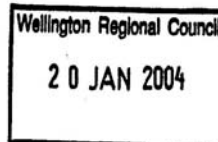


File: RLT1/24/1

14 January 2004

Anne Redgrave
Transport Administrator
Horizons Regional Council
Private Bag 1125
PALMERSTON NORTH



Dr D Watson
Manager of Transport
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
WELLINGTON

FILE REF:	
TP/01/04/05	
Doc. No. 190371	
Referred to	Date/tp
D. Watson	20/1/04
J. Howarth	14/2/04
L. McConnell	15/2/04
TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL	
EXECUTIVE	
SUITE BAG 713	
47 CLOVEN ROAD	
STRAITFORD	
NEW ZEALAND	
PHONE: 06-765 7127	
FAX: 06-765 5097	
www.trc.govt.nz	
Please quote our file number on all correspondence	

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed touring route – Sunset Highway

This Council established the State Highway 3 Working Party in August 2002, on the recommendation of the Taranaki Regional Land Transport Committee. The purpose of the Working Party is to address issues relating to that part of the highway between New Plymouth and Te Kuiti and comprises representatives from:

- Environment Waikato
- New Plymouth District Council
- Waitomo District Council
- Transit New Zealand, Hamilton
- Transit New Zealand, Wanganui
- Transfield Services
- Taranaki Regional Council

Late last year the Working Party received a presentation from a representative of Destination Taranaki, which is the regional tourism organisation. The presentation outlined a proposal being formulated in consultation with adjoining regional tourism organisations, which envisaged the establishment of a touring route named Sunset Highway, running from Ngaruawahia through Taranaki to Wellington. The route follows SH39 between Ngaruawahia and Otorohanga where it joins SH3 and through Te Kuiti to New Plymouth, Wanganui, Sanson and ending in Wellington. The Working Party's support for the proposal was conveyed to the Waikato and Taranaki Regional Land Transport Committees. Both of these committees have recommended support of the proposal to their respective councils, which in turn has been adopted.

Attached to this letter is a copy of a letter from Environment Waikato conveying their support of the proposal and an abridged version of the proposal prepared by Destination Taranaki for submission to Transit New Zealand.

2

Taranaki Regional Council requests consideration of this proposal by your Regional Land Transport Committee and recommends that it be supported as it will strengthen the already strong touring links that exist between Waikato, Taranaki, Manawatu/Wanganui and Wellington regions. It will also function as an alternative tourism route on the western side of the North Island.

Yours faithfully
B G Chamberlain
Chief Executive



per: D G Knowles
Director – Operations

cc: Errol Christiansen, Transit New Zealand, PO Box 345, Wanganui
Irena Brooks, Destination Taranaki, PO Box 290, New Plymouth



SUNSET HIGHWAY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The *Sunset Highway* is a touring route concept that links Waikato, Taranaki, Wanganui, Manawatu, Kapiti, Porirua and Wellington in New Zealand's North Island. The proposed route would start at Ngaruawahia, where State Highway 1 intersects with State Highway 39. The route would continue down SH39 to Otorohanga, down SH3 to Sanson and then down SH1 to Wellington. Obviously, the route can also start from Wellington and travel to Ngaruawahia in the reverse order. The route would have a total distance of 609 kilometres.

The proposed route features lush pasturelands, rugged coastline, mountain vistas and native bush, plus a glimpse of heartland New Zealand. Otorohanga already is well-known for its Kiwi House and emerging Kiwiana theme. Waitomo Caves is an iconic New Zealand attraction, as is Mount Taranaki, its pinnacle perfection often featured in national advertising. The Waimarie riverboat at Wanganui is another slice of New Zealand history, as is the rugby museum at Palmerston North and of course, our capital city features Te Papa and the Beehive.

There is a real opportunity to market the Sunset Highway as an alternative to the traditional tourist route down the centre of the North Island. From Auckland to Wellington via the Sunset Highway route is actually only 58 kilometres further than the main route down State Highway 1. This would help to distribute the benefits of tourism more widely as New Zealand prepares to welcome 2.7 million tourists p.a. by 2007. And to get those tourists to regions that have traditionally underperformed in the past.

With the recent announcement (July 2003) that Taranaki and Wellington will each be included in Tourism New Zealand's "Cultural Tourism" initiative, the Sunset Highway could also be the basis of a cultural touring route.