Northport schedules to test multimodal logistics and resilience benefits. • **Progress defence partnership opportunities** aligned with the dry dock and marine engineering cluster.
Phase 3 – Scale and integrate	• Operate fully integrated intermodal systems connecting rail, road and coastal shipping with shared data and coordinated incident management.	• Integrate trades and training at Northtec for heavy and marine engineering skills

Sensitivity: General

	• Expand **energy precinct operations** including scaling **clean fuels and hydrogen** as infrastructure and markets mature. • Maintain **integrated port–rail–road operations** with redundancy and capacity to match freight growth. • Transition Marsden Point–Northport into a fully serviced **industrial and marine manufacturing precinct** with mature utilities and investor-ready platforms for advanced manufacturing and export-facing industries.	• Scale a complete **marine engineering cluster** including workforce pipelines, supplier frameworks and defence partnerships.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 8: Regional Transformer 2 - Northport–Marsden Point Energy and Logistics Precinct



4.4 Transformer 3: Resilient Growth-Ready Towns and Liveable Communities

Resilient, growth-ready towns and liveable communities are central to enabling housing delivery, supporting workforce participation, and underpinning long-term regional wellbeing. **In Northland, the binding constraint on town growth is not land availability but the performance, compliance and resilience of enabling infrastructure**, particularly wastewater, potable water and stormwater systems. In priority hubs such as Whangārei and Marsden Point–Ruakākā, wastewater capacity sits on the critical path for housing, industrial development and workforce accommodation. Investment must therefore focus first on stabilising and upgrading core services so towns are genuinely growth-ready before additional demand is introduced.

Climate resilience and service reliability are essential preconditions for unlocking serviced land and sustaining investor and community confidence. **Flood protection, stormwater upgrades and water security are integral enabling investments,** particularly in locations such as Kerikeri–Waipapa, the Northern Wairoa and Kaitaia where climate exposure directly threatens housing supply, town centres and economic activity. Sequencing water, wastewater and flood protection investments together reduces risk, avoids stranded assets and ensures development occurs in locations that are viable and resilient over the long term.

Alongside physical infrastructure, the performance of growth-ready towns depends on the availability of a stable and appropriately housed workforce. **Labour constraints are already limiting infrastructure delivery, health services and industrial growth across the region**. Targeted provision of temporary and transitional workforce accommodation, particularly around Whangārei Hospital and the Marsden Point–Ruakākā employment hub, is a near-term enabling intervention rather than a secondary outcome of growth. Aligning housing delivery, transport access and social infrastructure with employment hubs supports immediate delivery capacity while improving long-term liveability.

Sensitivity: General

Transformer 3 – Phased Implementation and Delivery Action Plan

Phase	Investment and Interventions Aligned to Transformer 3	Other Enabling Activities
Phase 1 – Stabilise services and unlock near-term housing and workforce capacity	• Deliver **Ruakākā WWTP** to unlock capacity across the Marsden Point–Ruakākā hub. • Advance **Kerikeri–Waipapa wastewater expansion** through design, approvals and integration with Waipapa flood protection planning. • Deliver **priority Whangārei three waters upgrades** (hospital precinct, city centre and growth areas). • Undertake **Kaikohe and Kaitaia WWTP upgrades** to meet environmental compliance and growth requirements. • Assess **potable water** reliability across town networks and commence targeted renewals and storage uplift with a priority on Kaitaia and Dargaville. • Construct the first stage of **Whangarei Hospital** Pihi Kaha redevelopment. • Enable temporary and transitional **workforce accommodation** near Whangārei Hospital and Marsden Point aligned with peak construction periods.	• Establish and adopt a regional **Housing and Serviced Land Schedule** aligning water readiness, transport access and development pipelines across priority hubs. • Coordinate **Kāinga Ora, council and private sector pipelines** to deliver serviced, well-located housing coordinated with demand. • Initiate planning and feasibility work for **visitor and temporary and transitional workforce accommodation** in priority locations (including Whangārei, Marsden Point–Ruakākā and the Bay of Islands). • Enable supporting planning provisions through District Plan changes and/or Regional Spatial Plan processes to support housing and visitor accommodation in growth areas.
Phase 2 – Build growth-ready networks and connected neighbourhoods	• Construct the remainder of the **Whangarei Hospital** Pihi Kaha redevelopment • Deliver **Waipapa and priority town flood protection** measures to reduce climate-related risk to housing, town centres and Industrial land. • Construct major **water, wastewater and stormwater upgrades in growth towns** identified through spatial planning and Water Service Delivery Plans. • Enable delivery of mixed-tenure and build-to-rent neighbourhoods around transport corridors and employment hubs. • Deliver active mode and local mobility improvements in growth towns to improve access to jobs, services and visitor areas.	• Create common potable water and wastewater specification frameworks to guide business cases, consenting pathways and long-term asset management. • Coordinate serviced land for housing delivery with employment growth at Marsden Point–Ruakākā and along the regional freight spine to reduce commuting pressures and support labour supply. • Align tourism investment and funding programmes with accommodation capacity, destination upgrades and improved access.

Sensitivity: General

Phase 3 – Optimise resilience, performance and liveability	• Operate a regional water resilience programme incorporating climate-driven modelling, condition-based renewals and long-term asset management. • Deploy digital twins and optimisation tools across water networks to improve performance, leak detection and system-wide reliability. • Implement long-term funding, pricing and demand management mechanisms, including volumetric pricing where appropriate.	• Implement integrated stormwater and climate-resilience planning across councils, iwi and utilities to protect town centres and key corridors. • Maintain a rolling housing and serviced land pipeline refreshed through spatial planning reviews and hub performance monitoring across Whangārei, Marsden Point–Ruakākā, Kerikeri–Waipapa, Kaikohe, Kaitaia and Dargaville.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 9: Regional Transformer 3 – Resilient Growth Ready Towns and Liveable Communities

4.5 Transformer 4: Processing, Advanced Manufacturing and Integrated Logistics

Northland's long-term economic performance depends on its ability to **retain more value locally through processing, advanced manufacturing and integrated logistics**. While the region has strong primary production across horticulture, forestry, agriculture and marine industries, fragmented logistics systems, limited processing capacity and infrastructure constraints continue to suppress productivity and export value. Addressing this requires a shift from commodity-led transport investment toward an integrated system that **links production areas, processing hubs, industrial land and export gateways** in a coordinated and scalable way.

Transformer 4 establishes this system by deliberately **connecting inland production and processing locations with logistics hubs, rail corridors, ports and energy-enabled industrial precincts**. Priority locations include Whangārei, Marsden Point, Kerikeri–Waipapa, Otiria–Moerewa, Ngāwhā, Kaitaia and the Northern Wairoa Agricultural Delta. Investment focuses on making these locations genuinely industry-ready through coordinated upgrades to transport access, water and wastewater servicing, energy capacity and digital connectivity, enabling firms to scale processing activity and consolidate freight efficiently.

Early effort must **prioritise serviced industrial land, regional water storage and flood protection** in areas with productive soils, and readiness upgrades to road and rail corridors that support export supply chains. Inland logistics hubs, cool-chain facilities and rail-connected sites such as Otiria–Moerewa are progressed ahead of or alongside private processing investment to reduce logistics costs, improve reliability and support mode shift from road to rail where volumes justify it.

Alongside physical infrastructure, Transformer 4 embeds **workforce development, regional procurement and planning alignment as core enablers of retained value**. Planning rules, land release and utilities investment are aligned to support collocated processing, supplier parks and marine engineering clusters near key logistics nodes. Coordinated skills pathways and procurement frameworks strengthen local capability, support Māori enterprise participation and ensure that growth in processing and manufacturing translates into sustained employment, higher productivity and a more resilient export-oriented regional economy.

