

## Executive summary

This report reviews the Taranaki Regional Council's performance and achievement on its regional land transport planning and passenger transport functions for the 2006/2007 year.

Set out below is a summary of the main activities carried out in 2006/2007:

- Implemented the regional component of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy* and *Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki*.
- Implementation of the regional component of the Strategy focused on the:
  - Improvements to the New Plymouth passenger transport services on an eighteen-month trial period. This included increased service frequencies, an increase in the number of routes, an increase in the number of people eligible for concession fare and free travel for WITT students and staff.
  - Continued provision of a subsidy to assist in the delivery of Total Mobility services to people with disabilities in the Taranaki region.
  - A range of advocacy, liaison and collaborative activities.
- Adopted the *Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki* that promotes and encourages the further development of walking and cycling infrastructure/services in the region.
- Carried out advocacy activities in relation to Government funding policy proposals and funding programmes, including identifying appropriate Regional (R) Funding priorities.
- Continued to facilitate the State Highway 3 Working Party, to identify priorities for safety improvements along State Highway 3 and make recommendations to Transit New Zealand.
- Continued to monitor stock truck effluent disposal facilities in Taranaki in conjunction with the district councils, Transit New Zealand, Western Central Districts Road Transport Association, Opus International Ltd and Federated Farmers.
- Work towards the implementation of three new once-a-week bus services in South Taranaki, in conjunction with the South Taranaki District Council.
- Net expenditure of \$420,873 on Total Mobility taxi services in New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera (involving a total of 94,869 passenger trips).
- At the conclusion of the 2006/2007 year, the Total Mobility Scheme had a client base of approximately 3,500 involving 25 agencies affiliated to the Disabled Persons Assembly.
- Total expenditure of \$397,906 on concessionary fares (children, tertiary students, elderly, disabled users, beneficiaries and WITT students/staff) on urban bus services in New Plymouth (involving a total of 298,924 concession fare passenger trips). Total passenger trips on New Plymouth urban bus services for 2006/2007 was 324,021.



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This report reviews the Taranaki Regional Council's performance and achievements on its regional land transport planning and passenger transport functions for the 2006/2007 year.

## 1.2 Background

The Taranaki Regional Council is responsible for promoting an integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system within the region. This involves a range of activities including: the preparation and implementation of a *Regional Land Transport Strategy* and *Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki*, registering public transport operators, and providing for the reasonable needs of the transport disadvantaged through the provision of passenger transport services.

The Land Transport Act 1998 requires the Taranaki Regional Council to prepare a regional land transport strategy for its region. This Strategy is to identify the land transport outcomes sought by the region and the strategic options for achieving those outcomes. A revised Strategy for Taranaki was completed in 2005/2006.



Vehicles travelling through Stratford

The development of a regional passenger transport plan is a requirement of the Transport Services Licensing Act 1989. It is prepared by the Regional Council and provides the mechanism through which the Council specifies the passenger services proposed for the region, both generally and in respect of the transport disadvantaged. A revised *Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki* was completed during 2005/2006 and is included as Part II of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy*.

The Taranaki Regional Council's role in public transport is primarily that of planning, although the Council may also contract out or subsidise (through a Concession Fare Scheme) passenger transport services. Historically the Council has allowed market forces to largely determine local transport service delivery throughout the region, with Council's involvement limited to the provision of subsidies for users of the Total Mobility services in several urban centres, and concessionary fares on bus services in the New Plymouth City area. However, as part of its review of the *Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki*, the Council agreed to consider a range of new public transport initiatives for implementation in 2006/2007.

The following report outlines progress made by the Taranaki Regional Council in implementing the objectives and programmes of the Council's 2006/2016 *Long-Term Council Community Plan* relating to regional land transport planning and passenger transport within the region.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The overall objective for regional land transport planning for 2006/2007, as set out in the Council's 2006/2016 *Long-Term Council Community Plan*, is to:

*“Promote an integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system within the region”.*

The overall objective for passenger transport in Taranaki is to:

*“Promote the provision of community passenger transport in Taranaki and assist the special transport needs of the transport disadvantaged”.*

### **1.4 Performance measures**

In response to the above objective for regional land transport planning activities, the Council adopted the following performance measures for 2006/2007 as set out in the Council's 2006/2016 *Long-Term Council Community Plan*:

- Review the *Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki* in accordance with the Land Transport Management Act 2003 and upon completion of any trials and at three-yearly intervals.
- Implement the regional component of the Strategy.

