

EARTHWORKS FINISHED AT TUMAI

The bulk earthworks are now complete at the realignment of State Highway 1 from the Tumaï Rail Overbridge to Waikouaiti, and the next stage of the project is to place the granular pavement layers, says Transit project manager, Simon Underwood.

“The pavement layers will continue to be placed over the summer months, with the aim of sealing the mid-section of the new road before winter 2007. The balance of the finishing work, including the ‘tie-ins’ to the existing highway, will be completed after winter and the new highway will be open to traffic by December 2007.”

When travelling north, the new route will deviate to the left just prior to the existing rail crossing in Waikouaiti, and then run along the west side of the rail line and bypass the Tumaï rail overbridge, before reconnecting with the existing highway route. The new alignment will be 3.4 km long, and include a northbound passing lane.

Taking a proactive approach to issues such as erosion has played an important part in preserving the local environment while the earthworks have been carried out. Erosion and silt run-off have been managed through the daily rolling and trimming of earthworks, the use of silt fences across water channels and five sediment control ponds. Consequently the site has remained relatively tidy, and placing topsoil over exposed batters has also reduced the likelihood of erosion.

The \$7 million Tumaï realignment project is being undertaken by Rooney Earthmoving Ltd and the engineering consultant is Opus International Consultants, Dunedin.



An aerial view of the Tumaï realignment project.

Moa Bones Discovered

The discovery of moa bones at the Tumaï site has been an exciting adjunct to the project and has attracted keen interest from local archeologists. The contractor made the initial discovery and in the early stages excavations were closely monitored. Otago Museum staff carried out digs at the site, retrieving the 7000 to 10,000-year-old bones of at least three species of moa, including the giant South Island *Dinornis robustus*, which stood about three metres. Other discoveries included remains of the extinct South Island goose, adzebill, and several species of tiny freshwater molluscs.

With the precious bones recovered, the dig site was then closed in, with the natural ground reinstated and the earthworks continuing alongside.

“Transit was delighted to be able to contribute to the discovery and recovery of moa through this highway project,” says Mr Underwood.



Moa bones discovered at the Tumaï Site.

PROJECTS IN OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

Approval Sought For Caversham Investigation Funding

The approval process is underway to obtain funds to investigate the upgrade of SH1 along the Caversham bypass and through to Lookout Point.

Recently, the Otago Regional Council's regional land transport committee (RLTC), lent their support for the use of 'R' funds to assist in funding the project from development through to construction ('R' funds, are funds generated through petrol taxes, and earmarked specifically for projects within the region in which the funds were generated).

"As the project will require a combination of both nationally and regionally-generated funds, we are currently working through the process to secure the combined funds for the initial investigation phase, which we plan to get underway early next year," says Dunedin's Regional Manager, Mike O'Cain.

The initial project investigations will confirm the extent of improvements proposed along this corridor, although the key aims are to achieve a four-lane, median-divided route throughout, with over-bridges at Barnes Drive and Lookout Point, to simplify and improve safety at these intersections.

The investigation phase of the project is planned to take up to 18 months, with design and construction proposed to commence within the next five years, with an estimated unadjusted-for-inflation cost of \$33 million.

"This project represents the last major upgrade to the southern outlet of Dunedin, a project that began in the 1960s," Mr O'Cain says.

Safety Improvements to Thames St, Oamaru

Safety improvements are planned for the four-lane section of SH1 along Thames St in Oamaru, between Orwell St and the Coquet St/Severn St/ Lower Thomas St intersection.

The aim of the work is to reduce the number and severity of crashes occurring along this stretch of road.

"Between 2000 and 2004 there were 103 reported crashes over this section, a crash rate some five times greater than would be expected on a similar section of urban state highway," says Transit project manager, Simon Underwood.

