



COAST TO COAST

PUBLISHED BY THE CHRISTCHURCH REGIONAL OFFICE OF TRANSIT NEW ZEALAND

APRIL 2008

Pedestrian and cyclist safety a priority for Transit New Zealand

Feedback from New Zealanders to surveys conducted by Transit, shows more and more people want sustainable solutions to transport which includes more walking and cycling facilities.

Transit has taken this feedback on board and has budgeted \$30 million over the next 10 years to implement initiatives under the government's new national Cycling and Walking policy.

Transit regional transportation manager, Michael Blyleven says, "The policy ensures that specific projects will be developed, over and above new construction projects, that already accommodate wider travel options which means considering cycling and walking facilities.

"Most of the cycling and walking improvements are delivered via projects within the Christchurch City network. We have also been working on a safety review which has received approval to go ahead. This means we will be moving on some more cycle safety projects soon."

Transit regional traffic and safety manager, Tony Spowart says that

Transit has just put out a contract for tender for cycle improvements on SH74 at Queen Elizabeth Drive, and along SH73 at the Opawa Expressway, along Brougham Street and at Curletts Road.

Collectively this work forms part of the Christchurch Safe Cycling Facilities project which will provide cycling lanes and turning facilities on the state highways.

"In consultation with Spokes, the Christchurch branch of the Cycle Advocates Network (CAN), we prioritised where there was most need for cycling improvements. Work is scheduled to begin by this winter.

"Other projects on the go or under consideration include a cycle lane on SH1 and Carmen Road in Hornby and building cycle lanes down Blenheim Road from Curletts Road to the Sockburn roundabout," says Tony.

WEST COAST FOCUS ON PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY

On the West Coast Transit is working with local councils to develop a regional strategy for walking and cycling. The strategy will enable councils to develop further action plans and take advantage of Transit's expertise to create integrated projects that will benefit all road users.

Work on the strategy is getting underway in April. This will start with extensive stakeholder consultation and later Transit will ask for public feedback.

"We recognise that there are increasing numbers of cyclists on the highways and safety is a concern for them," says Michael Blyleven. "However the infrastructure solution is often prohibitively expensive so we need to find practical ways to enhance the safety of all road users, both cyclists and motorists.

"We will draw upon recent findings from our Cycle Pinchpoint research project to identify innovative solutions to improve safety for, and awareness of, cyclists using state highways."

Transit has also been involved in several other initiatives aimed at increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety. The SH74 Styx Mill overbridge widening and four-laning (pictured) recently won approval from Spokes, which nominated the development as a finalist in the award for Best Cycle Facility Project.



How do you make a narrow bridge safe for pedestrians and cyclists when you can't spend millions on building a new one? It's simple – add a clip-on.

It's an effective solution and just one example of the innovative ways Transit is solving the need to meet increasing calls for improved pedestrian and cycling safety on the region's main roads.

Transit regional traffic and safety manager, Tony Spowart, says the clip-on bridges are extremely cost-effective and work very well.

Three bridges are already in place in Canterbury. The first, the School River Bridge in Culverden has been replaced for some time. Recently one has been added to the Jed River Bridge near Cheviot which links the township with its sports field and the third has been attached to the Boyle River Bridge on SH7.



Arahura Bridge project to honour community and history

For more than 120 years the grand, single lane road-rail Arahura Bridge has provided West Coasters with the only rail and road access over the Arahura River. It was originally built in 1887 and spans 200 metres.

Though the bridge is well past its use-by date and needs to be replaced, the task will be done with a sensitive awareness of the nature of the bridge, the river and the communities bound by them. A landscaped heritage park is to be created on the eastern side of the northern approach to the new bridge.

The construction of the bridge at Arahura is now closer with ONTRACK recently announcing it has awarded the construction contract to HEB Smithbridge, recognised as innovative leaders in the construction of New Zealand infrastructure. The construction is expected to commence in April 2008 and take approximately 24 months.

“The project is a collaborative Whole of Government solution,” says Transit project engineer, Chris Collins. ONTRACK is responsible for the construction of the bridge and Transit, through a separate contract, will be responsible for the road approaches. The next step will be for Transit to advertise the roading approaches contract in June.

The new bridge will be built on the same alignment as the existing bridge. The new structure will have two road lanes with an adjacent footpath/cycle way and a separate rail line next to them. To achieve this, the bridge will be constructed in stages and a minimum of one lane of road traffic will be maintained at all times. Work on the rail tracks and rail portion of the new bridge will be

undertaken during the winter months when the line is not used to cart milk products from the Westland Milk Dairy Factory.

Replacing the bridge for safety and to ensure route security was a key priority for the West Coast in Transit’s 10-year State Highway Forecast.