In response to the above objective for passenger transport, over the period of this Plan and specifically for 2006/2007 the Council intends to:

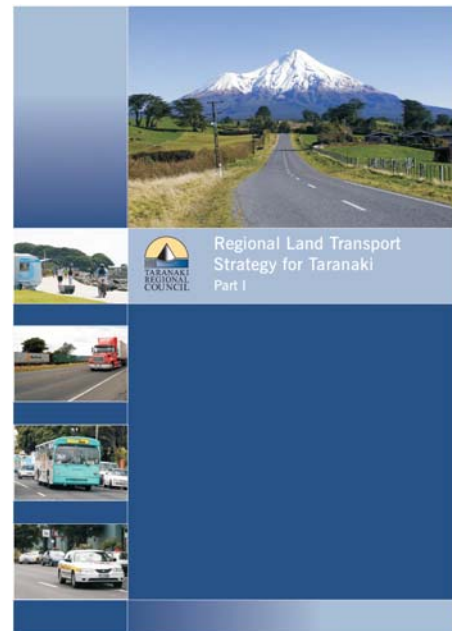
- Provide total mobility subsidy assistance, to qualifying persons through the Land Transport New Zealand supported Total Mobility Scheme, for people with a serious mobility constraint which prevents them from using public passenger transport services who need access to taxi services in New Plymouth, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera.
- Conclude the Passenger Transport Plan review and implement decisions adopted through the Regional Land Transport Strategy process.
- Implement passenger transport trials in the New Plymouth urban areas and regional Taranaki consistent with the Passenger Transport plan subject to funding approval from Land Transport New Zealand.
- Receive and register within 14 days, appropriate applications to operate a passenger transport service.

## 2. Report on progress

### 2.1 Review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy

The Council completed a review of its *Regional Land Transport Strategy* during the 2005/2006 year. The review was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Land Transport Act 1998 and the Land Transport Management Act 2003. As part of the Strategy review, the Council continued its review of public passenger transport services in the region. This review led to a revised *Regional Passenger Transport Plan* for inclusion as Part II of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy*.

The revised *Regional Land Transport Strategy* was adopted in February 2006. The following is an overview of the implementation of the regional component of the Strategy that occurred in 2006/2007.



### 2.2 Implementation of the regional component of the Strategy

#### 2.2.1 Overview

An annual report on the implementation of the Strategy during 2005/2006 was developed and forwarded to the Secretary of Transport, Land Transport New Zealand, Transit New Zealand and the Commissioner of Police within three months after the close of the 2005/06 financial year. The report was also made available to the public as required by the Land Transport Act 1998.

Implementation of the regional component of the Strategy in 2006/2007 focused on the following activities:

- The continued provision of a 50% subsidy to assist in the delivery of Total Mobility services to people with disabilities in the New Plymouth urban area, Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera with funds received in part from Land Transport New Zealand and in part from general rates (refer to section 2.3.3 of this report).
- The provision of a subsidy to assist the delivery of an enhanced Concessionary Fare Scheme for children, tertiary students, people with disabilities, the elderly, beneficiaries and WITT students/staff using urban bus services in the New Plymouth wider urban area, with funds received in part from Land Transport New Zealand and in part from a targeted rate on New Plymouth District ratepayers (refer to section 2.3.4 of this report).

- Discussions held with the Disabled Persons Assembly Taranaki, taxi companies and user groups regarding the operation of Total Mobility services in Taranaki.
- The continued administration (under the Resource Management Act) of the *Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki*, and the Taranaki Regional Council's four regional plans, to promote the sustainable and integrated management of natural and physical resources in relation to land transport infrastructure and activities.

A revised public passenger transport service for New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura was implemented on an eighteen month trial period (beginning 1 July 2006). The revised services included an extension to the Concessionary Fare Scheme to include beneficiaries. Furthermore, WITT students and staff are able to travel for free through a subsidy provided by WITT and the WITT Student Association.

Officers also worked closely with the South Taranaki District Council to further investigate appropriate public passenger transport services for South Taranaki.

Investigations were also undertaken, with assistance from the Inglewood Community Board, on implementing an Inglewood to New Plymouth passenger transport service. (refer to section 2.3)

In addition to the core activities outlined above the Council was active during the year on a range of advocacy, liaison and collaborative activities. These activities were undertaken to advance the land transport needs of the region and the objectives of the Strategy. These included the following:

- Made a submission to Environment Waikato's draft *Regional Land Transport Strategy for the Waikato region*. The Council confined comments to inter-regional cross boundary issues that could affect the efficient development and management of the land transport system between Taranaki and the Waikato region.
- Prepared (in consultation with district councils and Transit New Zealand) a revised programme of Regional Funding priorities for Taranaki; submitted those priorities to the Regional Land Transport Committee for discussion and agreement; and forwarded the agreed priorities to Land Transport New Zealand (refer to section 2.2.2).
- Responded to Land Transport New Zealand's draft *National Land Transport Programme for 2007/08* (including draft Regional Funding allocations), seeking clarification and providing feedback on a number of matters set out in the draft Programme.
- Made a submission to Transit New Zealand on its draft *State Highway Forecast for 2007/08 - 2016/17* (refer to section 2.2.2).
- Continued correspondence with Land Transport New Zealand noting our concerns over Phase One and Two of a reviewed Total Mobility Scheme (refer to section 2.3.3).
- Maintained the State Highway 3 Working Party to promote improvements to State Highway 3 (refer to section 2.2.3).

- Adopted a *Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki* (refer to section 2.2.4).
- Maintained the Stock Truck Effluent Disposal Working Party (refer to section 2.2.5).