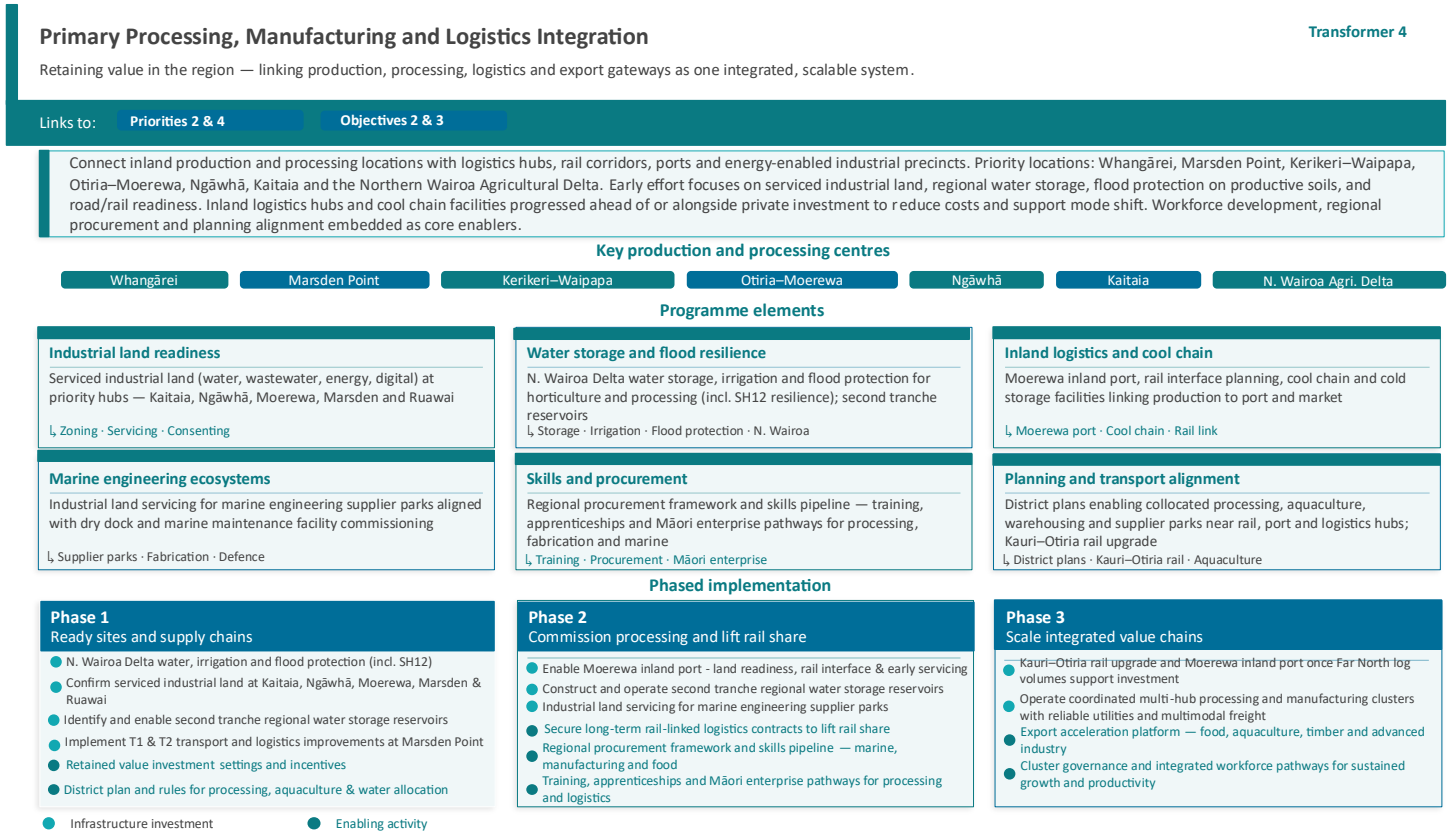
Sensitivity: General

Transformer 4 – Phased Implementation and Delivery Action Plan

Phase	Investment and Interventions Aligned to Transformer 4	Other Enabling Activities
Phase 1 – Ready sites and supply chains	• Implement **Northern Wairoa Delta** water storage, irrigation and flood protection investments aligned with horticulture and processing (including SH12 resilience). • Confirm serviced industrial land envelopes (water, wastewater, energy, digital) at priority logistics and production hubs of Kaitaia, Ngawha, Moerewa, Marsden, Waipapa, and Ruawai. • Identify and enable second tranche of regional water storage reservoirs in areas with highly productive soils.	• **Retained value investment settings**: Align infrastructure charges, procurement and incentives to support local processing and manufacturing near freight hubs. • **Planning rules for collocated processing**: Ensure district plans enable processing, warehousing and supplier parks near rail, port and logistics hubs. • Integrate **district and regional planning provision to enable aquaculture facilities** (including land-based processing facilities, mussel and oyster spat nurseries etc.) • Modify **regional planning rules** to enable water allocation in catchments with regional water storage reservoirs to be allocated to that reservoir operating company.
Phase 2 – Commission processing and lift rail share	• Investigate **Moerewa inland port** feasibility through a business case. • Construct and operate second tranche of **regional water storage reservoirs**. • Implement the projects in Transformers 1 and 2 relating to transport / logistics improvements and development at Marsden Point.	• Encourage and secure **long-term rail-linked logistics contracts** to increase rail share and reduce costs of SH1/SH15 maintenance. • Develop a **regional skills and manufacturing pipeline**: Develop training, apprenticeships and Māori enterprise pathways supporting processing, advanced manufacturing, food production, and marine engineering.
Phase 3 – Scale integrated value chains	• Invest in the Kauri – Otiria rail line upgrade and Moerewa inland port once log volumes in the Far North support investment. • Operate coordinated, **multi-hub processing and manufacturing clusters** supported by reliable utilities and multimodal freight access.	• Establish an **export acceleration platform** to expand global market penetration across food, aquaculture, timber and advanced industry. • Implement **cluster governance and integrated workforce pathways** enabling sustained growth and productivity gains.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 10: Regional Transformer 4 – Primary Processing, Manufacturing and Logistics Integration



4.6 Transformer 5: Clean and Resilient Energy System – The Energy Bridge

A **clean, secure and resilient energy system is now a foundational enabler of Northland's economic transformation**, regional resilience and long-term competitiveness. Energy reliability, capacity and affordability increasingly shape investment decisions, particularly for advanced manufacturing, logistics, processing and emerging industries. The **Energy Bridge provides the organising framework for coordinating renewable generation, grid upgrades, storage, industrial demand and digital reliability into a single, integrated regional energy system** that supports growth while reducing emissions and exposure to single-point-of-failure risk.

Delivering this system requires early focus on enabling conditions and network readiness. Grid visibility, connection certainty, distribution upgrades and regulatory settings must be progressed ahead of, or alongside, new generation and industrial development to de-risk investment and accelerate delivery. Priority actions include staged **reinforcement of local and transmission networks, replacement of ageing distribution assets, publishing hosting capacity and connection queues, and sequencing energy and digital upgrades** with the development of Marsden Point, Northport and other energy-enabled hubs. Aligning energy infrastructure with transport corridors, industrial precincts and growth-ready towns ensures capacity is delivered where and when it creates the greatest system value.

The Energy Bridge also underpins inclusive growth through partnership and participation. **Māori-led renewable generation and storage projects play a central role in the regional pipeline**, supported by shared ownership models, structured offtake pathways and coordinated consenting and investment frameworks. Distributed generation, storage and process heat electrification improve resilience and affordability while supporting decarbonisation of industry and freight. By integrating generation, grid, demand and skills development, the Energy Bridge positions Northland to attract high-value, energy-enabled industries and to scale a clean energy transition that delivers enduring economic, environmental and intergenerational benefits.