Project investigations are now complete. They included extensive community consultation that has influenced the form of the scheme, in that the existing roundabouts at Ribble and Eden Streets will be replaced with traffic signals. Traffic signals will also be installed at three other key intersections including the Coquet St/Severn St/Lower Thames St intersection, where there is a particularly poor crash history. Although the Boer War Memorial will be relocated further along into Lower Thames St, it will continue to take pride of place in the heart of Oamaru's historical and retail centre.

Design work is currently underway and is expected to be finished by the middle of 2007. Construction is expected to begin in late 2007.



The realignment work on River Road, SH93.

River Road Realignment Nearly Complete

Work to realign two severe curves and to construct a slow-vehicle bay on SH93 at River Road near Mataura is likely to be completed in December this year.

The \$1 million realignment - approximately two kilometres northwest of Mataura - has involved removing two curves and replacing them with a single 800-metre radius curve.

The correction of the previously substandard vertical and horizontal alignments aims to reduce the crash rate at the site, where 11 crashes have been recorded over the previous five years.

As part of the project, power, telephone and water services were also relocated.

Wakatipu Transportation Study

The Wakatipu Transportation study is a joint project being undertaken by Transit New Zealand, the Queenstown Lakes District Council and the Otago Regional Council.

"The study is examining roading, parking, travel demand management and passenger transport in the Wakatipu region. The aim is to produce a transportation strategy that can be implemented over the next 20 years," says Transit Dunedin Office regional transportation manager, David McGonigal.

Consulting with stakeholders is an important component of the project, he says. Details of the consultation will be advertised in newspapers and on the QLDC and Transit websites.

Key areas that the study is focusing on include:

- The Frankton Flats internal road network.
- State Highway 6A congestion and alternative routes.
- Public transport options including park and ride and water transport.
- A parking strategy for Queenstown.
- Kelvin Heights - additional routes to serve future residential development.
- Alternative routes to State Highway 6: Boyd Rd, the perimeter of Queenstown Airport, the west and east bank of the Shotover River.

The study, which began in July this year, is due to be completed in April 2007.

THE SCIENCE OF SNOW

Regional network manager, Murray Clarke, recently attended the International Snow Science Workshop (ISSW) in Telluride in the Rocky Mountains, 9500 feet above sea level.

Held every two years, the workshop is the world's prime event on avalanche management and attracts international experts including road controlling authority operational people, snow scientists, avalanche managers, and technicians.

In New Zealand, the Milford Road (SH.94) is the only state highway which has an avalanche programme.

Mr Clarke says Transit's involvement in the ISSW is an important part of keeping up with the latest thinking on avalanche management and the workshop was a great opportunity to meet with others facing similar issues.

"It's important to understand industry best practice, where the industry is heading and the lessons that can be learnt from each other's programmes. For example, it's useful to understand how other road controlling authorities balance risk levels with service levels (the need to keep the road open) and the processes they use to assess and manage this."

The workshop was also useful in that it was an opportunity to get to know other avalanche practitioners and their status in the industry. This is important when it comes to selecting people to audit the Milford Road programme, he says.

Mr Clarke also had the opportunity to find out how other countries are using park and ride systems to manage travel demand and congestion on high traffic volume roads.

"Virtually all the park and ride systems are voluntary and in many cases free, although to enter a national park there is usually a charge."

Another issue which arose at the workshop was the metering of traffic entering a national park as a means of managing congestion, and this is something that could be looked at for Milford Sound, Mr Clarke says.



An avalanche in motion above the East Homer Portal.

2010 Road Safety Targets

The Road Safety Strategy 2010 focuses on reducing road trauma in New Zealand and specifies national targets to reduce the number of people killed or hospitalised as a result of traffic crashes.

To meet the requirements of the strategy, the local Transit team, in conjunction with the network consultant, have developed a methodology to establish road safety targets for each network management area, starting with the Coastal Otago area.

Regional network manager, Murray Clarke, believes the development of this methodology is a first for Transit-managed roads.

