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 Taranaki'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 Taranaki region include:

- Road safety
- Residential and industrial development to the north of New Plymouth
- Route security and efficiency to the north via the Awakino Gorge and to the south via Hawera
- Tourist traffic, including development of the "Forgotten World Highway".

How we plan to address these key issues

The state highway network in Taranaki has been improved very significantly in recent years and is now generally of a high standard. The strategic significance of reliable state highway access to Taranaki is an important feature in planning for Transit's maintenance and preventive works programmes. While the emphasis for Transit in Taranaki is on maintaining the existing state highway network, there are a number of activities to improve road safety as well as route security and efficiency in the Taranaki region. A further priority is managing the connections between state highways and local roads, as well as access to state highways from adjacent land, to support the medium to long distance travel function of key arterial roads.

The realignment of the Normanby Road Overbridge south of Hawera is a recognised regional safety issue. Similarly the Rugby Road Underpass, also south of Inglewood, will provide a safer and more reliable route, particularly for heavy vehicles.

The Bell Block Bypass, North of New Plymouth, is a strategic route improvement between Paraite Road and Egmont Road, bypassing a section of existing highway to reduce congestion and improve safety. The Bell Block Bypass leads into the proposed Mangaone Hill Four-laning project.

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 Taranaki projects in the 10-year State Highway Forecast are shown on the map.

Road Safety – Secure and Efficient Transport Corridors

Transit has identified a number of activities to improve the safety and efficiency of sections of SH3, for progress in the next five years, including road realignments, intersection improvements and bridge widening. Further work on the management or removal of roadside hazards will continue.

Passing Opportunities

Limited passing opportunities in some parts of the region's road network lead to driver frustration and accidents. A passing lane project has been identified on SH3 for progress in the next three years, on Whareroa Road south of Hawera. To assess the requirement for further passing lanes in the Taranaki region a passing lane study is to be undertaken, on SH3 between Hawera and Wanganui.

Walking and Cycling

The Devon Intermediate Pedestrian Facility on SH45 in Western New Plymouth will be progressed in the next three years.

Strategic Studies

We are undertaking, or proposing to undertake, a number of strategic studies for the Taranaki region, including studies of New Plymouth North and Urban, a passing lane study and a study of Awakino Gorge, 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 large proportion of the forecast expenditure in the Taranaki region. In addition to preserving the highway network and undertaking maintenance and improvements to meet future levels of service, we propose to:

- Resurface 96 kilometres of the network
- Carry out 7 kilometres of road pavement reconstruction
- Improve the availability of road condition information at critical locations within the network.