

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 2005/2006 year.

Set out below is a summary of the main activities carried out in 2005/2006:

- Completed a revised *Regional Land Transport Strategy and Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki*.
- Continued to implement the regional component of the Strategy focusing on the:
 - Provision of a subsidy to assist in the delivery of Total Mobility services to people with disabilities in the Taranaki region.
 - Provision of a subsidy to assist the delivery of a concessionary fare scheme for children, tertiary students, people with disabilities and the elderly using urban bus services in New Plymouth.
 - A range of advocacy, liaison and collaborative activities.
- 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.
- Worked towards the implementation of revised bus services for New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura which commenced operation in 1 July 2006 for an eighteen month trial period.
- Continued the review of public passenger transport services for South Taranaki, in conjunction with the South Taranaki District Council.
- Net expenditure of \$389,316 on Total Mobility taxi services in New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera involving a total of 94,097 passenger trips.
- At the conclusion of the 2005/2006 year, the Total Mobility Scheme had a client base of approximately 1,800 involving 30 agencies affiliated to the Disabled Persons Assembly.
- Total expenditure of \$168,901 on concessionary fares (children, tertiary students, elderly and disabled users) on urban bus services in New Plymouth involving a total of 169,889 passenger trips.

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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 2005/2006 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. The Strategy is to identify the land transport outcomes sought by the region and the strategic options for achieving those outcomes. A revised Strategy was completed in 2005/2006.

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* completed during the year, the Council agreed to consider a range of new public transport initiatives for implementation in 2006/07.



Vehicles travelling through Stratford

The following report outlines progress made by the Taranaki Regional Council in implementing the objectives and programmes of the Council's *2005/2006 Annual Plan* relating to regional land transport planning and passenger transport within the region.

1.2.1 Objectives

The overall objective for regional land transport planning for 2005/2006, as set out in the Council's *2005/2006 Annual 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".

1.2.2 Performance measures

In response to the above objective for regional land transport planning activities, the Council adopted the following performance measures for 2005/2006 as set out in the Council's *2005/2006 Annual Plan*:

- Review the *Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki* in accordance with the Land Transport Management Act 2003.
- Implement the regional component of the Strategy.

In response to the objective for passenger transport activities, the Council adopted the following performance measures for 2005/2006 as set out in the Council's *2005/2006 Annual Plan*:

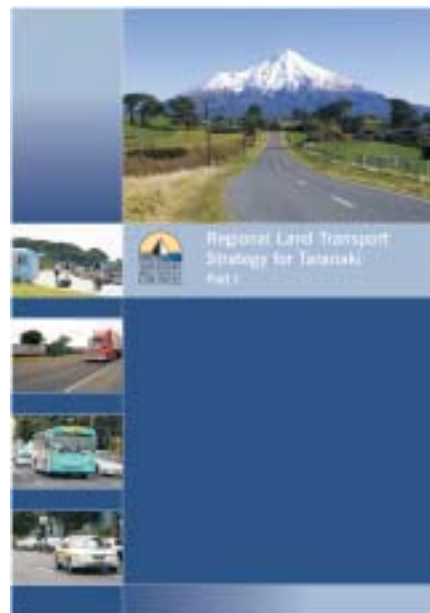
- Provide subsidy assistance, through the Land Transport New Zealand supported Total Mobility Scheme, for people with permanent disabilities who are unable to use public bus services and who need taxi passenger transport services in New Plymouth, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera and for people with disabilities and the elderly using public bus services in the greater New Plymouth area.
- Conclude the Passenger Services review and implement decisions adopted through the regional land transport strategy process.
- Receive and register, within fourteen days, appropriate applications to operate a passenger transport service.
- Maintain an overview of passenger transport requirements and facilitate the provision of appropriate services.

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 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 (refer to section 2.3.4 of this report). This review led to a revised *Regional Passenger Transport Plan* for inclusion as Part II of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy*.

Following an extensive information gathering process, background and literature review, assessment of legislative requirements and development of land transport options and desired outcomes during 2004/2005, a draft *Regional Land Transport Strategy* and *Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki* was released for public comment in November 2005.