NEW ZEALAND TRANSPORT AGENCY TAKES SHAPE

A new Crown entity, the New Zealand Transport Agency, will emerge on July 1 this year when Transit New Zealand and Land Transport New Zealand are brought together.

Its primary role will give effect to the updated New Zealand Transport Strategy (UNZTS) and, in doing so, undertake its functions in a way that contribute to an integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system.

A cohesive approach to transport planning, functioning and delivery and a clear focus on transport targets to take New Zealand into the future are two key benefits driving the creation of the New Zealand Transport Agency.

Passing lanes to deliver safer travel

Motorists travelling between Ashburton and Timaru will soon have an easier and safer drive with the completion of three more passing lanes on SH1.

Transit New Zealand expects construction of the lanes to be completed by the end of April. The passing lanes are north of Ealing, another south of Rangitata and the third, north of Orari.

Transit New Zealand regional projects manager, Geoff Griffiths, says the lanes will improve passing opportunities for motorists. "The lanes are designed to improve the safety and efficiency of the state highway network so motorists can look forward to safer and less frustrating journeys."

The passing lanes will provide passing opportunities in both directions and form part of a Transit New Zealand strategy which aims to provide passing lanes approximately every five kilometres on frequently used lengths of highways.

"The strategy includes a total of 10 additional passing lanes between Ashburton and Timaru and the work on these three will bring the total

number completed to eight," says Geoff.

The final two passing lane projects are still in the design phase and are programmed for construction in future years.

The passing lanes were identified as key to helping relieve pressure and improve safety on the highway which is facing steadily increasing traffic growth.



ASHBURTON TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Transit is moving ahead with public consultation on traffic issues in Tinwald that were identified in the Ashburton Transportation Study, which will be released soon.

Regional transportation manager, Michael Blyleven says Transit is aware of community concerns about access to the state highway and the dangers to pedestrians crossing the increasingly busy highway. "We will be talking to the principal of Tinwald School and the wider community," says Michael.

Residents in the area can expect a consultation flyer in their mailboxes shortly.

WORK TO CONTINUE ON CHRISTCHURCH'S WESTERN RING ROUTE

Two critical portions of Christchurch's Western corridor are about to be upgraded.

Plans to four-lane two sections of SH1 between Memorial Avenue and Yaldhurst Road and Sawyers Arms Road to Memorial Avenue in Christchurch head into the design phase this year.

The two sections are considered vital to ensuring access and mobility through the city with the Memorial Avenue /Yaldhurst Road segment being the priority.

Transit capital projects manager, Southern Zone, Colin MacKay says the work follows on from the signalisation of the Yaldhurst and Buchanans Road intersections.

"These were the first two of nine separate projects outlined by Transit New Zealand in a 2002 Scheme Assessment report to upgrade the corridor," says Colin. "The construction of the Memorial Avenue /Yaldhurst Road section is the next project in this plan of staged upgrades."

Land purchase negotiations and discussions with Christchurch City Council are already underway.

"Both projects will involve constructing another two lanes with a raised central median along the centre of the road. This will provide additional traffic capacity with two lanes in both directions while also creating safer facilities for cyclists," says Colin.

Open day attracts interest in Timaru Transport Study

The Timaru Transport Study came under the spotlight recently at an open day in Timaru.

Interested parties were invited to find out more about the strategy which is aimed at relieving increasing vehicle pressure on SH1 through the town.

Timaru District Council land transport manager, Andrew Dixon, says the open day was an opportunity for residents to comment on whether all the issues, constraints and opportunities to minimise the impacts of the proposed highway upgrade had been identified.

The strategy was developed in response to the findings of the Timaru Transportation Study which showed traffic on Evans Street which forms part of SH1 through Timaru would double over the next 25 years.

Transit regional transportation manager, Michael Blyleven says residents, businesses and other stakeholders were

able to make submissions concerning the proposals.

The submissions, which closed on March 14, will form part of a consultation report that will be used to consider localised issues and what opportunities there are to address the impact of the state highway upgrade.

“The Timaru District Council and Transit are working together for a wider solution,” says Michael. “However this is an integrated transport solution including road, rail, cycle and walkway infrastructure that affects the local community and their access, so extensive consultation is important.”

Timaru District Council land transport manager, Andrew Dixon (right) and Transit regional transportation manager, Michael Blyleven (left) answer questions about the impact of SH1 through Timaru.



CHRISTCHURCH SOUTHERN MOTORWAY: APPLICATIONS LODGED

Transit New Zealand has lodged alteration to designation and resource consent applications with the Christchurch City Council (CCC) and Environment Canterbury (ECan) for the Christchurch Southern Motorway.

The applications are the next step in the process towards construction of the \$110 million project. It is expected that the CCC and ECan will send out public notification of the applications and give people the opportunity to comment on them before setting a date for a hearing.