## 2.2.2 Regional advocacy on roading and funding issues

### **National Land Transport Programme for 2006/07**

The Council received a copy of the *National Land Transport Programme for 2006/2007* which allocates \$2.3 billion for land transport infrastructure and services nationwide. This was a 14% increase from the \$1.7 billion allocated in 2005/2006. Total allocation to Taranaki across all output classes in 2006/2007 was \$30.65 million, a slight increase from the \$30.6 million allocated in the previous year.

Indicative major roading projects included in the 2006/2007 Programme relating to the Taranaki region were as follows:

- Construction of the Bell Block Bypass and Mangaone Hill to Bell Block 4 Laning (to commence in the 2006/2007 year).
- Construction of the Rugby Road underpass.
- Design and construction of the Normanby Overbridge realignment.
- Construction of the Mangorei Road Intersection.
- Design and construction of the Tangahoe Bridge widening project.
- Design and construction of the Waitotara North Curve Improvements Investigation.
- Construction of the Whareroa Road South passing lane.
- Construction of cycle facilities – Eastern Cycleway Route.

Other projects included in the Programme were:

- Strengthening of Bedford Road Bridge's 50 & 52.
- Strengthening of Otararoa Road Bridge.
- Replacement of the Wiremu Road Bridge 116.

Maintenance allocations for the region increased by \$0.76 million on the previous year, bringing the total for 2006/2007 to \$27.97 million.

### **Regional Funding allocations**

The 2006/2007 year was the third year of allocating Regional Funding (or 'R' Funding), in addition to National Funds, under the National Land Transport Programme. This followed a Government decision announced in December 2003 to provide an increase in land transport funds to be distributed on a regional basis, according to population. The extra funds resulted from an increase of 5 cents per litre in excise duty and road user charges for light vehicles introduced on 1 April 2004. The R Funding allocation for Taranaki was initially estimated in 2004/2005 to be \$48.4 million over the 10 year period it was to be available. This figure was altered to \$51.7 million in 2005/2006. However, due to the increase in petrol prices and increasing trend towards people buying smaller cars, the Council has been informally advised that the level of Regional Funding is anticipated to be lower than \$51.7 million.

The only project completed under this Regional Funding category during 2006/2007 was the Awakino Tunnel Northbound Passing Lane. Despite this project being located in Waikato's section of the National Land Transport Programme Taranaki agreed to a 50/50 funding arrangement with Environment Waikato in recognition of the strategic importance of this project to the Taranaki region. Construction of the Bell Block Bypass also commenced in the 2006/2007 year. This project is part funded through a combination of Regional (50%) and National (50%) Funding.

Each year regional councils are requested by Land Transport New Zealand to submit recommendations on the distribution of Regional Funds as part of the submissions on the 2006/07 *National Land Transport Programme*. The deadline for submitting these Regional Funding recommendations for 2006/2007 was 6 November 2006.

In order to develop a draft Regional Funding priority list by this deadline, the following process occurred:

- A Regional Technical Officers Group (with members drawn from the New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki District Councils, the Taranaki Regional Council and Transit New Zealand) met on 6 September 2006 to consider proposals for Regional Funding.
- A draft Regional Funding priority list was then taken to the 28 September 2006 Regional Land Transport Committee meeting for comments and approval.
- Following agreement at this Regional Land Transport Committee meeting, a finalised Regional Funding priority list was sent to Land Transport New Zealand by the due date of 6 November 2006.

Taranaki's Regional Funding priority list is a continuation of the previous year's list with the following amendments added:

- **Tangahoe Bridge Widening Project:** In Taranaki's 2005/2006 Regional Funding Project Priority List this project was identified as a project currently committed in the 2005/2006 *National Land Transport Programme*. It was therefore not high on the list due to the perception that this project would progress during the 2005/2006 year. However, information since provided by Transit New Zealand has indicated that the cost of widening the bridge has risen and questions have been raised as to the appropriateness of a bridge widening relative to other options (e.g. replacement and realignment). Further work therefore needs to be done with respect to ascertaining the true costs of a 'Bridge Widening' versus a 'Bridge Replacement and Realignment'. The Regional Technical Officers Group felt it important to highlight the importance of this project in response to strong community feeling about the project and overall safety concerns along this stretch of State Highway 3. The Group has therefore proposed that the project is assigned a similar rating to the Awakino Gorge Realignment and Awakino Tunnel Widening projects on the Project Priority list.
- Number 17 on the Project Priority List has also been slightly reworded to identify the need for a 'Regional Passing Lane Status Report' for the entire state highway network. The Regional Technical Officers Group felt that the approach taken to the location of new passing lanes through Taranaki's state highway network was relatively piecemeal. It was therefore felt that a Passing Lane Status Report would further clarify the needs and benefits associated with more passing lane

opportunities in both Taranaki and the section of Waikato between Pio Pio and Awakino. Transit New Zealand has agreed to assist the Group with the preparation of such a report.

**Draft Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highway Forecast for 2007/08**

In tandem with the National Land Transport Programme and Regional Funding processes, a draft *10-year State Highways Forecast for 2007/08 – 2016/17* was released by Transit New Zealand for comment on 28 February 2007. Comments on this document were requested by 30 March 2007.

