

Transit New Zealand's 10-year State of
2003/04-2012/13



**Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Plan
2003/04–2012/13**

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Strategic Framework	5
National State Highway Plan	7
Northland State Highway Plan	11
Auckland State Highway Plan	21
Waikato State Highway Plan	35
Bay of Plenty State Highway Plan	47
Gisborne State Highway Plan	57
Hawke's Bay State Highway Plan	63
Taranaki State Highway Plan	71
Manawatu / Wanganui State Highway Plan	79
Wellington State Highway Plan	87
Nelson / Marlborough State Highway Plan	97
Canterbury State Highway Plan	105
West Coast State Highway Plan	115
Otago State Highway Plan	123
Southland State Highway Plan	133

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transit's 10-year forecasts of expenditure are based on the development of a 10-year plan. This plan comprises a programme of work for 2003/04 in accordance with Transfund New Zealand's 2003/04 National Land Transport Programme and an indicative plan for work for the remaining nine years up to 2012/13 in accordance with Transfund's 10-year forecast for state highway expenditure. This is the first time that Transit has consulted on and published a 10-year plan.

More than 150 submissions on the draft plan were considered by the Transit New Zealand Authority. A better 10-year plan has resulted and Transit thanks everyone for their input. Most of the top priority projects of regions have been included.

Transit's 10-year forecasts of expenditure are based on current funding levels with a modest allowance for alternative funding taking account of the provisions of the Land Transport Management Bill.

In recent years, significant improvements have been made to the state highway network but some regions still need attention. The 10-year plan reflects a reasonable balance of expenditure among regions taking into account government's funding priorities for congestion relief and safety improvements, as well as each region's particular needs.

Transit's first priority is to maintain, operate and protect the existing network in accordance with defined levels of service to meet road user expectations. Some state highways on the network, such as State Highway 94 to Milford, are particularly expensive to maintain. Maintaining and operating the state highways absorbs about half of Transit's current funding.

Improvements to the motorway network in Auckland are critical to the nation's economy. Major motorway improvements are currently underway and more are programmed for construction. It is envisaged that these improvements will significantly relieve congestion and support the Auckland Growth Strategy. These improvements will complement public passenger transport and travel demand management initiatives in Auckland.

While Transit recognises the urgent need for improvements to the transport system in Auckland, the 10-year plan does not neglect the rest of New Zealand. The plan includes:

- › a number of major urban projects in Hamilton, Tauranga, New Plymouth, Wellington and Christchurch
- › an ongoing programme of safety improvements, and passing lanes nationwide
- › a number of projects to improve route security and environmental protection including stock effluent disposal facilities.

Substantial progress has been made on four-laning State Highway 1, both north and south of Auckland, and work is currently progressing on the Waikato Expressway, south of Mercer. Provision is made in the 10-year plan for the Northern Motorway to be extended from Orewa to Puhoi, north of Auckland, on the basis of being a toll road. The plan also includes walking and cycling projects and regional development projects in response to the New Zealand Transport Strategy.

The 10-year plan will be kept under review and, each year, Transit will formally consult with Regional Land Transport Committees and other stakeholders during the process of updating the plan. Inevitably, some projects experience delays in obtaining planning approvals and land, and hence there will be changes to the plan.

This 10-year plan does not constitute a commitment by Transit to the development and construction of projects in accordance with the timeframes in the plan. The 10-year plan forecasts the possible timeframe for the development and construction of projects within current funding forecasts.

In conclusion, Transit believes that this programme reflects a balanced approach to the development of the New Zealand state highway network, taking account of the need for an efficient state highway network and a sharpened focus on environmental and social factors. Transit looks forward to working with local authorities and other stakeholders in implementing this plan.

INTRODUCTION

Transit is now required to prepare annually 10-year forecasts of expenditure. Such forecasts need to be based on 10-year plans for maintenance and improvements. This is the first time Transit has formally prepared such a 10-year plan.

This 10-year plan comprises the 2003/04 State Highway Plan approved by Transfund as part of the 2003/04 National Land Transport Programme and an indicative plan for the remaining nine years. While its implementation will depend on future funding levels, Transit is confident that it represents a realistic and achievable plan for maintaining and improving New Zealand's state highways.

The timeframe for the development of projects set out in this plan is indicative in that forecast funding levels may change and projects are inevitably subject to uncertain delays, for example, in obtaining planning approvals and land. Accordingly, Transit is not committed to the development and construction of projects in accordance with this plan but rather, this 10-year plan provides a basis for Transit's ongoing development of projects and its maintenance programme.

In developing this 10-year plan, Transit has consulted extensively with stakeholders including Regional Land Transport Committees (RLTCs). Over 150 submissions were received and, overall, the consultation process was very effective. The plan has been developed having regard to the extensive feedback Transit received from stakeholders on the draft plan released in January 2003. The final plan has been enhanced significantly by the consultation process and, generally, the priorities submitted by RLTCs and other stakeholders have been recognised.

As a first priority, Transit maintains, operates and protects state highways in order to maximise their safety and efficiency, and to defer, if possible, the need for major improvements. Ongoing improvements are, nevertheless, necessary to relieve congestion, meet the requirements of traffic growth, and remedy safety deficiencies.

Improvements and additions are urgently required to the state highway network in major urban areas, especially Auckland, to relieve congestion and accommodate traffic growth. These improvements are a significant proportion of Transit's 10-year plan. In addition, there is an ongoing need to continue the development of the remainder of the state highway network, particularly to improve safety.

