

7. SUBMISSION TO TRANSIT NZ DRAFT 2007/08 LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME AND 10 YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

General Manager responsible:	General Manager Strategy and Planning, DDI 941-8117
Officer responsible:	Portfolio Manager – Liveable Cities
Author:	Stuart Woods

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present, seek comment on and recommend adoption of a Council submission to the Transit NZ draft 2007/08 Land Transport Programme and 10 Year Financial Plan on which Transit NZ are currently consulting, and to approve attendance at a subsequent hearing of submissions. This consultation is an annual requirement under the Land Transport Management Act 2003 as part of Transit's land transport programme formulation. The due date of the submissions is 30 March 2005, although approval has been received from Transit to provide a ratified submission following on from this meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Under legislation, each year Transit New Zealand is required to consult on its forward work programme. This year's consultation document outlines Transit's proposed Land Transport Programme for the 2007/08 financial year, provides broad-brush information on the remaining four years of the Government's committed five year programme of works (established last year), and a ten year financial plan (outlining overall expenditure in the generic work categories on which its budget is based). The overall expenditure proposed for the 2007/08 year is \$1.38B, which may be compared to the \$1.19B for the current 2006/07 year (a 16% increase). However, the document indicates that the forecast level of activity will be broadly the same in the two years, with the increase absorbed by cost escalations.
3. Transit's approach in its consultation document has been to seek feedback on the coming year's activities, and to provide an update on the remainder of the committed five year programme. Specifically, Transit is seeking feedback on:
 - the regional transport issues listed;
 - the proposed maintenance activity level;
 - the programmed and new works;
 - Transit's contribution to meeting the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA) objectives (a mandatory requirement); and
 - the usefulness of the consultation document.
4. The consultation document is very similar in presentation and detail to the final 10 Year State Highway Plan and Forecast for last year, rather than the style of the consultation material in past years which contained significantly more information. A copy of the draft Canterbury State Highway Land Transport Programme is attached 1/2. In the consultation material, there is only limited information on projects provided for the 2007/08 year, some additional information on the large projects (valued at over \$4M) out to year 4 and no information about any projects beyond year 4. The Government has signalled it intends to move to a six-year funding cycle with a major update every three years, in order to align with the Local Government planning process cycle (LTCCP's). The first major updates and alignment will be due in 2009. This should ultimately produce a State Highway forecast where there is never less than three years of funding certainty.
5. The level of detail provided in the consultation document is poor, and makes any detailed analysis of the proposed programme difficult. Thus, it is similarly difficult to provide considered and specific submissions. Nevertheless, the Council still has an important opportunity through this mechanism to seek to influence and contribute to the finalisation of this year's Transit Land Transport Programme and Financial Plan. It is important therefore to compile the Council's views into a submission to respond to Transit's draft proposals.

6. The key matters identified by staff as important on which to express views are:
- That the consultation material is inadequate in terms of information and detail (or reference thereto) to make a full and detailed submission and contribution to Transit's mandatory consultation process.
 - That the lack of information about future years programmes (years 5-10 for large projects and years 2-3 for all other projects) is unacceptable in terms of seeking to align Council and Transit projects for integrated and collaborative delivery. For example, with the silence on years 5-10 in the programme, and relying upon last year's State Highway Plan, can the Council choose to presume that the Northern Arterial Rural construction date is now at latest in year 9?
 - That the recognition of the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS) in the consultation material list of regional issues for Canterbury is encouraging. However, once the UDS is adopted in the near future, Transit will need to go on and ensure that its overall programme is integrated with the UDS (this would not be able to be determined in the current consultation material), it delivers its commitments in a timely and collaborative manner, and provides transparent programming information so that the partner organisations can co-ordinate delivery of improvements across the UDS area.
 - That transport planning in Christchurch should be based on our philosophy that **prevention is better than cure**. Therefore the urgent demands in Auckland and Wellington should not unnecessarily detract from our ability to continue with good planning and implementation. The ongoing low level of activity and delivery of transport system improvements in Christchurch is creating an infrastructure deficit (or lag) in the State Highway system, which the remainder of the Christchurch transport system is having to unnecessarily cope with. In addition, the ongoing use of Regional Funds (R-Funds) rather than allocating National Funds (N-Funds) to Christchurch improvements has been reflected in previous Council submissions, and the same views of dissatisfaction can be expressed.
 - That cycling and walking improvement projects again are allocated a very small part of the overall expenditure, at around 0.2%, and are allocated in a priority 6 (the lowest) grouping of projects in terms of priority call on funding. They should be raised to priority 4 to be alongside minor safety works (and above the large projects – priority 5, which are all major roading projects with one exception), to provide sufficient focus to better meet the objectives of the LTMA.
 - That the proposal to construct the TDM project (bus priority corridor measures) in 2007/08 is strongly endorsed.
 - That the proposal to begin design of the Southern Motorway in 2007/08 and for construction to begin within four years is strongly endorsed, with the requirement of full collaboration and partnership between the Council and Transit being the hallmark of the project.
 - That the introduction of only two new small and medium projects in Canterbury (Lyttelton Tunnel Deluge System and the Johns/Main North Intersection upgrade) for the coming year is too few for addressing the many State Highway issues in the Christchurch and Canterbury region.
 - That the proposal for eight strategic studies in Canterbury, including Christchurch Northern Links, Halswell Road and the Southern Motorway extension (beyond Halswell Junction Road), is endorsed with encouragement for prompt completion and action thereafter.
8. A copy of the proposed City Council submission is attached for discussion, amendment if necessary, and adoption.

9. In the consultation material, Transit has asked whether the Council wishes to take an opportunity to present its submission to a hearing panel. Officers believe that this is a key mechanism to promote and optimise the chances of success to address our issues. Therefore officers intend to accept the opportunity, and are recommending that the presentation be delegated to the General Manager Strategy and Planning and the Portfolio Manager – Liveable City. Should Councillors wish to participate or indeed lead the presentation, then the recommendation (b) below should be modified and Councillors nominated to also participate. Information to date regarding these hearings is that they will be regionally-held and will occur on 18 April in Christchurch. Following release of the confirmed forecast around the turn of the new financial year, all submitters will be informed of the decisions, along with reasons, made by the Transit Board.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no financial implications to the Council directly related to this submission.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

11. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

12. The Council has no legal obligation to provide a submission on the Transit draft Land Transport Programme and Financial Plan, nor are any legal commitments made through the submission.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

13. Yes.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

14. Making the submission aligns to working with partner agencies to meet community outcomes related to transport.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?

15. The recommendation to adopt and promote the submission may influence Transit to improve its activities to support levels of service related to the transport system operation.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

16. The views expressed in the submission are aligned with the Council's transport strategies, the draft Urban Development Strategy, and Council budgets.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

17. Yes

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

18. None required.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Adopt the attached submission, subject to any agreed amendments, for forwarding to Transit New Zealand as its views on the Transit NZ draft 2006/07-2015/16 10-Year State Highway Forecast.
- (b) Grant approval for the General Manager Strategy and Planning and the Portfolio Manager – Liveable City to present the Council's submission to the regional hearings.