



KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES

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

- › Road safety, in particular the separation of heavy freight traffic and other traffic (including tourist traffic), and crashes on bends
- › Secure, efficient and safe transport corridors, especially between Auckland and Whangarei
- › Increased forestry traffic over the next few years in line with increased forestry harvesting, with most expected to be exported through Northport at Marsden Point
- › Tourist traffic, particularly on the Twin Coast Highway network linking the Bay of Islands, Cape Reinga and the Waipoua Forest
- › Increased land development, particularly at Ruakaka, Marsden Point, Kerikeri and Waipapa, Bay of Islands, Doubtless Bay, Opononi and Omapere, and Mangawhai. This 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 on state highways
- › Lack of passing opportunities
- › Spillages from stock trucks.

How we plan to address these key issues

The terrain in Northland is often difficult, resulting in state highways that are winding and undulating. Northland also has a diverse geology resulting in areas of inherently unstable rock formation known as Onerahi Chaos Breccia. This, together with an almost subtropical 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. The result 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 Road, north of Wellsford.

Transit will also continue to liaise with councils and developers to ensure an integrated approach is taken on development and transportation needs.

Improvements are 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.

Road Safety – Secure and Efficient Transport Corridors

Transit plans to continue to improve the safety and efficiency of state highways. A number of large and small to medium activities have been proposed. These include realignments, intersection improvements and seal widening and guard rails. In conjunction with local authorities, a further stock truck effluent facility is being investigated.

Tourist Routes

Stage 1 of the sealing of SH1 from Waitiki Landing to Cape Reinga was completed during 2004/05. The remainder of the sealing of this 20-kilometre section of state highway is now underway and is expected to be completed in 2009/10. 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. A passing and overtaking opportunities study will be undertaken on these routes.

During the consultation process for this forecast, there were requests for progress to be made on four-laning Selwyn Avenue to Fourth Avenue in Whangarei. In conjunction with the relevant local authorities and the Regional Land Transport Committee, Transit will undertake an investigation phase during 2008/09 to define the scope of the project. However, given that this is a transitional year, to a new planning and funding system we have not programmed any further phases for this project.

Walking and Cycling

Four activities for walking and cycling have been proposed in the Northland region to provide new or upgraded pedestrian or cyclist facilities in Otaika, Kawakawa, from Paihia to Haruru Falls, and the Kerikeri River Pedestrian Bridge.

Strategic Studies

We propose to undertake strategic studies between Wellsford and Whangarei to improve our long-term planning and ensure good decision-making.

Maintenance and Operations

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 90km and reconstruct 12km of highway
- › Continue a programme of slip site monitoring and management and make provision for emergency reinstatements
- › Carry out corridor maintenance including litter and graffiti removal, routine vegetation control, road marking, maintenance of signs, traffic signals and carriageway lighting maintenance and incident response
- › Continue a programme of minor safety improvements, including drainage improvements, intersection upgrades, seal widening and installing guardrails, in addition to planned capital improvements to address safety issues.