APPENDIX 1:

THE BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH THE NEW STRATEGY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED

APPENDIX 1:

The Strategic and Operating Context

The Northland Regional Land Transport Strategy of 2006 identifies the following as its strategic vision, objectives, key regional issues and key roading issues viz.

Vision – Northland has an integrated, responsive, safe and sustainable land transport system.

Overall Objectives

- Assist economic development
- Assist safety and personal security
- Improve access and mobility
- Protect and promote public health
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Integrate land use and transport planning
- Ensure an affordable and financially sustainable transport network.

Key Northland Regional Issues

- A low and geographically dispersed population base and therefore a high private vehicle dependency for inter and intra regional trips (although public transport usage has increased in Whangarei)
- Some economically deprived rural communities (particularly in the Far North)
- Strong rural based and manufacturing economy comprising pastoral farming, forestry, fishing and tourism.
- Diverse socio-economic patterns – high growth in the south (as a result of Auckland's growth) with the North relatively remote and sparsely settled. The East Coast has a high recreational use and coastal subdivision while the West Coast has fewer settlements and slower, even negative, population growth.
- Northland is a favourable and preferred holiday destination particularly on East Coast settlements with its consequent impacts on traffic congestion and safety at weekends and holiday periods.

Key Transport Issues

- Road design, maintenance and investment in infrastructure. High proportion – relative to other regions – of unsealed roads. Difficult geology for road construction. Availability and locality of suitable aggregate.
- Funding – Low population and socio-economic base means less funding is available to meet local authority share to be able to receive New Zealand Transport Agency funding. The region has a lot of catch up.
- Freight transportation – forestry, livestock, dairy products, fertiliser , metal and general freight mean that heavy vehicles cause frequent and severe pavement deterioration.
- Land use planning – need to integrate land use and transport planning.
- Rail Network – has locality and structural issues which needs development to facilitate an integrated transport system.
- Passenger transport services are generally lacking although undergoing some development.
- Travel Demand Management, in order to reduce private motor vehicle usage and promote alternative means of transport, is at an immature stage of development.
- Cycling and Walking – a safe cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is lacking and its development is likely to create demand.
- Road Safety – There is a strong need for a more streamlined approach to delivering road safety initiatives.
- Tourism – The increase in tourism has meant an increasing need for the development of roadside facilities.

Source: Northland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2006

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

"SWITCH ON 2 B SEEN"

During the last three years the Northland Regional strategic context has not changed a great deal.

The physical and socio-economic context has improved slightly with significantly enhanced dairy prices and favourable economic growth generating enhanced tourist seekers. The east coastal settlements continue to develop steadily while in the Bream Bay area of Whangarei has seen signifi cant subdivision development. Both the forestry manufacturing and marine industries around Whangarei have seen more focussed development. This continues to put pressure on the transport infrastructure.

The Key Transport Issues have also seen some evolution. The road design, maintenance and infrastructure and funding issues remain. However a significant investment of regional development funding from central government has meant that enhanced development of so called "forestry roads" within the local roading network is being achieved.

While this "one off" upgrade has been beneficial, the long term implication of elevated heavy traffic levels on these roads is still there. As well, the Northland Regional Council has undertaken to designate the rail route from Whangarei to Marsden Point and is seeking an undertaking to develop the track as a national priority.

Passenger transport services within the Whangarei urban area have been further enhanced, such that modal shift to public transport passenger transport is becoming meaningful. W alking and cycling strategies are being developed within the District Councils as increasing emphasis is put on attaining a multidimensional sustainable transportation system.

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

The Northland Road Safety Strategic Context

The Northland Regional Road Safety Plan 2004 – 2010 identifi ed the following as its strategic picture at that stage

Vision

"No r oad users killed or seriously injur ed on Northland roads."

Mission

The Mission was lifted from the Northland Regional Land Transport Strategy at that time as:

"A Land T ransport network that allows safe travel for all people in Northland"

With these safety policies as:

1. To assist with integrated initiatives across all relevant agencies aimed at improving driver attitudes, driver behaviour and the safety of identified at risk groups.
2. To improve the safety design aspects of the physical land transport network.
3. To develop systems which improve the reporting, recording and investigation of crashes.

Goals

1. To have fewer than a combined annual total of 160 road deaths and hospitalisations (of more than one day duration) as a result of crashes in Northland by 2010.
2. To further develop regional co-ordination of road safety resources, (engineering, enforcement, educational, community development) through RoadSafe Northland, and the development of collaboration initiatives that focus on priority road safety issues.

From these – Key Actions were Developed

1. All Road Controlling Authorities establish a Safety Management system.
2. RoadSafe Northland continues to develop and implement regional and local road safety community development projects and programmes. These will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders and communities.
3. All District Councils investigate problems and with the support of the Land Transport Safety Authority, the Police and others, prepare Road Safety Action Plans for priority crash factors and continue to plan, implement and evaluate specifi c projects and programmes for At Risk groups.