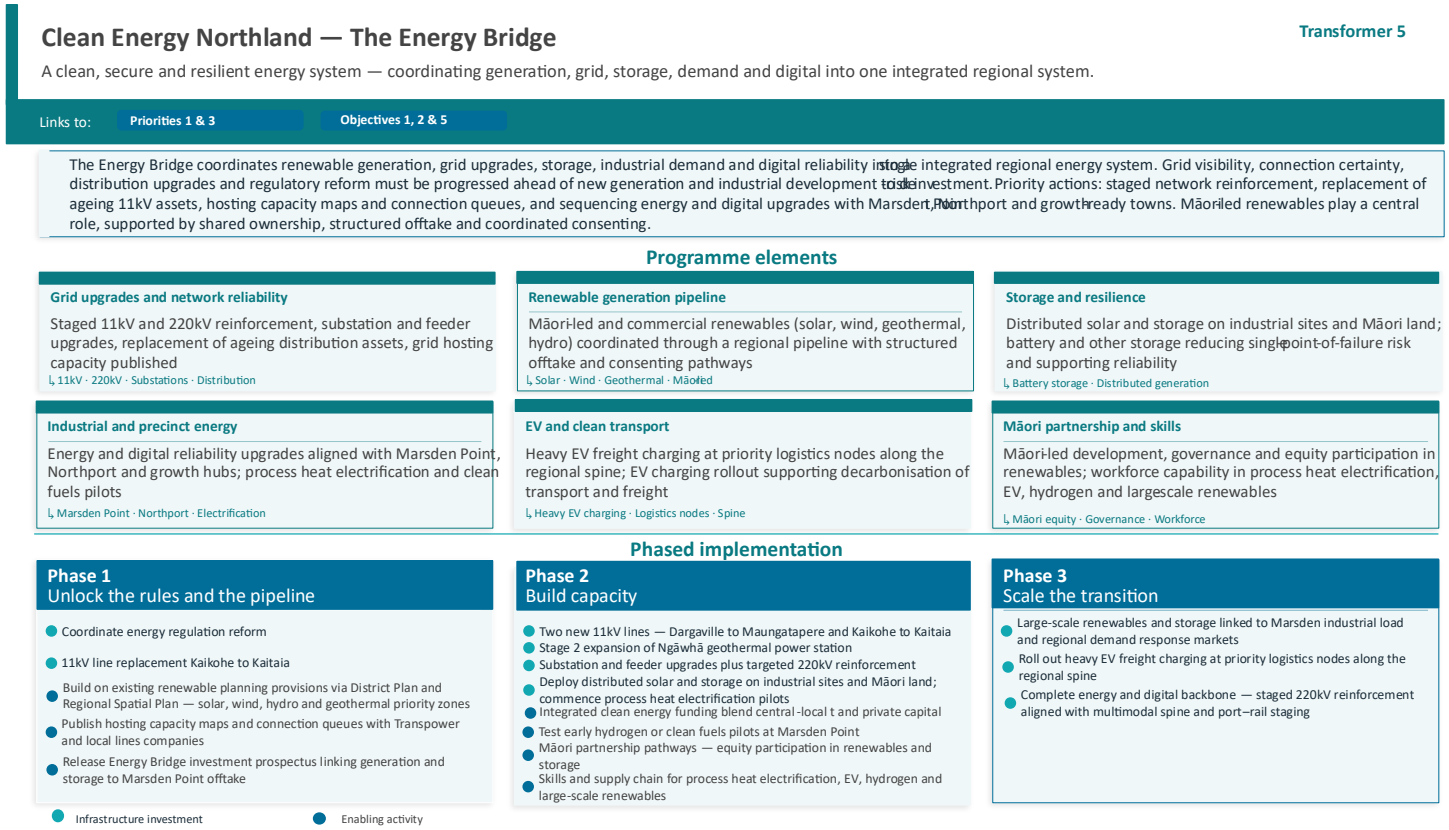
Sensitivity: General

Transformer 5 – Phased Implementation and Delivery Action Plan

Phase	Infrastructure Investment aligned to Transformer 5	Other Enabling Activities
Phase 1 – Unlock the rules and the pipeline	• Coordinate engagement on **energy regulation reform** to enable the "Energy Bridge" (transmission pricing, grid investment approvals, fast-track consenting). • Replacement 11kV line Kaikohe to Kaitaia	• Build on the **enabling renewable energy planning provisions** to identify further opportunities via District Plan and/or Regional Spatial Plan processes, potentially including master planning solar, wind, hydro and geothermal priority zones • Keep publishing **hosting capacity maps and connection queues** with Transpower and local lines companies to de-risk investment. • Release an **Energy Bridge investment prospectus** linking regional generation and storage to Marsden Point offtake.
Phase 2 – Build capacity	• Operate a fully integrated **Energy Bridge system** coordinating generation, storage, offtake contracts and grid services underpinned by **two new 11kV lines from Dargaville to Maungatapere and Kaihoke to Kaitaia** • Stage 2 expansion of the **Ngawha geothermal** power station • Progress **substation and feeder upgrades** plus targeted 220 kV reinforcement to lift reliability for precinct build-up. • Encourage and enable **distributed solar and storage.**	• **Integrated clean energy funding:** Blend central–local tools and private capital into a coherent investment framework supporting grid, storage and onsite generation. • **Māori partnership pathways:** Support Māori-led development, governance and long-term equity participation in renewables and storage.
Phase 3 – Scale the transition	• Deliver **large-scale renewables and storage** linked to Marsden industrial load and regional demand response markets. • Roll out **heavy EV freight charging infrastructure** at priority logistics nodes along the regional spine. • Complete the **energy and digital backbone**, including **staged 220 kV reinforcement** aligned with the multimodal spine and port–rail staging.	**Skills & supply chain for electrification:** Grow workforce capability in process heat electrification, EV charging, hydrogen and large-scale renewables deployment.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 11: Regional Transformer 6 – Clean Energy Northland



5 Funding, Financing and Delivery Pathways

5.1 Purpose of this Section

Delivering Northland's infrastructure priorities requires more than identifying what needs to be built. It requires clear regional coordination, strong partnerships, investable opportunities, and the effective mobilisation of funding and financing across multiple pathways. This Plan has been commissioned by Northland Inc on behalf of all Councils across the region and will be presented to the Joint Regional Economic Development Committee (JREDC) as the shared regional platform for coordinated infrastructure decision making.

Successful implementation will require an ongoing and broader partnership, including active engagement with Government and the private sector, together with a proactive and enduring partnership with iwi and hapū across Northland to ensure delivery is aligned with local aspirations, whenua-based opportunities and long-term regional wellbeing. This section sets out how the Plan supports the move from strategy to delivery.

A disciplined value for money approach underpins this section. Consistent with the National Infrastructure Plan, partners will "think slow and act fast": test the problem rigorously, consider low-cost and non-build options first, apply cost benchmarking, and seek independent assurance before funding decisions. This ensures new investment is right-sized, sequenced and affordable, and that maintenance and renewals are prioritised to deliver the greatest long-term benefit.

5.2 Regional Coordination and Governance

Effective infrastructure delivery in Northland depends on clear roles and coordinated action across a complex institutional landscape. No single organisation is responsible for delivering the full infrastructure system, and outcomes rely on alignment between Councils, iwi entities, CCOs, central government agencies and the private sector.

A future Northland Regional Deal represents one potential delivery and partnership pathway for advancing priority infrastructure programmes identified in this Plan, as does any new Regional Spatial Plan, alongside council Long Term Plans, central government investment programmes and iwi led and private sector initiatives.

Ongoing regional coordination is essential to:

- Agreeing priorities and sequencing across councils and partners and improving consistency in project development and investment readiness
- Strengthening advocacy and engagement with central government and informing place-based partnership discussions and any future rounds of City and Regional Deals
- Reducing duplication and improving confidence for investors and delivery partners
- Embedding value for money and right-sized delivery tests in regional prioritisation, sequency and implementation
- Applying independent assurance and readiness checks for major infrastructure proposals.

This coordination role complements, rather than replaces, the statutory responsibilities of individual organisations.

5.3 From Idea to Investment Ready Projects

A key barrier to delivery is the gap between early-stage ideas and projects that are genuinely ready for funding and construction. Too few initiatives progress through the full Better Business Case (BBC) process,

limiting the region's ability to clearly demonstrate costs and benefits, anticipated economic impacts, value for money, and viable funding and financing pathways.

This Plan supports a more deliberate, consistent and disciplined approach to project development, ensuring more proposals advance through each stage of the BBC framework so they become investment ready and able to secure support from Government, councils, iwi partners and the private sector. In practice, this means:

- Using the Plan's regional priorities, objectives and transformers to shape early concepts and to progress place-based ambitions that align with regional priorities
- Sequencing projects so enabling infrastructure is delivered ahead of dependent investments, informed by the framework set out in this Plan
- Using intervention hierarchies to address safety, resilience and performance issues with targeted, lower-cost measures before considering large capital solutions
- Right-sizing options through cost benchmarking and scenario testing
- Submitting major proposals for independent readiness assessment, including the national Infrastructure Priorities Pipeline.

By providing a clear strategic context, the Plan helps reduce uncertainty at early stages, improves the quality of project proposals, and increases the likelihood that projects progress through funding and approval processes. By aligning with national guidance on value for money and right-sized delivery, this approach reduces optimism bias and the risk that megaprojects crowd out essential renewals and higher-value investments.

5.4 Partnership with Iwi and Co-investment Opportunities

Partnership with iwi is central to the successful delivery of infrastructure and long-term regional development in Northland. Iwi are not only key infrastructure partners but also landowners, investors and kaitiaki, with a deep intergenerational interest in shaping Northland's future. Embedding iwi leadership and partnership within regional priorities enables shared value creation, community wealth building and sustainable outcomes.

The Plan seeks to support iwi partnership by: aligning infrastructure investment with iwi aspirations and development plans; enabling co-design and co-investment approaches where appropriate; supporting development on Māori land through the timely provision of enabling infrastructure; and recognising iwi entities as long-term investors, delivery partners and contributors to regional economic resilience.

Alongside iwi, partnerships with hapū and private investors remain central to the region's long-term success. Co-investment opportunities include: iwi-led investment in renewable energy, primary production, water storage, housing and commercial developments, supported through appropriate financing structures and consenting pathways; joint ventures in marine engineering, dry-dock services and logistics that leverage the Marsden Point and Northport precincts, alongside specialised supplier and innovation parks; procurement and supply-chain mechanisms that anchor value within Northland-based firms and support capability building over time; place-based investment funds enabling town centre revitalisation and housing delivery, aligned with Infrastructure Funding and Financing (IFF) tools and targeted rates where suitable.

Together, these partnership and co-investment pathways strengthen regional development, support Māori economic aspirations, and ensure Northland's infrastructure system delivers enduring intergenerational benefits.

5.5 Funding and Financing Approaches

Delivering the scale of infrastructure required in Northland will require a mix of traditional and innovative funding and financing tools, some of which may not yet be available or practical. Public funding will remain essential, particularly for core lifeline assets and resilience focused infrastructure, but it will not be sufficient on its own. The region will need to access a wider set of mechanisms that reflect who benefits, who contributes to demand on the network, and where commercial value can be unlocked to support delivery.

Funding and Financing Principles

The Plan applies a consistent, disciplined approach to value for money, right sized delivery and investment readiness to ensure that Northland's infrastructure programme is both affordable and deliverable. Rather than prescribing specific funding solutions for individual projects, the Plan sets out the principles and conditions that enable diverse funding and financing sources to be mobilised efficiently, transparently and in alignment with national frameworks.

A core expectation is that every programme follows the **National Infrastructure Plan's value for money principles**, beginning with a focus on maintaining and renewing existing assets. This includes ring fenced depreciation funding and transparent reporting to ensure long term sustainability of the region's infrastructure networks. Major upgrades or new build solutions are progressed after **right sized, staged** options have been tested through intervention hierarchies, cost benchmarking and robust business case analysis.

User and beneficiary pays mechanisms are applied wherever practical, supported by demand management tools such as tolling, time of use charging and volumetric water pricing to optimise network use and defer costly capital expenditure. For significant Crown funded proposals, **independent assurance** and project readiness processes including evaluation through the Infrastructure Priorities Programme are used to confirm strategic alignment, value for money and deliverability.

The Plan's funding and financing principles align with the **National Funding and Financing Framework** by improving investment readiness and strengthening the basis for engagement with Government, iwi partners, investors and the private sector. This includes using NIFF pathways where appropriate, demonstrating user or beneficiary pays in line with the 2024 Framework and applying special purpose vehicle or levy models to accelerate enabling infrastructure delivery.

Alignment with the National Funding and Financing Framework

The Government's Funding and Financing Framework, signals a shift away from default Crown grant funding and toward user pays and beneficiary pays approaches as the first funding source for new proposals. Agencies are expected to demonstrate the role of users, beneficiaries or demand management tools such as congestion charging and water metering before seeking Crown support. This Plan supports the application of a broad funding and financing toolkit that can be tailored to different project types and commercial profiles, including:

5.5.1 Central Government Funding Opportunities

While Central Government Funding cannot be guaranteed, there will be an ongoing need for the region to explore current and new avenues as they present themselves, this might include:

- Regional Infrastructure Fund
- Regional Strategic Partnership Fund (where applicable to infrastructure enabling activities)
- Climate Emergency Response Fund for resilience and decarbonisation initiatives, where relevant streams are available
- National Land Transport Fund for transport and mode shift programmes

- Future of Local Government related work on expanding local revenue options, as reflected in national funding guidance updates
- National Infrastructure Funding and Financing agency programmes, including long term levy-based models under the IFF Act for council enabling infrastructure (with recent examples such as the Wellington Sludge Minimisation Facility reaching financial close using IFF)
- Other funds including Infrastructure Acceleration Fund, Better Off Funding, Marae Drinking Water Fund, Cyclone Recovery allocations and Digital Connectivity funds supporting broadband and mobile coverage across New Zealand.

