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Corporate Plan Output: Asset Improvements – Road Network	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council 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

The proposed intersection improvement work is a critical element in the Riccarton Road Traffic Management Plan. It involves the realignment of the south-east corner to provide two straight through north-south lanes, merging past the intersection. 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.

A designation was included in the City Plan, which the current owner objected to. His objection sought removal of the designation. The current status is that a hearing has been held, and the matter is being held over pending the Council's consideration of its position in respect of a purchase. Various discussions have been held with the present owner, his agent and solicitor, over the last year or so in relation to the possible purchase of the property. The owner has been unable to sell the property and has requested the Council to purchase it.

An offer has been made, with a number of conditions. These include settlement on 2 July 1999 (ie in the 1999/00 financial year). Conditions regarding existing leases and terms are also covered. Further details are provided in the Property Manager's report in the public excluded section of this agenda.

Some urgency is sought in order that the owner and the Council can minimise legal costs and further work in terms of resolving the owner's objection to the Proposed City Plan. The owner's objection to the Proposed City Plan will be withdrawn on confirmation of the proposed agreement detailed below.

The *physical* work is currently programmed to commence in the 2001/02 year, and at this stage this is appropriate as it ties in with proposed lease arrangements and also as other property is potentially affected. It might yet be possible to bring construction forward, and this would be reported through future budget rounds.

THE SCHEME

Problems

The existing intersection is very busy, catering for about 43,500 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. The resulting queuing also has implications for safety, where driveway traffic seeks to cross queues. There have been 28 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.

Objectives

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

Proposed Option

The preferred scheme is illustrated in the attachment. 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. A 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.

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 City Services Committee and local interest groups.

Costs and Benefits

The undiscounted capital costs of the proposed scheme amount to approximately \$1,750,000. These include for acquisition/compensation for the required property (including No 95 Riccarton Road and adjacent land), demolition of No 95, construction of the scheme, and reinstatement of a smaller building on the balance of land not required. The actual net cost of the scheme after disposal of surplus property is estimated to be \$1,152,500.

The 'tangible' benefits are estimated to be 8.6 times the costs.

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 24 of the 28 accidents reported on the Clarence Street approach over this period could have been saved.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the project be approved.
 2. That the settlement be effected, as outlined in the public excluded report to the Council.