

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Councillors
FROM: Gary Clark, Transportation Manager
DATE: 10 September 2009
SUBJECT: **TRANSPORTATION REPORT**

1 ROAD MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

All the maintenance contracts are performing well with the amount of grit and CMA now reducing significantly with the warmer weather. There have been some slips and trees down on the road network over the last month during weather events. These have mostly been cleaned up with some exceptions.

There is large drop out on the Kaiteriteri Road north of Turners Bluff which will require some remedial works to control the road edge. Investigations are currently under way to stabilise the road and we are seeking funds from NZ Transport Agency to assist in repair works. Some of the work in this area will require major funds to remedy the fragile nature of this route. I also note that there are similar issues for the route from Kaiteriteri to Marahau. It is possible, at this stage, that we may have to put in temporary one lane sections along this road to address road stability and ensure we provide a safe route for the coming summer season. This will lead to delays and inconvenience to all road users.

The road around Turners Bluff has also experienced some minor movement as a result of the wet weather. I will report on this item separately in my report.

The pavement rehabilitation works have recently gone out to tender and I will report back on these once the successful tender has been confirmed. I note that we have written both the pavement rehabilitation contract and the resealing contract (to go out soon for tender) with an element of flexibility to allow Engineering Services to change or modify the intended programme if required. These contracts are for a two-year period.

2 NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME – (NLTP)

The NZ Transport Agency recently released the final NLTP for the country with no major surprises for Tasman District Council. The main focus within the NLTP was to promote economic growth, improve freight routes and provide better travel reliability for the road network. This focus will see significant funds being distributed to the north and mostly north of Hamilton. Any funding of capital works in the Tasman area will require us to meet the parameters above, which in most cases will be difficult.

The NLTP also proposes what is in effect a sinking lid policy on funding maintenance works by capping escalation. In Year 1 escalation is set at 3% and for Years 2 and 3 no escalation will be allowed for except under exceptional circumstances. This will in effect reduce our maintenance allocation over time.

One area where there is a fair bit of uncertainty is the Community Projects which falls under the Road Safety Coordinator's portfolio. The funding across the country has been significantly cut with some council's having their funding reduced by up to 70%. We have gone through our budgets and are still able to fund staff and most of the projects we have planned for this year. There will be a slight reduction in the number of projects and accordingly we will be concentrating on activities that provide the greatest impact. It is likely that our Travel Planner will be carrying out more work for Tasman District Council as Nelson are expected to trim their funding for Sarah slightly. We are able to manage this within our budgets. I see this as a benefit as there a number of new tasks that Council are taking which include organising a car pool web site and an accessibility forum and we will have Sarah working for Tasman for more time over the week.

This will provide some challenges in how we will maintain our road network over the next three years. This of course is complicated by the fact that our budgets were trimmed as part of the Ten Year Plan process and the reduced tender prices received for the Tasman and Waimea contracts. I will report to Council about the impacts of these changes over the next year in order to keep you informed of the issues.

The funding for cycle and walking projects has been moved into Category 2. This means that before any funds are released for these projects they will need to be justified and probably ranked against other projects throughout the country. With the emphasis on economic growth and reducing vehicle movements it is likely that these funds will migrate north like other funds distributed by the NZ Transport Agency.

I also note that fortunately we have been able to secure funding from NZ Transport Agency for the Ruby Bay Bypass cycle/walk connections. These were not to be funded as part of the funding cuts to this work activity. Significant lobbying by staff and Councillors has managed to get this project funded at 100% by the NZ Transport Agency which will allow us to release some local share funds to other cycle projects.

The funding available for Public Transport was also reduced which will have a significant impact on the planned improvements to be carried out as part of the Ten Year Plan. With this funding cut, Nelson will not be carrying out the improvements planned in their Ten Year Plan and therefore the funding of \$60,000 for Year 1 and \$120,000 for the following two years is unlikely to be required. Again our local share will allow us to improve some of the bus infrastructure such as providing seats and shelters at key bus stops. I would also like to use some of these funds towards providing the cycle/walk facilities allowed for in the Ten Year Plan. I will report more fully on the possible use of these funds being diverted to other projects when more details are available.

In summary the NLTP will provide the Transportation team some major challenges on how we maintain and improve our road network. It is likely to lead to less maintenance of our roads and this may affect the level of service provided to our road users.

3 NZTA SUPPLEMENTARY CLAIM

We have lodged a supplementary claim with NZTA for additional works associated with the cold winter and other extra tasks completed over the last financial year. A figure of \$313,021.20 was sought from NZTA to cover these additional costs. This excludes the local share component. The local share was already accounted for in the 2008/09 accounts.

This claim has been approved by NZTA however the \$313,021.20 has been taken from our funding over the next three year allocations. This may have a significant impact on meeting our level of services over this time period if, for example, we continue to experience cold winters. NZTA have recommended we place monthly reviews over all expenditure to ensure that we can address this issue over time.

4 WORK PROGRAMMES

We are finalising the work programmes for this financial year. It has been a major exercise as I have wanted to put in a ranking matrix to ensure the projects are prioritised in order of importance against particular criteria. These criteria included traffic volume, safety, community feedback and other elements depending on the work activity area. In order to ensure even work loads over the year we have identified some work that is ready to be progressed to enable them to be completed over the upcoming construction season. I will also provide a more complete list of the projects across the various work areas for the Councillors and forms part of my report on the Works Programme. These programmes are draft, however I would like approval for at least the minor works programme so we can start tendering some of this work.