A Regional Technical Officers Group meeting was therefore convened in early March 2007 to discuss the preparation of a draft submission on Transit NZ's draft 10-Year Forecast and other land transport matters. Included in the Council's submission were comments on projects included in Taranaki's Regional 'R' Funding Project Priority List.

The key points raised in the Council's submission were as follows:

- Support was provided for the cost sharing arrangement between both Taranaki and Waikato (through the use of R Funds) for the construction of several projects in the Awakino Gorge area, including the Awakino North Realignment and the Awakino Tunnel Widening.
- Not enough focus is being given to proactively working towards better road safety initiatives, for example the widening of narrow bridges.
- Support was provided for the construction of the Scowns Hill passing lane project, but a request was also made for the addition of several more passing lanes in both Taranaki and the section of State Highway 3 south of Te Kuiti (i.e. in Environment Waikato's jurisdictional area).
- Support was provided for two walking and cycling projects in Taranaki. However it was also noted that more funding needs to be made available by Land Transport New Zealand for walking and cycling projects throughout the country.
- Support was provided for the New Plymouth Strategic Study and a recommendation made that an Awakino Gorge Investigation Study and up-to-date Passing Lane Study for the entire state highway network are included in Transit NZ's list of strategic studies.
- The importance of continued maintenance of our state highway network was noted.
- Taranaki continues to strongly advocate the following projects in priority ordering: Bell Block Bypass, Rugby Road Underpass, Normanby Overbridge Realignment and Tangarakau Gorge Seal Extension.
- Taranaki continues to support the small and medium sized projects included in the draft Forecast and, in particular, the Tangahoe Bridge Widening project. Several other small and medium sized projects were also requested to be added to the list.

In response to the submissions received, opportunities were provided by Transit NZ for submitters to speak to their submission at a series of Hearings around the country. The Council therefore spoke to the key points of our submission at the New

Plymouth Hearing on 20 April 2007. A total of 268 submissions were received on the draft Forecast.

### **2007/2008 National Land Transport Programme**

In late June 2007, the Council received final notification from Land Transport New Zealand of the *2007/2008 National Land Transport Programme* and regionally distributed funds. A number of projects in the final *2007/2008 National Land Transport Programme* were identified for Regional Funding, including: the Bell Block Bypass (part National and Part Regional Funding), Rugby Road Underpass, Normanby Overbridge Realignment and Tangahoe Bridge Widening. Two Awakino projects were also identified as receiving Taranaki's Regional Funds in 2006/07, the: Awakino North Realignment and Meads Hill Northbound Passing Lane projects.

There are also a number of other projects in the Programme that have Regional and National funds allocated against them. These projects are primarily bridge replacements or renewals that have previously been funded through National Funding. The Council has expressed its concern the region is fully committed its Regional Funds for the next several years on a number of the larger projects. Should Regional Funds need to be used for these smaller projects previously eligible for National Funds it is likely that other local projects will slip down the priority list for each Territorial Authority. This could ultimately lead to road closures as these projects identified with Regional Funding will be waiting for this funding to be freed up in order to undertake such renewal work.

### **2.2.3 State Highway 3 Working Party**

The State Highway 3 Working Party was formed in August 2002 to promote improvements to State Highway 3 between Taranaki and Waikato in recognition of the strategic importance of this section of the state highway network. It is made up of representatives from the Taranaki Regional Council, New Plymouth District Council, Environment Waikato, Waitomo District Council, Transit New Zealand, Transfield Services, the Western Central Road Transport Association and the Automobile Association.

The Working Party met twice during the year (in September 2006 and April 2007) to discuss highway improvements, traffic safety issues, highway promotion and publicity. The two meetings focused on matters relating to Land Transport New Zealand's 2006/2007 State Highway Forecast information, opportunities for projects to be covered by Regional Funds and matters relating to a number of special projects.

Priorities for the immediate future have been identified as the need for more passing lanes, realignment of the road between the Awakino Hotel and garage, a widening of the Awakino Tunnel and easing of corners in the Awakino Gorge. The Working Party prepared an independent submission on Transit's *10-year State Highway Forecast*, with representatives speaking to this submission at Transit's 'Hearing of Submissions' in New Plymouth on 12 May 2006.

The Working Party also agreed to recommend that the Waikato and Taranaki regions cost share arrangement (through part use of their Regional funds) for the Awakino Realignment, agree to a Awakino Tunnel and Awakino Northbound Passing Lane work.

The growth in vehicle movements on SH3 along with its cumulative effects on road surface roughness, ride-ability of vehicles, and number of crashes was discussed at the September 2006 meeting. Crash analysis data was provided at the April 2007 meeting.

The Working Party discussed promotional initiatives for the highway at both meetings. Members agreed that this stretch of highway should have more publicity (in the form of brochures) and possibly be branded to reflect the special character of the highway. The idea of a promotional brochure will be progressed in the future.

A review of the Working Party was introduced at the April 2007 meeting. The review focused on four main areas: key benefits of the Working Party, tangible improvements on the highway since the inception of the Working Party, issues requiring further progress and complaints received about the state of the highway. The Working Party also recommended that, as part of this review, a Passing Lane/Opportunity Strategic Study be completed for SH3 between Te Kuiti and the SH3/3A junction (just north of New Plymouth).

