

1. LINWOOD AVENUE/CITY OUTFALL DRAIN REALIGNMENT RR 10450

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The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the purchase of the land required for waterway enlargement, realignment and enhancement associated with future road widening in Linwood Avenue.

BACKGROUND

There has long been an understanding that Linwood Avenue from its current four lane configuration at Hargood Street through to St Johns Street and later to Dyers Road would require upgrading as traffic volumes continue to increase (currently 4-5% pa compared with a City average of 2.5–3.5% on other arterial roads).

At the same time the Water Services Unit has been investigating the issues associated with the City Outfall Drain, including the length from St Johns Street (to the Estuary) where it emerges onto Linwood Avenue. Over this length the waterway issues include providing additional flood storage, enhancement of landscape and ecological values, and accommodation of walkway and cycleway facilities. It has been clear for a number of years that the waterway and roading requirements needed to be met in an integrated way and accordingly a project team with representation from City Streets, City Design, Parks and Water Services prepared a comprehensive report in 1997 on the options. One of the outcomes of this report was the need to acquire additional land on the south side of Linwood Outfall Drain between St Johns Street and Dyers Road. The report's plan showing an indicative development of the Outfall Drain coupled with four laning of Linwood Avenue is tabled. Beyond Dyers Road the Council has already secured the land on the south side by requiring a substantial setback for the new subdivision now in place. For the length between St Johns Street and Dyers Road the Council has also already acquired a 30 metre wide strip along the Samoan Congregational Christian Church property boundary and now has an opportunity to procure a further strip through the purchase of a block at the St Johns Road end. This would leave two further strips still to be acquired in the centre of the section (see tabled plan).

Four laning to Dyers Road has now been removed from the firm five year City Streets roading programme, but the project has been retained in the prioritised list of roading projects suggesting that construction is likely in a 5-10 year timeframe. As will be seen from the balance of this report this is the period of time it will take to realise the land acquisition programme required to meet waterway, cycleway and roading requirements.

FLOOD RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Outfall Drain is a significant waterway to the Estuary that has its headwaters in the central city area and drains a large area of light industrial and residential land. Flooding affects large areas of Tilford Street and Smith Street. At the edge of the Estuary a tidegate structure prevents flooding from high tides and storage behind the gates is necessary to provide ponding during storm events for 2-3 hours of the tide cycle. In the last ten years the St Lukes Street area has been filled to new subdivision levels depriving the drain of its natural ponding area. The reduced storage available for storm discharges is about 12,000 m³ or 1.6 hours of storage. This volume needs to be increased by about the same amount if the effect of the recent filling is to be negated and flooding in the Tilford and Smith Street area is to remain unaffected.

The current reserve provisions along the St Johns – Dyers Roads portion of Linwood Avenue constitute a 30 m wide road reserve, a 10 m canal reserve and a road reserve on the south side of the canal approximately 10 m wide.

The proposal indicated in the tabled plan would close this latter portion of road reserve and acquire an additional 30 metre strip to enable:

- four laning of the Avenue with provision for a substantial median continuing the existing avenue formation
- cycleways
- a realigned outfall waterway with landscape and ecological enhancement
- flood retention

This proposal would add 4,200 m³ to the flood storage capacity through the creation of a 420 m long by 20 m wide floodplain. The balance of some 8,000 m³ will be provided through the development of the waterway between Dyers Road and the Estuary.

CURRENT LAND PURCHASE PROPOSAL

As has already been stated, a 30 m wide strip along the Samoan Church frontage has been gifted to the Council for the purpose stated above and the opportunity has arisen to acquire a 2.0381 ha property in St Johns Street in order to secure the 30m wide strip required to realign the canal. It is intended following purchase of the property and completion of the works to dispose of the balance which is capable of subdivision into 19 sections.

This block of land is unmodified low-lying and has not been filled. It would therefore be useful for the placement of excavated material from the new ponding area parallel to the existing waterway which would eventually form part of the future waterway/ponding area. One new 225 mm culvert would be needed at the west end of the existing access road to connect the ponding.

The legal road along the south side of Linwood Avenue between St Johns Street and Dyers Road is designated for road closure to allow for waterway relocation and enhancement. At present this road provides temporary access to the church and two other properties. It cannot be closed until alternative access is provided. The City Streets Unit is working towards providing access to the Samoan Church and at a later stage this access could also be used to provide the legal access to the adjoining property. Alternative access to the remaining property can be provided through the land to be acquired which will enable the legal road to be closed.

In the case of the block recommended for purchase the Council is of course only interested in acquiring a 30 m wide strip and would need to subdivide and dispose of the balance of the land. However as set out above, the disposal would be done in such a way that access was provided to the adjoining property – an essential step toward closing the legal road on the south side.

Estimates of land and development costs and likely revenues from subdivision and disposal of the balance of the lot, as set out in the public excluded portion of this report, indicate that the Council will acquire the 30 m strip at no net cost.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Waterways and Wetlands New Assets: Riparian and Wetland Purchase and Covenants. Sufficient funds are available in this output for the purchase.

SUMMARY

Land acquisition on the south side of the Linwood Outfall Drain is necessary to achieve the eventual development needs of road widening, cycleway and walkway provision, flood storage and landscape and ecological enhancement. A 30 m strip is recommended and acquisition has already been completed along the Samoan Church frontage. An opportunity exists to obtain a further 130 m strip through purchase of a block at the St John Street end of the section. Estimates suggest that subdivision and disposal of the balance of the block will yield returns that more than covers land and development costs yielding the 30 metre strip at no net cost to the Council.

Recommendation: That the property in St Johns Street be acquired on the terms and conditions outlined in the public excluded section of the report.