5.5.2 Targeted Rates, Development Contributions and User Charges

These are well established tools that can be applied more strategically across Northland to support the priorities and objectives of this Plan. Possible options include:

- Forestry related levies to reflect heavy vehicle impact on rural and regional networks, including a Regional Forestry Charge at Northport for network renewals and upgrades associated with harvest peaks and heavy vehicle use, consistent with user or beneficiary pays principles
- Growth related levies that help fund water, wastewater and transport capacity in growth nodes, including establishing clear local authority policies and guidance on the application of Developer Agreements
- Pricing tools such as road tolling for high cost or high value corridors, consistent with demand management emphasis in the national framework
- Targeted rates for town centre improvements, flood protection and water storage
- Volumetric charging for commercial water users where appropriate, reflecting full economic cost where feasible

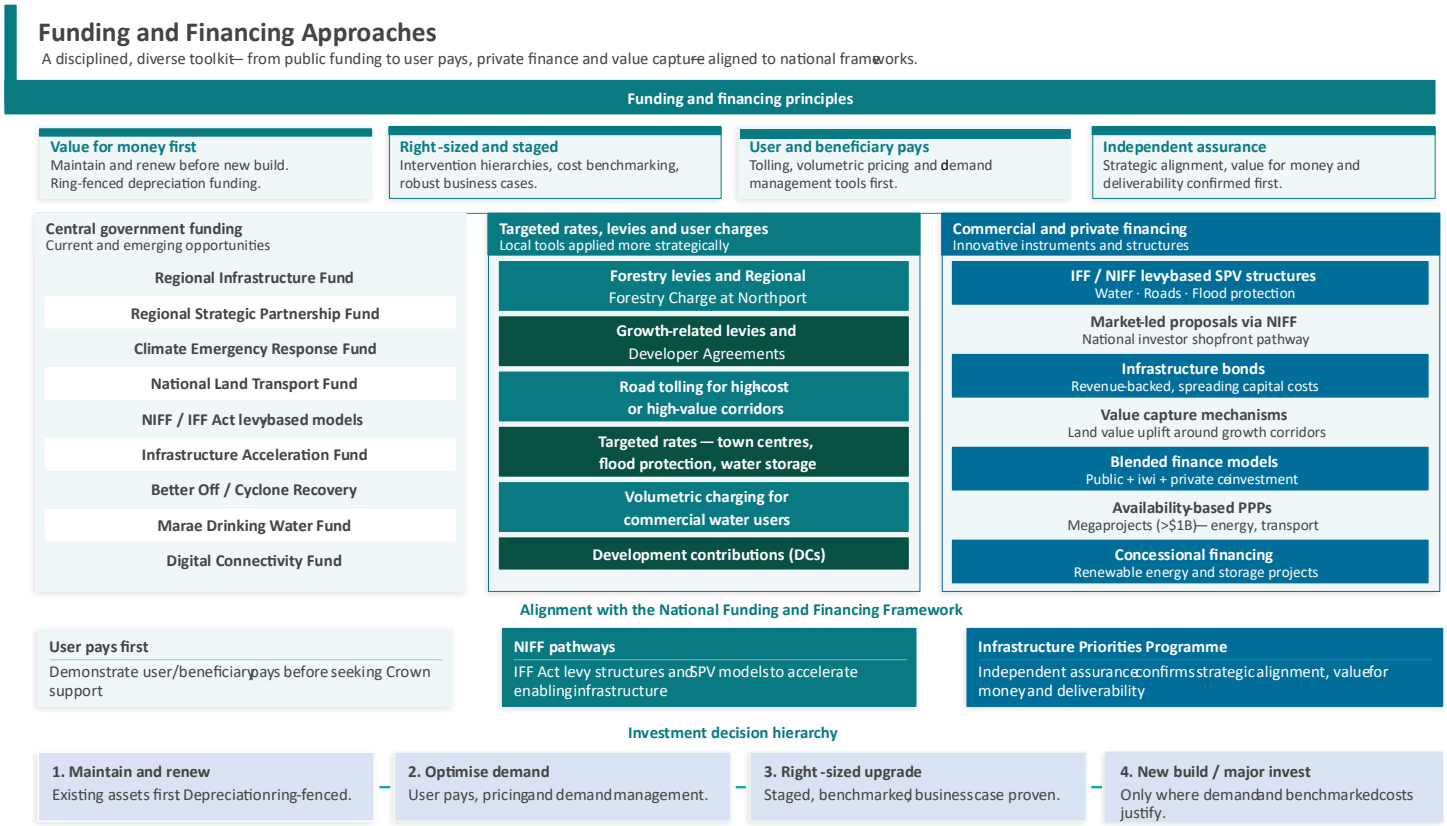
5.5.3 Commercial and private financing instruments

More broadly, Northland may benefit from other tools used both in New Zealand and internationally, such as:

- **Infrastructure Funding and Financing (IFF) Model** administered by NIFF, creating long term levy-based financing structures via special purpose vehicles for enabling infrastructure across water, storm water, transport including local roads and public transport, and environmental resilience such as flood protection. NIFF maintains a Senior Debt Panel of prequalified lenders to support transactions.
- **Market led proposals pathway** via NIFF's national investor shopfront, enabling unsolicited proposals and private capital participation to be assessed through a single interface.
- **Infrastructure bonds** and revenue backed instruments that spread capital costs over time where revenue certainty exists.
- **Value capture mechanisms**, including land value uplift contributions around serviced growth areas and corridor nodes.
- **Blended finance** models combining public, iwi and private investment to de risk early stages and crowd in capital.
- **Availability based Public Private Partnerships** for commercially viable assets and megaprojects (>$1B in value), including energy, transport and health infrastructure, marine engineering, logistics or visitor economy infrastructure, subject to value for money tests.
- **Concessional financing or risk sharing tools** to support early stage renewable energy and storage projects where wider system benefits exist.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 12: Funding and Financing Approaches



5.6 Potential Funding Pathways for Regional Transformers

Delivering the programme of activities set out in the Regional Transformers will require differentiated funding and financing approaches that reflect their purpose, risk profile and commercial maturity. While all depend on early investment readiness and strong assurance, the balance between public funding, user-pays tools and private capital shifts across the programme.

The focus of Transformer 1 on lifeline infrastructure, where national resilience, safety and continuity of access dominate, has strong public good aspects, meaning central government funding and co-investment remain the primary levers, supplemented only by targeted beneficiary-pays tools where freight demand is clearly attributable.

In contrast, Transformers 2, 4 and 5 are more directed towards unlocking commercial value, whether through port-adjacent logistics, advanced manufacturing, or clean energy generation. These programmes are suited to blended finance, private capital, iwi investment and value-capture mechanisms once enabling infrastructure risks are reduced. Public funding plays a catalytic role, not a long-term financing one.

Transformer 3 combines both public good and commercial opportunities. Resilient, growth-ready towns and liveable communities require compliance-driven three-waters investment and growth-enabling infrastructure. Here, NIFF's IFF tools, targeted rates, SPVs and selective user charges are identified as the most appropriate mechanisms, supported by central government funds where resilience and public health outcomes are at stake.

Table 5-1 Potential Funding Avenues for each Regional Transformers

Transformer	Possible funding and financing avenues	Rationale
1. **Connecting Northland**	NLTF; CERF; Cyclone Recovery & Infrastructure Acceleration funds; Crown–council co-investment; forestry levies & Regional Forestry Charge; limited tolling/time-of-use pricing	Core lifeline assets with strong public good and national resilience benefits; public funding essential, with targeted beneficiary-pays where freight demand is disproportionate
2. **Northport–Marsden Point Energy & Logistics Precinct**	Blended finance (Crown, council, iwi, private); NIFF investor shopfront; infrastructure bonds; PPPs/concessions for revenue-generating assets; RIF & RSPF; value capture around industrial land	Commercial value can be unlocked at scale; public funding should focus on enabling infrastructure while private and iwi capital lead on commercial components
3. **Resilient, Growth-Ready Towns & Liveable Communities**	Central government resilience and public health funds; NIFF IFF levy-based SPVs; targeted rates & development contributions; volumetric water charging; blended finance for iwi-led development	Mix of compliance and growth-enabling investment; well aligned with IFF, targeted rates and selective user charges where affordability allows
4. **Processing, Advanced Manufacturing & Integrated Logistics**	Private capital for plants and logistics assets; blended finance for early-stage shared utilities; value capture around industrial land and hubs; NIFF market-led proposals; green finance	Focus on competitiveness and retained value; private capital first, with public funding limited to shared enablers and risk reduction
5. **Clean & Resilient Energy System (Energy Bridge)**	Private and iwi investment; concessional finance and risk-sharing tools; blended finance; infrastructure bonds & green finance; central government funding for early enabling actions	Generation and storage become commercially viable once sequencing, connection and offtake risks are addressed; well suited to concessional and green finance

By exploring these potential funding avenues and being alive to future funding opportunities associated with any new government programmes, or a possible Northland Regional Deal, the region can work towards diversified, investable programme that reduces reliance on any single funding source while improving affordability and delivery confidence.

By sequencing public enablement, targeted charging and private capital appropriately, Northland can progress each Transformer at the pace required while maintaining fiscal discipline and unlocking long-term regional value.

5.7 Alignment with Spatial Planning, Northland Waters CCO and National Agencies

Successful delivery depends on strong alignment between infrastructure investment, spatial planning and service delivery. The Plan is designed to align and inform current and future initiatives, including:

- Regional and district **spatial planning**, delivering infrastructure that supports agreed growth patterns and priorities, and place-based outcomes
- The strategic priorities and forward works programmes of the **Northland Waters CCO**, particularly where water services are critical enablers of housing, industry and resilience
- **National agencies and funding bodies**, ensuring regional priorities are well positioned within national investment frameworks and can utilise NIFF's investor shopfront, IFF structures, and relevant government-backed funds where appropriate.

By providing a clear regional narrative and priority structure, the Plan strengthens Northland's ability to engage with national agencies and to align local, regional and national investment decisions.

