



New Zealand Automobile Association
Submission on the
2006/7 Transit New Zealand
Ten Year State Highway Forecast

31 March 2006

Executive Summary

The New Zealand Automobile Association welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Transit ten year forecast for 2006-7. While the forecast process has its drawbacks the AA commends Transit for its dedication to the principles of open government and accountability.

This year's forecast was being branded as unacceptable by almost all commentators from the moment its contents became public. This submission deals with both the reasons for the circumstances Transit has been asked to manage and the options Transit has elected to follow.

Modelling by the Automobile Association has determined that current sources of revenue remain the lowest cost option for highway construction for the duration of this forecast. That said the quantum of funding is still insufficient to boost highway capacity to an internationally competitive state due largely to central Government diversion of petrol taxes into Crown accounts for 25 years.

Highways are the arteries of our nation's economy and in many places they are dangerously constricted. Whilst progress has been made with recent roading expenditure increases previous administrations (both Labour and National) have passed-on a deficit of roading investment from one generation to the next in an unsustainable manner. The AA has shown that the completion of strategic links produces benefits to the total economy. The adoption of a sustainable approach to highway funding is long overdue.

The Automobile Association is concerned that Transit is under pressure to prematurely invest in technology to manage a network which is manifestly inadequate in some places. Because management technology has only a marginal effect on network efficiency - particularly when capacity is significantly sub-optimal - the Association considers this investment would be better deferred until the difference between capacity and demand was also marginal.

The Association is also concerned that Transit performs to world's best practice for highway build-operators. The Association would encourage the adoption of practices common to private sector operators which stress rapid completion, pavement-life cost minimising technologies, and contract price minimisation via providing contractor certainty. We are hopeful the current Government reviews will identify these options.

All New Zealanders have a stake in improving the safety of our State Highway network. As a representative of 1.1 million motorists the AA is firmly of

the view that much more can be done to achieve the goals of the 2010 Road Safety Strategy. As part of the AA's Safer Roads Project AA Districts will continue to press for improvements which reduce the impact of human error on our roads.

The comments in this submission are robust. They are not, however hostile. The Association would like to be fully engaged and play our part in providing a solution to these problems. The Automobile Association wishes to continue to work with all Government agencies for the benefit of the motoring public, as it has done for the past 102 years.

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1. WIDER ISSUES

1.0a The Association firstly congratulates Transit on preparing a set of priorities that, despite the potential for criticism, by and large reflect the true key strategic steps forward. In allocating much of the scarce funding to congestion relief in Auckland and safety in the Waikato, Transit has taken a bold stand to push forward on the crucial but difficult projects at the heart of the problem, instead of ticking off many easy projects that are just tinkering at the edges. For that, Transit is to be applauded, and the Association encourages Transit to resist pressure to distribute funds to low return projects in order to appear geographically equitable. That said the AA is a strong supporter of safety retrofitting projects which must continue to be funded. Where funds are taken from crucial projects for those of less value, it is at a cost to the nation as a whole.

1.0b The Association supports the use of funds where they will make the greatest difference for motorists, rather than on an ad hoc regional or population basis.

1.1 Funding levels remain insufficient

1.1a The Association welcomes the Government's announcement, following the launch of the draft forecast, of Crown funding to maintain the project dates contained in last year's plan, and particularly to maintain momentum on Auckland's roading network. The Government needs to urgently formalise this funding immediately, before the uncertainty leads to further deterioration of capacity in the contracting industry and consequent price increases.

1.1b The Association continues to stress that the current funding levels, although higher than before, still only place Transit in 'catch up' mode after decades of underfunding. The level of investment is still not sufficient to deliver in reasonable timeframes all the financially justifiable projects around the country, and that funding levels must increase still further. The AA would be keen to be part of a review of sources of funding to ensure this added investment can happen.

1.1c While it is difficult to forecast ten years ahead, major projects do have ten year or longer lead times, making the ten year forecast an absolute minimum. Last year the AA identified at least an additional \$5 billion of projects that are needed but sit outside the ten year timetable. Are we creating a huge bow wave of projects that are outside the ten year forecast?

1.1d The Association considers that planning on a 25 year time frame would better reflect

Transit's obligations towards sustainability in that it would reflect the needs of forthcoming generations and would enable Transit to proactively address the long term strategic needs of the country rather than re-ordering a known set of projects.

1.2 Tolls and Travel Demand Management are premature

1.2a The Association considers that it is too early in the catch up process to be contemplating TDM or congestion charging as valid approaches, because the adequately funded ultimate road networks differ so significantly in layout and capacity from the existing network.

1.2b Tolls have been assumed in this programme, but increases in excise and RUC have not. Nor was an increase in the proportion of petrol excise dedicated to the Land Transport Fund, nor increasing the proportion of the fund allocated to State highways.

1.2c The Association conditionally supports tolls in principle, to enable the construction of new roads that would not otherwise be built. But practically, using realistic toll prices and other assumptions, in the vast majority of cases the net toll revenue is negligible, while tolls detract significantly from the project benefits and the high collection costs and interest payments significantly increase the total amount needed to be collected from motorists.

1.2d The Association opposes expenditure on TDM or toll systems.

1.2e On balance, the Association considers petrol excise and RUC to be a superior method of increasing road funding, and results in less total net cost to motorists. Transit's forecast should assume future revenue increases to the National Land Transport Fund to cover annual maintenance costs and maintain real value in response to increasing construction costs and vehicle efficiencies.

1.2f The Association considers that the simplest transition to road pricing will involve an eventual shift from petrol excise and RUC to an eRUC system, and considers the eRUC project should be on the plan.

