



**Hamilton Regional Office
Media Release**

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Transit forecast proposes Harbour Link project for Bay of Plenty

Construction of the Harbour Link project in Tauranga will be completed within five years with tendering of the Stage 1 works already underway, announced Transit New Zealand today with the release today of the 10-year State Highway Forecast 2006/07.

Stage 1 consists of completing the 4-laning of Hewletts Road to complement the successful Hewletts Road Flyover project opened last month. This will be followed by the tendering and construction of Stage 2 which involves duplication of the Harbour Bridge, a four-lane flyover from Takitimu Drive (SH2) to the existing Harbour Bridge and 4-laning of the bridge causeway.

Transit regional manager Chris Allen says that the Harbour Link project is a critical part of the long-term vision of an efficient transport network for the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region, including the linking of Tauranga, Mount Maunganui and the Port of Tauranga.

“A range of initiatives to improve traffic flows will also be implemented along Tauranga Central Corridor over the next five years. “Travel Demand Management” measures will complement improvements to Harbour Link and include encouraging more use of public transport and walking and cycling facilities,” Mr Allen says.

Design of the SH2 Tauranga Eastern Motorway has also been moved forward into the 2006/2007 programme allowing Transit to work with its Smart Transport partners to develop a joint funding package to progress an integrated transport system.

“A significant amount of the future growth in the region will be adjacent to the Eastern Corridor and it is important that all parties with an interest in the area work together to achieve a sustainable transport system where state highways, local roads and public transport come together to support this growth,” Mr Allen said.

Transit will also continue to work with developers and Tauranga City Council to complete construction of the remaining stages of the SH36 Pyes Pa Bypass within five years. To the north of Tauranga, investigations are proposed to reconsider the SH2 Katikati Bypass and to develop state highway intersection improvements at Omokoroa as well as a reconsideration and design of the Tauranga Northern Arterial within five years.

The region has identified eight strategic corridors in the Regional Land Transport Strategy review. Two of these corridors, the Tauranga Central and Eastern Corridors are well understood with the current work underway. Transit proposes to undertake strategic studies on the remaining six strategic corridors, including Tauranga Northern and Southwestern Corridors, three Rotorua Corridors (Southern, Eastern Lakes and Rotorua Central) and the Eastern Bay of Plenty Corridor, to improve long-term planning and assist good decision-making. In particular Transit will be working with Rotorua District Council to consider some of their strategic issues such as the Rotorua Eastern Arterial.

Replacement of the Reids Canal Bridge and flood protection improvements at the Awaiti Stream Bridge on SH2 near Matata are planned to improve route security in the eastern Bay of Plenty as part of an integrated package of flood protection works being undertaken by the Whakatane District council, Environment Bay of Plenty and OnTrack.

Currently under construction, the SH5 Gasline Curves Realignment, SH2 Matata Underpass and the SH2 Paengaroa Weighstation projects will all be completed in 2006/07. A number of other new safety projects on SH2, SH5, SH33 and SH36 will also be undertaken, along with three new passing lanes.

Information with a national focus is included in a separate media statement.

Transit’s 10-year State Highway Forecast 2006/07 and a media kit will be available at 6pm today on our website at www.transit.govt.nz

Ends