

Opus retains network management

Opus International has been successful in retaining the \$14-million network management contract for consultancy services to look after Transit's state highways in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay.

It is a five-year contract. Opus has been involved with Transit for many years and is a valued part of the team, says Gordon Hart.

Five-year physical works maintenance contracts were renewed on July 1 and include pavement maintenance, resurfacing and emergency works. The \$23-million Gisborne contract went to incumbent Fulton Hogan (East Coast) while the \$34-million Hawke's Bay contract went to incumbent Works Infrastructure.

"A change in the way we let of these contracts has paid off with huge efficiencies for Transit in the latest

changes. For example, three of the quotes for the traffic safety contract offered savings of \$730,000 over the expected prices.

The region-wide lighting contract went to Nathan Pope Electrical and the pavement marking to Orsbom Roadmarkers.

Belling Contracts will be undertaking vegetation control in Hawke's Bay and Wairoa, with Salisbury Traffic Services taking the contract in Gisborne.

Sealcoat Central and Maverick Services won the contracts for traffic safety management in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay respectively.

For a list of all the contracts let in the region please refer to www.transit.govt.nz

Values important in contracts

Transit is focusing its Hawke's Bay/Gisborne network management contracts on values as well as quality work.

It's about having a very close working relationship, says Gordon Hart.

"It has proven very effective in trials in Gisborne. We form a contract management board and use words like openness, trust, empowerment and honesty in terms of the values under which the contract operates. It's almost an alliance contract.

"The enhanced interaction between the three parties involved in these contracts not only ensures operation with less tension and a more positive environment for people to work, but also results in a much higher standard of outcome," he says.

"Everybody's involved in all aspects of the delivery and has more ownership of the results - a better product delivered by a team that gets more satisfaction out of producing it."

Farewell to former Transit Napier regional manager Neville Harkness

More than 40 years in the roading industry hasn't curbed the enthusiasm of former Transit regional manager Neville Harkness.

Neville may have retired in February but he just can't keep away. He's been involved with a number of specific projects for Transit since then, including recently awarded network management contracts for the Hawke's Bay and Gisborne state highways.

Neville says highlights of his career include the post-Cyclone Bola restoration work, the completion of the Hawke's Bay Expressway through to the airport and working with the strong team in the region.

He says his biggest disappointment would be the Meeanee Rd overbridge on the Expressway not starting during his time as regional manager.

Neville started at the Ministry of Works in Masterton in 1963, transferring to Porirua in 1965. He spent two years in Thailand (66-68) teaching local contractors how to build roads before returning to Porirua until June 1975 when he took up a position in Napier for the Ministry of Works and Development.

Although he ended up with a varied job as regional manager, he says he most enjoyed addressing technical roading issues.

Looking for innovative maintenance techniques kept Neville interested in the job, as 70% of the region's funding is for maintenance.

"I'm proud to have been part of a team that has kept itself at the forefront of asset management."

Neville says one of the major changes during his career has been the greater justification needed for projects to get the green light, compared to the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Retirement has provided more time for keeping fit and for family and church activities.



New guardrails for danger spots

Two kilometres of new guardrails have been installed on SH2 between Napier and Wairoa — that's \$500,000 worth in the Matahoroa Gorge and the Devil's Elbow.

People tend to slow down with the twisting nature of those sections of road. But the potential was fatal and motorists are now protected from extreme drop offs, says regional network engineer Ken Holst.

There had been one fatal accident, four injury accidents and a number of non-injury accidents before the installation of the guardrails.

New guardrails have also been added around the White Pine Bush area just north of Tangoio where a truck crashed earlier this year.



One stretch of the Devil's Elbow with the new guardrail. Inset — the same stretch of highway last year.



AVENUE NEWS

From the Napier Regional Office of Transit New Zealand

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Large projects worth \$50-million for Hawke's Bay state highways in next 10 years

Five large projects, with a combined construction cost of over \$50-million, are forecast for construction in Hawke's Bay according to Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast 2005/06-2014/15.