A total of 52 submissions were received during the consultation process, with 11 submitters specifying that they wished to be heard in support of their submission at a 'Hearing of Submissions' on 31 January 2006. The Regional Land Transport Committee subsequently acknowledged the submissions received and after making appropriate changes to the document, the *Regional Land Transport Strategy* and *Regional Passenger Transport Plan for Taranaki* were adopted in February 2006.

2.2 Implementation of the regional component of the Strategy

2.2.1 Overview

An annual report on the implementation of the Strategy during 2004/2005 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 2005/2006 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 and the elderly 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 general rates (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.

Considerable work was also undertaken during the year in progressing towards the implementation of new and revised public passenger transport services for New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura on an eighteen month trial period (beginning 1 July 2006). Staff also worked closely with the South Taranaki District Council to further investigate appropriate public passenger transport services for South Taranaki.

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 Horizons Regional Council's *Regional Land Transport Strategy Review – Initial Consultation Paper* and their draft *Regional Land Transport Strategy*. 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 Manawatu-Wanganui 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).
- Completed a *R Funding: Local Roads Feasibility Study* which prepared Project Pre-Feasibility Reports for a number of transport projects on local roads to be included in the R Funding Programme Priority list (refer to section 2.2.2).
- Responded to Land Transport New Zealand's draft *National Land Transport Programme for 2006/07* (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 2006/07 - 2015/16* (refer to section 2.2.2).

- Corresponded with Transit New Zealand and Land Transport New Zealand to highlight the National and Regional importance of the Bell Block Bypass project (refer to section 2.2.2).
- Provided feedback to Land Transport New Zealand on their new performance information requirements for public passenger transport.
- Sent correspondence to Land Transport New Zealand noting our concerns over Phase One and Two of a reviewed Total Mobility Scheme (refer to section 2.3.4).
- Maintained the State Highway 3 Working Party to promote improvements to State Highway 3 (refer to section 2.2.3).
- Continued preparation of 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 2005/06

The Council received a copy of the *National Land Transport Programme for 2005/2006*, allocating \$1.7 billion for land transport infrastructure and services nationwide. This was a 20% increase from the \$1.42 billion allocated in 2004/2005. Total allocation to Taranaki across all output classes in 2005/2006 was \$30.6 million, an increase from the \$27.5 million allocated in the previous year.

Indicative major roading projects included in the 2005/06 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 2005/06 – 2007/08).
- Design and construction of the Normanby Overbridge realignment.
- Construction of the Rugby Road underpass.
- Investigation, design and construction of the Kapuni Bridge Improvements.
- Design and construction of the Tangahoe Bridge widening project.
- Design and construction of the Mangaorei Road Intersection.
- Investigation, design and construction of the Waitotara North Curve Improvements.
- Construction of the Whareroa Road South passing lane.
- Replacement of the Wiremu Road bridges 107, 109, 121 and 122.
- Investigation into improvements in the Awakino Gorge area.
- Design of the curve realignment at Muggeridge South.

Other projects included in the Programme were: a joint transportation study between the New Plymouth District Council and Transit New Zealand; a SH3 Passing Lane study; a SH3/44/45 New Plymouth City Corridor Management Plan; Stage 1 of New Plymouth District Council's Cycle Strategy; a SH3 Awakino Gorge Strategic Study; and a Regional Funding (local roading) investigation project.

Maintenance allocations for the region increased by \$3.17 million on the previous year, bringing the total for 2005/06 to \$27.21 million.

Regional Funding allocations

The 2005/2006 year was the second 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 2004/05 to be \$48.4 million over the 10 year period it was to be available (this figure was altered to \$52.9 million in 2005/06). However these two estimates have since decreased due to the rise in petrol prices, subsequent trend towards purchasing of smaller vehicles and hence less income derived from the excise duty and road user charges. The only project completed under this Regional Funding category during 2005/06 was a 'Local Roads Feasibility Study' which aimed to produce pre-feasibility reports for five local roading projects.