1.2g The Association supports Transit forecasts including assumptions that National Land Transport Fund revenues increase to cover the cost of maintaining and improving the quality of the State highway asset

1.3 Announcements on funding levels undermine consultation

1.3a There was a confidence last year that with substantial injections of funding the roading programme was at last making progress. It was with some despair that Districts saw the scheduled dates pushed back so far in the consultation document, and thus a great sense of relief at the Government's announcement of additional funding within a very short time of the forecast being published.

1.3b However this did leave an almost universal sense of frustration at being asked to comment on a forecast that contained quite specific project but unsatisfactory dates, only to have the dates made redundant by Government. These announcements have created significant uncertainty about the level of additional funding and its allocation, and how that would affect the dates in the forecast.

1.3c We recognise that this was out of Transit's hands, but it does call into question the validity of the consultation process. While there is additional funding, it is currently not at all clear how much it will be and to what regions it will be allocated.

1.3d We recognise that Transit still needs input from its stakeholders on priority order, irrespective of funding levels and dates, which we have provided as best we can in this submission given the short timeframe.

1.3e However, we note that project priorities and urgency are not independent of projected dates. Motorists are prepared to wait a reasonable time for construction within the year or two, as long as they know its on the way. But when a project is ten or more years away, there is some outrage at the delay. Particularly where people are being killed or injured, each year's delay seems callous and becomes increasingly unacceptable.

1.3f Many of these projects are fiscally positive, so the nation is financially worse off from these lengthy delays.

1.3g From both a moral and financial perspective, the timeframes outlined in the forecast are manifestly inadequate and a direct result of insufficient funding

1.4 Very large projects don't work with PAYGO

1.4a The Auckland Western Ring Route is clearly the top priority roading project in the country, but also carries an enormous price tag. The forecast

shows this as slowing progress around the rest of the country for a decade while this one project is completed.

1.4b The completion of the Waikato Expressway, the highest priority large safety project in the country, also carries a major price tag and stretches over too many years. Other large projects that are key to economic growth and safety include the Tauranga Strategic Roding Network, Maramarua Expressway, Transmission Gully and the second Waitemata Harbour Crossing.

1.4c The Association considers that projects of such enormous size should be treated separately from the normal funding process, and funded by debt raised specifically for the purpose (eg through infrastructure bonds), to be repaid through the resultant increases in general taxation, excise and RUC revenue.

1.5 R-Funding is not reaching the regions

1.5a Districts were confused over the role of R funding. There was a general expectation that R funding was intended to support projects that would not otherwise ever be likely to be funded, and in particular, to assist with the local share of local road projects.

1.5b The counter view is that R funding should be used to accelerate the next most crucial project in order of priority, whether that is State highway or local road, and it would represent the motorists share rather than ratepayers.

1.5c Many Councils supported the increase in petrol tax to create the Regional 'R' fund, on the understanding that funding would go to Districts and particularly to local roads, with a focus on safety. Districts expected the subsidy rate would have been better than 80%.

1.5d By setting the subsidy at a rate similar to the 'N' fund does nothing to improve the situation if the real barrier is the local share. The inability to meet the local share has been the historical limitation on investment in the local road network; not an inability to provide the matching Crown share.

1.5e The suggestion that a significant proportion of this fund should now be directed to the State Highway network to partially restore purchasing power of the SH fund is not acceptable. Our expectation is that the Crown should restore real value to the State Highway fund and direct that a preferential subsidy rate for work of proven safety value be available to Territorial Authorities via the 'R' fund.

1.5f There is also confusion over timeframe of R funding, as to whether projects accrue a certain amount to be spent on small projects each year, or whether the money can be anticipated or "saved up" for a large project over the ten year period of R funding. Since the R fund accrues over a ten year period, what happens to Districts if the amount that is collected does not eventuate as expected?

1.5g The Association strongly supports genuine spending of the R funding. This can only happen if there is agreement to reduce the contribution required from TLAs.

1.5h The Association considers information surrounding R funding has not been adequately promulgated and would appreciate regional briefings as to its role.

1.6 Repeated Cycling of Priorities frustrates AA

1.6a Many Districts put in quite terse comments that nothing had changed since last year, and their priorities have not changed since last year. Particularly where a District's top priority project is ten years away, it rubs salt in the wound to ask them annually to reassess their priority.

1.6b The continual changing of priorities is part of a wider problem about delays and lack of progress. Where several projects rotate in the priority order, there is suspicion that this leads to a lot longer to build them all, and at higher cost, than if they were picked off one at a time in rapid succession.

1.6c There is a major flaw in the priority process that actually encourages cycling priorities, because it does not compare apples with apples. As projects get closer to their construction date, costs become exact but tend to be higher. Projects at earlier stages of development tend to have lower but less certain costs, and are likely to be subject to the same cost escalation as they get closer to construction.

1.6d It is not sound economics to push a project, that is just about to be built, back down the priority queue behind projects that have lesser certainty. As that next project gets ready to be built, it too is likely to suffer the same fate, leading to an continual cycling of projects, and increased costs all round.

1.6e This represents complete wastage, as investigations and consultations go stale and need to be redone. The uncertainty also increases the cost structures of the contracting industry. The raised expectations contribute to community frustration

with Transit lack of progress.

1.6f As raised in our submission last year, there are many more projects being investigated than can be funded. This raises expectations, and wastes money because investigations have to be redone once they are stale. It also encourages shifting priorities. If there was a greater resolve to finish one project at a time, we suspect it would result in lower overall costs and shorter timeframes.