#### 2.2.4 Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy

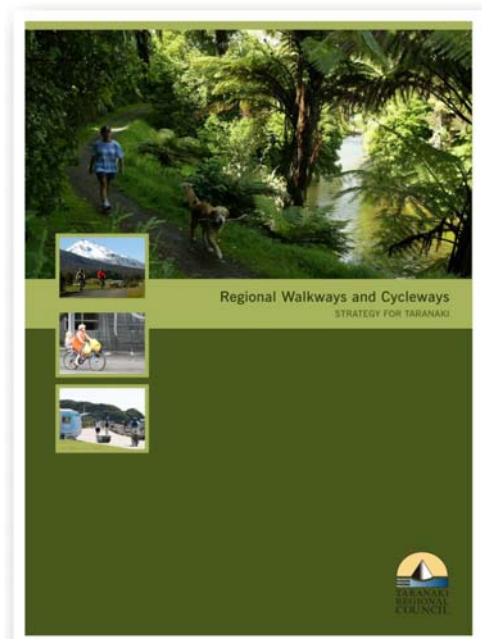
The *Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki* was adopted by the Council on 27 June 2007. This is a joint project involving the Council, each of the three district councils, Department of Conservation, Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board, Transit New Zealand, Federated Farmers and Venture Taranaki.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Promote the economic, social, environmental, recreational, health, tourism and transport benefits of walking and cycling.
- Identify current and possible future walkways/cycleways as part of an integrated, region-wide network connecting Taranaki's natural environment and linking with other walking and cycling infrastructure and population centres.

Important components of the Strategy are identifying existing or new regional priority walkways, routes, tracks, cycleways etc. and identifying options for linking these with significant facilities or amenities. The walkways and cycleways are classified according to their purpose or use.

*A Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki* fits in well with national policies such as the *New Zealand Transport Strategy*, the



Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki

*New Zealand Walking and Cycling Strategy* and local strategies developed by the district councils. It also links strongly with the Council's *Regional Land Transport Strategy* (refer to section 2.1).

### **2.2.5 Stock Truck Effluent Disposal Working Party**

Three stock truck effluent disposal facilities are now located within Taranaki: two on the state highway network (Ahititi and Waverley) and one at the Stratford saleyards. The operation of these facilities continued to be monitored during the year.

The Taranaki Regional Council received one complaint relating to stock truck effluent discharges during the year. This was for releasing stock truck effluent to the roadside

It is considered that the *Regional Stock Truck Effluent Disposal Strategy* and the management systems that have been put in place to avoid or minimise stock truck effluent discharges onto roads are working satisfactorily. However, there is still a need for vigilance to ensure that the in-transit facilities are appropriately maintained and continue to be used by carriers, and that farmers continue to stand stock.

The Working Party continues to meet on an annual basis to keep a watching brief on the situation. The members of this group include: each of the three district councils in the region, the Taranaki Regional Council, Transit NZ, Road Transport Association (Western Central Districts), Opus International Ltd. and Federated Farmers.

## **2.3 Passenger transport**

The Council's progress in achieving its programmes in relation to passenger transport is set out below.

### **2.3.1 Overview of passenger transport requirements**

The Council maintained a general overview of passenger transport services in the region and continued, through the annual plan process, to assist disabled persons using the Total Mobility Scheme and New Plymouth bus services. The Council also investigated the implementation of passenger transport services in South Taranaki and Inglewood.

### **2.3.2 Registration of services**

The Council received no new registrations for taxi services during 2006/2007. One variation to an existing registered taxi service was received (from Stratford Taxis) during 2006/2007.

Two registrations for new bus services were received during 2006/2007 (one from Okato Bus Lines and another from Tranzit Coachlines). Five variations to existing registered bus services were received during 2006/2007 (three from Tranzit Coachlines, one from Okato Bus Lines and one from InterCity Coachlines).

### **2.3.3 Total Mobility Scheme**

Total Mobility taxi services were provided to people with disabilities in the targeted areas of the New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera.

The budget for Total Mobility services in these areas was set at \$419,503 for the year, funded in part from Land Transport New Zealand (40%) and in part from general rates (60%).