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 2005/06 was 28 October 2005.

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

- A regional 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 30 September 2005 to consider proposals for Regional Funding.
- A draft Regional Funding priority list was then taken to the 20 October 2005 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 28 October 2005.

Taranaki's Regional Funding priority list included the following statements:

- The Taranaki Regional Council endorsed the construction of the Rugby Road underpass realignment – ranked Number 1 priority on Taranaki's Regional Funding list.
- The Council endorsed the design and construction of the Normanby Overbridge and realignment – ranked Number 2 priority.
- The Council requested the National Funding of an Awakino Gorge Strategic Study to further investigate a package of projects within the Awakino Gorge area which could be funded through Regional Funding.

- The Council endorsed the construction of the Awakino North Realignment and Awakino Tunnel Widening projects, with the assistance of Regional Funding.
- The Council endorsed the progression of several passing lanes between New Plymouth and Otorohanga.

Bell Block Bypass funding update

Further to the identification of the Bell Block Bypass project commencing construction in the 2005/06 financial year, in October 2005 Transit New Zealand made an application to Land Transport NZ for project funding approval. Land Transport NZ subsequently deferred the application noting that increased costs had reduced the benefit cost ratio and referred the project back to Transit New Zealand for further work.

Following Land Transport NZ's announcement to defer funding for the Bell Block Bypass project, the Taranaki Regional Council called a public meeting to discuss the details of the project and recent developments. The meeting was to provide an opportunity for the public to express their views on the proposal and was held on 18 January 2006. It attracted over 300 people.

Those at the meeting expressed their overwhelming support for the Bypass proposal and presented their views on the seriousness of the current situation. They also called for action to address the problems but rejected suggestions of a roundabout as a long-term option to replace the Bypass.

The Taranaki Regional Council subsequently arranged a closed meeting between the Chief Executives of Land Transport NZ, Transit NZ, New Plymouth MP Harry Duynhoven and key representatives of the local government, industry, business and transport sectors. This meeting (which took place on 25 January 2006) impressed upon Land Transport NZ and Transit NZ, the urgency and seriousness of the situation. It also emphasised the contribution of Taranaki to the national economy and the strategic importance of the state highway network to the region.

Draft Transit New Zealand's draft 10-year State Highway Forecast for 2006/07

In tandem with the National Land Transport Programme and Regional funding processes, a draft *10-year State Highways Forecast for 2006/07 – 2015/16* was released by Transit New Zealand for comment on 30 January 2006. Comments on this document were requested by 24 March 2006.

A Regional Technical Officers Group meeting was therefore convened in early March 2006 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:

- Disappointment was expressed over the lack of funding for any large projects in the Taranaki region prior to 2009/10.
- The strategic importance of the Bell Block Bypass to both the New Plymouth District, Taranaki region and the national economy was noted.
- Support was provided for the regional issues outlined in the draft Forecast with several minor wording changes suggested.

- A request was made for the Bell Block Bypass project to be recognised as the Number One priority for the Taranaki region under Transit NZ's ranking for each large activity.
- Support for and agreement of Transit NZ's ranking for each small and medium sized activity identified for the Taranaki region was provided.
- Agreement of the five passing lanes identified in the draft Forecast of importance to the Taranaki region was provided, along with a request for four additional passing lanes to be included (i.e. the Wharekauri Road, Haehanga, Otaraoa Road and Meads Hill passing lanes).
- Several additional strategic studies were requested, including a: passing lane study for the area between Hawera and Waitotara, passing lane study for the area between Te Kuiti and New Plymouth, joint New Plymouth Transportation/Strategic study between the New Plymouth District Council and Transit NZ, and an Awakino Gorge Investigation study.
- Support was noted for the inclusion of two walking and cycling activities in the draft Forecast.

With regard to the Bell Block Bypass project, the Council strongly recommended to Transit NZ that this project be recognised as the Number One priority project for the Taranaki region. It was also recommended that the Bell Block Bypass be recognised as a project of national importance, with National Funding the appropriate funding source. However the Council acknowledged that, should it be impossible for National Funds to be made available within a short term timeframe, then the Council would be prepared to discuss with both Transit NZ and Land Transport NZ the possibility of applying Regional Funds to the Bell Block Bypass project.