1.6g The plan needs to be future proofed so that we avoid yoyo effects from funding changes. Transit needs to be able to plan for funding unders and overs in the immediate year rolling forward, so that momentum and certainty can be maintained on its forward programme.

1.6h The Association considers that there should be a set of graduated priorities, so once a project was on the two year plan, it should be extremely rare to remove it; once a project was on the five year plan, Transit would have a high commitment to building.

1.7 Delays are not taken seriously

1.7a There is a view that contracted time frames for completion are far longer than would be considered reasonable. This is exacerbated by a track record of further delays to those contract deadlines. The Association is deeply concerned that Transit spends less management attention on estimating and managing project timeframes, than on estimating and managing project costs. Delays often cost the nation many times more than costs in the long run, but it is the road users and their customers that pay these costs, rather than Transit.

1.7b In the past, projects had generous incentives to finish earlier than expected. Projects would operate with 400 workers and heavy machinery would operate 24 hours per day seven days per week. Without this incentive, there is desultory use of resources and lengthy construction timetables. Heavy machinery, which ties up large amounts of capital, are operating 8 hour days and 5 day weeks. This is an inefficient use of resources and leads to overall poorer outcomes for the country in terms of delays to essential core infrastructure.

1.7c After decades of underinvestment and a running down of industry capacity, Transit now has the challenge of delivering rapidly on Government expectations. The terms of reference for the review of Transit's own processes is too narrow.

1.7d The Association considers Transit needs to negotiate less generous timetables, and to

incentivise accelerated project completion dates.

- 1.7e The review of Transit procedures needs to expand to cover the entire range of planning, consent, design and construction processes, and challenge the fundamental assumptions about how long these need to take. International benchmarking of all stages of development should be required.**
- 1.7f The Association is concerned that there is no backup plan to approve project funding without delay in the face of cost increases. In some instances, the delay costs to the nation far exceed the cost increases.
- 1.7g An example would be the serious safety issue at Mangatawhiri. Because there was no backup access to funding approvals, higher than expected tender prices have led, not to a month's delay, but to a year's delay because of missing the summer construction period, and this project is still not confirmed some three months later.
- 1.7h Urgent safety projects, such as Mangatawhiri, that have tenders that exceed the estimate, need to be able to proceed without awaiting a full LandTransport Board meeting and subsequently losing a whole construction year.
- 1.7i Transit needs to establish a streamlined approval process with LandTransport to enable urgent works to be funded without delay.**
- 1.8 Cost Increases not being managed**
- 1.8a Regions around the country also expressed concern at the rate of cost increases. Requirements of the LTMA and Environment Court are adding significant costs, but not delivering commensurate benefits, thus denying other regions the chance of building their projects as they drop off the ten year plan. Because there is no representation from those who have to pay for the requirements, effectively the Environment Court is leading to a 'free rider' problem where appellants can ask for the most expensive mitigation with no strict test of reasonableness.
- 1.8b The Association expresses extreme concern at the ability of the Environment Court to make conditions with little or no accountability for affordability or value for money and no representation from motorists who have to pay these costs, either directly through petrol tax or as opportunity costs through injuries, delays or financial loss.**

2. NATIONAL PRIORITY ORDER

2.1 Maintenance vs Construction

- 2.1a Embedded in the State highway forecast is the assumption that maintenance must always take priority over construction. This is particularly a concern when maintenance cost increases are absorbing much of the petrol tax and RUC increases. The Association challenges this assumption.
- 2.1b While not maintaining the existing system leads to higher life cycle costs to government, Transit must observe that failure to build fiscally positive construction projects also leads to higher life cycle costs to government.
- 2.1c The Association believes that motorists would accept a lower standard of maintenance on existing roads temporarily if it meant they achieved better network in the longer term.
- 2.1a The Association has two generic priorities safer roads and alleviating congestion. Congestion is highest priority for our Members in regions where congestion levels are high.

2.1d The Association asks Transit to transfer some of the maintenance budget to high value (fiscally positive) construction work.

2.2 Approaches to Congestion Alleviation

- 2.2a Travel Demand Management**
As noted above, the Association strongly objects to Transit placing highest priority on TDM systems around the country as a way of managing congestion.
- 2.2b This emphasis is premature, and will waste already scarce funding. TDM systems designed now will be based on suboptimal road networks arising from a huge backlog over several decades of inadequate funding. Once complete networks are in place, such TDM systems will become redundant in short order. This is not consistent with Transit's goal to ensure that benefits of expenditure are sustainable. For sustainable TDM, TDM systems should be designed and built in tandem with, or following, completion of optimal roading networks.
- 2.2c Rationing of a suboptimal level of supply is counter to Transit's economic development, social and sustainability goals.
- 2.2d TDM systems must be moved down the priority list so they are after the major network improvements rather than before.**

2.2e Toll systems project

The \$57m costs of Transit's National Toll Systems Project are excessive when there is only one toll project likely in the near future. As noted above, based on the Association's calculations, tolls will not make a significant net contribution to funding in the near future and other funding sources will provide better funding and traffic outcomes.

- 2.2f The immediate need is to establish a low cost system for ALPURT 2 without compromising the platforms for future possible projects. This should be included in the committed ALPURT costs in terms of ranking.

2.2g The draft plan gives toll systems a very high national ranking; the Association considers this project should be deleted from the rankings and a minimalist system developed as part of the ALPURT project to allow tolling at ALPURT alone.

2.2h Investment in Rooding

The Association considers that when compared to rooding networks in cities of comparable size around the world, that Auckland's extreme levels of congestion can be directly attributed to the inadequate road networks in place. The Association strongly considers that first priority must be to put in place the necessary rooding and bus networks before instituting TDM measures.