5.8 From Strategy to Delivery

Together, these funding, financing and delivery pathways ensure that the Northland Infrastructure Plan functions as a practical implementation framework. The Plan supports coordinated action, improves investment readiness, and enables partnerships that move infrastructure from strategy into delivery.

The sections that follow set out how progress will be tracked, priorities refined and the Plan kept current as Northland's development pathway evolves.

6 Implementation, Sequencing and Next Steps

6.1 Purpose of this Section

The Northland Infrastructure Plan is a living, **action-oriented framework** designed to move the region from fragmented project activity to a coordinated, transformational investment programme. The Plan will evolve over time alongside Te Rerenga, ensuring that regional priorities remain responsive to changing social, economic and environmental conditions while maintaining a clear, **long-term strategic spine**. Its value lies not only in setting long-term direction but in how regional priorities are tested, sequenced, funded and delivered, and how partners work together to turn intent into action.

Central to this shift is the use of **Regional Transformers**. These provide the organising structure for implementation by clustering interdependent transport, water, energy, digital, housing and sector-enabling investments into coherent programmes. The Transformers ensure that sequencing decisions maximise cumulative impact, that enabling works are delivered up front, and that regional partners can mobilise around shared outcomes rather than isolated projects.

6.2 Prioritisation and Sequencing of Projects

Sequencing is fundamental to effective implementation. Infrastructure delivers the greatest value when enabling works are delivered first, when investments are coordinated across agencies, and when programmes progress in the right order to unlock development, support resilience and maximise regional benefits.

The **Regional Transformers** provide the primary framework for sequencing by:

- identifying the enabling infrastructure required to unlock **place-based development, economic hubs and sector clusters**
- Clarifying **cross-sector dependencies** between transport, water, energy, digital, housing and social infrastructure
- Distinguishing **near-term investments** that address critical constraints from **longer-term system shifts** that support future growth
- Supporting **coordinated timing and funding alignment** across councils' Long Term Plans, the Regional Land Transport Plan, Northland Waters programmes, Crown infrastructure mechanisms and private investment
- Advancing **business case development, IPP readiness and funding pathways** with a focus on infrastructure that where they unlock wider regional benefits.

Project prioritisation will be guided by:

- **Alignment with the Regional Transformers** and the outcomes they organise, rather than isolated project-by-project assessments
- **Contribution to inclusive growth, resilience and long-term regional value**, including the ability to lift productivity and reduce system vulnerabilities
- **Readiness and deliverability**, including Better Business Case maturity, indicative funding and financing pathways, and dependency management
- **Enabling value**—the extent to which a project unlocks, accelerates or de-risks investment in housing, economic hubs, freight, tourism, energy or community wellbeing

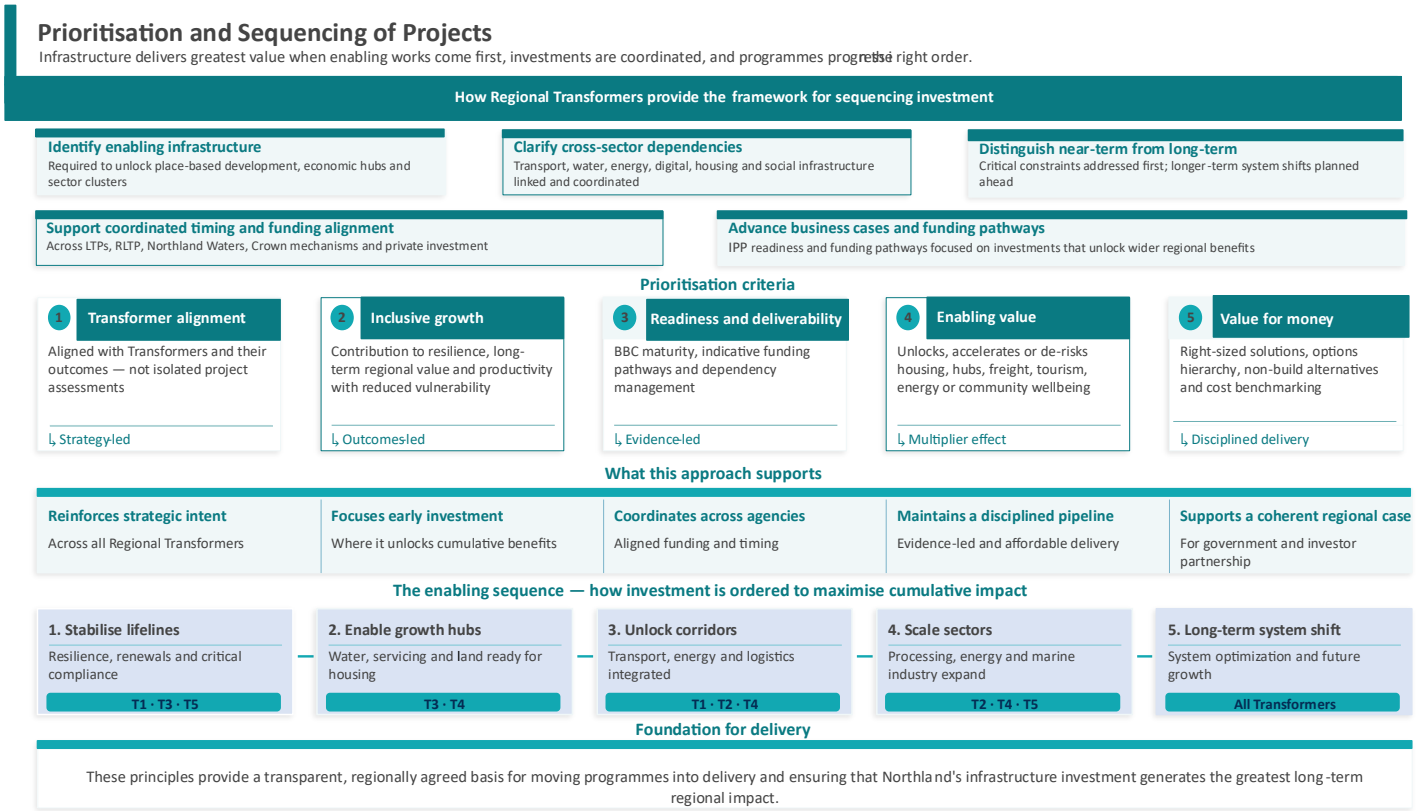
- **Value for money**, including right-sized solutions, options hierarchy testing, non-build alternatives and cost benchmarking

This approach ensures that sequencing decisions: reinforce strategic intent across the Regional Transformers; focus early investment where it will unlock the largest cumulative benefits; coordinate infrastructure investment across agencies and funding sources; maintain a disciplined, evidence-led and affordable delivery pipeline; and support a coherent regional case for government and investor partnership

Together, these principles provide a transparent, regionally agreed foundation for moving programmes into delivery and ensuring that Northland's infrastructure investment generates the greatest long-term impact.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 13: Prioritisation and Sequencing



6.3 Governance and Ongoing Management of the Plan

Management: Northland Inc is well placed to coordinate delivery and implementation at a regional level, providing a single point of leadership and integration across partners. Working in close partnership with each of the councils, iwi and hapū, and the private sector, Northland Inc can steward the regional programme, align sequencing and advocacy, and help move priority initiatives from concepts to investment-ready proposals and into delivery.

Governance: The Plan is non-statutory and region-led, and its effectiveness depends on clear governance, shared ownership and disciplined follow-through across all partners. The Joint Regional Economic Development Committee (JREDC) appears as the logical governance entity, and this uses and builds on existing regional collaboration mechanisms rather than creating unnecessary new structures.

Councils' responsibilities and alignment: While the Plan is not prescriptive for individual organisations, each council can use the regional priorities and programme logic set out in this Plan when preparing its local Infrastructure Strategy and Long Term Plan (LTP). This means local investment pipelines are informed by agreed regional objectives and sequencing while respecting local statutory decision-making.

Ongoing management of the Plan will focus on:

- Maintaining a clear regional coordination function for strategy, sequencing, advocacy and assurance (led by Northland Inc)
- Working with councils and CCOs to align the Plan with Infrastructure Strategies, LTPs, asset management plans and spatial planning, and to integrate enabling infrastructure with growth areas and regional transformers
- Supporting consistent engagement with central government, iwi entities and private investors, using shared evidence, readiness checks, and value-for-money and right-sized delivery principles
- Monitoring delivery and outcomes, refreshing priorities as conditions evolve, and publishing periodic updates to maintain confidence and transparency.

The Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains current, credible and aligned with regional development objectives, with progress reported publicly to maintain momentum and support investor confidence.

6.4 Immediate Next Steps

Following publication of the Northland Infrastructure Plan, the region must move quickly from strategy to coordinated implementation. Northland Inc will lead regional coordination and advocacy, working closely with councils, iwi and hapū, CCOs, central government agencies, infrastructure providers and the private sector.

These next steps focus on aligning regional priorities with statutory planning and funding processes, strengthening investment readiness, sequencing projects through the RLTP and LTP cycles, and updating the case for a Northland Regional Deal.

Key priorities include:

- Confirm and adopt regional priorities across all partners.
- Progress engagement and discussion with iwi partners.
- Embed sequencing through councils' LTPs, Infrastructure Strategies and the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP).
- Strengthen regional business case development and establish a structured pathway into the Infrastructure Priorities Programme (IPP).

- Align infrastructure priorities with emerging regional spatial planning work.
- Establish a coordinated regional advocacy programme and mandate Northland Inc as the lead advocate.
- Prepare an updated case for a Northland Regional Deal.

These steps are intended to build momentum, improve confidence and ensure that the Plan functions as a practical tool for decision-making and delivery. Table 6-1 provides further details on key actions and responsibilities.