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 the 12 April 2006. A total of 662 submissions were received on the draft Forecast, with 86 of these submissions coming from Taranaki (the second highest amount of submissions received behind Waikato).

In June 2006, the Council received Transit NZ's final *10-year State Highway Forecast for 2006/07-2015/16* which confirmed information provided in the final NLTP for 2006/2007.

Further to ongoing dialogue between the Taranaki Regional Council, Transit NZ and Land Transport NZ on this matter, the finalised *10-year State Highway Forecast for 2006/07 – 2015/16* identified the Bell Block Bypass project as funded in part by Regional and in part by National Funding. Work is to proceed into 2006/07 to determine what is meant by the term 'part Regional Funding'.



Transit New Zealand's 10-year State Highways Forecast

2006/2007 National Land Transport Programme

In late June 2006, the Council also received final notification from Land Transport New Zealand on the *2006/2007 National Land Transport Programme* and regionally distributed funds. A number of projects in the final *2006/2007 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, Tangahoe Bridge Widening, Waitotara North Curve Improvement, Whareroa Road South Passing Lane and New Plymouth walking/cycling route projects. Several Awakino projects were also identified as receiving Taranaki's Regional Funds in 2006/07, including the: Awakino North Realignment, Awakino Tunnel Widening and Awakino Tunnel Northbound Passing Lane projects.

The process for deciding on Regional Funding allocations, as well as co-ordination with the preparation of the *National Land Transport Programme* and Transit NZ's *10-year State Highway Forecast*, has not proved to be satisfactory from the Council's point of view. The Council's concerns have therefore been passed on to Land Transport NZ.

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 once during the year to discuss highway improvements, traffic safety issues, and highway promotion and publicity. The 21 March 2006 meeting focused on matters relating to Transit NZ's draft *10-year State Highway Forecast*, opportunities for projects to be covered by Regional Funds and matters relating to a number of special projects.

Priorities for the immediate future were 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. It was therefore agreed that the Working Party would prepare 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.

Minor safety works discussed at the March meeting included several signage projects, sections of guardrails being erected in the Awakino Gorge and a number of rehabilitation projects. It was also noted that a lot of preventative maintenance (i.e. slips) was being undertaken within the Awakino Gorge area.

Venture Taranaki provided an update on the proposed branding of State Highway 3 as the 'Sunset Highway'. The recommendation is now to move away from such a proposal to focus on promoting the two existing international touring routes currently located in

Taranaki i.e. the SH43 (Forgotten World Highway) and SH45 (Surf Highway 45) touring routes.

Members agreed that the Working Party should continue with a focus on further promotion and advocacy, and on identifying capital construction opportunities and smaller maintenance/safety projects. The value of further liaison with Transit NZ and Transfield Services was also recognised.

2.2.4 Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy

Work continued during the year on the preparation of a *Regional Walkways and Cycleways Strategy for Taranaki*. 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 project 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 will be to identify existing or new regional priority walkways, routes, tracks, cycleways etc. and identify options for linking these with significant facilities or amenities. The walkways and cycleways will be classified according to their purpose or use. A draft strategy will be prepared in 2006/07 for consultation with key stakeholders and the public.

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

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

The Taranaki Regional Council received no complaints relating to stock truck effluent discharges during the year. The only problems that occurred over the last year have been associated with the design of the Waverley site (mainly associated with health/safety issues for Truckies). Both Transit NZ and the South Taranaki District Council have worked through these issues to arrive at a suitable solution.

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 territorial authorities 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.

2.3.2 Registration of services

The Council received no new or variations to registrations for taxi services during 2005/06.

Two variations to existing registered bus services were received during 2005/06 (one from Okato Bus Lines and one from InterCity Coachlines). However, the service variation received from Okato Bus Lines for the new and revised urban bus services in New Plymouth did not commence operation until 1 July 2006. One bus service withdrawal was also received from Okato Bus Lines.

