

11. WOOLSTON/BURWOOD EXPRESSWAY

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Jeanette Ward - Project Manager, DDI 371-1665
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The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the Woolston/Burwood Expressway. This includes the stage now in operation and the final stage yet to be built. Also the Board is being asked to support a planting plan for the area between the Expressway and two areas of a local reserve.

STAGE 1B

On Wednesday 19 September 2001 a large crowd gathered for the official opening of ANZAC Drive between New Brighton Road and Wainoni Road. Retiring Councillor David Close officially opened the project with a speech and then passed over the ribbon cutting to a local resident.

Although the new road has helped to reduce the amounts of heavy traffic travelling through adjacent residential areas there have been problems experienced by the local residents and non-motorised users of the ring road. These are discussed below along with the actions that are being taken. This information will be included in Volume 4 of the Woolston Burwood Expressway newsletter to be delivered to residents later this month.

Bridge Underpasses

The underpasses for cyclists and pedestrians were designed to provide a continuation of the riverside paths but also provide a people friendly space. To help achieve this the walls were kept as low as possible to maximise light entry and openness. The designers were aware that at very high tides, primarily spring tides of which four were expected each year, the river would breach the underpass walls. It appears that this problem is occurring more frequently than anticipated especially with the recent heavy rain.

Pumps are installed to clear small amounts of rainwater but these will not cope with total flooding of the underpasses. When flooding does occur larger pumps will be brought in to remove the contained water as soon as possible. A maintenance contractor monitors the tides and takes action as necessary. Gates, either side of both underpasses, will indicate to users that the path is closed and an alternative route suggested. These gates are to be installed shortly.

Graffiti on the underpass walls and the bridge generally is removed as soon as it appears. This system of close monitoring has kept the walls clear to date.

Many people living adjacent to the new road have expressed concern about the noise generated from the traffic and expected the new road to have an asphaltic surface (road carpet). A chip seal surface has initially been applied to the new roadway as it is constructed in an area where an old dumping site was situated. Because of this some settlement could occur and repairs may be necessary. If asphalt had been laid after construction and repairs were required the resulting surface would be unsatisfactory and cause ongoing maintenance issues. A period of at least 12 months is desired before applying an asphalt layer. As asphalt should only be laid during a specified season due to the ground temperature required (generally October to March) the asphalt cannot be laid until at least October this year. This will help to reduce some noise effects from tyres. When the planting becomes more established this will also help to reduce noise and visual pollution.

Speed Limit

Some locals are concerned that the 70km/h speed limit is too high. Vehicles reach Wainoni Road from the north at 70km/h and should be slowing down to 50km/h on Bexley Road but generally continue at 70km/h past the school. The 50km/h speed limit signs are on the north side of the traffic signals. In addition to this repeater 50km/h speed limit signs have been erected outside the school as a reminder of this change of speed. This section south of the signals will also be 70km/h when Stage 2 is opened next year providing a consistent speed environment between the new road and 70km/h on Dyers Road.

The road was designed for speeds of 80km/h and the National rating formula for the road gives a value of 80 or 100km/h. It was therefore originally proposed that the speed limit for the expressway would be 80km/h. The Council preferred that a 70km/h speed limit be imposed along this section of the expressway but this would be reviewed after a 12 month trial period. The 12 months will start once the entire expressway is finished; Stage 2 is due to be completed in April next year.

Grass Berms

There was a delay in attending to the grass berms over the Christmas and New Year period and many residents rang either myself or Board members concerned about the lack of attention. A maintenance contractor was urgently sent to the site and the work was carried out. A long-term maintenance contract has now been set up for this work.

The section of the ring road where residential housing does not have direct access is treated as rural and grass is kept between 25mm and 150mm. The shaggier look of the 150mm standard is to differentiate the ring route with its limited access points from near-by urban roads. However, people often complain about the presence of flowering "weeds"; for example dandelions. There is a trade-off between the level of complaint and the higher cost (about three times) of landscape mowing that would be incurred if the mowing frequency were increased.

Where houses have access to the ring road the grass will be kept to a landscape standard of 25mm to 60mm (Wainoni Road to Eureka Street). The stretch between the Avon River and Wainoni Road is to be kept to 150mm standard but as it runs between housing it may be upgraded to landscape standard along with the future stretch from Eureka Street to Birch Street.

