

10. CLARENCE/ RICCARTON/STRAVEN INTERSECTION

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of a proposed intersection improvement scheme and to seek the Council's approval for the purchase of a property on the south-eastern corner to enable this project to proceed.

BACKGROUND

Implementation of this proposed intersection improvement is a critical element in the on-going development of a Riccarton Road Traffic Management Plan. It involves the realignment of the south-east corner to provide two straight through lanes from Straven Road into Clarence Street and realignment of the merging past the intersection. It also includes, realignment of the south-west corner to provide better utilisation for the two south-north lanes. Other facilities, including suitable lane widths for cyclists and a central island on the Clarence Street approach to reduce a significant recorded accident problem are provided for.

The Council's former City Services Committee approved an earlier version of this scheme and purchase of the property at #95 Riccarton Road (leased by Kutwell fabrics) in 1999.

The physical work is currently programmed to commence in the 2004/05 year. Outstanding property purchase still to be effected (and held pending Council adoption of the final scheme) includes land required from the Windmill centre and a small sliver from Nos. 5, 7 and 9 Straven Road.

THE SCHEME

Problems

The existing intersection is very busy, catering for about 45,000 vehicles on a typical day. It suffers from a number of problems: the capacity is limited by having only one southbound through lane (on Straven Road), and poor orientation of the nearside northbound through/left lane (on Clarence Street). Significant delays on all approaches result, including Riccarton Road, because of this lack of capacity and the resulting green-time allocation. These delays have a significant adverse effect, not least on the reliability of public transport along this key bus corridor.

The resulting queuing also has implications for safety, where driveway traffic seeks to cross queues. For example, there have been some 25 reported accidents on the Clarence Street approach immediately south of the intersection in the last 5 years. Seven of these resulted in some form of injury to crash victims. Whilst the accident record north of the intersection is not so bad, there are still difficulties (and safety concerns) with access to and from the service lane which runs behind the shops on the north side of Riccarton Road.

Objectives

The principal objectives of the scheme are to reduce delay and improve safety at the existing intersection and on its approaches.

Proposed Option

The preferred scheme is illustrated in the attachment. It extends from Rata Street across Riccarton Road to Dilworth Street. The scheme plans also shows the integration of this scheme with the proposed kerb and channel replacement on Straven Road north of Rata Street, and the changes to the Kahu/Kilmarnock/Straven intersection endorsed as part of the kerb and channel renewal north of that intersection.

As indicated, the scheme consists of provision of an additional southbound through lane and realignment of the Clarence Street approach through widening, which will also provide for merge facilities and cycle lanes on the north and south intersection approaches. A solid median is proposed on the Clarence Street approach to restrict turning manoeuvres to left in/left out only at two existing driveways. Alternative, unrestricted access exists for properties accessed via these driveways. Thresholds are proposed at Rata Street and Bradshaw Terrace, with a flush median all the way between Kilmarnock Street and Riccarton Road. On-road cycle lanes to serve the north-south demand would be provided the whole length of the project.

Improvement of capacity on Straven Road/Clarence Street would, as well as reducing queues and delays on the north and south approaches also allow more time to be devoted to Riccarton Road, reducing queuing and delay here. It is also proposed to remark the Riccarton Road approaches to provide a separate right-turning lane. It is anticipated that this too will reduce congestion. The remarking (and relocation of existing bus-stops) will however require removal of 7 existing parking spaces, 3 on the southern side of Riccarton Road immediately west of the intersection, and 4 on the north side immediately east of the intersection.

The proposed option is fully consistent with the Regional Land Transport Strategy, which recognises the importance of the 'inner-western ring route'; the City Plan, which classifies all approach roads as Minor Arterials, and the Riccarton Road Traffic Management Plan, which has been previously endorsed in principle by the former City Services Committee, Community Board and local interest groups.

Costs and Benefits

The total cost of the proposed scheme is currently estimated at approximately \$1,350,000. This includes the property already purchased by the Council at #95 Riccarton Road. The true net cost is somewhat lower than this as, if no work was carried out at the intersection, the City Streets Unit would still anticipate major carriageway repairs being required north of the intersection to maintain the integrity of the road formation.

The 'tangible' benefits are currently estimated to be 7.8 times the costs, that is, the public would 'receive' about \$8 in benefits for each dollar that the Council (with Transfund subsidy) would invest.

The majority (90%) of these 'tangible' benefits are estimated to come from relief of congestion (reducing queuing and delay): Very significant delays indeed are forecast at the intersection within 10 years if the proposed improvement is not undertaken. The remainder (10%) of the 'tangible' benefits are attributable to the predicted accident savings - conservatively, only those likely to be saved on the southern approach have been accounted for in this figure. If the proposed median had been installed over the past 5 years, it is estimated that about 85% of the accidents reported on the Clarence Street approach over this period could have been saved.

Where to from here?

The draft scheme plan has been developed by the City Streets Unit after consideration of a number of options. However, the final plan has yet to be finally decided upon. The views of the Community Board are sought and, pending their approval of the plan for the purposes of consultation, it is proposed to circulate this for comment by owners and residents to adjacent properties as soon as possible. In addition, it is proposed to invite any interested parties to a public meeting during the consultation period to discuss the proposals in greater detail and receive their feedback. Following this period, a report will be brought back to the Board to invite any further decisions to be taken.

This report will also be provided to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee in order to receive their feedback.

Recommendation: That the Board endorse the draft Scheme Plan for improvement of the Clarence/Riccarton/Straven Intersection and its approaches, for the purposes of consultation.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Officer's recommendation be adopted.