



KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES

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” between Taumarunui (Waikato) and Stratford (Taranaki).

How we plan to address these key issues

The state highway network in Taranaki has been improved 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 Normanby Road Overbridge south of Hawera is a recognised regional safety issue and will be realigned. Similarly the Rugby Road Underpass, south of Inglewood, will provide a safer and more reliable route, particularly for heavy vehicles and is presently under construction.

The Bell Block Bypass, north of New Plymouth, is a strategic route improvement between Paraitē 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 and is part of the current construction work.

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 and intersection improvements. Further work on the management or removal of roadside hazards will continue.

The Taranaki and Waikato regions have agreed to share the cost of the construction on improvements in the Awakino Gorge, including the Awakino North Realignment and the Awakino Tunnel Access Improvements, to ensure that the future reliability, security and safety of this strategic route between the two regions is retained.

South of Hawera, the widening of the Tangahoe Bridge has been contracted for construction in the current year.

Passing Opportunities

Limited passing opportunities in some parts of the region’s road network lead to driver frustration and accidents. To assess the requirement for passing opportunities in the Taranaki region, a study was undertaken on SH3 between Hawera and Wanganui. This will lead to the development of a suite of eight passing lanes between Waitotara and Hawera over the next three years.

Walking and Cycling

Investigation of the Devon Intermediate pedestrian walkway on SH45 in Western New Plymouth is progressing and improvements at the site will be undertaken in the next two years. In addition, the Bell Block to Waiwhakaiho River cycleway is now being funded as a council project.

Strategic Studies

The New Plymouth Strategic Study presently underway will identify improvements and the management and protection of strategic networks and important local roads in New Plymouth. The study has recently undergone wide public consultation and will be finalised later in 2008.

Maintenance and Operations

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 115km of the network
- › Carry out 15km of road pavement reconstruction
- › Improve the availability of road condition information at critical locations on the network.