



KEY TRANSPORT ISSUES

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

- › Road safety, in particular the Waikato state highway network which has the highest fatal crash densities in the country, 20 percent higher than any other region. It has 20 of the nation's 100 worst "black routes", with a high frequency of serious and fatal crashes
- › Long-haul routes, the Waikato Region being part of a growth triangle linking major export hubs, population centres and tourist attractions in Auckland, Waikato, and the Bay of Plenty. In addition, a number of the country's strategic corridors with high proportions of heavy vehicles passing through the Waikato linking south to Taranaki and Wellington, contributing to a complex mix of local, inter-regional and tourist traffic
- › Congestion and bottle necks, because of rapid population and development growth in and around Hamilton, and to a lesser extent Cambridge and Taupo, are causing congestion and increasing travel delays and transport costs for long-haul travellers. It is causing a deterioration of environmental and amenity values for the communities that these long-haul routes pass through
- › Large volumes of vehicles are diverting onto unsuitable alternative routes to avoid delays, with resultant impacts on safety and economic development
- › Increased forestry traffic, over the next five to 10 years with forestry harvesting expected to increase from 10 to 11 million tonnes from Central Plateau forests, much of the product being exported through the Port of Tauranga
- › Significant pressure for commercial access and growth in northern and western Hamilton. Hamilton's Rotokauri Structure Plan and Waikato District's Horotiu Structure plan will put significant pressure on the Hamilton Western Corridor, which also has a local road function. Transit will work closely with its transport partners to build on the Access Hamilton Strategy, which seeks a balance

between roading, rail, passenger transport, and active modes of transport such as walking and cycling to manage demand

- › Tourist traffic, particularly in Taupo and on the Coromandel Peninsula (where the number of domestic holidaymakers is also a significant issue), and on the routes linking Auckland, Waitomo Caves, Lake Taupo, and Rotorua
- › Flooding on the Thames Coast highway and interruption of the state highway network because of bad weather and slips, particularly on the SH1 Desert Road and on SH3 through the Awakino Gorge, has a significant economic impact nationally as well as on the Taranaki region and the local communities
- › Spillages from stock trucks remain a significant environmental and safety hazard.

How we plan to address these key issues

The Waikato Expressway continues to be the highest priority transport issue for the region. Further progress will be made on the remaining components over the next 10 years. This will, in time, reinforce SH1 as a preferred long haul route, together with SH29 between the Bay of Plenty and Auckland. The SH2 Maramarua Corridor and SH27 are expected to remain as attractive routes for long-haul traffic in the short to medium term.

Further improvements are proposed to the Hamilton Western Corridor to complement the works already in progress. Improvements will include the identification and protection of the strategic transport corridors in South Hamilton through the planning process. Transit will also consider a number of projects on the existing routes in the meantime to relieve congestion and improve efficiency.

Transit is also considering improvements to route security for the region on the Thames Coast and on SH3 between Taranaki and the Waikato.

A number of walking and cycling activities are also planned to complement the strategies and work of the various territorial authorities.

Studies are currently underway to look at increasing safety on the “black routes” and will continue in the coming year. These have identified a number of small and medium-sized safety improvement projects which are included in the plan.

Congestion and Strategic Corridor Improvements

Transit expects to design and commence construction of the Rangiriri Bypass within five years as well as making significant progress with the Cambridge and Ngaruawahia Bypasses within 10 years. The detailed design of the Rangiriri, Ngaruawahia and Cambridge Bypasses are already underway and we are planning to progress the Longswamp to Te Kauwhata section and the Huntly and Hamilton Bypasses in the coming year. The region has expressed a preference to develop the Hamilton Bypass ahead of the Huntly Bypass. Transit will continue working with the region to develop a funding plan, which will consider tolling opportunities.

Construction of the Church to Avalon four-lane project is now complete and construction of the Avalon Drive Bypass project is well advanced.

Construction of the Te Rapa Bypass will commence in 2010/11 subject to completion of the planning and land purchase requirements and subject to the agreement of a funding package with Hamilton City Council.

The strategic routes for the Southern Links project in the south Hamilton area will also be identified and designated within five years. A number of small intersection improvement projects are also proposed for Hamilton City, to relieve congestion and improve the efficiency of the existing network in the meantime.

The design of a two-lane replacement for the single lane Kopu Bridge is substantially complete and its construction will be progressed to assist with the high volumes of traffic visiting the Coromandel Peninsula, particularly on weekends and public holidays.

A number of strategic studies will be undertaken to determine strategies for a number of other corridors in the Waikato.

Safety

The Maramarua Deviation was designated in 2005/06, the design is now underway and construction is expected to start in 2010/11. This will complement the Mangatawhiri Deviation, currently under construction. In addition investigation work has now commenced on the Kopuku Road section of the highway.

A number of small safety projects will be constructed in the next five years, together with the continued “black route” safety work (including removal of roadside hazards). The SWATT (South Waikato and Taupo Target 2010) project between Tokoroa and Taupo is now substantially complete and further work is proposed on a number of sites around the Waikato including:

- › Hamilton North Safety Improvements
- › Hamilton Urban Safety Improvements
- › SH27 Safety Improvements
- › SH39 Safety Improvements
- › South of Hamilton Safety Improvements

Route Security and Availability

A number of bridge upgrades and replacements are programmed on SH25 and SH26 north and south of Thames as part of Project Peninsula, a multi-agency flood protection package. Construction is underway on replacement bridges on SH25 at Te Puru and Tararu. Investigation is continuing for the Kirikiri Stream Bridge on SH26 and will commence on the SH25 bridge at Waiomu.

The Taranaki and Waikato regions have agreed to share the cost of investigations in the Awakino Gorge. The Awakino North Realignment on SH3 has now been completed.

Construction of the Waikato Road Information Project on SH1 and 2 is continuing while further investigation will be undertaken into a road information project for the Coromandel Peninsula.

Passing Opportunities

Five new passing lanes have been completed during the year on SH1, SH2, SH3 and SH25A. A further four are either underway or programmed for construction in the coming year, three of these are on SH1 between Tokoroa and Taupo and one on SH3 south of Te Kuiti.

A number of other passing lanes are included in the programme for either investigation or design.

Stock Effluent Disposal Facilities

As part of a national programme to provide a safe and convenient network of stock effluent disposal facilities, investigation will continue into new facilities on SH1 at Putaruru and on SH3 at Te Kuiti.

Walking and Cycling

Improvements for walking and cycling are proposed in Hamilton City, Cambridge, Turangi and Te Awamutu.

Transit proposes to work in partnership with Hamilton City Council to jointly implement improvements to pedestrian facilities across SH1 Cobham Drive to the Hamilton City Gardens.

Strategic Studies

Transit proposes to undertake a number of strategic studies to improve our long-term planning and assist good decision-making, together with studies that lead to sustainable environmental outcomes.

These studies include a Lake Taupo Stormwater Runoff Environmental Scoping Study and corridor studies of SH2/SH29 Pokeno to Hairini (Inter-Regional Strategic Study), and Greater Hamilton State Highway Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Maintenance and Operations

Maintenance activities make up a large proportion of the forecast expenditure in the Waikato region. In addition to preserving the highway network and undertaking maintenance and improvements to meet future levels of service, we propose to:

- › Undertake 236km of resurfacing, including 25km with low noise surfacing
- › Strengthen 55km of highway
- › Continue improving techniques to manage highways in winter
- › Target noise reduction works for specific problem areas
- › Improve traffic and travel demand management in East Waikato and the Coromandel by upgrading signals and electronic variable message signs to provide real time information for road users in Hamilton
- › Implement plant pest strategies and use special plant pest eradication programmes to target hotspots
- › Implement planting to reduce future maintenance on steep slopes or batters next to highways
- › Continue to implement and maintain special safety programmes (including speed-activated electronic signs) in areas or corridors with poor road safety records, including identified “black routes”
- › Introduce thermal mapping of the inland network to better predict where ice will occur.