2.3.3 Total Mobility Scheme

Total Mobility taxi services were provided to people with disabilities in the targeted areas of the New Plymouth urban area, Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford and Hawera. The budget for Total Mobility services in these areas was set at \$408,106 for the year, funded in part from Land Transport New Zealand (40%) and in part from general rates (60%).



Taxi services operating in the Taranaki Region

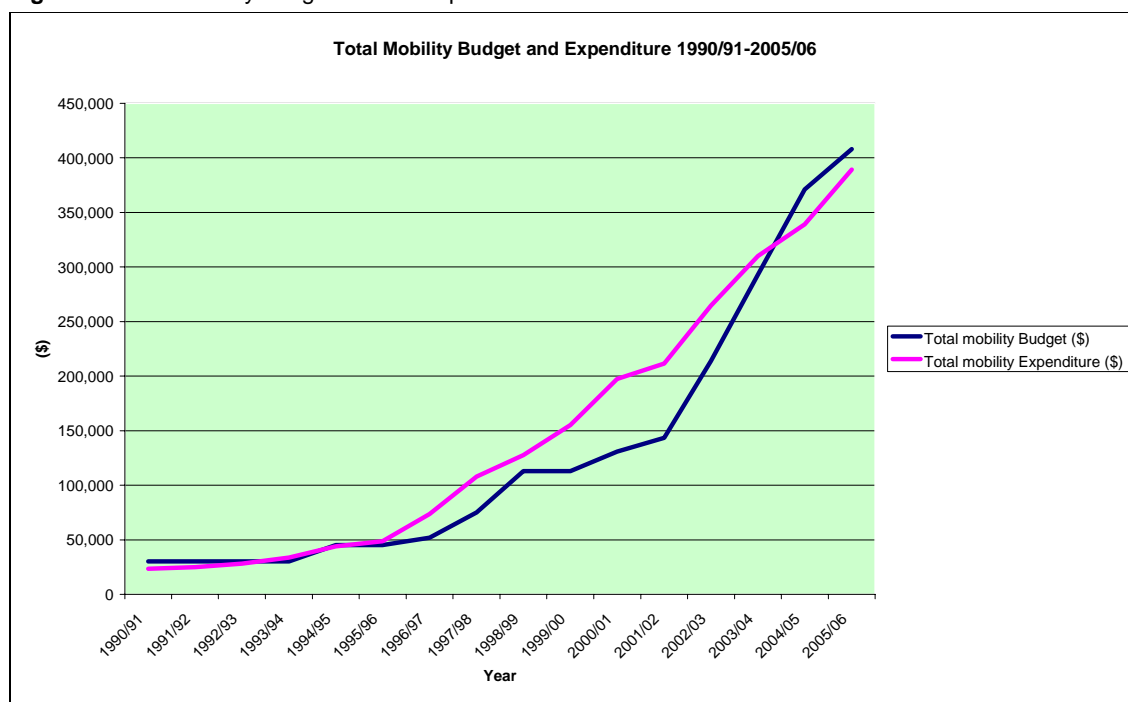
Continuing strong growth in demand for Total Mobility services was experienced during the year. Net expenditure for the year came in at \$389,316, a 15% increase over last year's expenditure of \$339,134, but below the budget for the year. Table 1 shows the budget for each area and the net expenditure per area for the 2005/2006 financial year.

Table 1 Total mobility budget and net expenditure per area for 2005/2006

Area	Budget (\$)	Expenditure (\$)
New Plymouth	365,068	313,942
Waitara	10,434	14,118
Stratford	13,039	14,580
Hawera	19,558	46,676
Total	408,109	389,316

Figure 1 shows the Total Mobility budget and expenditure trends over the last 15 years.

Figure 1 Total mobility budget and net expenditure trends between 1990/91 and 2005/06



In 2005/2006 a total of 94,097 Total Mobility passenger trips were undertaken, an increase of 1.3% 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 2005/2006 year the Total Mobility Scheme had a client base of approximately 1,800.