The 10-year plan is based on current funding levels and generally takes no account of the possibility of additional revenue during the 10-year period. A modest provision has been made for the possibility of alternative funding of some projects under the Land Transport Management Bill, for example, by means of borrowing or tolls. There is also a possibility that some local authorities or other agencies might wish to assist Transit with funding for some projects. It is anticipated that the contribution from alternative funding mechanisms will increase in future years.

The 10-year plan shows the current priority order and possible construction start dates of large projects (with construction costs of more than \$3M) over the next 10 years. For small and medium-sized projects (with construction costs of less than \$3M), the plan includes only those projects which are proposed for development or construction within the next three years. Thereafter, the plan includes an ongoing allowance of \$40M per year for small and medium-sized projects. Provision is also made for property purchases.

Transit's 10-year plan is consistent with the New Zealand Transport Strategy and Regional Land Transport Strategies (RLTSs), as well as Transit's National State Highway Strategy and corridor plans for each state highway. Projects have been prioritised in accordance with Transit's prioritisation criteria which are consistent with Transfund's Funding Allocation Framework.

The plan has been reviewed on the basis of the submissions received from RLTCs and other stakeholders, and a reassessment of the likely rate of progress of some Auckland projects. Compared to the draft plan released in January 2003, quite a number of non-Auckland projects have been moved up the priority order in the revised 10-year plan.

Transit's 10-year plan will be reviewed annually in consultation with RLTCs and other stakeholders to take account of changing priorities including any changes to the New Zealand Transport Strategy and RLTSs, and any unexpected delays in project development. There is also a possibility of additional revenue or alternative funding being available, possibly for specific projects, which could accelerate the 10-year plan.

In the meantime, the plan will continue to change as the timing of projects is affected by planning delays and other factors.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Transit's 10-year plan has been developed within the strategic framework of the New Zealand Transport Strategy, Transit's National State Highway Strategy and Transit's prioritisation criteria.

New Zealand Transport Strategy

The 10-year plan is based on the New Zealand Transport Strategy which was recently released by government. In particular, the 10-year plan complies with the following objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy:

- › assisting economic development – the New Zealand Transport Strategy recognises that land transport investment, including measures to reduce congestion, is required to assist economic development. All of the major urban projects in the 10-year plan will assist economic development by reducing congestion and adding infrastructure to support urban growth. Similarly, many major projects on rural highways will support regional development
- › improving safety – the New Zealand Transport Strategy acknowledges that “engineering” improvements to the roading network can contribute effectively to reducing crashes and road fatalities. As well as ongoing safety maintenance, the 10-year plan includes rural realignments, seal widening, intersection improvements focussing especially on crash “black spots” and safety retrofitting projects. Most projects make some contribution towards improving safety. The provision of passing lanes to reduce driver frustration, and a plan of walking and cycling projects, will also enhance the safety of the state highway network
- › improving access and mobility – in accordance with the New Zealand Transport Strategy, the 10-year plan includes projects to improve access and mobility primarily by reducing congestion. The plan includes active and integrated traffic management systems for Auckland and Wellington, bus lanes and bus shoulder lanes on existing sections of motorway and provision for bus shoulder lanes on all new motorways in Auckland. These public transport lanes will improve access and mobility

- › protecting and promoting public health – congestion relief projects in the 10-year plan will reduce vehicle emissions and hence contribute towards protecting and promoting public health. New projects are designed to meet stringent noise levels. The 10-year plan also includes a plan of walking and cycling projects to provide greater transport choice and promote public health
- › enhancing environmental sustainability – all maintenance and improvement projects are subject to the requirements of the Resource Management Act and require resource consents, as necessary, to protect the environment. All projects include appropriate mitigation of environmental effects and landscaping. Local and recycled materials are used where appropriate.

National State Highway Strategy

Key policies and plans which Transit has adopted for the development of the state highway network, as outlined in Transit's National State Highway Strategy, are to:

- › increase the capacity of the network to assist **economic development** by:
 - › constructing motorways and expressways in urban areas to support urban growth and reduce congestion
 - › constructing expressways on high-volume rural corridors
- › improve the **safety** of state highways by:
 - › correcting deficiencies at crash black spots including replacing one-way bridges
 - › providing a consistent “no-surprises” alignment and a “forgiving” road environment, including consistent seal widths and design speeds of curves, and retrofitting highways to improve safety
 - › maintaining skid-resistant surfaces
 - › providing safe intersections with appropriate traffic controls and signage

- › seal all state highways to support tourism and **economic development**. Currently, the only state highways remaining to be sealed are:
 - › SH1F to Cape Reinga (20km)
 - › SH38 to Waikaremoana (21km)
 - › SH43 in Taranaki (12km)
- › provide passing lanes at 5km intervals on high-volume highways (carrying in excess of 4,000 vehicles per day) and occasionally on medium-volume highways (carrying 2,000 to 4,000 vehicles per day) in rolling and mountainous terrain, primarily to improve **safety** but also to reduce driver frustration
- › provide a network of stock effluent disposal facilities to protect the **environment** against effluent spillages
- › maintain and improve the security of the state highway network, eg by seismic retrofitting structures and undertaking preventative maintenance of slips, to improve **accessibility**.

Prioritisation Criteria

Transit has adopted the following project classifications and prioritisation criteria which are in accordance with Transfund's Funding Allocation Framework:

Trend to Increasing Priority ↑	A	Statutory Responsibilities
	B	Congestion Relief
	C	Safety
	D	Environment
	E	Protection Against Catastrophic Events
	F	Travel Quality and Route Efficiency

In prioritising projects, account has also been taken of the benefit to cost ratio of projects, support for economic growth, government's commitment to improved safety targets by 2010, and regional priorities, particularly the priorities of RLTCs.