2.2i The simple fact is that internationally, cities that have invested in expanding their road networks consistently have lower congestion than those that have not.

- 2.2j Building roads reduces congestion, reduces emissions, saves some 25% of fuel consumption, improves air quality and health effects, and removes high volume traffic from pedestrian and inner city precincts.

- 2.2k Specific projects are covered in the regional priority lists.

2.2l The Association supports the strong focus on investment in rooding to reduce congestion, fuel use and emissions, and considers that significantly more investment is needed.

2.3 AA Safer Roads Project

- 2.3a The Association has now for some years been promoting a Safer Roads project, which emphasises a safety culture approach to road crashes, from analysing root causes, to proactively managing systems and to mitigating consequences.

2.3b Road Hierarchy and Development Along State Highways

In terms of road safety engineering, the Association supports Transit's "no surprises" philosophy, which is consistent with our "Self Explaining Roads" philosophy, and developing a road hierarchy that tells motorists what type of road they are on and therefore how they should drive. Roads that encourage drivers to drive according to that hierarchy are intrinsically safer in nature.

- 2.3c The Association strongly supports Transit's position on maintaining the State highway system as the key interconnector around the country, with its performance not to be degraded by ribbon development.

2.3d The Association supports Transit in protecting State highways, as the top hierarchy system, by minimising the number of direct entrances. It also strongly supports recovery of developer contribution to ameliorate the effects associated with increased traffic to/from developments, and integration of development land use with road capacity and hierarchy.

2.3e Forging Roads

The Association also commends Transit's demonstrated commitment to Forging Roads, as demonstrated by its increased adoption of median barriers, passing lane strategy, black spot treatments and the programme of safety retrofits or area wide minor safety treatments, such as removing roadside hazards, guard rails, wider shoulders, audible markings.

- 2.3f The Association congratulates Transit for some excellent safety initiatives being undertaken through the National Safety Co-ordinating team focussing on areas of greatest risk around the country. Regions have expressed support for this innovation.

- 2.3g The Association strongly supports increasing the budget allocated to these issues, given the high return of these investments and the significant contribution they have been making, and can continue to make, towards achieving the goals of the Road Safety Strategy 2010.

2.3h Passing lanes continue to be the highest priority for our Members.

- 2.3i Transit's progress in the number of passing lanes implemented over recent years has resulted in a noticeable improvement to motorists. The Association urges Transit to further accelerate its passing lane strategy, including slow vehicle bays, particularly in regions that will not see major investment otherwise.

2.4 Four laning

- 2.4a Traffic volumes are unsustainable on the two-lane stretches of road on SH1 (Waikato expressway route), SH2 (Maramarua expressway route), SH1 (Wellington to Levin) and SH2 either side of Tauranga. Over the past five years these roads have claimed 1767 people killed or injured. At such high traffic volumes, the statistical chance of head on crashes accelerates, with consequent loss of life, because there is always traffic coming the other way.
- 2.4b In these cases, it is not bad drivers that are the fundamental cause of the crash rate, because driver errors are no higher than anywhere else. It is that the road is simply carrying a higher volume of traffic than it is designed for. Put another way, the road is being asked to play a higher role in the road hierarchy than it is designed for.
- 2.4c Where there are such high traffic volumes and crash densities, four-laning divided highways are the only long term solution. The Association considers low cost measures such as lower speed limits and interim safety measures are not an acceptable long-term solution on these stretches of road. In many instances, the traffic volumes on these roads are generating more than enough excise and RUC to build roads of a suitable standard.
- 2.4d In other countries, a two lane roads is converted to a divided four lane road, by adding another two lanes on a different alignment. The Association questions why this approach has not been used in New Zealand.
- 2.4e Also in other countries, many four lane divided highways operate in corridors of the same width as many of Transit's two lane roads. The Association considers that within the same corridor width, motorists would vastly prefer a four lane divided highway to a two lane road with wide shoulders.
- 2.4f A four lane highway, even with very narrow shoulders, carries the same advantage as a wide shouldered road in terms of ability to pass cyclists or even stopped vehicles, but its real value is in removing the conflict and frustration of vehicles travelling different speeds, removing the risk from overtaking or the anxiety of delaying other traffic, removes the fear of head on collisions, and thus significantly reduces driving stress.

2.4g The Association considers Transit needs to progress its four laning strategy far more rapidly than the current rate.

2.5 Other road users

- 2.5a The Association supports projects that make cycling and walking safer and easier and recognises the need for all users to share the road. However, some regions comment that a perhaps over enthusiastic embracing of this new mandate is leading to some inappropriate results. Partial cycleways that stop suddenly are proven to be more dangerous than none at all.
- 2.5b The Association's view is that the priority for cycling is connected, integrated cycle routes, as opposed to "Integrating cycling and pedestrians into projects" on a piecemeal project by project basis.
- 2.5c Cyclists and pedestrians sharing State Highways with vehicles at open road speeds is not consistent with the roading hierarchy. In most instances, a separate route will be on local roads. Transit should fund separate cycle and pedestrian networks, even where these are on local roads, if they remove cyclist and pedestrian traffic from high speed State highways. This will protect the through-function and safety levels in the road hierarchy.
- 2.5d Where separation is not feasible or desirable, the entire length of a shared route must be consistently able to cater for the mix of traffic, at one standard, with no surprise changes in quality partway along the route.

2.5e The Association considers Transit needs to support fully interconnected cycle/pedestrian networks that are physically separated from high speed State highways, even where these would normally be considered local road projects.