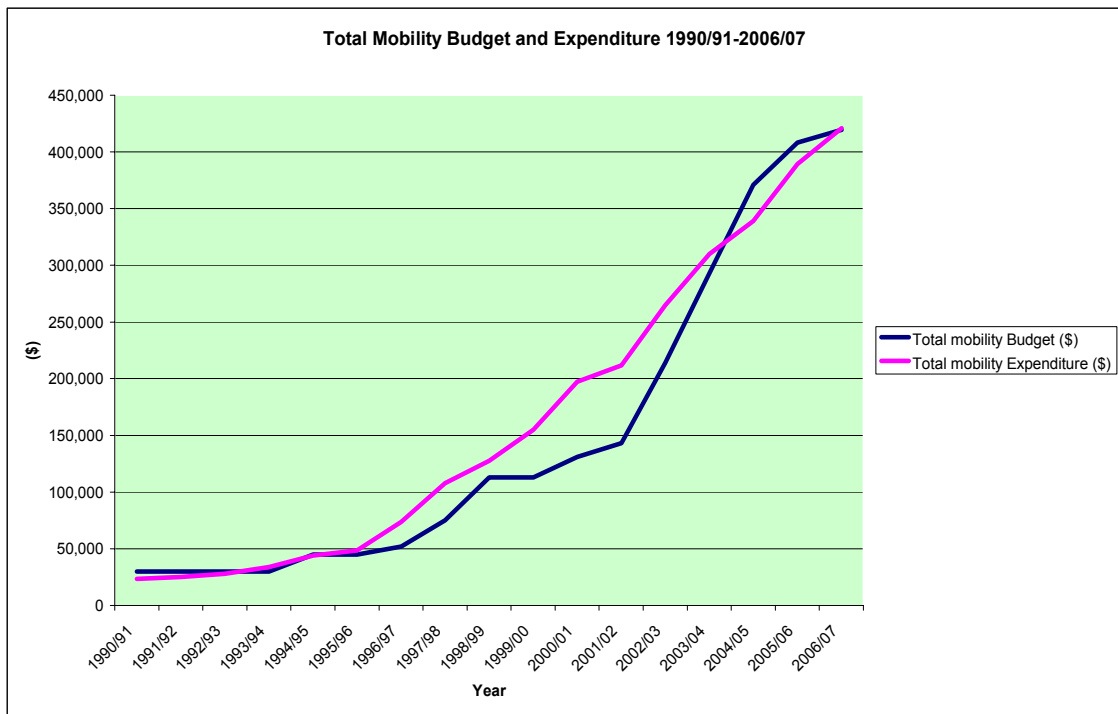
Continuing strong growth in demand for Total Mobility services was experienced during the year. Net expenditure for the year came in at \$420,873, an 8% increase over last year's expenditure of \$389,316. Table 1 shows the budget for each area and the net expenditure per area for the 2006/2007 financial year.

**Table 1** Total mobility budget and net expenditure per area for 2006/2007

Area	Budget (\$)	Expenditure (\$)
New Plymouth	324,973	316,786
Waitara	22,313	19,730
Stratford	14,762	13,738
Hawera	57,455	70,619
<b>Total</b>	<b>419,503</b>	<b>420,873</b>

Figure 1 shows the Total Mobility budget and expenditure trends over the last 16 years.

**Figure 1** Total mobility budget and net expenditure trends between 1990/91 and 2006/07



In 2006/2007 there was a total of 94,869 Total Mobility passenger trips undertaken, an increase of 0.8% over the previous year. The majority of these trips (81%) were in the New Plymouth urban area. However, Hawera continues to show strong growth in demand.

At the conclusion of the 2006/2007 year the Total Mobility Scheme had a client base of approximately 3,500. Of this total, approximately 2,200 individuals were affiliated to the Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA) and 1,300 to agencies affiliated to the DPA.

A total of five taxi organisations participated in the Total Mobility Scheme during 2006/2007. These were: New Plymouth Taxis Ltd, Energy City Cabs, Egmont City Cabs, Stratford Taxis and Hawera Taxis Ltd.

Total Mobility services are provided to 25 agencies affiliated to the Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA). These agencies are:

- Access Ability
- Arthritis - Central
- Blind and Partially Blind
- Cancer Society
- CCS North Taranaki
- CCS South & Central Taranaki
- DPA Individual
- Epilepsy Group
- Idea Services – South Taranaki
- Idea Services – North Taranaki
- Molly Ryan Trust
- MS Society
- Pathways Trust
- Parafed
- Parkinsonism
- Post Polio Organisation
- RNZ Foundation/Blind – Hawera
- RNZ Foundation/Blind – Nth Taranaki
- RNZ Foundation/Blind – Stratford
- SF Organisation
- Stroke Foundation
- Tainui Village
- Taranaki Arthritis
- Taranaki Asthma Society
- Taranaki Enterprise

The Total Mobility Scheme is a nationwide scheme with funding assistance provided in part by central government and in part by regional councils. During the year, the Ministry of Transport and Land Transport NZ continued its overall review of how the Scheme is being operated, with the intention of working with regional councils to obtain national consistency in how these services are being provided. The 2005/2006 Regional Land Transport Planning and Passenger Transport Annual Report has further details on this review.

In August 2005 the Minister of Transport announced improvements to the Scheme to be introduced over two phases over a period of two to three years. Phase One improvements would see an increase in the financial assistance rate to regional councils from 40% to 50% provided Councils agree to 11 conditions to improve the Scheme. Phase Two improvements would see an increase in the financial assistance rate to 60% subject to Council agreeing to a further 19 conditions. The Ministry has subsequently separated out four of these conditions, therefore reducing the number of Phase Two conditions to 15.

The Council recognises the valuable service that the Total Mobility Scheme provides to people with disabilities. However, the Council has raised several concerns regarding the implications of the review of the Total Mobility Scheme and agreeing to the conditions specified in Phases One and Two of the review. The Council's primary concern relates to the cost and funding of the Scheme which it considers should be met by central government from general taxation rather than from regional rates. The Council has also expressed its concerns about potential increases in use and administration costs associated with the review. Ongoing correspondence is occurring between the Council and Land Transport NZ on these issues.