A total of seven taxi organisations participated in the Total Mobility Scheme. These were: New Plymouth Taxis Ltd, Energy City Cabs, Egmont City Cabs, Action Taxis, Southern Shuttle and Taxi Services, Stratford Taxis and Hawera Taxis Ltd. However at the end of 2005/2006 the Council was notified that Southern Shuttle and Taxi Services was no longer operating.

Total Mobility services are provided to 30 agencies affiliated to the Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA). These agencies are:

- Access Ability
- Amputee Group
- IHC Taranaki (Idea Services)
- Molly Ryan Trust

- Arthritis Foundation
- Paraplegic
- Parkinson Group – North Taranaki
- Asthma Organisation
- Blind Association
- Blind Cricket
- Cancer Society
- CCS North Taranaki
- CCS South & Central Taranaki
- Community Living
- DPA Individual
- Epilepsy Group
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Parkinson Group – South Taranaki
- Pathways Trust
- Post Polio Organisation
- RNZ Foundation/Blind – Nth Taranaki
- RNZ Foundation/Blind – Stratford
- RNZ Foundation/Blind – Hawera
- Stroke Foundation
- Tainui Village
- Taranaki Enterprise
- Taranaki Head Injury
- Te Toko O Maru Trust

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. Over the last couple of years the review process has proceeded through the following process:

1. In March 2005 the Ministry of Transport released a discussion document on the review and called for submissions.
2. The Taranaki Regional Council made a submission on the review and, while supporting the need for the Total Mobility Scheme, opposed any increases in costs to ratepayers, restating its view that these services should be funded by central government.
3. In August 2005 the Minister of Transport announced improvements to the Scheme to be introduced in two phases over the next 2 to 3 years.
4. Phase One improvements would see an increase in the financial assistance rate to regional councils from 40% to 50% provided councils agreed to 11 conditions to improve the Scheme.
5. Phase Two improvements would see an increase in the financial assistance rate to 60% subject to Council agreeing to a further 19 conditions.
6. In January 2006 Land Transport NZ distributed a draft Phase One Agreement for signing by councils.
7. During February and March 2006 Land Transport NZ held separate meetings with Councils to discuss the Agreement to Phase One, encouraging councils to sign the Agreement and to discuss Phase Two improvements.

The Council raised several concerns regarding the implications of signing Phase One and agreeing to the 11 conditions specified. The Council's primary concern is that the Scheme is a health, welfare or disability service that should be funded by central government from general taxation rather than from regional rates. The Council 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

The Council also provided funding for the delivery of a Concessionary Fare Scheme for children, tertiary students, people with disabilities (through an ACCESS ticket) and the elderly using urban bus services [Okato Bus Lines Ltd] in the urban area of New Plymouth. This is different to the 2004/2006 year where the Concession Fare Scheme only provided subsidised fares for people with disabilities and the elderly.

Funds for this service were received in part from Land Transport NZ (46.2%) and in part from general rates (53.8%).