3. SPECIFIC COMMENTS BY REGION

- 3.1 In general, the Association supports the overall draft regional priorities as currently formulated, with exceptions set out below on a region by region basis. The priority regions are
1. Auckland
 2. Waikato
 3. Bay of Plenty
 4. Wellington
 5. Northland
- The other AA Districts are listed north to south in no priority order.

3.2 AUCKLAND

- 3.2a. The AA priorities for the Auckland region match those of Transit's draft forecast in the Auckland region, with two exceptions:
- 3.2b. Delete the Northern Motorway TDM (Ramp Signalling) (priority 1 and 2), or demote to at least priority 24. This system should be designed after the completion of the Western Ring Route (priority 8=) and after HBTC and Newmarket viaduct (priority 21-23), and most importantly, needs to be integrated with, and installed after, improvements to the local road systems.
- 3.2c. Delete the Toll Systems Project (priority 6 and 7). The Association cannot support the high cost and high ranking of the national toll systems project, given there is only one toll road on the immediate horizon. The Association supports a minimalist toll system specific to, and as part of the already committed ALPURT toll road, and urges further development of eRUC as an eventual replacement of fuel tax and toll systems for paying for roads.
- 3.2d The Association considers the emphasis on the Auckland Western Ring Route in the draft forecast is a fair assessment of the importance of this route nationally. The last link in this route, Avondale, is not on the list for completion until 2016. The Association considers that this is far too late, and all efforts need to be made to bring forward this date to 2012. The Allen report estimated that delays to the four packages of projects, including the Western Motorway, cost the country in the order of \$1 million per day.
- 3.2e The Association seeks assurance that appropriate incentives are in place to ensure all parties are aware of the daily cost of delays on these key projects.

- 3.2f Transit also needs to make it a priority to protect the Eastern Corridor for a future rational development, and also to advance planning to enable the Waitemata Harbour Crossing by 2020.

3.3 WAIKATO

- 3.3a The Association supports the same priority list as the RLTC; these projects are still as important and relevant as last year and before.
1. Mangatawhiri Deviation.
 2. Avalon Drive Bypass
 3. East Taupo Arterial
 4. Kopu Bridge
 5. Church to Avalon Dr 4 laning
 6. Te Rapa Bypass
 7. Rangiriri Bypass
 8. Ngaruawahia Bypass
 9. Maramarua Deviation
 10. Cambridge Bypass (2 Lane)
 11. Piarere - Oak Tree Bends.
- 3.3a The Waikato region continues to have a major funding gap. High traffic volumes relative to population, including a high proportion of heavy traffic, reflect the region's strategic location between Auckland and the rest of the country and its economic role as primary producer. Crown funding through the JOG process has been indicated, but is as yet unannounced. This injection of funding is desperately needed in this region.
- 3.3b The Waikato region also has the worst safety problems in the country, which the Waikato and Maramarua Expressways (SH1 and SH2) would resolve. Traffic volumes significantly exceed the safe carrying capacity of these 2-lane roads for significant distances.
- 3.3c The Association strongly urges Transit to secure funding to complete its four-laning strategy for these two State Highways in the Waikato within ten years, as the top safety priority. The Association considers that debt funding could accelerate these major projects to the net benefit of the country.**
- 3.3d The city of Hamilton needs future proofing and protection of corridors so that it does not end up with the same congestion problems as Auckland.
- 3.3e In terms of overall national needs, the Waikato region stands out, along with the Bay of Plenty, as being the areas of greatest need, and these are not being adequately addressed by the R funding formula.

3.4 BAY OF PLENTY REGION

3.4a The priority order is:

1. Tauranga Central Corridor TDM
2. Harbour Link
3. Pyes Pa Bypass
4. Omokoroa Intersection
5. Te Maunga/Domain Road Four Laning
6. Tauranga Eastern Arterial
7. Maunganui Road/Girven Road IS
8. Rotorua Eastern Arterial
9. Ngongotaha Straights (south) 4 Laning
10. Katikati Bypass
11. Hairini/ Welcome Bay IS
12. Hairini to Maungatapu Bridge SI
13. Tauriko Bypass
14. Ngongotaha township(north) 4 Laning
15. Tauranga Northern Arterial
16. Te Puna/Omokoroa Four laning

3.4b The Bay of Plenty is second worst to Waikato in terms of its rural road safety record, particularly SH2 from Te Puna to Paengaroa, which is part of the Strategic Roding Network and the Transit Four-laning Strategy.

3.4c Completing the Tauranga strategic roding network by 2012 would contribute \$440m annually to the country (Allen report, 2004). It is a major concern that a number of SRN priority projects are still 10 years away from being completed.

3.4d The Association strongly supports the urgent development of Harbour Link as a non-tolled route through additional funding indicated in the agreement between Labour and New Zealand First.

3.5 WELLINGTON

3.5a In the Wellington region, the Association has the added difficulty of being asked to set priorities on a draft programme that was prepared prior to the Western Corridor subcommittee's announcement that Transmission Gully is the preferred route for the western corridor.

3.5b If TGM is promptly constructed, a number of projects that are on the draft forecast will be lower priority or even unnecessary. Then there are other projects that are connected with efficient operation of TGM that are not on the plan that will need to be added to the programme.

3.5c The priorities are:

1. SH2 Dowse to Petone I/C
2. Transmission Gully Motorway
3. Kapiti Western Link Road
4. SH2 Rimutaka Corner Easing (Muldoon's corner)

5.SH 58 Pauatahanui to SH2 4-laning

3.5d The Centennial highway median barrier (SH1) is assumed to proceed.

