



**Hamilton Regional Office
Media Release**

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Transit Forecast accelerates projects for Waikato

Acceleration of key Waikato Expressway Projects is the highest priority for the region in Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast released today.

Included in the programme is further investigation of the Rangiriri Bypass and starts for the design of the Cambridge and Ngaruawahia Bypasses. The designs of the Huntly Bypass and Longswamp to Rangiriri four-laning projects are also proposed within five years.

Transit regional manager Chris Allen said that this development work would help establish more defined cost for the projects and help secure resource consents to enable construction starts.

"We expect to design and commence construction of the SH1 Rangiriri Bypass within five years, as well as make significant progress to enable a construction start within 10 years on the SH1 Cambridge and Ngaruawahia Bypasses. We will also work with regional representatives who are yet to determine whether the next Waikato Expressway priority will be the SH1 Huntly Bypass or the SH1 Hamilton Bypass," he said.

In Hamilton, construction of two large projects, the Church to Avalon Drive four-laning and the Avalon Drive Bypass, is programmed to start in the 2006/07 year, with both projects expected to be complete within five years.

Construction of Hamilton's SH1 Te Rapa Bypass is also proposed to commence within five years, subject to the completion of further design, planning and land purchase requirements and agreement on a funding package with Hamilton City Council.

"There are significant growth issues in the area and it is important that we establish a transport solution that integrates the state highway, local road and public transport systems with the existing and anticipated land use and includes

appropriate provision for walking and cycling. This will require a number of parties to be involved in the funding package,” Mr Allen said.

Investigation of the strategic routes for the Southern Links project south of Hamilton will also be completed to allow designation of the land for future road construction within five years.

The design of the replacement SH25 Kopu Bridge near Thames is already underway and a construction start is scheduled within the next five years. Transit also proposes to replace the nearby SH26 Kirikiri Stream Bridge along with two others on the Thames Coast SH25 at Te Puru and Tararu as part of Project Peninsula aimed at reducing the effects of floods in the area.

Another high profile regional project included in the 2006/07 forecast is the design of the SH1 East Taupo Arterial; construction of stage 4 of the project is scheduled to start within five years to complement the first three stages, which the Taupo District Council is proposing to construct.

Two other major projects and a number of small and medium projects, which aim to address the region’s safety issues, are also scheduled:

- The SH2 Maramarua deviation, which was designated in 2005/06, design will be carried out within five years, construction is also proposed to start within this time.
- The Piarere to Oak Tree Bend realignment project on SH1 south of Cambridge will also commence within five years, subject to the resolution of land purchase.
- A number of small to medium safety projects including the SH1 Piarere Junction Safety Improvements, SH1 SWATT 2010 Stage 2, SH27 Tahuna Road Roundabout and SH31 Owaikura Road North Realignment are all programmed to be completed within the next three years, together with continued “black route” safety work.
- Ten passing lane projects around the region are scheduled for construction within three years.

The Taranaki region has agreed to use funding for constructing improvements in the SH3 Awakino Gorge, including the Awakino north realignment and the Awakino Tunnel widening. These will be carried out within the next five years.

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