### 2.3.4 Concessionary Fare Scheme

On 1 July 2006, the Council introduced an improved urban bus service for New Plymouth on an eighteen-month trial period. The improvements to the service focussed on an increase in the amount of routes, an increase in the service frequency and an increase in the Concession Fare Scheme to include beneficiaries. WITT students and staff are also eligible to travel for free thanks to a subsidy provided by WITT and the WITT Students Association. Previously the Concession Fare Scheme only provided for children, tertiary students, people with disabilities (under the "ACCESS" scheme) and the elderly.

Funds for this service were received in part from Land Transport NZ (50%) and in part from a targeted rate on New Plymouth District ratepayers (50%).

The Council contributed \$1.50 on the standard fare of \$3.00 for all Concession Fare categories.

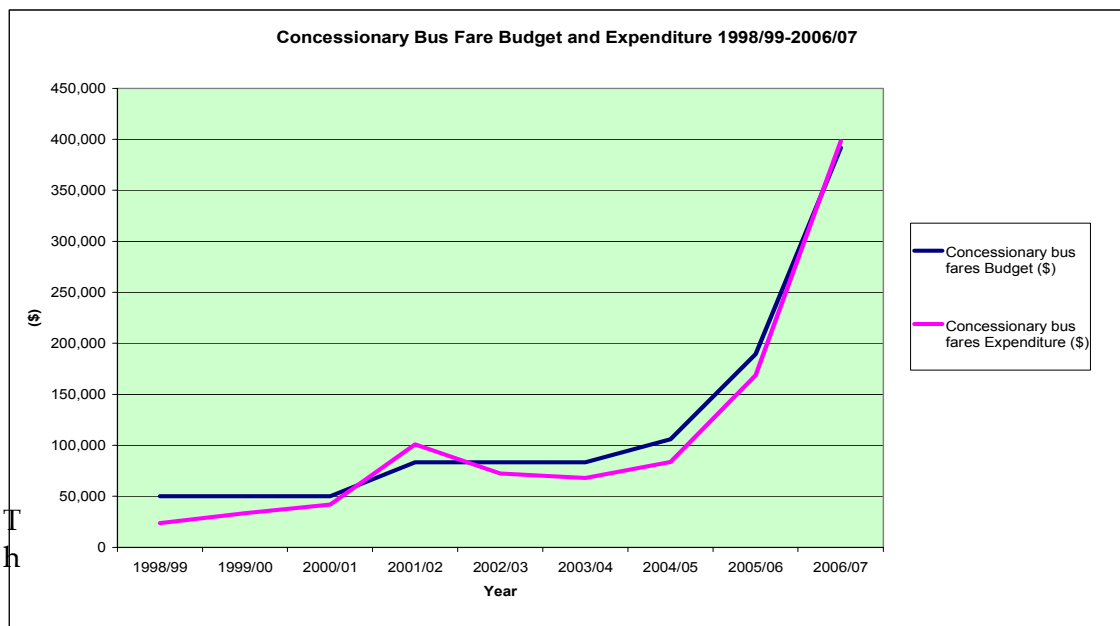
A total of 298,942 passenger trips were undertaken in 2006/2007 by Concessionary Fare users. Of these, 223,194 trips were made by children (75%), 28,612 by beneficiaries (10%), 24,483 by the elderly (8%), 11,282 by ACCESS card holders (4%), 8,059 by WITT students/staff (3%) and 3,312 by tertiary students (1%).



A new Super Low Floor bus was introduced on the New Plymouth urban services in 2006/2007.

Figure 2 shows the Concession Fare budget and expenditure trends over the last 9 years. The increase in 2006/2007 expenditure reflects the enhanced services introduced at the beginning of the year.

**Figure 2** Concessionary Bus Fare budget and net expenditure trends between 1998/99 and 2006/07



e budget for concessionary fares was \$392,000 for the year. Expenditure for the year came to \$397,906.