3.5e Particularly frustrating is the delay to the Dowse to Petone project, which was ready to be tendered in early 2006 and all consents, land purchases and designs are complete. Both industry and community expectations were raised very high. Such a last minute delay has a hugely detrimental effect on the contracting industry, only adding to costs.

3.5f The project will enable traffic to travel directly from the Hutt Valley to SH1 via Haywards, without some 30km of congested travel looping back via Ngauranga Gorge. It removes significant numbers of vehicles, and particularly heavy vehicles, from already overloaded corridors, alleviating congestion on both the SH1 and SH2 corridors into Wellington.

3.5g In the draft forecast, made prior to Government announcements of additional funding, Transit placed this project very high on the priority for funding should additional funding be found. Given the Government commitment to additional funding, the Association strongly urges Transit to tender this project without further delay.

3.5h Funding for Transmission Gully should fall outside the normal planning process and not come out of the normal allocation. Work should progress immediately on geotechnical, resource consent and design work.

3.5i Pushing back the dates for the Kapiti Western Link five years from 2007/08 to 2012/13 is unacceptable to all key stakeholders in the joint project.

3.5j Muldoon's corner is another project that is long overdue with serious risk of head-on crashes. In the absence of road improvements, electronic monitoring and signalling needs to be investigated.

3.5i SH 58 upgrade is essential for safety and capacity in conjunction with TGM.

3.6 NORTHLAND

- 3.6a We are particularly disturbed by the delay proposed for the extension to Kamo Bypass and the completion of the sealing of State Highway 1 to Cape Reinga.
- 3.6b We believe that it is a symbolic priority to complete the seal to Cape Reinga and we want to continue to push for that. However, in terms of contribution to the roading network, all of the proposed projects pale against the extension to Kamo Bypass.
- 3.6c Kamo Bypass**
The Association considers Kamo Bypass (second stage) should be top priority in this region. There has been an alarming increase in congestion around Whangarei City in recent years. This is due, in large part, to the lack of action on State Highway 1 within Whangarei City. It does not make sense that SH1 reduces from double lanes each way along the Western Bypass to a single lane each way for only a 500m stretch. When this short stretch also includes 2 feeder roads from the City, then we have significant congestion at critical times of the day.
- 3.6d The Kamo Bypass extension would unplug one end of this congestion, and allow Whangarei District Council to complete the Spedding Road extension. This would serve to take significant pressure off a number of congested inner city intersections. There are around 15,000 vehicle movements per day affected by the lack of action on SH 1 within the city. With the current and projected growth of Whangarei District, this situation is now reaching crisis point.
- 3.6e Our Association sees many of Transit's proposed projects as having identifiable safety benefits, but as having less benefit to the overall roading network compared to fixing the SH 1 issue within Whangarei City.
- 3.6f Our Association believes that if Transit NZ is to have access to R Funding which was levied for local roads then its first priority should be to ensure that the money is spent where it best benefits the overall network.
- 3.6g Waitiki Landing to Cape Reinga Seal extension.**
Completing the sealing of this last remaining piece of State Highway in Northland is second priority.
- 3.6h **Passing Lanes**
The Association commends Transit's emphasis on passing lanes in Northland and strongly sup-

ports continuing the passing lane programme. The Northland District of the Association would welcome the opportunity to present its views about passing lanes in Northland.

3.7 TARANAKI

- 3.7a The priorities in Taranaki remain the same as last year:
- 1.SH 3 Bell Block B/P
 - 2.SH 3 Mangaone Hill 4 laning
 - 3.SH 3 Normanby Overbridge Realignment
 - 4.SH 3 Rugby Road Underpass
 - 5.SH 43 Tangarakau Gorge SE

3.8 WANGANUI

- 3.8a Priority order for large projects in the Manawatu/Wanganui region is:
- 1.Ohingaiti-Makohine Realignment
 - 2.Manawatu Hill Realignment
 - 3.Papatawa Realignment
 - 4.Foxton South Curves
 - 5.Manukau Railway Overbridge
- 3.8b Council would like to see the Bulls Bypass back on the agenda, the congestion in Bulls township with SH1 and SH3 traffic passing through is an issue that needs investigating.
- 3.8c The Wikitoria Intersection Safety Improvements have been planned for some time. Council believes this project is important particularly to encourage heavy traffic to stay on the State Highway system when passing through Wanganui.
- 3.8d Passing opportunities have been improved between Bulls and Sanson, but with the volume of traffic using the road we believe a four lane road between the two townships is justified.

3.9 DESERT ROAD

- 3.9a Strategic Studies: Desert Road region**
The strategic study of Desert Road Summit to Levin is vital. The Association is concerned that the Transit (and other entities') regional structure fails to address the strategic primacy of the Desert Road route as a whole, rather leaving it at the unpopulated extremities of several regions. Thus issues are being addressed in a piecemeal fashion, if at all, rather than as a key strategic link in New Zealand's State highway network.
- 3.9b The Desert Road has several sub 50km/h corners, which Council believes is a major safety issue on

the primary strategic route through the island. The Waikato River bridge is a black spot that should be dealt with. Motorists would greatly appreciate more passing opportunities along the Desert Road route, including both passing lanes on the straight stretches and increased emphasis on slow vehicle bays through the slow winding sections.

- 3.9c Further, Transit needs a strategy to reduce the cost of construction on the Desert road, to proactively manage down both DOC expectations and costs of geographic isolation. The latter may require a different approach combining several contracts (eg passing lanes, maintenance and construction) into one performance based contract to achieve better leverage and increased innovation. This could include measures such as safety, travel time and lane availability.
- 3.9d We note that SH4 Paraparas is not included in the strategic studies. There is mention of a realignment north of Upokongaro but with the Paraparas being the main bypass of the Desert Road it should be included in the long term plans.