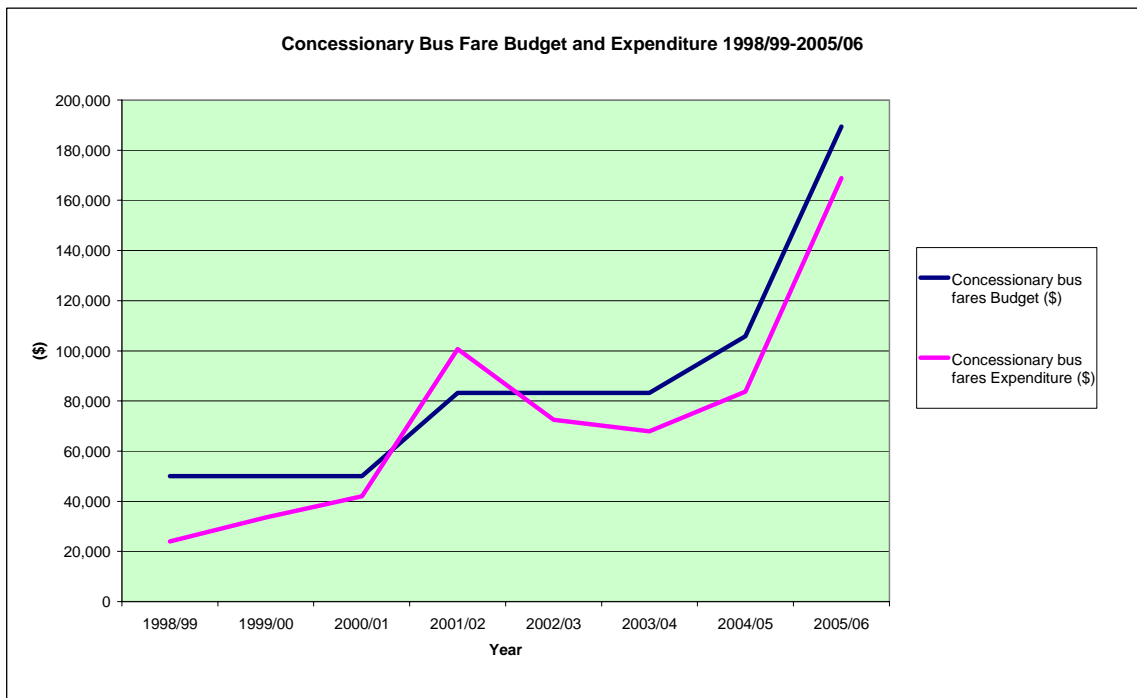
The Council contributed \$1.50 on the standard fare of \$2.70 for children, tertiary students, those under the "Access" scheme (i.e. for people with disabilities) and the elderly.

A total of 169,889 passenger trips were completed in 2005/2006 under the Concessionary Fare Scheme. Of these 116,032 trips were made by children, 7,687 by tertiary students, 26,883 trips by people with disabilities, and 26,030 by the elderly.

The budget for concessionary fares was \$189,400 for the year. Net expenditure for the year was \$168,901.

Figure 2 shows the Concession Fare budget and expenditure trends over the last 8 years. The increase in 2005/2006 expenditure reflects the enhanced Concession Fare Scheme introduced at the beginning of the year.

Figure 2 Concessionary Bus Fare budget and net expenditure trends between 1998/99 and 2005/06



2.3.5 Passenger transport review and implementation

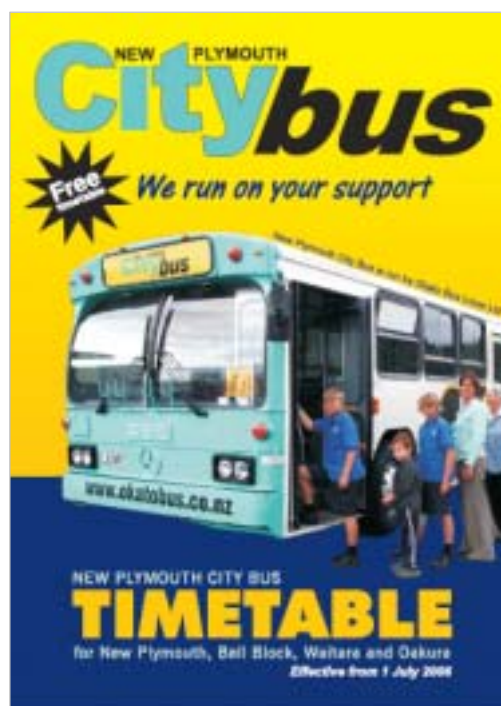
Public passenger transport services for New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura

An extensive review of passenger transport services in Taranaki has been undertaken over the last two or three years.

In addition to a report undertaken in 2004 by Booz Allen Hamilton Ltd (entitled 'Review of Passenger Transport in Taranaki'), a transport consultant Mr Brian Baxter was contracted in early 2005 to obtain more detailed information on the type of passenger services that could be provided in New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura; possible routes, fares, frequencies and operating characteristics for these services; and potential costs. Mr Baxter was also requested to provide the Council with more detailed information on passenger transport procurement procedures that would have to be met (including licensing and funding issues), as set by Land Transport New Zealand.

