



KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES

Transit, along with local and central government are working together to achieve a sustainable land transport system in new ways.

Transit will work closely with regional and district councils to ensure that any substantial upgrading in the next 10 to 20 years is properly considered and planned, in order to relieve congestion and support regional growth strategies. This requires agreement on amendments to road and public transport plans and shared funding responsibilities for both local and national infrastructure and services.

Planning activities such as the Bay of Plenty's Regional Land Transport Strategy, Long-Term Council Community Plans, and Transit's State Highway Forecast all help in this process.

In meeting the objectives of the NZTS and LTMA, the key regional transport issues for the Bay of Plenty Region include:

- › Road safety: particularly safe interaction of heavy freight traffic with general traffic, as well as tourist traffic
- › Congestion: rapid population and development growth in the Bay of Plenty, particularly in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region and in and around Tauranga, is causing significant congestion, together with safety problems
- › Forestry traffic: over the next five to ten years, forestry harvesting is expected to increase from 10 million to 12 million tonnes a year from the Central Plateau forests, and much of the product will be exported through the Port of Tauranga
- › Tourist traffic: particularly around Rotorua and the Urewera National Park
- › Route security: interruption of the state highway network because of flooding and slips, particularly in the eastern Bay of Plenty between the East Cape (Gisborne), Opotiki District and Whakatane District, has a significant economic impact on the forestry and dairy industries, as well as on local communities
- › Spillages from stock trucks.

How we plan to address these key issues

The Tauranga Central Corridor is one of the most congested corridors in the state highway network and substantial improvements are planned.

The Tauranga Eastern Corridor is also very congested and will be put under further pressure by the substantial growth planned for Papamoa. Transit is working with its Smart Transport partners (Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty, and Environment Bay of Plenty) to develop the Tauranga Eastern Corridor in a manner that integrates the proposed land use with transport systems to achieve a sustainable balance.

Progress will be made towards determining strategies for the remaining Strategic Corridors in the Bay of Plenty the strategic study planned for the Tauranga Northern Corridor will take into account the review of the long term function of the highway and design work for a appropriate Tauranga Northern arterial will be undertaken.

Several small projects and other activities under maintenance and operations are targeted at improving route security in the eastern Bay of Plenty, particularly in Matata where Transit is working closely with the Whakatane District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty and ONTRACK on a package of activities following the recent severe flooding.

Large improvement activities (with construction costs of more than \$3.4M), have been indicated for 10 years, while activities with construction costs of less than \$3.4M are proposed over the next three years and are shown in the table. The locations of Bay of Plenty projects in the 10-year State Highway Forecast are shown on the map.

Congestion and Strategic Corridor Improvements

The Hewlett's Flyover project was completed in 2005/06 and Transit now proposes to complement this by progressing Harbour Link as a full state highway project. The first stage of the project will be the completion of the four-laning of Hewlett's Road in 2006/07. This will be followed by the duplication of the Harbour Bridge and a four-lane flyover from the Harbour Bridges to Takitimu Drive. The objective is to increase road capacity, provide bus lanes where possible to encourage better utilisation of public transport, and provide walking and cycling facilities that will encourage people to use these modes of transport.

In addition, a range of travel demand management initiatives will be identified and implemented on the Central Corridor over the next three years, to complement road capacity improvements.

The design of the Tauranga Eastern Motorway has been moved forward to commence in 2006/07, to allow Transit to work with its Smart Transport partners to get a better understanding of the costs and risks of developing a package of transport activities to integrate with and complement the significant proposed land use changes. This will allow the Smart Transport partners to develop a joint funding package to progress the various construction works.

Investigation work is proposed for growth areas on the northern corridor at Katikati and Omokoroa as well as design work for the Tauranga Northern Corridor.

Transit proposes to continue to work with Tauranga City Council and the developers at Pyes Pa to complete the remaining stages of Pyes Pa Bypass. Stage 1 of the Bypass was completed in 2005/06 by the developer as a contribution necessary to accommodate growth and to maintain the functionality of the transport system, including the state highway network.

The Gaslines Curves Realignment on SH5, the Matata Underpass Realignment and the Paengaroa Weighstation on SH2 are all under construction and will be completed in 2006/07.

Safety

There are three safety projects being undertaken. Installation of a guardrail on SH33 and the widening of two bridges on SH36 Rotorua/Tauranga Twin City Corridor. Further work in removing roadside hazards will continue.

If the Bay of Plenty region agrees to the utilisation of their \$R funding a number of additional small projects could be progressed including further bridge and seal widening, intersection improvements and a bridge replacement at Waitahanui on SH2 if land purchase can be resolved.

Route Security

Replacement of the Reids Canal Bridge and flood protection improvements at the Awaiti Stream Bridge on SH2 near Matata are planned as part of an integrated package of flood protection works.

Passing Opportunities

Transit will construct passing lanes north and south of Katikati on SH2 and also a further one on SH5 near Rotorua if the region agrees to \$R funding.

Stock Effluent Disposal Facilities

As part of a national programme to provide a safe and convenient network of stock effluent disposal facilities, new facilities will be constructed on SH2 at McLarens and near Opotiki.

Strategic Studies

The Bay of Plenty has identified eight strategic corridors in their proposed Regional Land Transport Strategy review. Two of these corridors are the Tauranga Central and Eastern Corridors and are well understood. Transit propose to undertake strategic studies on the remaining six strategic corridors, including Tauranga Northern and South-western Corridors, three Rotorua Corridors (Southern, Eastern Lakes and Rotorua Central) and the Eastern Bay of Plenty Corridor, to improve our long-term planning and assist good decision-making.

Maintenance and Operations

The safe operation of the state highway network is a key function for Transit. Processes are in place to manage traffic efficiently, provide consistent and reliable information for road users, undertake maintenance work on the highway in the safest and least disruptive way, monitor locations where crashes occur, and where appropriate, take corrective action.

The state highway network is a \$15 billion transport infrastructure asset that demands sophisticated and effective management. Transit has systems in place to do this, ranging from infrastructure and traffic databases to natural features inventories, long-term deterioration modelling tools, and annual condition data collection supported by advanced contract delivery methods and regular performance reporting.

Further, improvements to the way traffic is managed at incidents and in congested urban areas are being investigated and implemented.

Maintenance and operations activities make up a key part of the forecast expenditure in the Bay of Plenty Region. In addition to maintaining current and future levels of service, and preserving the asset, we propose to:

- › Undertake 92km of resurfacing, including 8km with low noise surfacing
- › Strengthen 12km of highway
- › Improve the road network in the eastern Bay of Plenty to safeguard the state highway in times of flood
- › Target noise reduction works for specific problem areas
- › Improve traffic and travel demand management by upgrading signals and dynamic signage to provide real time information for road users in Tauranga and Rotorua
- › Implement plant pest strategies and use special plant pest eradication programmes to target hotspots
- › Carry out planting to reduce future maintenance on steep slopes or batters next to highways
- › Continue to implement and maintain special safety programmes in areas with poor road safety records, including identified “black routes”.