3.10 MANAWATU

- 3.10a The priority order is:
1. A reliable route through the Manawatu Gorge
 2. A sound alternative route via the Pahiatua Track
 3. Passing lanes on SH1 Sanson to Himatangi
 4. Route to Fielding
 5. Transmission Gully early planting
 6. Old West Road
 7. Manawatu Hill realignment
- oo's corner is too low and the start date too late. Previously it had a priority of 16 and construction start date of 2006. This project is a classic example of the cycling of priorities as costs increase closer to construction.

3.11 MARLBOROUGH

- 3.11a The prioritised projects schedule and key local policies are:
- 3.11b **Awatere Bridge**
We are delighted with the decision of your Authority to commit to the construction of the Awatere project including the rail underpass and the northbound passing lane. The project remains on our schedule until all elements of the project are commissioned.
- 3.11c **Passing Opportunities**
The most overwhelming feedback we receive from our members is of dissatisfaction arising from the lack of passing opportunities on our State Highway network. Volumes are now such

that many of the traditional overtaking opportunities feature oncoming traffic. Motorist become frustrated by lengthy delays which leads to intemperate decision making which in turn places themselves and other road users at risk.

- 3.11d We applaud the progress made this year with the commissioning of the SH1 Koromiko passing lane and the widening of the shoulders at Half Way House, Welds Pass summit and Dashwood on SH1 and at the Rai Summit on SH6. This latter initiative is a credit to your officers and National Safety Co-ordinating team. Favourable feedback from truck operators and slower travellers (such as those towing boats and caravans) confirms that there is a place for the lower cost solutions to complement the passing lane programme.
- 3.11e Council firmly recommends early starts on passing lanes at SH1 Para, Spring Creek, Lions Back along with two south of Ward and two southbound and two northbound on SH6 between Kaituna and Rai.
- 3.11f Whilst these are progressing we urge continuation of the initiative for installing slow vehicle shoulders at strategic locations on a basis prioritised by demand.
- 3.11g We would ask that your safety management liaison with NZ Police, encourage targeted education of slower drivers to ensure maximum use is made of slow vehicle facilities.
- 3.11h. **Winter Maintenance.**
We welcome the additional signage and use of chemical/gritting programmes. We strongly endorse your proposed risk mapping and installation of weather stations and urge that progress be accelerated. Despite the advances by your Authority and suppliers, motorists are still being caught unawares by winter conditions. It is suggested that further research into the availability/suitability of low cost (relatively vandal proof) temperature sensing devices which convey a graphic message of ground temperature to motorists, be made.
- 3.11i. **Safety Proofing.**
Many of the mishaps on our roads arise as a result of minor lapses in concentration by earnest and responsible motorists. In many cases the consequences of this lapse are severe because of the unforgiving nature of much of our network. SH1 between Blenheim and Cheviot negotiates some of the most difficult terrain in NZ and we must accept that it will take many years of steady investment to improve the alignment to what the community feels is acceptable.
- 3.11j Your Authority has made commendable progress

over the past 18 months erecting guardrailling and making this section of road more forgiving.

3.11k It is strongly recommended that your Authority continue with this excellent safety proofing initiative on targeted, proven risk reduction basis, at the current rate, which we believe to be approximately \$1.5million per annum.

3.11l We may not be able to totally eliminate crashes but we can most certainly work positively toward reducing severity and the social cost of motoring with the use of proven safety proofing techniques. We respectfully suggest that this work be given a recurring annual budget of some \$1.0 to \$1.5 million per annum per Transit region along with setting of national risk abatement policies and a publicity programme.

3.11m. Pelorus Bridge SH6

One of the key objectives of the national policy is route security. The single lane Pelorus Bridge is an extraordinarily fragile element of the road link with Nelson. This route serves as a lifeline between the Nelson and Marlborough regions; there is no rail link and the route via SH63 is inefficient. This is a key arterial route for heavy transport and tourism and could be subject to lengthy repairs if it was to be involved in an incident with a heavy vehicle. Replacement parts are not readily available because of the age and construction style of the bridge. Marlborough as a region is also prone to seismic activity, we understand that little is known of the foundations of this structure. The Pelorus area is also being considered as a world heritage reserve that will further slow development of replacement options. It is recommended that steps be taken immediately to secure a future alignment, confirm the level of impact and foundation risk and programme replacement.

3.11n. Alabama Road – SH1 Intersection (Riverlands Bypass)

This is a unique intersection that is particularly sub-standard and features a severe SH1 curve, a railway level crossing, poor sight distances, no manoeuvring facilities, an adjoining rural settlement and an adjacent primary school. Heavy transport and industry to the south of Blenheim are key factors in the increased volume through the site.

3.11o The combination of serious faults means there is no low cost fix available. We do not want to wait for a serious crash issue to generate a qualifying BC ratio and believe corrective action needs to be advanced immediately while in rural land for a bypass is available.

3.11p Given development patterns, it is highly likely that the only available bypass route will become

compromised in the near future.

3.11q. SH62 Rapaura Rd

We firmly recommend the continuation of the upgrading programme initiated by Marlborough District Council prior to this route being designated as a State Highway. This route is complementary to the other State Highway components across the Wairau Plains and is essential that we bring the standards, service level and provision for safety up to the same quality as the balance of the network.

3.11r. Cycling and Walking

We also support the Marlborough Walking and Cycling strategy. There needs to be a concerted effort to provide safe access to places of work and for recreation through the region. We suggest an emphasis on safety and that adequate separation of vulnerable users from traffic is an ongoing priority.