6.5 Keeping the Plan Live

The Northland Infrastructure Plan is not a one-off exercise. It is intended to evolve as projects progress, funding settings change and regional priorities mature. By maintaining a clear strategic spine, strong coordination and a disciplined approach to sequencing, the Plan provides a foundation for sustained, inclusive infrastructure-led development across Northland.

Sensitivity: General

Table 6-1: Recommended next steps to implement the Northland Infrastructure Plan

Step	Purpose	Lead / Partners	Key Deliverables
Confirm Regional Priorities and Programmes	Finalise the prioritised programme for each Transformer and agree responsibilities, staging and dependencies.	**Northland Inc (lead)**; Councils, CCOs, iwi/hapū, NZTA, KiwiRail, Transpower, Northport, private sector.	Regional Priority Schedule; Delivery and Governance Map; confirmed wave-one projects for progression.
Progress engagement and discussion with iwi partners			
Embed Priorities in Statutory Planning (LTPs, Infrastructure Strategies, RLTP)	Embed regional priorities directly influence local Infrastructure Strategies, Long Term Plans, and the Regional Land Transport Plan.	**Councils and RTC (joint leads)**; Northland Inc for coordination; NZTA for alignment with GPS/NLTP.	Draft LTP updates, Infrastructure Strategy changes, and RLTP sequencing aligned to the Plan.
Establish a Coordinated BBC Development Pipeline	Build a consistent, region-wide process for creating high-quality, value-for-money business cases.	**Northland Inc (lead)**; all project-owning partners.	Regional BBC Register; templated BBC artefacts; monthly BBC clinic; first wave of business cases advanced one stage.
Structured IPP Submission Process	Create a disciplined, quarterly process for submitting regional projects to Te Waihanga's Infrastructure Priorities Programme.	**Northland Inc (curation + submission)**; councils, CCOs, NZTA, iwi/hapū, private proponents.	Quarterly IPP bundles; IPP endorsed menu; strengthened regional investment readiness.
Align with Emerging Spatial Planning Processes	Integrate the Plan with emerging regional and district spatial planning processes, including growth areas, hazard mapping and servicing pathways.	**Northland Inc and Councils**; Northland Waters CCO; iwi/hapū; NZTA, Transpower, MBIE.	Spatial-Infrastructure Overlay; integrated growth and servicing maps; inputs to statutory spatial plans.
Update the Case for a Northland Regional Deal	Use the Plan to underpin a unified, investment-ready pitch to Government seeking multi-year support.	**Northland Inc (lead)**; Councils, iwi/hapū, private sector; Treasury, Te Waihanga, NIFF, NZTA.	Regional Deal Prospectus; Transformer-level investment logic; cross-agency briefing package.
Northland Corporate Group Delivery Coordination	Establish a standing forum for coordinating delivery capacity, workforce, aggregates, and forward works planning.	**Northland Inc (convene)**; Councils/CCOs, NZTA, KiwiRail, Northport, energy providers, large contractors.	Quarterly Integrated Delivery Dashboard; 12–24 month regional works programme.
Targeted Regional Advocacy and Engagement Programme	Provide structured engagement with Ministers, national agencies, investors, and iwi to progress priority programmes.	**Northland Inc (lead advocate)**; supported by all project owners.	Engagement calendar; regional advocacy briefs; agency-specific briefing packs.
Funding and Financing Mobilisation	Match each priority project with viable funding and financing tools and prepare the associated technical work.	**Northland Inc with Councils and NIFF**; project owners and commercial advisors.	Funding and Financing Options Matrix; detailed financing pathways per project; IFF/SPV scoping where relevant.
Monitoring, Assurance and Plan Refresh	Maintain momentum through regional reporting, performance monitoring, and regular Plan updates.	**Northland Inc PMO**; reporting to the regional governance forum and JREDC.	Monthly milestones and risk register; quarterly reporting dashboard; annual Plan refresh.

Sensitivity: General

A

Appendix A – Supporting Evidence and Foundations

Supporting Evidence and Foundations

Northland Socio-Economic and Infrastructure Context

Northland's infrastructure challenges sit within a distinctive socio-economic context shaped by long-standing structural factors, geographic isolation and historic underinvestment. While the region benefits from strong natural resource endowments and sectoral foundations, these advantages have not consistently translated into productivity, income or wellbeing outcomes comparable with national averages.

Northland has lower average household incomes, labour productivity and educational attainment than New Zealand as a whole, alongside higher rates of deprivation in many communities. Access to services varies significantly across the region, particularly for rural and remote settlements where distance, transport reliability and digital connectivity shape day-to-day opportunity. These conditions interact with infrastructure performance, reinforcing both economic constraints and social outcomes.

Infrastructure deficits have contributed directly to higher costs for households and businesses. Limited transport redundancy increases freight costs and vulnerability to disruption. Constrained water and wastewater capacity restricts housing delivery and industrial expansion in several growth locations. Energy network limitations affect both reliability and pricing, particularly during peak demand or system stress. Digital connectivity gaps continue to affect access to education, healthcare and employment pathways.

Recent analysis undertaken for the region by MartinJenkins highlights that these constraints suppress the realisation of Northland's latent economic potential. While growth opportunities exist across food and fibre, energy, marine industries, logistics and tourism, investment readiness is often constrained by the availability, resilience and sequencing of enabling infrastructure. Addressing these infrastructure constraints is therefore a prerequisite for lifting productivity, improving living standards and reducing disparities over time.

Understanding Northland's Infrastructure System

Infrastructure in Northland functions as a set of interdependent networks rather than discrete sectoral assets. Transport, water, energy, digital and social infrastructure collectively shape how the region operates and how resilient it is to disruption.

The transport system is characterised by a small number of critical state highway corridors, supplemented by rail, ports, airports and coastal connections. Limited redundancy means that disruptions due to weather events, maintenance or asset failure have immediate and disproportionate impacts on freight movement, access to services and regional mobility. Port and airport activity is heavily dependent on the reliability of land transport, energy and digital networks.

Water infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems, plays a central enabling role for housing, industry and public health. In several locations across the region, servicing capacity rather than land availability is the binding constraint on development. Climate impacts, including flooding and drought risk, further increase pressure on ageing networks.

Northland's energy system reflects its position at the edge of the national electricity network. While the region has significant renewable energy generation potential, current transmission and distribution arrangements create vulnerabilities in supply security and constrain the connection of new generation and energy-enabled industries. Digital infrastructure similarly operates as a foundational network, influencing access to services, education, remote work and innovation.

Social infrastructure, including health, education and community facilities, is closely linked to population distribution and transport accessibility. Its effectiveness is strongly influenced by the performance of the supporting physical networks that enable access.

These networks are mutually reinforcing. Weakness in one element reduces the effectiveness of others, while coordinated investment across systems can unlock outcomes that no single asset could achieve independently.

Spatial and Sector Implications of the Future State

The future state articulated in the Northland Infrastructure Plan has clear spatial and sectoral implications for how infrastructure investment is prioritised and sequenced.

From a spatial perspective, the Plan emphasises focusing growth in a limited number of well-serviced hubs and towns rather than dispersing investment across multiple locations. This approach improves affordability, reduces infrastructure duplication and supports more efficient service provision. It also aligns infrastructure investment more closely with spatial planning, housing supply and employment locations, strengthening the relationship between infrastructure delivery and development outcomes.

Sectorally, the future state prioritises infrastructure that supports value-added activity rather than solely the movement of raw commodities. This includes improving connections between primary production areas and processing facilities, logistics hubs and ports; enabling energy-intensive manufacturing and processing through reliable, low-emissions energy supply; and supporting marine, tourism and innovation-driven sectors through coordinated transport and digital networks.

The future state also acknowledges the diversity of pressures across the Far North, Mid North and Whangārei. Tailored, place-based approaches are required to reflect differences in population growth, servicing capacity, economic structure and community aspirations. Infrastructure solutions must therefore be varied, right-sized and aligned with local context, rather than uniformly applied across the region.

Infrastructure Sequencing and Enabling Logic

Sequencing is a central mechanism through which infrastructure investment delivers value, manages risk and improves affordability. Enabling infrastructure refers to the foundational investments that must be in place to unlock downstream development, such as housing, industrial activity or service expansion.

Common sequencing challenges in Northland have included situations where visible capital projects proceed ahead of necessary enabling works, resulting in under-utilised assets, cost escalation or delayed benefits. Examples include transport upgrades without corresponding water servicing capacity, or energy investments not aligned with land use or industrial development readiness.

Effective sequencing requires identifying dependencies across sectors and ensuring that critical enabling investments occur ahead of, or in parallel with, major builds. This approach reduces delivery risk, avoids costly retrofitting, and improves confidence for co-investment by iwi, private sector partners and central government.

Sequencing also supports affordability discipline. By aligning infrastructure delivery with realistic demand and growth trajectories, investment can be staged over time, spreading costs and avoiding premature over-specification. Sequencing logic therefore acts as both an economic and risk-management tool within the regional infrastructure system.

Addressing Equity and Māori Wellbeing Through Infrastructure

Socio-economic disparities within Northland shape how infrastructure investment should be approached and evaluated. Higher levels of deprivation, variable access to services and a growing Māori population mean that infrastructure outcomes have a direct influence on equity and intergenerational wellbeing.

Te Rerenga, Northland’s Economic Wellbeing Pathway, provides a framework for understanding infrastructure as a foundational enabler of wellbeing across economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. It highlights the importance of infrastructure in supporting secure housing, access to health and education, environmental stewardship and meaningful participation in the regional economy.

For Māori enterprises and whenua-based development, infrastructure access is often a critical constraint. Unlocking development potential typically requires multiple forms of enabling infrastructure to be delivered in a coordinated way. Equitable access to infrastructure, alongside procurement and partnership approaches that build local capability, can significantly strengthen Māori economic participation and long-term asset stewardship.

Addressing equity through infrastructure therefore requires intentional design, prioritisation and sequencing. Outcomes should be assessed not only in terms of asset performance, but in terms of access, opportunity and resilience for communities across the region.