Landscaping

The extent of the roadside planting in comparison with other roads such as Queen Elizabeth II Drive at present may appear minimal. However the new planting will bulk up with time. The Queen Elizabeth II Drive plantings are over ten years old and the underlying ground conditions on that road are generally more favourable than the Wainoni area.

The planting beds have now been weeded and the trees and shrubs that died will be replaced in April/May. We are assuring people that within six months they will notice a vast improvement.

The expressway has spilt in half Cedarwood Reserve which features an established playground on the west side. There is currently no definitive separation between these reserve areas and the road. The objectives of a proposed separation are to:

- Enhance the appearance of the expressway south of the bridge.
- Improve safety by providing physical barriers between the expressway and adjacent reserves to stop pedestrians and cycle movements across the expressway.
- Enhance and provide a sheltered informal recreational space in two Reserve areas.
- Provide a pedestrian link from Cedarwood Reserve to the expressway cycleway/footpath.
- Contribute to the ecological values of the Woolston Burwood Expressway (ANZAC Drive) and the Green Corridor.



VIEW OF THE EXPRESSWAY AND RESERVE AREAS FROM THE SOUTH

Rather than create a harsh fence line, a landscaping concept plan has been prepared which meets the above objectives. This plan is attached to the report (Appendix A). The Parks and Waterways Unit has been involved in the preparation of this concept. The planting consists of two bands of coastal bush and it is suggested that a five-wire farm type fence is erected within these landscaped areas. There are also additional trees to be planted as part of this plan. On the east side these will provide shelter against the easterly for anyone who wishes to stop and use the proposed seats.

The Board has allocated \$3,500 towards a fence along the west side of the expressway at Cedarwood Reserve. It is suggested that this amount is put towards the fence and landscaping if the Board are agreeable to the concept attached. The City Streets Unit and Parks and Waterways Unit are likely to be able to fund the remaining work.

STAGE 2

Programme

The road stopping process and property purchase negotiations have caused a delay in the start of construction of Stage 2. Construction was to start in January this year but it will now be April at the earliest. The design is complete and contractors are currently tendering for the work.

Features of this stage include the creation of a park like area to the south of Eureka Street on the riverside of the new expressway (opposite Carisbrooke Street). The area will be planted with shrubs and specimen trees and has opportunities for locating seats with views to the river. The vertical riverbank will be regraded to slope gently to the waters edge providing river access via an informal beach.

There are also features that will help to reduce the effects of flooding which has always been a problem in this low lying area of the city. The grass swales throughout the project direct storm water to piping systems and help to increase the quality of runoff before entering the river. The creation of a wide swale outside Bexley Reserve will increase storage of runoff, not only from the road but also from Bexley Reserve. The width necessary for this swale has allowed the cycleway to be aligned in the reserve itself providing a more pleasant cycling environment. The Estuary Branch Drain is to be realigned and regraded increasing the capacity for storage and the ability to transport storm water to the main Estuary Drain. The extension of the Knights Drain retention basin, north of Pages Road, also increases storage capacity for storm water. These improvements are being combined with the Expressway work and will lower the demand on the pumping stations catchments within Bexley.

Road Stopping

The legal closures of Carisbrooke Street and Eureka Street were notified in August 2000. The closures of Bexley Road (north end and south end), Brook Street and Birch Street were advertised last year and local residents lodged a number of objections. After consultation with the objectors the two projects attached (Appendix B and C) were considered necessary to help reduce the effects of the closures. All the objections were then withdrawn and closures legally notified.

Property

There are two property settlements outstanding within the limits of this stage. If the tender had been postponed until these were resolved there could have been further delays to the start of construction. The tender acceptance will not be given until Council approval on 28 March 2002. The Property Unit is confident that these outstanding issues should be resolved within this timeframe. If the settlements are not resolved, the successful Contractor will be able to programme the work to avoid any further delays. Both properties involve land severances rather than total purchases and both are taking some time as there is change of access issues.

Several areas of land were initially considered to be surplus to the project and possibly available for sale. Those that presented access difficulties have been landscaped as part of the project. The future of four remaining areas will be reported to the next Board meeting. The report will describe the potential land use problems that the Board should be aware of.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the concept planting plan be considered by the Board as an appropriate form of separation between the expressway and adjacent reserve areas.
 3. That the Board's existing allocation of \$3,500 be used towards the implementation of the plan.

Chairperson's

- Recommendations:**
1. That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.
 2. That the Avondale and Bexley Residents' Associations be informed of the progress of the Expressway project.