



## 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 Northland'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 Northland region include:

- › Road safety: of particular concern is the separation of or safe interaction between heavy freight traffic and general traffic (including tourist traffic), and crashes on bends
- › Secure, efficient and safe transport corridors, especially between Auckland and Whangarei
- › Forestry traffic: over the next few years forestry harvesting is expected to increase to 4 million tonnes per year with much of it expected to be exported through Marsden Point Port
- › Tourist traffic: particularly on the Twin Coast Highway network linking the Bay of Islands, Cape Reinga and the Waipoua Forest
- › Increased land development at Ruakaka, Marsden Point, west of Whangarei, Kerikeri, Waipapa and between Mangonui and Taipa, is resulting in growing traffic volumes, leading to the need for some improvements to the strategic roading network, including state highways
- › Increasing congestion through the Whangarei urban area, including the state highways
- › Lack of passing opportunities
- › Spillages from stock trucks
- › Low road standards (particularly on local roads) compared with the rest of the country

## How we plan to address these key issues

The terrain in Northland is often difficult, causing state highways to be generally quite winding and undulating. Northland also has a diverse geology resulting in areas of unstable soft rock formation ("Onerahi Chaos"). This, together with an almost sub tropical climate of high rainfall, results in some lengths of state highway having an uneven, rough surface. Transit will continue to seek engineering solutions to permanently stabilise such areas.

Intensified land use, particularly around Kerikeri and west and south of Whangarei, and growing traffic volumes are placing increasing demands on state highways. As a result, there is a need to improve the alignment of highways and provide more passing lanes, especially on SH1 between the intersection with SH10 at Pakaraka and Ross Rd, north of Wellsford.

Improvements are also required on key forestry routes to accommodate the predicted increases in forestry traffic from Northland forests to Northport at Marsden Point. Proposed improvements include the provision of passing lanes, seal widening, and the upgrade of intersections where forestry trucks enter the state highway network. Innovative low-cost solutions to the latter will be required because logging trucks generally use intersections only for the relatively short harvesting period.

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

## Road Safety – Secure and Efficient Transport Corridors

Transit will continue to improve the safety and efficiency of state highways and provide a network of stock effluent disposal facilities, in conjunction with local authorities. A number of large and small to medium activities have been proposed. These include realignments, intersection improvements, seal widening, removal of roadside hazards and guard rails.

## Tourist Routes

Stage 1 of the sealing of SH1 from Waitiki Landing to Cape Reinga was completed during 2004/05. Stage 2, which covers the remainder of this 20-kilometre section of state highway is included within the 10-year State Highway Forecast. Cape Reinga is a nationally significant tourist destination and sealing will meet tourist expectations and improve safety.

## Passing Opportunities

Limited passing opportunities in some parts of the region's road network lead to driver frustration and accidents. In addition to the many passing lanes already completed, Transit plans to progress further passing lanes on SH1 between Auckland and Kaitaia and on SH14.

## Walking and Cycling

Two walking and cycling projects have been identified that will provide new or upgraded pedestrian or cyclist facilities.

## Strategic Studies

We are proposing to undertake a number of strategic studies for the Northland region, including SH1 and SH14 in Whangarei City, 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 activities make up a large proportion of the forecast expenditure in the Northland region. In addition to preserving the highway network and undertaking maintenance and improvements to meet future levels of service, we propose to:

- › Resurface 66.5 km and reconstruct 12.8 km of highway
- › Continue a programme of slip site monitoring and management
- › Continue a programme of minor safety improvements including drainage improvements, intersection upgrades, seal widening, and guardrails, in addition to planned capital improvements to address safety issues.