Plan Role, Alignment and Governance

The Northland Infrastructure Plan sits alongside, and does not replace, existing statutory and non-statutory plans at local, regional and national levels. It draws on and aligns with council Long Term Plans, Infrastructure Strategies, spatial plans, sector strategies and national direction, including the National Infrastructure Plan.

The value of the Plan lies in its regional, systems-based perspective. By integrating information across sectors and jurisdictions, it provides a coherent framework for understanding priorities, dependencies and sequencing. This supports more effective engagement with central government, funding agencies and investors by clarifying regional intent and investment logic.

The Plan distinguishes between areas where the region can lead delivery, where collaboration and partnership are required, and where advocacy to central government is necessary. It also provides a basis for improving delivery capability through mechanisms such as regional procurement frameworks, standardised approaches and shared investment pathways.

Plan Development Process and Evidence Base

The Northland Infrastructure Plan was developed through a structured, collaborative and evidence-based process involving regional councils, infrastructure providers, central government agencies, industry representatives and technical specialists.

A Project Steering Group provided oversight throughout the process, comprising representatives from Northland Inc, Northland Regional Council, Whangārei District Council, Kaipara District Council and Far North District Council. Regular meetings and workshops were used to guide direction, test findings and ensure alignment with council responsibilities and regional priorities.

The development process included a comprehensive review of existing regional, local and national strategies relevant to infrastructure, including Te Rerenga, council Long Term Plans, Infrastructure Strategies, spatial plans and sectoral strategies. This ensured coherence and avoided duplication while enabling a clear regional synthesis.

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken across the region, including discussions with councils, iwi entities, infrastructure providers, industry groups, economic development agencies and community organisations. These insights were critical in identifying system constraints, validating growth opportunities and testing sequencing assumptions.

Engagement has occurred with Te Kahu o Taonui, recognising iwi and hapū as essential regional decision-makers, partners and investors. Further engagement is recommended to validate priorities and objectives prior to finalisation of the Plan.

A regional infrastructure pipeline was assembled using the National Infrastructure Pipeline and supplementary information from councils, providers and stakeholders. This pipeline provided visibility of known and emerging investments, enabling identification of gaps, dependencies and coordination

opportunities. While dominated by public sector projects, it provides a foundation for improving delivery alignment and investment readiness over time.

Socio-economic analysis undertaken by MartinJenkins underpins the Plan's understanding of demand drivers, demographic trends and regional disparities. This evidence base informed the development of priorities, objectives and the six regional transformers that structure the Plan.

Sensitivity: General

B

Appendix B – Infrastructure Pipeline and Methodology

Sensitivity: General

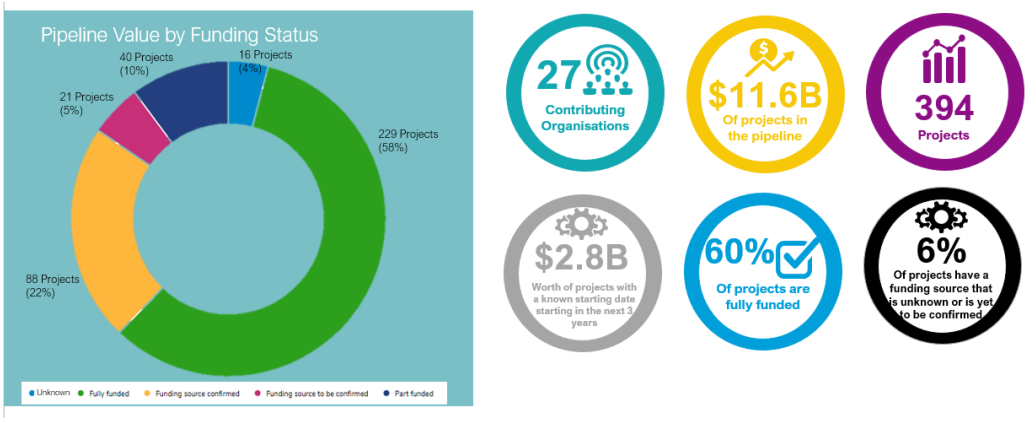
Northland Infrastructure Pipeline

As part of developing this Plan a consolidated dataset of known and emerging infrastructure investments across the region was assembled and captured in QuckBase. It includes projects spanning the following sectors:

- transport (roads, bridges, rail, ports, airports, public transport)
- water (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, flood protection)
- energy (generation, transmission, distribution)
- communications and digital infrastructure
- industrial and commercial infrastructure
- social infrastructure (health, education, housing-related infrastructure).

Projects included in the pipeline vary in scale, maturity and delivery pathway. They range from early-stage concepts through to funded and committed investment. Figure 14 provides some high level detail on the projects included in the pipeline.

Figure 14: Pipeline Insights



The pipeline includes:

- regionally and nationally significant projects
- council and CCO-led infrastructure delivered through long-term plans
- projects led by central government agencies
- private sector and iwi-led projects where information is publicly available.

Planned Investment

The planned investment pipeline shows that:

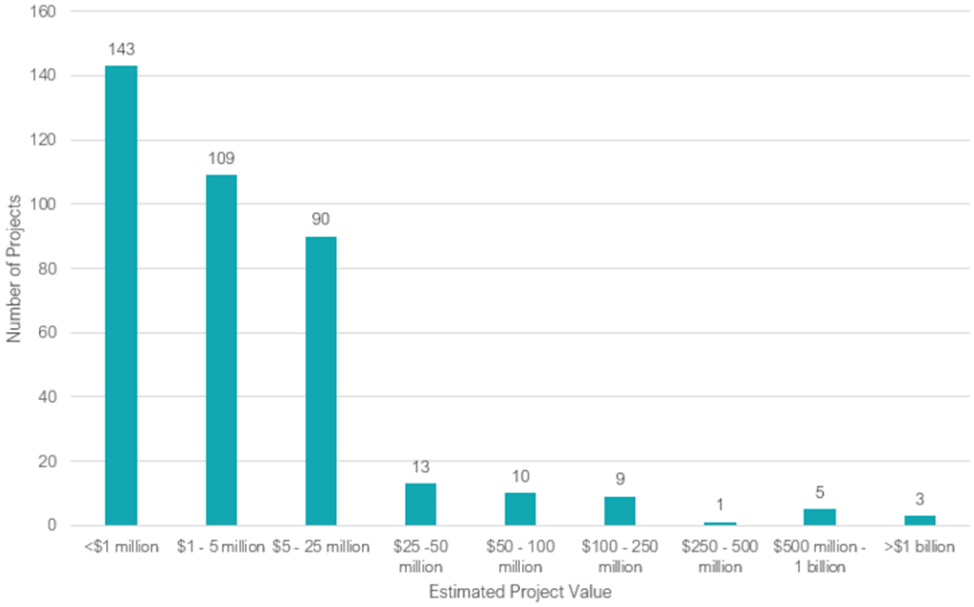
- 36% of projects are under $1 million, indicating a substantial pipeline of early-stage, enabling, or site-specific investments.
- A further 27% fall in the $1–5 million range, reinforcing the dominance of small-to-medium interventions.
- 31% of projects sit between $5–50 million, representing the core delivery layer where system capacity and performance are materially lifted.

Sensitivity: General

- Only 2% of projects exceed $500 million, but these are likely to be system-shaping investments (for example transmission reinforcement, major generation assets or port-linked energy infrastructure).

Figure 15 shows that the highest project counts are clustered below $25 million, with rapidly diminishing numbers at higher values.

Figure 15: Planned investment by project value



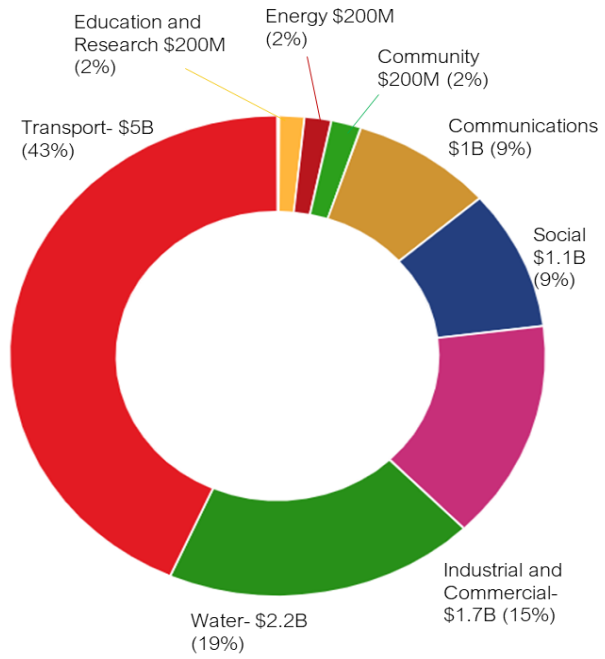
The sectoral investment profile highlights a highly concentrated infrastructure pipeline, with a small number of sectors accounting for the majority of total value. While projects are distributed across transport, water, industrial, social and digital infrastructure, the value concentration reflects the system-shaping role of a few dominant asset classes, particularly transport and energy-enabled industrial infrastructure.

Figure 16 shows that of the planned investments:

- Transport ($5.0B, 43%) is by far the largest investment category, reflecting the scale of state highway assets and nationally significant corridors.
- Water ($2.2B, 19%) and Industrial & Commercial ($1.7B, 15%) form the second tier, together accounting for over a third of total investment.
- Social infrastructure ($1.1B, 9%) represents a substantial but more targeted investment set.
- Communications ($1.0B, 9%) reflects nationally delivered digital infrastructure rather than region-specific spend.
- Energy ($200M, 2%) and Education & Research ($200M, 2%) appear small in value terms, but play a disproportionate enabling role.

Sensitivity: General

Figure 16: Planned investment by sector



This mix reinforces that energy investment is not a standalone sector, but a critical enabling input across all high-value sectors, particularly transport, industry and water.

