

27. LAND TRANSPORT TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES RULE 54002

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The purpose of this report is to outline the LTSA proposal to create a “*Traffic Control Devices Rule*” and to decide on the form of submissions on the Rule to be made by the Council.

BACKGROUND

On 3 February 2003 the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) released the second (yellow) draft of the proposed *Land Transport Rule: Traffic Control Devices Rule 54002*. The release of the current draft of the proposed Rule follows consideration of submissions to the initial red draft which was circulated to a number of Road Controlling Authorities and technical organisations for comment. Council officers’ comments on the red draft were considered by a ‘Technical Advisory Group’ set up by the LTSA. Engineering staff from both City Streets and City Solutions discussed and put together submissions into this process. A Traffic Engineer from the Council is a member of the Technical Advisory Group.

It is recommended that the Council continue with its involvement in the Rule setting process. The deadline for submissions on the yellow (public consultation) draft of the proposed Rule close on Tuesday 22 April 2003.

RULE OBJECTIVE

The objective of the proposed Rule “*is to contribute to the safe and efficient operation of our road network by:*

- *requiring uniformity in the form, appearance and placement of traffic control devices;*
- *establishing minimum standards for traffic control devices;*
- *specifying who may authorise and install traffic control devices; and*
- *ensuring that Road Controlling Authorities take safe road practices into account in the design and installation of traffic control devices used for traffic management”.*

The Rule aims to ensure that traffic control devices are uniform in appearance and are used consistently throughout New Zealand. It establishes minimum standards for traffic control devices and specifies who may authorise, install or remove them.

The Rule proposes to give Road Controlling Authorities more accountability for traffic management and more scope to take local conditions into account when installing or removing traffic devices. ‘Traffic Control Device’ means a device used on a road for the purpose of traffic control; and includes any, sign, signal, or notice; traffic calming device, marking or road surface treatment.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PROPOSED ROAD USER RULE 61001

The adoption of proposed driver rules in the *Draft Land Transport Rule: Road User Rule 61001* relating, in particular, to roundabouts, pedestrian crossings and special vehicle lanes (including cycle lanes, bus lanes and transit lanes) will result in changes to the responsibilities and practices of road controlling authorities in respect of traffic control devices. It is for this reason that the Road User Rule and Traffic Devices Rule are being developed in tandem and are intended to be signed by the Minister of Transport during 2003 and to come into force at the same time.

The report to the Committee from the Coordinating Committee for Traffic Safety refers to submissions that have been made on the Road User Rule. Changes arise from proposals in the Road User Rule in relation to roundabouts, the marking of special vehicle lanes (including cycle lanes) and pedestrian crossings, have been topics of discussions at both technical group and coordinating committee forums. Changes to existing road marking guidelines and standards are required to fit in with new Road User Rule requirements and it is from this direction that the Council will be most affected.

PROPOSED CHANGES

The Traffic Devices Rule sets out to be prescriptive rather than descriptive, with the intention to refer to national standards and guidelines rather than include diagrams that would describe various traffic control devices, including road markings. Some minimum standards are to be included in the Rule and this is where opinion is divided on whether or not to include such things as minimum widths of pedestrian crossings etc.

The Road User Rule refers specifically to new driver responsibilities with respect to the following traffic control devices:

1. **Roundabouts:** *In order to support a consistent set of traffic priorities at roundabouts where traffic entering a roundabout must give way to all traffic on the roundabout and exiting the roundabout has priority over circulating traffic. To this end the Rule proposes that the "Alberta" system for road markings through roundabouts is adopted for all multi laned roundabouts.*

All multi laned roundabouts in the city are currently marked with the 'Alberta' system in mind. It is anticipated that no further changes will be required to implement this new Rule provision. However, over a period of time, new roundabout 'Give Way' signs will replace existing signs on the approaches to roundabouts.

2. **Marking of Special Vehicle Lanes:** *It is proposed that the minimum lane width for motor vehicles will remain at 2.5 metres. With the marking of special vehicle lanes - particularly cycle lanes, road controlling authorities will need to place a lot more emphasis on road marking standards to ensure that "industry best practice" is used consistently throughout the country.*

There should be no problems here with the Christchurch City Council which has, along with Hamilton City, pioneered much of the research into onroad cycle lanes and facilities. No doubt some facilities on Christchurch roads will need revisiting. However, it is unlikely that the Christchurch City Council will need to make any wholesale changes to marked cycle lanes if the new Rule is adopted.

3. **Pedestrian Crossings:** *The proposed Rule prescribes a maximum length for a pedestrian crossing (15m) and requires that a traffic island is the only traffic control device that can divide a pedestrian crossing into two halves. This will enable pedestrian crossings to be placed on roadways wider than 15m kerb to kerb. However, industry best practice does not recommend using "zebra" pedestrian crossings on multi laned roads.*

The Council has been supportive of these principles through the years and will not need to revisit any of the existing pedestrian crossings in the city as our current practices already exceed the proposed minimum criteria for this particular traffic control device.

Technically, engineers working in the Council have a number of issues which have yet to be resolved in relation to the provision of cycle lanes and facilities on roads and the minimum criteria for the marking of pedestrian crossings. The LTSA is currently working on new National Guidelines for Cycle and Pedestrian facilities incorporating current industry best practice. The existing 'blue book' on cycle facilities in New Zealand was initiated by the Christchurch City Council; the Council also had a predominant role to play in the publication of the TRAFINZ 'Pedestrian Facilities' guideline. Both of these publications are being reviewed with the intention that they be adopted as the definitive guideline on best practice in the proposed Rule.

DISCUSSION

With a deadline of 22 April 2003 in mind, it is proposed that engineers from the City Streets and City Solutions Units agree on the major issues that require addressing by the Council. These will then be collated and submitted as the Council's recommendations on the yellow draft of the Rule. Individuals are also encouraged to make their own submissions as the Traffic Devices Rule is mostly a technical document that reflects current industry best practice. The Council submission will concentrate on the effects of the Rule on Council operations and where the Council's current practices may differ from those proposed in the new Rule.

CONCLUSION

The proposed Traffic Devices Rule is likely, together with the Road User Rule, to be enacted during 2003. The two Rules will replace many of the regulations, gazette notices, orders and policy statements made under the Transport Act 1962 when those sections of the Act are due to be repealed in 2005.

The proposed Rule will, based on current industry best practice, provide Road Controlling Authorities with more accountability for traffic management and scope to take local conditions into account when installing and removing traffic devices. Although there is still some way to go before agreement is reached on a number of standards and guidelines that will be referenced in the new Rule, the LTSA is confident that, given progress to date, timelines will be achieved.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the information relating to the Traffic Devices Rule process and requirements for Council and technical comment be received.
 2. That staff prepare submissions and lodge them on or before 22 April 2003.
 3. That the City Streets Manager report back to the May meeting of the Committee a summary of the submissions.

Chairman's

- Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.