Current Progress

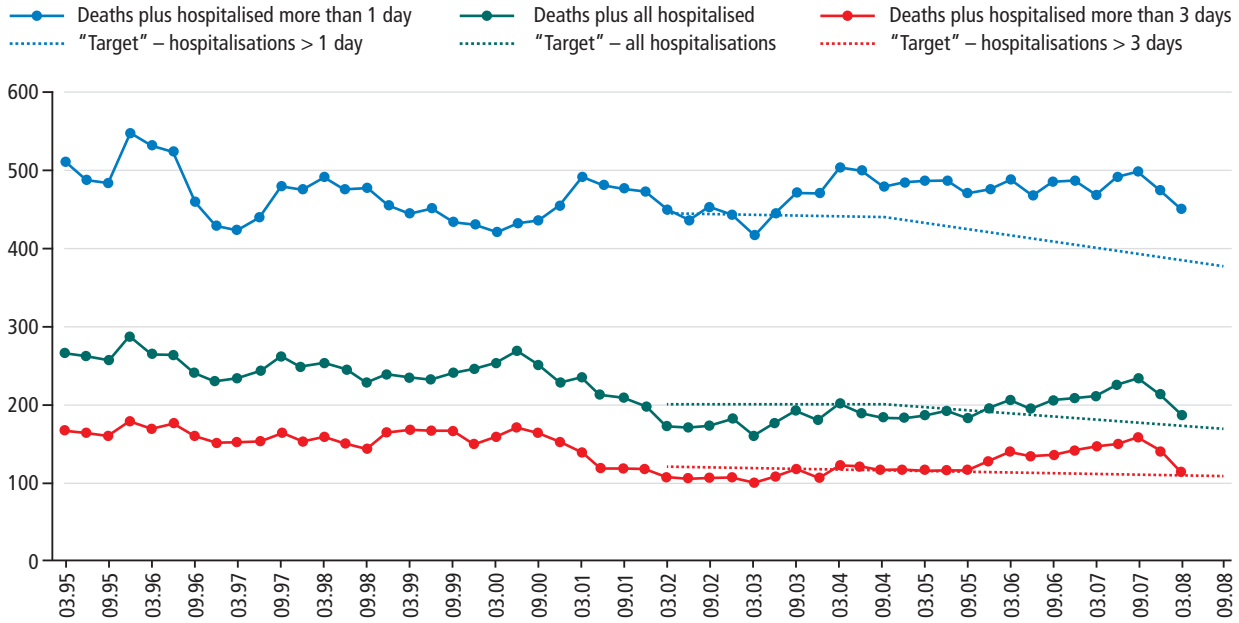
The most complete Crash Analysis data available is as at March 2008, indicates a slight tracking down in casualty rates for Northland. 338 in March 2008 as compared to 405 and 379 for March 2007 and March 2006 respectively.

The latest death fi gure until the end of December 2008 indicates only slight progress in the Northland performance as against the same time last year (29 vs. 30). This toll compares to a more signifi cant change for the Auckland region (20% reduction) and against the National Toll (366 vs. 421).

Total Deaths and Hospitalisations (greater than 1 day) as at March 2008 for Northland at 338 compares to the target set in 2003 of 160. Considerable variability exists between years and between quarters with the attached graph (1) illustrating that deaths plus serious casualties is tracking towards target but when all hospitalisations is accounted, there is some way to go to achieve target. The lag in identifying hospitalisations occurs because of the investigative requirements of this statistic.

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

Deaths plus hospitalisations (12 months total) resulting from road crashes in Northland



Overall though, Northland' s road toll remain reasonably consistent over recent times. While hospitalisations are tracking downwards.

The regional Mission identifies a policy "To develop systems which improve the reporting, recording and investigation of crashes". It is diffi cult to measure progress as there is no legal obligation to report non-injury crashes. However based on official CAS numbers and the best information available through the Health system indicates that there is still a signifi cant gap in numbers although it is not known what this means in terms of unaccounted social cost or dollars missed out on through the transport budget.

The question arises about the relative value of collecting additional evidence as it could involve private information which may add little to the ability to extract funds for roading improvements.

Key actions resulting from the current strategic plan specify that Road Controlling Authorities develop both Safety Management Systems and Road Safety Action Plans. These have been established but need to develop a dif ferent dynamic in order to be effective.

As well, specific projects and programmes for At Risk groups involving community stakeholders continue to be developed.

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

Overview of Trends and Issues

Analysis of data within the MOT publication "Motor V ehicle Crashes in New Zealand 2007" indicates a number of trends from a national perspective which will be set against the Northland trends from which conclusions will be drawn.

