



**Christchurch Regional Office
Media Release**

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Transit forecast will make travelling easier for Cantabrian motorists

Better access and mobility around Christchurch is a top priority for the Canterbury region in the Transit New Zealand 10-year State Highway Forecast released today.

The design phase for the extension of the Christchurch Southern Motorway (SH73), which will ensure efficient travel south of the city, is planned to start in 2006/07 with a proposed construction start within the next five years.

This project has been accelerated following a decision by the Government to invest \$425M over five years to fast-track state highway improvements beyond those announced in August 2005.

"Traffic within Christchurch city is increasing by four per cent each year so it's a top priority for us at Transit to improve route efficiency around the city," regional manager Colin Knaggs says.

"The extension of the SH73 Christchurch Southern Motorway, a four-lane arterial to link the Northern Motorway with QE2 Drive, QE2 four-laning and the Western Bypass of Belfast are key to providing congestion relief and keeping road users moving efficiently around the city," Mr Knaggs says.

Other projects included within the Forecast to improve congestion and provide route efficiency on the main arterial routes around the city are:

- The implementation of a Travel Demand Strategy for Christchurch planned to start in 2006/07.
- Investigation planned within five years for the Memorial Ave Intersection and design and construction planned for the second five year period of the forecast, to ease congestion.

- The design phase for 4-laning of SH1 from Memorial Ave to Yaldhurst Road and Sawyers Arms to Memorial Ave is planned for the first five years with construction following in the second five years.

Seventeen small and medium projects to ease congestion, give access for walkers and cyclists, and provide route efficiency and safety are included in the list for Canterbury. It is planned that all these small and medium projects will be carried out within three years.

“Intersection improvements, rural realignments and construction of passing lanes all help to provide a safe and efficient state highway network throughout the Canterbury region. Having these projects included in the Forecast is good news for all road users in the region,” says Mr Knaggs.

Four strategic studies are also scheduled in the Forecast to improve long term planning and assist in decision-making. The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy is already committed and in progress. Transit is working alongside the local councils on the transportation needs of Christchurch in 30 years time.

The other studies cover the SH1 Christchurch Northern Links, the SH1 Kaikoura Coast, SH1 Woodend Bypass (which is in the early stages) and the route security of SH73.

Transit’s national programme to provide a safe and convenient network of stock effluent disposal facilities includes a proposed new facility at Pareora, south of Timaru.

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

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