3.11s Stock Effluent Facilities

We firmly endorse the construction of Stock Effluent facilities in Hira, Murchison and Springs Junction. Once we have an effective network in place we look forward to a law change to eliminate the offensive and hazardous practice of dumping effluent on our carriageways and roadsides.

3.11s Marlborough Roads

We continue to support the philosophy of Marlborough Roads.

3.11t We value the open relationship embraced by your Marlborough team and their earnest efforts to advance best value for the motoring dollar through integrated processes and road maintenance contracts. There are bound to be challenging times; local roads and state highway objectives do not always precisely align. We would welcome the opportunity to assist and contribute as you meet these future challenges.

3.12 NELSON

3.12a As we have indicated, we believe the priority of projects in our area remains unaltered and they are:

3.12b Southern Link Completion of the link between Whakatu Drive and Queen Elizabeth II Drive by an alternative route.

3.12c Ruby Bay Bypass Planning is now complete and the project is ready to proceed immediately. Delay in progressing projects that effectively have planning consents will likely increase their eventual cost and likely result in further delays.

3.12d Whangamoa South Realignment As with the Ruby Bay Bypass, planning and land acquisition is complete for this project and it should commence immediately so as to secure the best possible value for the Crown funds to be used in improving this State Highway.

3.12e Hope Saddle This project will be of considerable benefit to traffic entering and leaving the Nelson area, but is lower priority than the three above. Maximum energy needs to be given to completing these before the Hope Saddle.

3.12f Safer Roads
The Association considers passing lanes are important and there are none planned for Tasman/Nelson, despite there being insufficient passing lanes in this region. The Association considers the top priority for passing lanes in Nelson is on SH6 (Blenheim to Nelson).

3.12g The Association also supports the use in this region of low cost initiatives to immediately improve the safety of existing roads, eg rumble strips, better signage, median barriers and passing lanes.

3.13 CANTERBURY

3.13a The District supports the Transit priority list, except the TDM implementation priority, which the District considers should be removed from the ranking until after adequate capacity has been built.

3.13b TDM (top Transit priority for Canterbury, priority 24 nationally) offers little benefit for the "network", being mere tinkering and a temporary solution for localised problems. TDM cannot address a 48% growth in traffic over 10 years, or even a significant part of it, and should follow implementation of a strategic road network rather than precede it.

3.13c All projects presented address current and urgent problems in regard to safety (with accidents now) or congestion (with peak traffic problems now evident and trip delays of 15-20 minutes).

3.13d None of the major road projects have an indicated construction start date prior to 2012 and the first of these, the Southern Motorway, was at position 73 on the national priority list.

3.13e This is a matter of serious concern to the Canterbury District, given Christchurch's rapid growth with 4% annual traffic growth on main arterial routes compounds to 48% over 10 years; and up to 8% traffic growth annually on the new

"ring route". Auckland and Wellington traffic growth is in the band 2-4% pa.

3.13f Canterbury population in 2006 is 495,000, Auckland's is 1,256,000, yet Canterbury has not received additional JOG funding as have other fast growing regions.

3.13g Racecourse Corner (north Ashburton) is an area of specific concern. The Association also considers the Western bypass as integral to the total package with a completion date no later than 2012.

3.13h The Association supports Transit's removal of roadside hazards, and installation of audible markings.

3.13i A key issue for Christchurch is protecting the integrity and function of the State highway corridors, so that encroaching development does not lead to the need for a bypass of a bypass. The Association supports Transit's approach on this issue.

3.14 SOUTH CANTERBURY

3.14a There needs to be increased priority for the intersection of State Highways 1 and 8 (Washdyke/Timaru). We are concerned at (further) delays in this project. Traffic banks up daily, and frustration at the wait to exit from SH 8 is leading motorists to take unacceptable safety risks.

3.14b State Highway 79 (Geraldine to Fairlie) also should have higher priority. SH 79, a major tourist route, has inadequate seal width for the current traffic mix, and needs more slow vehicle bays or passing lanes.

3.14c In terms of minor safety works, safety issues on SH8 include culverts and poor visibility, the Waituna Stream Bridge and curve, Otaio bends and Makikihi North Passing Lanes

3.15 NORTH OTAGO

3.15a The Association for North Otago considers the SH1 Orwell to Severn Street project in Oamaru to be the most urgent. This Transit draft priority is 122, despite the high accident rate, the high urgency/seriousness, rating of 100% for safety benefits, and BCR of 3.9. Also of concern are the resources and money already spent on the project to date and the importance of this section of SH 1.

3.15b The planned delays to this project will result in a higher final cost, inconvenience and further loss of life and injury. The AA in North Otago strongly

believes. The first two stages of the proposal should be combined to form Stage 1, and the project must be completed now.

3.16 OTAGO/QUEENSTOWN LAKES

3.16a Within 15 years the population in Central Otago will equal that of Coastal Otago. Transit needs a long term strategy for the SH8 connecting corridor.

3.16b Transit also needs to improve both the safety and capacity of Caversham Valley Road to Mosgiel, and generally SH1 south of Dunedin.

3.16c The top priority for safer roads is advancing the passing lane programme, minor safety works and hazard removal. Duplication of one-lane bridges has a high priority in Otago, with both safety and tourism benefits.

3.17 SOUTHLAND

3.17a The priority in this region is the Old Coach Road.

Questions relating to the detail of this submission should be addressed to Jayne Gale, Motoring Policy Manager (931 9992 DDI, jgale@aa.co.nz).