Sources of Pipeline Information

The pipeline has been constructed by collating information from multiple public and engagement-based sources to provide the most comprehensive regional picture possible at the time of preparation.

Primary sources include:

- the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission's national infrastructure pipeline
- published council Long-Term Plans and infrastructure strategies
- Regional and National Land Transport Plans
- central government funding and consenting schedules
- publicly available investment plans of infrastructure providers
- targeted engagement with key regional infrastructure stakeholders.

Where possible, project information has been cross-checked across sources to improve consistency and accuracy.

Pipeline Construction Methodology

The pipeline was developed through a structured, multi-step process:

1. **Data collection**
   Publicly available project data was collected from national, regional and local sources, supplemented by information obtained through engagement with infrastructure providers.

2. **Filtering and classification**
   Projects were reviewed to confirm relevance to the Northland region and classified by sector, location, delivery agency, funding status and indicative timing.
3. **Standardisation**
   Project attributes were standardised where possible to allow comparison across sectors, including estimated cost ranges, delivery timeframes and funding status.
4. **Validation**
   High-level validation was undertaken through engagement with councils and key stakeholders to identify known gaps, overlaps or inconsistencies.

This approach balances breadth of coverage with transparency about data quality and limitations.

Project Attributes Captured

Where information was available, the following attributes were recorded for each project:

- project name and description
- sector and asset type
- geographic location
- indicative capital cost or cost range
- delivery timeframe
- funding status (committed, partially funded, unfunded, unknown)
- lead delivery agency or proponent
- project status (concept, planning, business case, delivery).

Not all attributes are available for all projects, particularly for early-stage or privately led initiatives.

How the Pipeline Should Be Interpreted

The infrastructure pipeline should be interpreted with care and in context.

Key considerations include:

- **Indicative, not exhaustive**
  The pipeline reflects known projects at a point in time and may not capture all planned or emerging investments, particularly where information is commercially sensitive.
- **Variable maturity**
  Projects are at different stages of development and should not be compared solely on cost or scale without considering readiness and dependencies.
- **No prioritisation implied**
  Inclusion in the pipeline does not imply priority, endorsement or funding commitment. Prioritisation is determined through the strategic framework set out in the Plan.
- **Evolving over time**
  The pipeline will change as projects progress, funding decisions are made and new initiatives emerge.

Relationship Between the Pipeline and the Plan

The infrastructure pipeline informs the Plan, but does not define it.

The Plan uses the pipeline to:

- understand current investment patterns and gaps
- test alignment with strategic priorities and place-based outcomes
- identify sequencing opportunities and dependencies
- support investment readiness and advocacy.

Where misalignment exists between the pipeline and the Plan's priorities, the Plan provides the basis for reshaping future investment rather than retrofitting strategy to existing projects.

Limitations and Known Gaps

The pipeline has several inherent limitations:

- reliance on publicly available data means some private or early-stage projects are not captured
- cost estimates are indicative and may change as projects progress
- funding status may lag current decisions due to reporting cycles
- some projects span multiple regions or programmes and cannot be fully attributed to Northland.

These limitations reinforce the importance of using the pipeline as a **strategic guide**, not a definitive investment programme.

Ongoing Management and Updates

The infrastructure pipeline is intended to be maintained and refined over time as part of implementing the Plan.

Ongoing management will focus on:

- updating project status and timing as information becomes available
- improving consistency of data across sectors
- strengthening links between the pipeline and spatial planning
- using the pipeline to track delivery and inform future prioritisation.

Further technical detail, including project-level tables and sector breakdowns, can be developed as supporting material or maintained separately as a live dataset.

How the Pipeline Might Be Used Going Forward

The infrastructure pipeline will continue to be refined and updated as the Plan is implemented. It will be used to:

- support prioritisation and advocacy for regionally significant investments
- inform engagement with central government funding programmes
- improve coordination across councils, CCOs and infrastructure providers
- identify opportunities for iwi and private sector co-investment
- track progress and maintain transparency around delivery.

C

Appendix C – Stakeholder Perspectives and Engagement

Purpose of this Appendix

Stakeholder engagement has provided a strong foundation for the Northland Infrastructure Plan. The perspectives captured in this appendix demonstrate broad recognition of the region's infrastructure challenges and opportunities, and strong support for a coordinated, place based and delivery focused approach.

By documenting these perspectives, this appendix supports transparency and confidence in the Plan, while allowing the core document to remain concise, strategic and forward looking.

This appendix summarises the engagement undertaken to inform the Northland Infrastructure Plan and the key themes that emerged from stakeholder perspectives. It provides transparency around how the Plan was developed and how input from across the region and beyond has shaped its strategic direction.

Engagement was used to:

- understand infrastructure challenges, opportunities and priorities from multiple perspectives
- test emerging strategic directions and assumptions
- identify gaps, risks and dependencies across infrastructure systems
- inform the development of priorities, programmes and delivery pathways.

The views summarised in this appendix are presented at a thematic level. They do not represent formal positions of individual organisations unless explicitly stated.

Engagement Approach

Engagement was undertaken as part of the development of the draft Northland Infrastructure Plan and was intentionally broad, reflecting the Plan's role as a regional coordination and investment framework.

Engagement methods included:

- targeted discussions with local authorities and council-controlled organisations
- workshops and briefings with regional governance and coordination groups
- meetings with central government agencies and sector bodies
- engagement with infrastructure providers and industry representatives
- initial engagement and briefings with tangata whenua representatives.

The engagement approach prioritised strategic insights over project-level detail, recognising that the Plan is intended to guide long-term infrastructure direction rather than finalise specific investment decisions.

Stakeholder Groups Engaged

Engagement included perspectives from the following stakeholder groups:

Local Government and Regional Agencies

- Far North District Council
- Kaipara District Council
- Whangārei District Council
- Northland Regional Council
- Northland Inc
- Northland Waters CCO.

These organisations provided insights into local growth pressures, infrastructure constraints, service delivery challenges and alignment with spatial planning and long-term plans.

Central Government Agencies and Sector Bodies

- New Zealand Infrastructure Commission – Te Waihanga
- central government infrastructure, transport, energy and funding agencies
- regional economic development and investment agencies.

Central government perspectives focused on investment readiness, alignment with national priorities, funding pathways and the need for clearer regional narratives to support decision-making.

Infrastructure Providers and Industry Representatives

- transport, energy, water and communications providers
- port, airport and logistics operators
- construction, manufacturing and primary sector representatives
- tourism and regional industry bodies.

These stakeholders provided insights into network performance, capacity constraints, resilience issues, workforce challenges and the practical implications of infrastructure investment for business operations and growth.

Tangata Whenua

- briefings and early engagement with iwi and Māori governance entities.

Engagement with tangata whenua focused on the role of infrastructure in enabling Māori land development, supporting iwi aspirations, strengthening resilience and enabling long-term, intergenerational outcomes. Ongoing engagement is recognised as essential as the Plan moves into implementation.

Key Themes from Stakeholder Perspectives

Across engagement, several consistent themes emerged.

Connectivity and Access

Stakeholders consistently identified transport, freight and digital connectivity as critical enablers of regional development. Reliable connections within Northland and to national and international markets were seen as essential to economic participation, resilience and investment confidence.

There was strong interest in improving freight pathways, including rail, port, aviation and coastal shipping, alongside the need to maintain and strengthen local road networks that support everyday access for communities.

Resilience and Reliability

Resilience emerged as a core concern across sectors. Stakeholders highlighted the impacts of weather events, climate risks and infrastructure disruptions on communities, businesses and service delivery.

There was broad support for shifting from reactive repair toward more proactive investment in resilience, renewals and risk reduction, particularly in transport, water and energy systems.

Energy and the Transition Opportunity

Energy reliability and affordability were identified as critical constraints, alongside strong interest in renewable energy and energy-enabled development opportunities.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of using energy infrastructure not only to improve security of supply, but also to attract energy-intensive and value-adding industries to the region, supporting diversification and long-term growth.

Water Security and Growth Enablement

Water supply, wastewater capacity and flood protection were consistently identified as key constraints on housing, industrial development and land-use change.

There was strong recognition of the role of water infrastructure as a growth enabler and the importance of aligning water investment with spatial planning, town growth strategies and economic development objectives.

Place-Based Growth and Spatial Alignment

Stakeholders emphasised that infrastructure investment must reflect place-based needs and support agreed growth patterns.

There was support for a clearer articulation of regional hubs, towns and growth areas, and for aligning infrastructure delivery with regional and district spatial planning to avoid fragmented or inefficient investment.

Delivery Challenges and Investment Readiness

Common delivery challenges included:

- funding constraints and uncertainty
- fragmented planning and decision-making
- regulatory and consenting complexity
- workforce and contractor capacity limitations.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for clearer sequencing, stronger project development capability and improved coordination to move projects from concept to investment-ready status.

How Stakeholder Perspectives Informed the Plan

Stakeholder input informed the Plan in several key ways:

- reinforcing the need for a system-based, place-focused approach rather than a project list
- shaping the strategic priorities and emphasis on connectivity, resilience, energy and place-based development
- highlighting the importance of sequencing and enabling infrastructure
- strengthening the focus on delivery pathways, investment readiness and partnerships
- reinforcing the central role of iwi partnership and co-investment.

The Plan reflects areas of broad alignment across stakeholders while providing a clear regional framework to guide future decision-making.

Ongoing Engagement

Engagement is not a one-off activity. The implementation of the Northland Infrastructure Plan will require ongoing collaboration with stakeholders to:

- refine priorities and sequencing
- support project development and investment readiness
- align infrastructure investment with spatial planning and funding cycles

- build confidence and momentum for delivery.

Future engagement will place particular emphasis on deepening partnerships with iwi, aligning with central government investment processes, and maintaining strong coordination across councils, CCOs and infrastructure providers.