

Moving people in 2055

The Ministry of Transport's draft Long-term Insights Briefing

We welcome your feedback on the draft Long-term Insights Briefing. Submissions can be made to LTIBconsultation@transport.govt.nz until 6 August 2025.

In our Long-term Insights Briefing we use Monty, our National Transport Modelling tool, to simulate what a day's travel would look like for:

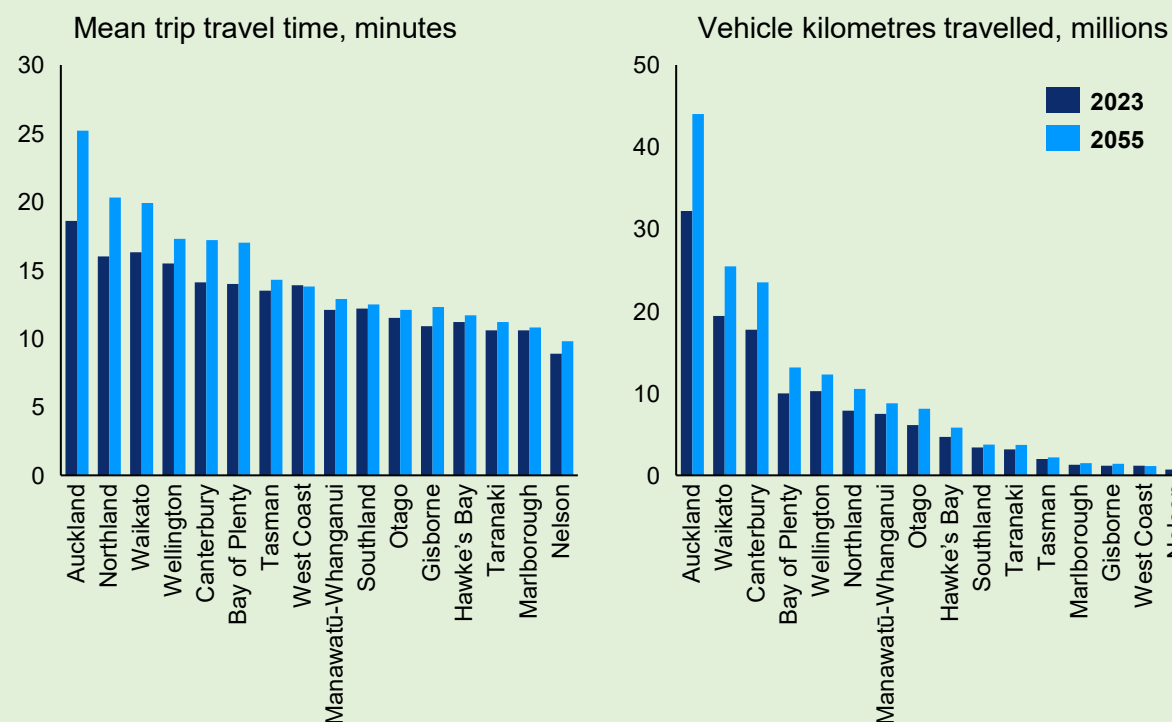
- 1 Our current population
- 2 New Zealand under 2055 population projections (a population of over 6 million)
- 3 A 2055 case study in Napier which replaces car journeys with 'robotaxis'

Population size and technological change have had significant impacts on our transport system over the last 30 years. Our population has increased from 3.5 to 5 million, and has had access to transport innovations like GPS navigation, micromobility solutions like e-scooters and app-based ride hailing services, and mainstream electric vehicles. This informed our choice of illustrative scenarios for the future.

We found...

Without increased network capacity or demand management, longer trips are expected – especially in Auckland

In our 2055 population scenario, higher populations using the same roading network will lead to longer trip times and aggregate kilometres of travel in all regions except for on the West Coast, where population levels are projected to decline.



Robotaxis may surprise us

In our illustrative 'robotaxi' scenario, people don't have the option of using a private car. Under this scenario vehicle kilometres travelled actually increase, as robotaxis travel empty between trips. Significant wait times for robotaxis also lead users to switch to walking or cycling for shorter journeys. This shows that a real world robotaxi-type scheme would need careful design in order to actually bring benefits to road users.