1. Injuries and Fatalities Nationally

The national ratio of injuries per 10,000 population is 37.9. This ratio hit a low point in Year 2000 of 28.6 but has generally been trending upwards over the last seven years although the injury rate is still lower than 14 years ago (46.4 in 1994).

The National road toll (fatalities) has been generally trending downwards from 1972 (2.79 per 10,000 population) to 1.0 per 10,000 in the 2007 year.

The injury crash rate has been generally tracking up since year 2000 although the highest crash rate per 10,000 population of 47.4 occurred in 1972.

Questions arise about the measurement of crash rates in earlier years but the general trend of fatalities trending down, injuries trending upwards and crash rates per unit of population trending upwards may have more to do with the relative safety of the vehicles on the road rather than the safety of the road itself relative to the driver behaviour of those using the roading network.

Within the categories of other road users over most recent years, for motorcyclists, the trending is consistent with cars – fatalities trending down and injuries trending up. Cyclists – injuries are trending up with fatalities relatively stable and Pedestrians, both killed and injured, is relatively stable.

2. Northland Trends in the National Context

Total casualties within the three Northland District Council areas in 2007 amounted to 797 or 51.7 per 10,000 population. This compares to 37.9 as the national average. Further analysis reveals significant variability between the Districts with Whangarei having 32, Far North 69 and Kaipara 79 casualties per 10,000 respectively. Both Far North, and Kaipara Districts have amongst the highest casualty rates per unit population in the country.

The issue with Kaipara's casualty rate is reinforced with the trending of total number of crashes over time. Most Districts in the country have a steady or slight trending upwards of total number of crashes over the past five years.

Most Districts show some year' s crash rate as being out of the ordinary but the overall trend is reasonably steady . Kaipara' s total crashes are on a strong upward trend from 57 in 2003 to 103 in 2007. This is a rate of 5.53 per 10,000 exceeded only by Southland at 5.98 per 10,000. The crash rate in Far North is also well above the average. It is reasonable to surmise that the crash rate in the two predominantly rural Districts in Northland has a relationship to the standard of the roads in those two Districts but that is not the only factor.

The specific issues relating to the road safety environment will be dealt with in a subsequent section. Data from the 2007 motor vehicle crashes report provide factors of interest:

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

Open Road Speeds

	2001	2007
Northland	96.3	95.0
W aikato	99.4	95.2
Bay of Plenty	96.7	91.5
Hawkes Bay	101.8	96.3
W ellington	98.7	93.2
National Average	**100.2**	**96.3**

This indicates that over this time, that open road speeds have reduced but that the speed on Northland roads has reduced less than the National average. This pattern is not so apparent with the urban road environment.

Restraint Wearing

Front Seat	2001	2003	2005	2007
Northland	88	90	93	100
W aikato	94	93	96	96
Bay of Plenty	94	93	93	94
Hawkes Bay	82	90	91	94
W ellington	94	91	96	95
Rear Seat				
Northland	72	87	94	71
W aikato	80	82	83	88
Bay of Plenty	53	70	85	76
Hawkes Bay	52	76	96	84
W ellington	71	82	84	87

The Northland figures indicate a high rate of restraint use. However, the Northland District Police Crash Review 2007 notes that notices issued for restraint offences have increased suggesting an increasingly complacent attitude to restraint use. Clearly the data is in conflict such that the Police report suggests that restraint use is a live issue on Northland roads.

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

Cycle Helmet Use

	2001	2003	2005	2007
Northland	85	69	91	77
W aikato	96	93	91	89
Bay of Plenty	93	87	87	93
Hawkes Bay	91	85	94	90
W ellington	96	91	93	88

Again the 2007 Northland fi gure could be an anomally , based on the trending from previous years but it could also indicate an evolving complacent attitude regarding road safety. There have been no specifi c road safety/cycle helmet programmes in recent years.

Overall this limited data suggests a road safety environment in Northland that is trending in the wrong direction compared to the National scene.

Road Safety Issues in Northland

New Zealand Transport Agency has prepared Road Safety Issues reports based on reported crash data and trends for 2003-2007 period. These reports give details of contributing causes and the main characteristics of a range of different category of crashes. These are summarised by Road Controlling Authority district:

Whangarei	Kaipara	Far North	State Highways
Bends	Crashes at Bends	Bends	Bends
Loss of Control *(straights)*	Loss of Control *(straights)*	Alcohol	Speed
Road Factors	Alcohol	Speed	Alcohol
Alcohol		Road Factors	Road Factors

While different factors impact dif ferently through the region, the issues which emerge from this analysis are:

"SLOW DA FLOW PASS YOUR KEYS TO A SOBER BRO"

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

Loss of Control on Bends

This relates to two factors – T oo fast for the conditions and engineering issues relating to specific bends. Further analysis indicates that Learner, Restricted, Disqualifi ed and Never - licensed drivers are over -represented as well as 15-19 year age group. Crashes on bends often means the driver runs off the road hitting a roadside hazard or another vehicle.

