

By email

27 January 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister of Transport
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Tēnā Koe Chris

Waterloo Transit Oriented Development

Thank you for your recent email requesting an update on progress with the redevelopment of Waterloo train station.

Strategic drivers and objectives

The Wellington Transit Oriented Development (TOD) programme was initiated by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) in November 2021. Waterloo Station in the central Lower Hutt Valley was selected as the first TOD focus location due to:

- A need by Greater Wellington to address major and pending end-of-financial-life infrastructure issues in the Waterloo train station.
- Greater Wellington's ownership of prime commercially developable land in the wider station precinct which is currently under-utilised from a land use perspective.
- The station precinct's strategic location in the Hutt Valley and the significant physical 'footprint' of the site (approximately 18,865m² of developable land), currently dominated by free-to-use carparks.
- The opportunity to redevelop Waterloo as an integrated transport hub for the Hutt Valley linking with RiverLink, Hutt City CBD and connections to and from Wellington Central, Upper Hutt and the Wairarapa.
- The precinct's potential to contribute to Wellington Regional Policy Statement (RPS) objectives and goals in the Hutt Valley through a project that contributes to and enables urban intensification and enhancement in Hutt City.
- The precinct's potential to facilitate urban intensification in the wider catchment as a site for employment (e.g. anchor tenant office space) and social services provision (i.e. health, education and social services provision).

Greater Wellington's strategic transport objectives for the project include fully integrating all public transport services associated with Waterloo into a single coherent structure which incorporates a bus interchange and improves customer experience including accessibility.

From an urban development perspective, our objective is to facilitate adjacent commercial development (office, retail and services) on Greater Wellington land in the precinct through a TOD-enabling transport hub design, which will, in turn, facilitate urban development in the immediate catchment.

Reference design

Following a series of concept and commercial investigations over the past three years which have demonstrated the feasibility and viability of a TOD in the Waterloo precinct, a key focus for the project in 2025 has been delivering a reference design for the transport interchange component of the TOD.

This design process has further emphasised that, currently, the station has significant accessibility issues, ageing infrastructure with the station roof at end-of-life, and low-quality connectivity with neighbouring areas. In its current state, Waterloo provides a less-than-ideal experience for able-bodied passengers and considerable challenges for those with mobility needs.

Furthermore, the design process has also highlighted that the end-of-financial-life infrastructure issues in the train station mean that any deferral of action regarding infrastructure renewal will come with a commensurate increase in eventual cost and may lead to accelerated maintenance costs if asset conditions degrade more rapidly over the coming decade than currently anticipated.

A reference design for the transport component of the development was adopted by Council in September 2025. Key elements of this design are:

- A new, more accessible, overpass to provide greater connectivity across the rail corridor.
- A new pedestrian crossing on Cambridge Terrace to replace the aging underpass.
- Alignment of the platforms, making them uniform with each other and level with the trains.
- Improved amenities, shelter and safety measures.
- Covered bike shelters for both platforms.
- Dedicated space for a commercial development within the main station.
- Upgrades to the bus interchange to better integrate with the station.
- A purpose-built pick-up/drop-off zone.

Further work relating to the design of the broader commercial development will commence following further engagement with potential investors and developers.

Pedestrian underpass

The current Waterloo pedestrian underpass has emerged from recent studies as the key structural and financial consideration associated with the project. The underpass acts as the primary public thoroughfare for East-West pedestrian movements in the area, particularly for school children and residents accessing nearby shops, services and community (the nearest alternative crossing points are approximately 700m north and 500m south). The pedestrian underpass is situated beneath both the rail tracks and the Cambridge Terrace roadway. Originally constructed in 1988, it was designed with an assumed lifespan of 50 years.

Considerable focus for the design team has been on approaches to retaining the existing underpass and considering alternatives if retention is not structurally, financially or environmentally viable. Assessing the underpass's remaining lifespan is challenging and our staff have been dealing with underlying material and water ingress issues for some years now. Recent testing work through the project has highlighted the volatility of ground conditions around the underpass.

Council has concluded through the reference design process that full replacement over time of the underpass with an overpass would be the least risky approach fiscally, structurally and environmentally. The factors influencing our decision-making include:

- Underpass risks are too high: The existing underpass is deteriorating (water ingress, tile delamination, minimal reinforcing cover); seismic performance is uncertain; renewal or strengthening is costly, complex, and may pose unacceptable risks to the Waiwhetū Aquifer; retaining it could reduce future pedestrian capacity.
- Overpass + at-grade crossing improves safety and legibility: Better wayfinding and sightlines; more accessible for all users; avoids flood and moisture issues inherent to underpasses.
- Better constructability: Less complex than a long overpass; avoids major excavation and aquifer risks; enables more efficient staging.
- Supports TOD objectives: Compact station footprint frees land for commercial development; integrates bus, rail, walking, and cycling; future-proofs the precinct for growth and intensification.

We are conscious that replacement of the current underpass with an overpass and signalised crossing on Cambridge Tce comes with significant cost and will be controversial with some users and residents.

To address this, Greater Wellington has commissioned further impact studies to help us and Hutt City Council better understand effects from the proposals on traffic and pedestrian movements in the area. In addition, Greater Wellington will be engaging in further community awareness and engagement initiatives in 2026 and will keep your electoral office updated on these.

Business case and financing

Waterloo is a test project for a suite of further TOD initiatives I will be promoting to Ministers later in 2026. The funding and financing model finally agreed on for this project will serve as a template for further commercial partnerships as we continue to explore commercial and urban development opportunities across the Wellington public transport network, including opportunities Greater Wellington can lead (i.e. where Council has significant land holding interests) and opportunities where Greater Wellington can support other landowners (e.g. in Johnsonville).

Greater Wellington is currently finalising the Initial Business Case (IBC) for the project and are working with the private sector to determine the optimal funding and financing pathway for the development and to further refine projected costs. The IBC is due to be finalised for Council endorsement in April 2026.

Despite attracting a “very high” efficiency rating from NZTA, this project, like all new Greater Wellington projects in 2024, did not attract funding. We will continue to engage with NZTA on this project through the next National Land Transport Fund funding round.

Estimates to date indicate the original project budget of \$110m is indicative for all elements of the works including the investment required to deliver fit-for-future east-west pedestrian and cycle movements across the rail corridor (estimates of \$30-50mil investment required for this element).

Greater Wellington is sole funding the initial planning and design phases of the project but will need to seek external investment from state and/or private investment sources to deliver this project. Commercial engagement with the property investment sector is currently underway and findings and recommendations from this will be presented to Council for consideration in April 2026.

I will update you on progress with funding and financing once we have a clear picture of our commercial options and their long-term whole-of-life costs to our Council.

Greater Wellington will continue to brief you on progress with this project and welcome the opportunity to host you for a site visit to discuss the proposed development at your convenience.

Ngā mihi



Daran Ponter

Heamana | Chair

CC: Greater Wellington Councillors Quentin Duthie, Nigel Elder, Gabriel Tupou
Ken Laban, Mayor, Hutt City