As a result of these investigations the Council agreed to:

- The addition of further routes or changes to routes on urban bus services in New Plymouth, Bell Block and Waitara.
- Increases in service frequency on all these routes.
- The continuation of the Oakura service.
- Changes in fare structure.
- Concessions fare for children, tertiary students, beneficiaries, people with disabilities and senior citizens.
- An investigation, in conjunction with the Western Institute of Technology Taranaki (WITT), of free travel for WITT students.
- An investigation, in conjunction with the Taranaki District Health Board, of making its bus service between Hawera and New Plymouth open to non-health passengers.
- The establishment of a community transport service in South Taranaki focusing on the needs of residents between Waverley-Patea-Hawera.
- The establishment of a once-a-week bus service between Opunake-New Plymouth and between Opunake-Hawera.



New timetable for the New Plymouth City Bus services

Mr Baxter also recommended that appropriate promotion and publicity be undertaken in conjunction with the introduction of any new services, that service improvements be trialled for a suitable period and that these be evaluated against appropriate guidelines adopted before the trials commence.

In conjunction with the development of a *Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki*, a *Regional Passenger Transport Plan* was produced (as Part II) and put out for public

comment in November 2005. A significant number of submissions received (52 in total) provided comments on the *Regional Passenger Transport Plan* component of the Strategy.

Further to the *Regional Passenger Transport Plan* being adopted by the Council in February 2006, the following work was undertaken to commence revised passenger transport services in New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura as of 1 July 2006:

- These services are to be known as the “New Plymouth City Bus” services.
- They are to be operated by Okato Bus Lines and financially assisted through a Concession Fare Scheme by the Taranaki Regional Council, Land Transport New Zealand and (for WITT students and staff) the Western Institute of Technology of Taranaki and its student association.
- A new timetable was prepared which outlines all the important information relating to: fares and conditions, routes and frequencies, a general New Plymouth city map and important contact details. Fifteen thousand timetables were printed and will be widely distributed to existing and potential users.



Map of the revised New Plymouth City Bus routes

- Four new mid-week routes are to operate within New Plymouth city, as well as return services connected New Plymouth with Bell Block/Waitara and Oakura. These services are to operate between 7am and 5.10pm during the week and on an increased frequency between 10am and 2pm. A limited Saturday service will also be available for New Plymouth West and East residents.
- The service changes will be undertaken for an eighteen month trial period.
- Posters were placed at various information points and organisations throughout New Plymouth. A4 information leaflets have also been distributed widely in conjunction with organisations newsletter mailouts etc. Radio and newspaper advertising have promoted the implementation of these new services in the lead up to the eighteen month trial commencing.
- The New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) assisted the commencement of revised services through the installation of bus shelters and stops, assisting with new road markings where necessary and by agreeing to the use of the Ariki Street Bus Station as the central terminus point for all urban services. Ongoing discussions will also occur with NPDC regarding the location of new bus shelters, the installation of new timetable holders and other appropriate traffic management issues.
- Further to services commencing operation on 1 July 2006, an ongoing promotion and publicity campaign will be undertaken to continue encouraging people to use the buses as an appropriate 'Cheap, Quick and Convenient' alternative form of transport.

Further discussions with the Taranaki District Health Board have verified that it is not possible to open its bus service between Hawera and New Plymouth to non-health passengers.

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. These discussions are continuing.

3. Conclusion

Performance measures detailed in the Council's *2005/2006 Annual 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* and implementation of the regional component of the Strategy.
2. The Council completed an annual report on the implementation of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki*.
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 provided funding for the delivery of an enhanced concessionary fare scheme for children, tertiary students, people with disabilities and the elderly using urban bus services in the urban area of New Plymouth.
5. The Council made preparations for the introduction of improved passenger transport services in New Plymouth on a trial basis, to commence operating on 1 July 2006.
6. The Council continued its review of passenger transport services for the South Taranaki District.

Community outcomes

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