Speed

The New Zealand Transport Agency statistic indicates a much higher proportion than the national average, are under 29 and/or in the other than fully licenced category.

Alcohol

Compared to national statistics, a significantly higher proportion are male and a high number of disqualifi ed drivers of all ages – a recidivist drink driver problem.

Road Factors

Involve around 20% of the total crashes throughout the region and is identifi ed as predominantly a rural issue.

The NZT A reports provide a guideline to the broader issues indicating where they might be different in Northland than in other areas.

Police Commentary

A report by Inspector Clifford Paxton "Northland District Fatal Crash Review 2007" provides further insights based on crash evidence.

Key insights into the issues include

1. People play the most signifi cant role in Northland crashes as compared to vehicle and road factors.
2. Youth and/or young drivers are a particular issue as compared to the national scene i.e.

	Northland NZ	
0 – 14 Age	17.6%	4.6%
15 – 19 Age	17.6%	13.9%
20 – 24 Age	23.5%	18.5%

3. Alcohol and Drug dependency is responsible for 21% of casualty crashes – the highest percentage in New Zealand.
4. People will check the risk before modifying behaviour and increasing the perception of risk is a key policing tactic.

The Police model of deployment has been to focus on

- Policing the roads
- Deploying to risk through Risk Targeted Patrol Plans
- Seeking performance outcomes

Reduction in fatalities is claimed against the increased performance measures.

5. Socio-Economic factors such as low self esteem, low education, alcohol and drug dependency contribute to more risky behaviour and high casualty. The significantly higher incidence of Maori in motor vehicle crashes is identified.
6. An excessive speed including loss of control on bends (too fast for the conditions) is the principal issue in Northland with the perceived risk of being caught as the crucial determinant in the decision to speed.
7. Alcohol is a factor in 29% of all fatal and serious injury crashes with higher alcohol levels lowering the perception of risk. Compulsory breath testing is the best deterrent particularly at targeted times. High recidivists is an issue.

APPENDIX 1: *(continued)*

8. Restraints use has worrying contrasts with a recorded high level of restraint use but high number of offence notices and high casualty rate through lack of restraint use.
9. Intersections have a low crash risk in Northland compared to the National scene, with red light running being the biggest risk. The severity of crashes at uncontrolled intersections was lower because of increased care.
10. Pedestrians and Cyclists at 26% of all fatalities in 2007 was considerably higher than the previous year and the National average. The question is raised about road design needing to accommodate these users along with a 30 km per hour speed limit in certain built up areas and the need to promote higher cycle helmet wearing.
11. Fatigue was a reducing factor in 2007 in Northland although a major area nationally . High risk people are younger males and shift workers along with long hours working commercial drivers.
12. Motorcyclists are an emerging risk in Northland. Motorcyclists carry 18 times more risk than car drivers on the road. They are 2% of the vehicle fleet but they account for 17% of road related injury claims to ACC with emerging over 40 year old motorcyclists being a unique risk.
13. Roading factors by themselves are unlikely to be the principal cause of Northland road accidents. However the development of self explaining forgiving roads and the systematic removal of unnecessary roadside objects along with signage and audible edgeline has the potential to mitigate driver behaviour and poor judgement on certain sections of roads in Northland.
14. Vehicle factors are rarely the leading causative factor in road casualties but the question is raised about whether drivers in safer vehicles adopt unsafe driving practices in compensation.

The NZT A Road Safety Issues reports and Inspector Paxton's report provide some insight into national trends which Northland stands against. They form the basis for developing the strategic plan.

Emerging Legislative Issues

The recently enacted Land T ransport Management Amendment Act (2007) requires that Road Safety Strategies fi t within the Regional Land Transport Strategy signed off by Regional Transport Committees.

The recent change of Government has meant a change in emphasis on infrastructure development and the new Government Policy Statement on T ransport was imminent at the time of writing this Plan.

The Regional Road Safety Strategy needs to incorporate District Council Road Safety Strategies and Action Plans. These strategies and plans covering education, engineering and enforcement and road policies and/or community road safety plans need to be consolidated, formalised and implemented within the District Road Safety Action Plans.

As well, new proposals relating to young and novice drivers, speeding, give way and stop signs, seatbelt of fences and excessive noise are at various stages of enactment.



NORTHLAND REGIONAL **ROAD SAFETY PLAN** 2009 – 2012

RoadSafe Northland
Safer people Safer roads Saving lives

NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL