

## A smoother path for roading

**There are some strong opportunities to make savings on council roading operations in the Waikato.**

While these are attractive in their own right, the opportunities we've identified come as the Government – through the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) – is pushing for further efficiencies.

NZTA provides on average 50% of the costs of managing and maintaining the region's road network.

The agency is currently reviewing the way its cost share is allocated.

Roads in the Waikato, and their management and maintenance, make up around 11% of the national network and more than 11% of the national funds applied to operations and maintenance areas. Over the 2009-12 Long Term Plan period some \$340 million was spent on operations and maintenance, including state highways, in the Waikato.

A national study last year through the Road Efficiency Task Force speculated that between 2% and 20% could be saved nationally in the road operations and maintenance areas.

For the Waikato, including state highways, that would amount to between \$8 million to \$70 million over three years. For council roads the indicative saving is \$2 million to \$30 million over three years.

A stock take of roading in the Waikato indicates:

- Different road type definitions (arterials/collectors/local) across all councils
- Different standards across all councils (pavement width, traffic control systems)
- Different levels of response to problems in each council
- Different ways of collecting management data and different types of data.

Objectives for the Waikato Mayoral Forum roading working party are:

- Local accountability to continue
- Unify road policies and standards as much as possible
- Deliver agreed levels of service, with consistency being a goal
- Establish optimal contract format, size and management
- Utilise existing resources, and provide resilience to specialist staff
- Sustainability of the service for the future
- Achieve efficiencies.

The immediate next steps are to work on a regional approach to agreed standards, levels of service, categorization of road type across the region, and contract optimization.

**For more information, contact Don McLeod, roading working party CEO, on 07 884 0600 or [don.mcleod@mpdc.govt.nz](mailto:don.mcleod@mpdc.govt.nz).**