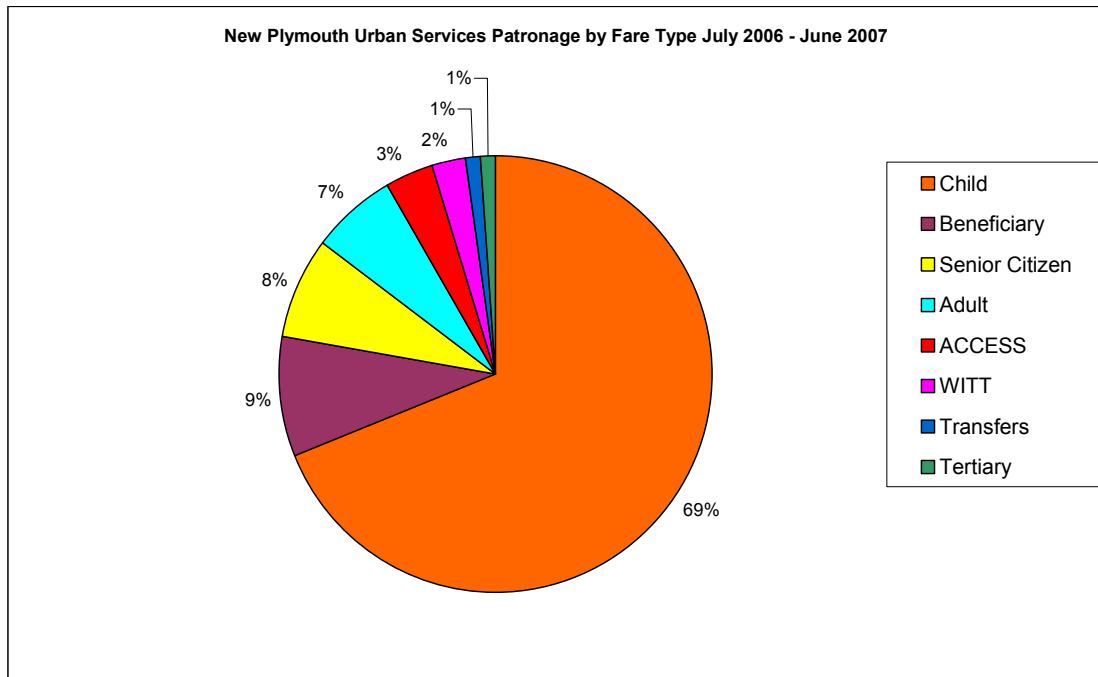
### 2.3.5 Passenger transport review and implementation

#### Public passenger transport services for New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura

An extensive review of passenger transport services in Taranaki has been undertaken over the last two or three years. (For further details on the *Regional Passenger Transport Plan* recommendations made for public passenger transport services in the New Plymouth urban area, refer to the 2005/2006 Regional Land Transport Planning and Passenger Transport Annual Report).

The improved services outlined in this review commenced operating on 1 July 2006. Total patronage for the 2006/2007 year was 324,021. Figure 3 shows the patronage figures for each category.

**Figure 3** New Plymouth Urban Service Patronage by Fare Type July 2006 – June 2007



The improved services that were introduced from 1 July 2006 also increased the number of urban service routes from three to four routes (the existing Saturday services, Oakura service and Waitara services remained the same). Patronage for all these routes is as follows:

**Table 2:** New Plymouth urban bus services patronage for 2006/2007

Route	Patronage 2006/2007
333 Marfell-Spotswood	51,060
444 Westown-Hospital	38,382
555 Vogeltown-Frankleigh	29,730
777 Merrilands-Fitzroy	23,069
14 New Plymouth-Oakura	17,448
888 New Plymouth-Bell Block-Waitara	15,808
Saturday services	1,994
School overrun services	146,530
<b>Total</b>	<b>324,021</b>

**Public passenger transport services for South Taranaki**

Further discussions were held with the South Taranaki District Council as to the appropriate services to be provided between Waverley-Patea-Hawera, Opunake-Hawera and Opunake-New Plymouth.

Expressions of interest were sought for these services in February 2007. Tenders were called in March 2007 and evaluated. Contracts were then awarded in May 2007. (From the start of July 2007, these once-a-week return services will commence operating on a contract basis). The Waverley-Patea-Hawera and Opunake-Hawera services will operate on Thursdays while the Opunake-New Plymouth service operate on Fridays. These services will operate initially for a trial period of eighteen-months.

**Public passenger transport services for Inglewood**

Following a request from the Inglewood Community Board, a public passenger transport service from Inglewood to New Plymouth was scoped during the year. As part of this scoping, a survey was done of Inglewood residents to determine, among other things, the demand for a service and the frequency of such a service. The survey showed that there is a demand for such a service.

As a result of the survey the Council agreed, in June 2007, to invite expressions of interest for a once-a-week service from Inglewood to New Plymouth (return). Tenders were called for in July 2007 and it is anticipated the service will commence operating by the end of 2007.

### 3. Conclusion

Performance measures detailed in the Council's *2006/2016 Long-Term Council Community Plan* have been achieved for the Council's passenger transport functions.

#### **Programmes and performance measures**

1. The Taranaki Regional Council completed its review of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki* during 2005/2006 and began implementation of the regional component of the Strategy in 2006/2007.
2. The Council completed an annual report on the implementation of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki* in 2005/2006.
3. Total Mobility taxi services were provided to people with disabilities in the targeted areas of New Plymouth urban area, Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera.
4. The Council continued passenger transport trials in the New Plymouth urban areas for a trial period of eighteen-months.
5. The Council provided funding for the delivery of an enhanced Concessionary Fare Scheme for children, tertiary students, people with disabilities, the elderly, beneficiaries and WITT students and staff using bus services of New Plymouth, Waitara and Oakura.
6. The Council completed its review and awarded contracts for passenger transport services for the South Taranaki District. Three trial services commenced operating in July 2007.
7. Received and registered within 14 days, appropriate applications to operate passenger transport services.

#### **Community outcomes**

This activity contributed to Sustainable, Prosperous, Connected, Together and Vibrant Taranaki outcomes through the Council continuing to promote the provision of passenger transport services throughout the region and staff undertaking a regional advocacy role on roading and funding issues.