"The methodology looks at trends in crash statistics including hospitalisations to determine what the 2010 goals are for each particular network. For example, we need to develop a safety strategy in conjunction with our safety coordinating partners, Land Transport NZ and NZ Police, to meet the Coastal Otago goals, which are no more than 55 fatal and serious crashes per year."

While progress is encouraging in moving towards the target, further work will be required to ensure that traffic growth does not erode the progress made to date, Mr Clarke says.

WEBSITE

Transit's website is an excellent source of information and showcases the breadth of activities in which Transit is involved.

You can find out about Transit's projects, access research prepared by international experts, download Transit publications and keep up-to-date with media releases and state highway improvements as they happen.

Check us out at: www.transit.govt.nz

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF

Administration assistant **Annette Harvey** joined the Transit team in April as a temp, and since September has been on the permanent casual staff. Although a Kiwi, Annette has spent the last 20 years living in Sydney. Her background is sales, and she worked as a territory manager for New South Wales.

Annette is enjoying her new role, and says Transit's great supportive team has made the transition easier. She loves the Dunedin lifestyle and has taken up piano, does home renovations, and is exploring the great outdoors and the local cultural scene.



Graeme Henderson joined Transit in June as the area engineer Southland, replacing Don Lyon.

Graeme's background is roading and civil engineering. He brings 34 years of practical experience to the Dunedin Operations team and for the past 16 years, has been the Dunedin branch manager for Works Infrastructure Ltd. Graeme is enjoying experiencing life on the other side of the fence!



Roy Johnston came to work for Transit in July. He has six years' roading experience gained at the Dunedin City Council and Clutha District Council. In these roles he focused on safety, asset and project management. His role as a project and safety engineer with Transit is to assist with capital projects and network safety.

Outside of work Roy enjoys climbing, tramping, biking, reading, travelling, and funnily enough sitting around doing nothing!



Bruce Richards is the Dunedin Office's new regional planning manager, replacing Debora Field who is now working in Transit's Auckland office.

Bruce joined in April and is enjoying working outside the bounds of Dunedin City. He is working to establish regional relationships with colleagues and councils, and is finding his previous work experience in Central Otago helpful in doing this. For some time, Bruce had his own consultancy practice there and provided a service to Queenstown Lakes and Civiccorp.

Outside work Bruce is involved in sports including skiing and cycling, but he has a habit of preferring his motorcycle for recreation as well as commuting. Bruce is married with two children of high school age.



The new position of senior planner with the Dunedin Office's Transportation Planning Division has been filled by **Ian McCabe**. Ian joined in March this year and his job is to oversee and manage Transit's statutory/consent planning and LAR work, and to assist the regional planning manager in strategic policy planning activities.

With over 13 years' planning experience, Ian joins Transit from the Dunedin City Council where he worked as a senior planner with the resource consents team. He has also been a consultant planner for Opus International Consultants, worked with the Department of Conservation, and as a survey draughtsman for the now Department of Survey and Land Information.

Ian has a BA in Geography and a Masters in Regional and Resource Planning from the University of Otago.

A keen musician, Ian plays bass trombone for the St Kilda Brass Band, as well as playing bass guitar and trombone for local operatic societies. He is also involved in sea scouts with his children.



Graduate engineer **Marcos Santana** joined Transit's Dunedin Office in October. He holds an honours degree in natural resource engineering from the University of Canterbury. Marcos has a particular interest in sustainable development and he hopes that his time at Transit will enable him to gain more knowledge in this area.

Although originally from Belize in Central America, Marcos identifies more strongly with Caribbean culture. His main hobby is soccer (football) and he also has an interest in tramping, basketball and athletics.



*Season's Greetings
from Transit*

Transit New Zealand
P.O. Box 5241
Dunedin

Skeggs House, Level 2
62-66 Tennyson Street
Dunedin

Telephone: (03) 477 8527
Facsimile: (03) 477 9237