



## 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 West Coast'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 West Coast region include:

- › Road safety: a key concern is the potential conflict between heavy and light vehicle traffic, particularly on single-lane bridges on SH6
- › Ensuring secure and efficient transport corridors to the east via SH73 and Arthur's Pass, and via SH7 and Lewis Pass, to the north via SH6 and Hope Saddle, and to the south via SH6 and the Haast Pass
- › Increasing traffic due to the coal mining, dairy and tourist industries
- › Lack of passing opportunities.

### How we plan to address these key issues

State highway 6 forms the essential spine for land transport on the West Coast. Significant improvements to SH73 over recent years have greatly improved the security of this strategic link. The latest improvement to be completed is the construction of a new rail bridge at the Otira Underpass, which has allowed the vertical clearance to be increased for road traffic. Vehicles of all legal dimensions can now use this route to access the West Coast.

Traffic volumes on the West Coast are generally quite low and the state highway network is maintained to a high standard for low-volume highways. In maintaining this standard, Transit acknowledges the large tourist content of the traffic in this region. While the emphasis for Transit in the West Coast region is on maintaining the existing state highway network, there are a number of activities prioritised in the 10-year State Highway Forecast to improve road safety as well as route security and efficiency in the West Coast 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 strategic long distance travel function of key arterial roads.

The Arahura River Bridge is in urgent need of replacement given its age and condition. There would be significant negative impacts on the West Coast network if the bridge was to become unserviceable. We are working closely with ONTRACK with a view to constructing a new bridge within the next 5 years.

The lack of alternative access to and through the West Coast means that both SH73 and SH6 are of great strategic importance to the West Coast economy. The scoping study on the Gates of Haast Realignment will be completed on SH6 and a strategic study for Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek on SH73 will be undertaken to identify state highway improvements at reasonable cost.

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 West Coast 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 small to medium activities to improve the safety and efficiency of sections of state highway, including the Goat Creek Bridge Replacement on SH73.

In addition, traffic signals will be installed on SH6 through the Buller Gorge, to improve the safety of passing vehicles in some of the narrower locations.

### Stock Effluent Disposal Facilities

In accordance with the plan agreed with local authorities the stock effluent disposal facility on SH6 in Hokitika has been completed and a new stock effluent disposal facility is proposed for SH7 at either Reefton or Springs Junction, depending on stock movements. A facility at Jacksons on SH73 is also under development.

### Walking and Cycling

We are proposing to undertake the West Coast Cycle Strategy, in association with local authorities, to improve our long term planning and ensure good decisions that lead to safer and more efficient transport.

### Passing Lanes

Limited passing opportunities in some parts of the region's road network lead to driver frustration and accidents. Transit proposes to develop a strategy to identify possible locations for passing opportunities, using a mix of slow vehicle bays, seal widening and passing lanes.

### 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 the majority of the forecast expenditure in the West Coast region. In addition to preserving the highway network and undertaking maintenance and improvements to meet future levels of service, we propose to:

- › Undertake 91km of resurfacing, including 1km with low noise surfacing
- › Strengthen 8km of highway
- › Improve the availability of road condition information to road users at critical points on the network using electronic variable message signs, as erected on SH7 (at Lewis Pass and Rahu Saddle). Signs for SH73, at Arthur's and Porters Pass, are expected to be commissioned this year
- › Introduce thermal mapping of the inland network to predict where ice may occur
- › Introduce more road weather stations to improve emergency responses to ice and snow on roads, and continue to trial the use of the de-icer calcium magnesium acetate
- › Continue to monitor Waiho River erosion at Franz Josef and take appropriate action to ensure SH6 remains safe and open
- › Continue risk analysis of rock falls and river erosion and prioritise works accordingly, to avoid road closures
- › Strengthen a number of bridges on the network to reduce their vulnerability in the event of a severe earthquake
- › Work with the Department of Conservation to ensure maintenance works within national parks represent best practice
- › Complete the strengthening of the three suspension bridges (Fox, Cook, and Karangarua) on SH6 in south Westland to remove the current weight restriction, which is a significant impediment to heavy goods movement in this area
- › Continue with improvements in traffic management at incidents on the network.