5 RIWAKA-KAITERITERI ROAD

We have been carrying out some investigations on the Riwaka-Kaiteriteri Road to better understand the issues relating to Turners Bluff. MWH have prepared a geotechnical report on this section of road for us to be informed of the stability. The geotechnical report has confirmed my concerns with regard to the section of road. There are some significant risks in the stability of certain parts of Turners Bluff which will require careful management and ultimately major works to ensure this route remains open. I have had discussions with the Turners to find a solution to the issues and will report back to Committee at the next meeting about the options available to remedy the situation. I have attached the geotechnical report for the committee's information.

6 SAFER JOURNEYS

The Ministry of Transport has issued its discussion document on providing safety to the community. The road safety strategy designed to take us through to 2020 is titled "Safer Journeys". The strategy looks at some 60 initiatives to reduce fatalities and injuries on New Zealand roads aimed at engineering, enforcement and education to achieve the set targets. Such initiatives include increasing the driver age, lowering the blood alcohol limit, improving motorcycle safety and speed limits around schools. I have included a copy of Safer Journeys for the committee member information. If any of the committee have a particular initiatives they would like to be included in our submission please discuss with me. Submissions on this document close on 2 October 2009 and we will be making a submission on behalf of Council and the Regional Transport Committee.

7 RIVERS

The rivers contract is progressing well with work managing crack willow started. There have been some minor issues with the recording of information on Confirm which is still to be resolved. This is expected to occur shortly.

We are proposing to review the legal status of the various drains, streams, and rivers which will ultimately lead to the consideration of the current river rating system. This

project will take some time to complete as the issues relating to the river rating system are complex and need to be carefully investigated. The final conclusion may result in a new proposed river rating system that fairly matches the work done on rivers with the stakeholders who pay the rates.

We will be carrying out some gravel relocation works in the Wai-iti River by the Pigeon Valley Bridge. We have had a request to clear some of the gravel from underneath the bridge. As part of the inspections the rock protection around the bridge abutments required some attention. The rivers contractor will be carrying remedial work to the bridge rock protection. Gravel will be removed and used by Parks & Reserves to assist in building a BMX track in Wakefield. All the works will be carried out on the banks of the river with no work being undertaken within the river channel. This works can be carried out under existing resource consents.

8 SALISBURY BRIDGE

At the previous Engineering Services Committee meeting a question was asked about the ongoing maintenance of the Salisbury Bridge after completion of the renovation works. There are on going costs of around \$4,000 per year for annual inspections and annual maintenance to the deck, cables and tower structures. Every five years there would be a load test to allow the setting of limits for the use of the bridge. There are some one-off special works possibly required from year 10 which include replace the main cables and other associated cables and hangers. The cost for this work is estimated at around \$50,000. The wooden towers themselves are expected to last at least 30 years and probably longer under the proposed maintenance regime. Some of the current problems experienced with the bridge structure are the result of poor maintenance or lack of maintenance over many years.

9 TAKAKA AERODROME

Council staff have received a request to carry out improvements to the existing cross wind runway at Takaka Airport. The management committee for the aerodrome have sought quotes to carry out the work and seek Engineering Services approval for this work to be undertaken. Two quotes have been received. The funding of the improvements will come from the Takaka aerodrome account.

We have reviewed the quotes and considered that there is a need to ensure any work that is carried out on the runway meets the appropriate standards for the construction of such a facility. We consider it appropriate to gain expert advice to the requirements of the standard of the sub-base and wearing course material. This information will be passed on to the interested parties to confirm their quotes before any work is carried out. The reason for this approach relates to the health and safety issues of providing a safe facility that is designed for its intended use.

10 ROAD SAFETY COORDINATORS REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2009

10.1 Motorcycle training courses

Two further training and skills courses were held at the start of August. Both these courses had maximum numbers and positive feedback was received from both the intermediate and advanced course. Two more college courses were held for scooter/motorbike riders.

There will be more courses held in October/November with additional promotion of these at the motorbike show being held at Founders Park on 13 September.

10.2 Carpooling

Surveys were given out during Ecofest and have been available on-line. Findings from these will be fed to Council's new web master. It is intended the carpooling initiative will be web-based, simple and easy to use and promoted throughout the district.

10.3 Ecofest

A joint Tasman District Council, NCC and Bicycle Nelson Bays active transport stall at Ecofest promoted walking and cycling. Despite the wet weather there were good numbers and lots of interest.

10.4 Billboards

Council is working with the NZ Transport Agency to develop billboards to highlight the 20km/hr past a stationary school bus and also working with Ngatimoti School and the students to design billboards to remind drivers they are entering a rural community.

10.5 School Travel Plans

The senior students at Wakefield School have received level two cycle training which aims to develop their road skills and encourage more to regularly cycle to school. Twenty children recently received certificates for walking on a regular basis to school. Two parents have voluntarily taken on the role as coordinators of the Walking School buses and have been set up with a database of information and some resources to help them progress.

The second working party meeting at Brightwater School was held in early August and a draft action plan has been drawn up.

The survey of children/parents at St Paul's has been completed and shows that their issues are similar to those at Salisbury School but do differ considerably from Waimea Intermediate.

11 RECOMMENDATION

THAT Committee receives this report.

Gary Clark
Transportation Manager