

West's transport future mapped out

By AROHA FLEMING

More lanes on the north-western motorway and more motorways are all part of Transit New Zealand's plans to get west Aucklanders moving.

Transit launched its Auckland state highway strategy on Tuesday, mapping out the future for the region's state highways.

Auckland regional manager Wayne McDonald says improvements are needed to relieve congestion estimated to cost the region more than \$750 million a year.

"We are fully committed to implementing this strategy with most of the specific projects outlined coming within a 10-year timeframe, subject of course to our success in securing the necessary funding," says Mr McDonald.

He says the western ring route is the highest priority for a new route.

This involves completing the SH20 corridor, including the Avondale extension, to connect the southern and northwestern motorways, upgrading the northwestern and creating the new Upper Harbour motorway — SH18.

The route will provide an alternative to State Highway One.

"Motorists will be able to effectively move from one area of the city to another more safely and efficiently, so Transit is moving to deliver this as soon as it possibly can," Mr McDonald says.

The new SH18 through Hobsonville to Greenhithe will cost \$140 million and be completed by 2004.

The Avondale extension is estimated to cost \$72m and will be complete by 2009.

Transit is still investigating options for the Avondale extension connection from Richardson Rd to the northwestern motorway.

Plans for upgrading the northwestern motorway include widening the section between Great North and Te Atatu Rds to eight lanes and creating six lanes between Te Atatu and Hobsonville Rds.

Widening the lanes will take place between 2004 and 2009 at an estimated cost of \$38m.

Among Transit's plans that will affect the west are an extension of the northwest-



RELIEF IN SIGHT: Transit hopes its regional highway strategy will free motorists from the daily crawl along the northwestern motorway.

ern motorway to Brigham Creek Rd by 2004.

That will be extended further north toward Kumeu by 2009 at a total cost of \$40m.

There are also proposals to provide bus shoulder lanes alongside roads including SH18, the Avondale extension of the southwestern motorway, and a westbound lane from Gt North Rd to Rosebank Rd.

The existing eastbound bus shoulder lane from Patiki Rd to Rosebank Rd will also be extended.

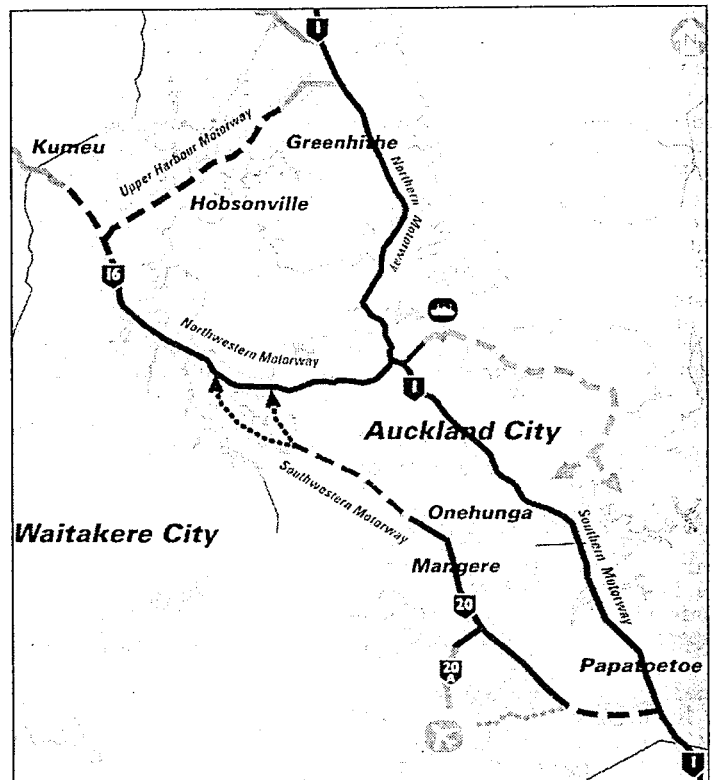
At spaghetti junction, there'll be a new link between the northwestern and northern motorways and the link from the southern to the northwestern will be widened.

Transit is also planning more than \$4.5m of safety improvements on the northwestern motorway.

Mr McDonald says the strategy is in line with the Auckland Regional Council's regional land transport strategy.

Implementing the strategy across the whole region will cost \$1 billion over the next ten years.

"Where projects do not meet Transfund's criteria, we'll be seeking funding from Infrastructure Auckland," Mr McDonald says.



ROADING FUTURE: This is how the Auckland's roading network will look in 10 years. The dotted lines represent options for the Avondale extension of SH20.

Waitakere City councillor and regional passenger transport subcommittee member Carolynne Stone says the plan contains nothing new for the west, but it's good to see dollar amounts placed on the projects. "It gives the community some reality of what infrastructure is costing."

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