KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES

Transit will work closely with the Auckland Regional Transport Authority and regional and district councils to ensure the best alignment of priorities, to relieve congestion and support regional growth strategies.

In meeting the objectives of the NZTS and LTMA, the key regional transport issues for the Auckland region include:

- Severe congestion, resulting in variability in trip times
- Road safety, in particular on SH1 and SH16 north of Auckland where there is a lack of passing opportunities
- Traffic growth, driven by population growth
- An alternative route to SH1 through Auckland
- Secure, efficient and safe transport corridors, especially between Auckland and Whangarei and SH2 within the Auckland region
- The impact of land use development because of continuing intensification within the metropolitan urban limit
- Increased land use development at growth nodes such as Warkworth and Kumeu leading to the need for improvements to the roading network
- Passenger transport infrastructure requirements.

How we plan to address these key issues

Economic growth and resulting increases in traffic demand will require the state highway network interconnections in and around Auckland to be substantially completed within the next 10 to 20 years to support the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy. They will also need to be sustainably managed in order to relieve congestion, improve travel time and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Travel Demand Management is a combination of activities that together seek to influence travel behaviour. Methods include travel plans, traveller information systems and traffic management techniques such as ramp signaling. Transit endorses the principle of Travel Demand Management as an integral component of a sustainable approach to land transport and is actively investigating opportunities for this.

Improvement works encompass the entire region within a particular focus on the Auckland Central Corridor, Northern Busway and the Western Ring Route, including the recently completed and opened Greenhithe Deviation.

Corridors outside the Auckland metroplitian urban limit also require improvements to accommodate increases in inter-regional travel. Proposed activities include improvements to the alignment of existing two-lane highways, seal widening and the provision of passing lanes.

Travel Demand Management

Ramp signalling is one of a number of Travel Demand Management approaches that seeks to influence demand for transport or travel. Installation of signals has commenced on the Southern Motorway, with the Northwestern and Northern Motorways following as an integrated project. Signals are also included as an integral part of forward planning on all of the Western Ring Route. The overall objective is to reduce congestion, reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability during peak travel periods.

Auckland Central Corridor

Auckland Central Corridor activities cover SH1 from Albany to Manukau. Several capacity improvement projects are forecast for the next 10 years. These include projects such as the Victoria Park Tunnel and Newmarket Viaduct replacement, which will add capacity to maximise the performance of the Central Motorway Junction.

Western Ring Route

The Western Ring Route is a proposed strategic motorway running south to north through Auckland, connecting Manukau City, Auckland City, Waitakere City and North Shore City. It is made up of 10 individual projects that need to be completed as a package. It will take traffic from Manukau through Waterview and Hobsonville to Albany to provide a strategic alternative to State Highway 1.

Provision for completion of the Western Ring Route has been included in Transit's State Highway Forecast, but in order to complete by 2015, as planned since August 2005, additional revenue will be needed to fund the required debt. Transit is working on the understanding that Auckland does want the Western Ring Route and wants it completed sooner (2015) than would be possible under current conventional funding.

Significant progress is being made on the Auckland Western Ring Route with the opening of SH18 Greenhithe Deviation during 2007/08, along with progress on SH20 Mt Roskill Extension and the construction start of SH18 Hobsonville Deviation. In addition, significant progress is being made on the development of SH20 Waterview Connection with a PPP option being investigated and a further $9.8M of funding approved to complete the planning stage in readiness to seek the necessary consents and approvals. At the southern end of the ring route, construction of Manakau harbour crossing has begun.

Public Transport Improvements

Transit considers and makes appropriate provision for public transport for all new projects being developed and ensures there is a close alignment with ARTA's programme. A number of bus priority lanes are being progressed in conjunction with other motorway capacity improvements. While provision for Rail to the Airport has been provided for in the Manukau Harbour Crossing Corridor between the harbour and Walmsley Road.

Road Safety

Transit has identified a number of activities to improve the safety and efficiency on sections of state highway. These include realignments, intersection improvements, seal widening and lighting safety retrofits.

Passing Opportunities

Limited passing opportunities on parts of the rural state highway network lead to driver frustration and accidents. Transit plans to progress passing lanes on both SH1 and SH16 north of Auckland.

Stock Effluent Disposal Facilities

As part of a national programme to provide a safe and convenient network of stock effluent disposal facilities, two new facilities are being constructed on SH1 at Wellsford and on the Bombay Hills.

Walking and Cycling

Provision for walking and cycling activities is an integral part of state highway planning. These facilities are provided as part of improvement projects on the Western Ring Route where applicable. There is one specific pedestrian facility planned for implementation in the next three years, on SH16 at Westgate, and also the Old Mangere Bridge Walking and Cycling project. Studies currently underway include the scoping of projects to contribute to the regional walking and cycling strategy and options for walking and cycling across the Waitemata harbour.

Strategic Studies

We are proposing to undertake a number of new strategic studies for the Auckland region to improve our long-term planning and assist good decision-making.

Maintenance and Operations

Maintenance and operations activities make up a large proportion of the forecast expenditure in the Auckland region and are due to increase over the next 10 years because of the commissioning of capital projects. In addition to preserving the highway network and undertaking maintenance and improvements to meet future levels of service, other asset renewals and operations activities include:

- Resurfacing 56km of multi-lane motorway
- Resurfacing 29km and reconstructing 1km of rural state highway
- Improving safety by applying high skid resistance surfacing
- Continuing to refine maintenance practices to reduce traffic disruptions and noise
- Continuing to carry out structural and seismic strengthening of bridges, including the Auckland Harbour Bridge
- Improving techniques and response times when managing incidents on motorways.

In 2008/09 the Transit – managed Traffic Management Unit, a joint collaboration between Transit and six Auckland local authorities providing 24-hour integrated traffic management, incident management and traveller information to road users, proposes to:

- Continue to improve management of the wider impacts of the expanding motorway construction programme
- Expand the geographic coverage and improve the functionality of the motorway Advanced Traffic Management Systems
- Provide an improved traveller information service to users through the traffic website and associated services
- Increase resource levels to operate travel demand management measures, such as ramp signalling
- Continue to enhance the management of the critical arterial network by improving co-ordination of traffic signals throughout the region
- Improve asset management systems for all high technology equipment
- Improve traffic flow within the region
- Continue to improve incident management.