Transit New Zealand's regional projects manager Geoff Griffiths says he is hopeful the notifications will go out within the next couple of months.

“We have requested a joint hearing with the CCC and ECan and would like to see the hearing process underway and completed by the end of the year,” says Geoff. “However, it is largely out of our hands now and we just need to let the process run its course.

“We will be in a position to tender the design and construction contract of the motorway as soon as consents are obtained. This could mean a start to construction in 2009 if all goes well,” says Geoff.

The Christchurch Southern Motorway is part of the region's integrated transport strategy and a key element in the implementation of the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy. It will provide a strategic arterial route connecting the southwest of Christchurch with the city centre and the Port of Lyttelton.

The current plans can be viewed on Transit's website at www.transit.govt.nz/projects



Everybody wins when the bus comes first

Christchurch bus priority measures

Looking ahead to a sustainable future transport system is driving work on bus priority measures around Christchurch.

Fast, efficient and reliable public transport is considered vital to enhancing the economic wellbeing of Canterbury, says Transit senior transportation planner, Mike Tottman.

“Transit’s bus priority measures are an integral part of a bigger multi-agency plan that identifies and prioritises bus priority routes and measures within and around Christchurch.

“With the volume of traffic in the city consistently increasing, we are looking for public transport opportunities that help manage congestion by making public transport more attractive.”

Buses are fundamental to this future strategy as a full bus equates to 40 fewer cars on the road. However Mike says that for the public to be prepared to move from being car drivers to regular bus users, the service has to be attractive to use and consistently reliable.

“Bus priority measures will help provide reliability by providing the bus with dedicated lanes to avoid general

traffic especially during commonly congested travel times in the morning and afternoon. We have a number of options that are available to us and we are evaluating them to find the most suitable and cost-effective for the locations proposed,” says Mike.

Transit has consulted closely with the public and stakeholders on two bus priority routes (Main North and Main South Roads) and for a standalone bus priority measure (the Travis Road / Bassett Street intersection).

“We received a good consultation response and have incorporated suggestions into the preliminary design where appropriate,” says Mike.

The options included for bus priority on state highways in Christchurch are bus lanes, amended junction and traffic signal layouts, better spacing of bus stops and bus gates. Descriptions and diagrams of these options can be found at www.buspriority.co.nz

Intersection project eases right turns



Construction work on improving the Yaldhurst and Curletts Roads intersection near Church Corner in Christchurch is nearly finished. The project was undertaken to provide better right turning facilities and to upgrade signage.

Old bridges under review

Kurow's century-old twin wooden bridges across the Waitaki River are a step closer to being replaced. The historic bridges were originally built for rail traffic and were considered quite robust, however there is now evidence of decay in many places.

An initial scheme assessment for replacement of the bridges was carried out in 1998, but work was put on hold with the advent of Project Aqua and other possible projects around the lower Waitaki area. At the time, it identified the best option was to replace the bridges with new single lane structures located close to the existing bridges.

Transit area engineer for South Canterbury, Colin Hey says now that the river works are resolved, the go ahead has been given to review the replacement scheme. The next step will be to confirm and build on the work already done in the past.

"We need to revisit the original scheme plans to bring them up to date in terms of current design and planning practice. There are a few more processes required nowadays, particularly with regard to consultation and consent approvals," says Colin.

Transit is already in talks with the Kurow Island project team which is busy cleaning up and landscaping the island between the two bridges. The area has previously been used as a landfill but is now being cleaned up to create a recreational area for fishing, jet boating, picnics, cycling and walking.

"At this stage it looks like the replacement bridges will be immediately downstream from the old bridges," he says.

In due course a consultation flyer will be sent out to all stakeholders inviting submissions on the proposals for the new bridges.



New webcams to be installed at key Christchurch intersections

Travellers in Christchurch will be able to make more informed travel decisions with the installation of webcams around Christchurch.

Transit Christchurch regional traffic and safety manager Tony Spowart says the cameras are currently being installed at the following intersections: Anzac Dr, Pages Rd; Blenheim Rd, Curletts Rd; Brougham St, Colombo St; Memorial Ave, Russley Rd; Main South Rd near Hornby Mall; Main North Rd before the motorway; at the Yaldhurst Curletts intersection.

Others are still to be installed at the Christchurch Northern Motorway, the SH 1/ SH 74 intersection in Belfast, the Hornby Mall intersection and the intersection of Main North Road and QEII Drive

Tony says, "These locations were chosen because of their high traffic volumes. Installing webcams at these sites will enable motorists to better plan their journey with respect to how busy the roads are at any given time. Traffic flows will be updated every minute."

CONTACT US

Christchurch Regional Office:

Level 7,
123 Victoria Street,
Christchurch.

Tel 64 3 366 4455

Fax 64 3 365 6576

www.transit.govt.nz