

9. ODIE PLACE PEDESTRIAN ACCESSWAY

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Corporate Plan Output: Safety Improvements 9.5.90	

The purpose of this report is for the Board to consider the closure of the pedestrian accessway from Odie Place to Pages Road. The Board has previously recommended that the accessway be closed but a final decision was deferred. As a result of the recent change in the delegations to Community Boards, the Board now has the authority to make the decision.

BACKGROUND

Mr Raymond Bearman of 12 Odie Place presented a petition with 16 signatures to the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board at its 29 January 2001 meeting on behalf of the residents of Odie Place, requesting that the pedestrian accessway adjacent to this property be closed. Mr Bearman expressed concern for the accessway being used by people to congregate in and to access properties in the area for committing burglaries. Graffiti has been a problem and the litter that is left in the accessway (especially after weekends) is a concern to the local residents.

The 'L' shaped accessway is approx 110 metres in length between Odie Place, a cul-de-sac and Pages Road, a major arterial road. The north western to south eastern section of the accessway divides the properties of 12 and 15 Odie Place with a sealed footpath. At its southern end the accessway opens out onto property under development in Woodham Road. Street lights are installed at either end of this section of the accessway. The east to west section of the accessway consists of a sealed footpath with a fence on its northern boundary with lighting provided from the street lights on Pages Road.

Te Amorangi Richmond is developing a Wellness Centre on the site adjacent to the southern end of the accessway. Discussions by the Property Unit with representatives from Te Amorangi Richmond on the matter of the existing accessway have suggested that, 'from a security perspective it would be advantageous to them if this accessway was closed'.

The existing fence line between the Council-owned land and the rear boundaries of two Odie Place residences is currently in the wrong position. This fence line is sited approx 1.5 to 2 metres within the Odie Place properties and needs to be addressed. The Property Unit suggests that, if the accessway is closed, it would undertake negotiations with adjoining owners with a view to leaving the existing fence line in its present position. A land swap would be undertaken with Mr Bearman who adjoins the accessway. However, if the accessway remained open, the Property Unit would consider a compensation payment for the area encroached upon by the Council.

To gauge the use of this facility a pedestrian count was carried out on Tuesday 13 March 2001 between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm, where 61 adults and students were observed to travel in either direction. The majority of those using this facility were either elderly pedestrians or students on cycles. It is noted that nearby Pages Road and Kerrs Road provide separate bus services from the City to Northshore, New Brighton and Southshore. Although there are no schools in the immediate area, students were seen to be using this accessway as an important link in their daily journey.

A survey was carried out of residents in Wildwood Avenue from Kerrs Road to Pannell Avenue, including the Council Housing Units at Lyn Christie Place. Of the 20 residents surveyed, nine used the accessway and 11 did not. Six agreed to the closure, nine disagreed to a closure, while five had no opinion.

The City Streets Unit does not support the closure of this accessway as it provides a public facility as part of the 'Living Space' theme of this area. It also provides a short cut facility for pedestrians and cyclists through this area.

The Aranui/Wainoni Community Constable has no reason to either support or reject the closure of the accessway. It does not create any specific problems to the New Zealand Police.

PUBLIC MEETING

The Community Board hosted a public meeting on Thursday 12 July 2001. Approximately 200 invitations were distributed to residents in the Odie Place area. Seven residents attended the meeting. Four other residents communicated their preference for the accessway to be closed prior to the meeting.

The residents raised concerns about the safety of the accessway and the impact on the Odie Place residents of vandalism and criminal behaviour arising there. The general view expressed was that the accessway is not used heavily because there are no longer shops or a bus stop at its end.

Mr Norm Dewes from Te Amorangi Richmond confirmed that the planned development of a Wellness Centre over the next two to three years would involve construction of buildings along the fence line with the accessway. The residents considered that the accessway would be unsafe if it was more enclosed and less visible from the road.

Mr Dewes has written a letter of support for the closure of the accessway to the Community Board.

The consensus of residents attending the meeting appeared to be that the accessway should be closed.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD

A recommendation was made to the then City Services Committee from the Board's meeting of 30 July 2001 that the accessway be closed and that road closure procedures begin as soon as possible. The Board was particularly concerned that, with the Wellness Centre development in place, the accessway will be an enclosed and less safe 'L' shaped alleyway.

The City Services Committee subsequently recommended to the Council that the status quo remain.

At the Council meeting on 27 September 2001 the then Board Chairperson made a deputation seeking the closure of the accessway. The Council decided that the matter be referred to a joint meeting of the City Services Committee and the Board for further consideration.

The joint meeting did not occur prior to the local body elections. Under the delegations made to the incoming Community Boards the closure of the accessway is now a matter for the Board to decide. The following recommendations reflect the Board's previous consideration of this issue.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Board agree that the accessway from Odie Place to Pages Road be closed and that road closure procedures begin as soon as possible.
 2. That the Property Unit consider the land issues concerning the two Odie Place properties.
 3. That Mr Bearman be informed of the Board's decision.

Chairperson's Recommendation: That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.