Top of the list is the overbridge at the intersection of Meeanee Road and the Hawke's Bay Expressway, programmed for construction in 2005/06.

The other projects are the College Road to Silverstream realignment and passing lane (see page 2) planned for a construction start in 2007/08 and seal widening on SH2's Takapau Plains, south of Waipukurau (2009/10).

The sealing of SH38 to Lake Waikaremoana could start by 2009/10, four years earlier than indicated in last year's 10-year plan. The realignment of the Matahoroa Gorge on SH2 between Napier and Wairoa also moves into the 10-year period. The SH5 Tarawera Hill realignment and passing lanes are forecast for

investigation in 2008/09 and design in 2009/10.

"In total, nearly \$22 million will be spent on maintaining and improving state highways in Hawke's Bay in 2005/06," says acting regional manager Graham Taylor.

The forecast total for the 10-year period is more than \$323 million - significantly more than the \$227.2 million forecast last year.

"It is the result of extra funding for land transport from the increase in petrol tax from April this year. Because of this extra money, known as regional distribution funding, we can forecast a construction start for these large projects much earlier than would otherwise have been possible."

Regional summaries and maps and lists of projects and forecast construction timing will be available at www.transit.govt.nz.



Acting regional manager Graham Taylor pictured with regional project engineer Mike Wong at the new north bound passing lanes between Clive and Awatoto, completed last year.

Next stage of Meeanee/Expressway intersection

Transit is hopeful construction on the \$8 million Meeanee Road overbridge project on the Hawke's Bay Expressway will start this summer, regional project engineer Mike Wong says.

Earlier this year Land Transport New Zealand deferred making a decision on Transit's funding application for the project to get more information.

Mike says Transit has made good progress on resolving the issues raised by Land Transport NZ and hoped to

report back to the Transit Board by September.

"If funding is approved we'd look to get things going this coming summer construction season."

In the meantime, Transit is investigating other safety measures for the intersection.

The phasing of the lights has been changed and overhead lights on the expressway will higher mast arms, making them visible from further away.

Updates on other State Highway projects

Tahaenui Bridge replacement

Investigations will soon be underway for the replacement and total realignment of the Tahaenui Bridge on SH2, about 5km south of Nuhaka. This will reduce the number of loss of control and head-on accidents at the bridge. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.8-million.

Otane intersection improvements



Long-awaited improvements to the Otane intersection, on SH2 between Hastings and Waipukurau, are to go ahead. The bridge will be widened and a right-turn bay added, as well as general geometric improvements. This section of highway has a relatively high accident rate because it has a narrow bridge and an intersection with an unprotected right turn - both on a curve. It is proposed that this work be carried out in conjunction with the Otane Cemetery passing lane, which will commence just north of the intersection. The projects have a combined value of nearly \$1-million.

Moturoa Curve realignment

Transit plans to realign a tight curve that's out of context with adjoining sections of SH2 at Moturoa, 3km north of Otane. The project will cost an estimated \$350,000. The project is programmed for design this financial year and is planned for construction in 2006/07.

Bluemung Bridge Improvements

Motorists who travel regularly on SH2 between Napier and Wairoa will have noticed a vast improvement to the curve of Bluemung Bridge.

Transit has improved the curve and the camber of the railway overbridge, which is just south of the Mohaka River at Raupunga.

It has also improved the camber on four curves at the northern end of the Waihua Hill, south of Wairoa, which used to catch motorists by surprise.

Both projects have made a huge difference to motorist safety, says regional network engineer Ken Holst.

Reverse curves and roller coasters

Investigations will soon commence for the proposed 1.6km realignment of SH2 between College Road to Silverstream, 10km north of Waipawa. The estimated construction cost of the project is \$3.4 million. The project will remove a deceptive horizontal reverse curve combined with a roller coaster vertical alignment, which have resulted in many loss of control and head on crashes, says Mike Wong. A new southbound passing lane will also improve efficiency and reduce crashes that are due to driver frustration.

Dillon's Hill design



The design phase is continuing for the realignment of the upper section of Dillons Hill on SH5. Transit intends to improve safety for motorists on this steep 500m section, which has an up-hill passing lane through tight reverse curves. Dillons Hill is about 13km from the Napier-Taupo road's intersection with SH2 near Eskdale. Some drivers find this section difficult to negotiate because of the relatively tight corners and constantly changing grades. Construction should start this financial year.

Keeping our roads safe

The latest safety initiative to stop fatal crashes on New Zealand's state highways is being driven from the top.

A network has been set up to coordinate state highway network safety — headed by the chief executives of the Land Transport Safety Authority and Transit New Zealand and the Commissioner for Police.

"The three organisations are determined that the government's 2010 vision to reduce the number of fatalities of the network to 300 will be met," says

Transit's Gisborne/Hawke's Bay network operations manager Gordon Hart.

"We've come out strongly to drive the next stage of the vision to meet that target. We are working together to find solutions to maximise our ability to do something real about the road toll."

232 people died on New Zealand's state highways last year — seven of them in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay.

Safer corner at Ngatarawa

An accident prone, sharp bend has been removed on SH50 west of Hastings. The curve, south of Ngatarawa Road, has long, high-speed approaches from both directions. The \$650,000 realignment was finished last summer.



Left: the new curve from the north. Right: the finished product.

Guardrail doing its job

A new guardrail design in use around the Gisborne and Hawke's Bay region has already proven its worth for at least four motorists.

The new boxed-end treatments (pictured) are designed to crumple or fold in on themselves, held in place by wooden posts specially designed to snap on impact (replacing traditional Texas twists which were designed to allow a car to ride up and roll over onto the road).

Four of them had to be replaced within a month of being installed, says regional network engineer Ken Holst.

"That means they were doing the job they were designed for. There were no injuries in those four accidents because of the new design. If they had hit the original guardrails the cars would have been

airborne and the occupants badly injured, if not killed."

About 60 of the new guard rails have been installed around the region.



Safety on the expressway

Safety improvements have been continuing at the Hawke's Bay Expressway intersection with Meeanee Quay on SH2 near the Hawke's Bay Airport.

The turning lane left into Meeanee Quay has been lengthened to make it more obvious to motorists on Meeanee Quay that a vehicle on the expressway is turning, says regional project engineer Mike Wong.

Solid median islands have been replaced with a painted median, while stop signs have replaced give way signs. A dotted line has also been painted on the road so traffic from Meeanee Quay turns into the correct lane on the expressway.

There have been six accidents on the intersection, one of them fatal. Four have been as a result of a driver automatically following the vehicle in front across the expressway.

"We're looking at a number of intersections with the same layout and issues but find there's no obvious reason for the high number of accidents at Meeanee Quay."



Low-noise surfacing for expressway

A quieter time for residents near the Hawke's Bay Expressway.

Transit New Zealand's strategic plan identifies a need to improve its standing against its environmental strategies. Hence, it announced a \$2-million investment in low-noise road surfacing.

Then came the good news for Hawke's Bay.

Because of the ongoing concerns of Napier residents about noise from the Hawke's Bay Expressway, \$1-million was given to Hawke's Bay for low-noise surfacing from the airport to Kennedy Rd (except across the estuary where there are no houses).

Gisborne Hawke's Bay network operations manager Gordon Hart says it was a great achievement for this region.

"Competing against Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch — for us to win half of the grant to do something so tangible — we're absolutely rapt.

"There are safety spin-offs as well. The new surfacing uses an open graded porous asphalt which has far better drainage than any other surface."

It is planned to take the treatment across the Kennedy Rd overbridge and out to the urban fringe (weather dependent) in the coming year.

New regional planner

Transit Napier welcomed a new regional planner at the end of April.

Oliver Postings hails from the UK where his last position was as a strategic planner doing large-scale commercial and residential developments. For the past six years he was based in London and before that in the more rural areas of Surrey/Somerset (two years).

Oliver came to New Zealand in October with his kiwi partner — he says he loves the lifestyle, the outdoor sports and the fact that there is so much to offer at the back door.

