

29. 11. 2000

**LAND TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE
24 NOVEMBER 2000**

**A meeting of the Land Transport Subcommittee
was held on Friday 24 November 2000 at 2pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Denis O'Rourke (Chairman),
Councillors David Close, Ian Howell, Sally Thompson and Ron Wright.

APOLOGIES: An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Denis O'Rourke.

The Committee reports that:

PART A - MATTERS REQUIRING A COUNCIL DECISION

1. BLENHEIM ROAD DEVIATION

Officers responsible Property Manager City Streets Manager	Author Property Services Officer, Bill Morgan, DDI 371-1581 Transportation Planning Engineer, Paul Roberts
Corporate Plan Output: Roading Network Planning	

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Councillors which will enable a decision on whether or not to proceed with a deviation of Blenheim Road at the Deans Avenue intersection.

Given the timing and status of its Tower Junction project, the principal affected landowner, Ngai Tahu Property Group (NTPG) now requires a clear commitment from Council **at this meeting** about whether it wishes to pursue the deviation, on the terms outlined herein.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 State of Existing Bridge

The existing Blenheim Road rail overbridge is of inadequate width to safely cater for the needs of all road users (including cyclists and pedestrians). The bridge approaches ('crib-walls') are in poor condition and require remedial work to prevent spalling and slumping of the roadway work – certainly within the next 2-3 years. The bridge itself would need strengthening work to withstand a significant earthquake event. Preliminary investigations by City Design have, however, concluded that strengthening of the bridge is unlikely to prove a cost-effective solution, because the proposed immediate maintenance of the approaches is unlikely to guarantee their survival in the same event.

The proposed most cost-effective ("do-minimum") solution is therefore:

- Within next 2 years: Repair crib-walls on approaches and provide clip-on cycle/pedestrian width extensions. Do NOT strengthen bridge at this stage. The immediate cost of this option would therefore be approximately \$480,000.
- Construct a new bridge, including approaches following collapse of the existing bridge during a significant earthquake event (bearing in mind that the bridge does not carry essential utility services.) The cost of this replacement at current value is estimated to be approximately \$2.3m(plus), with a 65% chance of this expenditure being required in the next 50 years.

1.2 Opportunities for Deviation

At its eastern end, Blenheim Road currently terminates at Deans Avenue. At this point, traffic backs up in peak periods onto the overbridge, giving rise to potential for rear end collisions to stationary vehicles by vehicles coming over the crest of the Blenheim Road overbridge. Furthermore, the current linkage to Moorhouse Avenue which connects with eastern and southern areas is indirect. Traffic has to follow a "dog leg" around the south/west corner of Hagley Park.

1 Cont'd

The overbridge forms one of the few pedestrian/cycle links across the railway available in the area but, as noted above, users are poorly serviced by inadequate facilities on the bridge. Pedestrian/cycle access across Deans Avenue to Hagley Park is also hampered by high existing traffic volumes.

The potential improvement would involve deviating Blenheim Road from its present alignment so that it curves south-east from Mandeville Street approximately parallel to Lowe Street, using land formerly occupied by the railyards. The 'deviation' would then cross the railway, via a new bridge, and then curve east connecting with Moorhouse Avenue. The scheme would include signalised intersections at either end, demolition of the existing bridge, provision of an at-grade pedestrian/cycle link in the existing Blenheim Road corridor and creation of easements for services and disposal of surplus land.

The former railway workshops site north of the railway station has existing resource consents for development of a large bulk-retail park ("Tower Junction"). This development could proceed with or without a Blenheim Road Deviation, but if a deviation alignment is implemented west of Lowe Street, then this would affect the layout of the development, impacting on both the amount of floorspace and car-parking available. The owners are in a position to pursue their development immediately and wish to be open for trading by October of 2001. They have had to give a deadline for Council to decide whether or not it wishes to pursue land acquisition to facilitate the deviation. Constructive discussions on potential terms of settlement have occurred with these landowners and these have resulted in the total estimated project costs reported here.

1.3 Potential loss of opportunities

The deviation would achieve a number of advantages for the transport system, with some disadvantages. Both are covered in more detail in the section on 'Options' below. However, one of the principal perceived advantages of the deviation has more to do with general city planning: Removal of the existing overbridge and a considerable reduction in traffic along Deans Avenue in the area of the deviation would almost certainly improve the amenity of the former saleyards land (between the railway and Hagley Park). Improved amenity of saleyards land is considered more likely to promote use of this land for its zoned use (residential). Without improved amenity, the owners have indicated that they are likely to pursue a resource consent application for business use.

Whilst alternative deviation alignments exist, the alignment favoured by the subcommittee and agreed to by Ngai Tahu (if a deviation is pursued) uses the "Tower Junction" site, and NTPG land south of the railway. If either of these sites is developed without taking into account the proposed land requirements for the deviation, then it is considered unlikely that the preferred deviation alignment (and the opportunities it presents) will ever be realised.

The perceived benefits of pursuing the deviation at this time must, however, be carefully weighed against the costs - and the potential to utilise the capital involved on other projects that may deliver relatively equal or higher benefits.

1.4 Council Resolution

At its October meeting the Council considered a report from the City Services Committee on the Blenheim Road deviation and resolved:

- "1. That the report be received.*
- 2. That the proposal for a road deviation be further pursued and that:*
 - (a) The full ramifications of compulsory purchase be reported urgently to the Council, and*
 - (b) Other alignment options be explored.*
- 3. That the Land Transport Subcommittee urgently investigate the issues and report direct to the Council with substantive recommendations.*
- 4. That a special Council meeting be called if necessary to consider and decide on those recommendations."*

1 Cont'd

2. LEGAL ISSUES

Over the intervening period the subcommittee has met on three occasions to consider the relevant issues and was briefed by Mr Denis Sheard of Buddle Findlay over the matters relating to the ramifications of compulsory purchase. A summary of the issues has been provided by the office solicitor, Karilyn Shutt, who has commented as follows:

2.1 Public Works Act

Compulsory Acquisition

"I understand that Denis Sheard's advice to the Council's City Services Committee was that the option of compulsorily acquiring the road deviation land is impractical. I agree with that view and confirm that the more realistic way of obtaining the land will be by agreement under section 17 of the Public Works Act 1981.

This is because the compulsory acquisition process is lengthy, costly, and has no guarantees of success.

In terms of time frames, the compulsory acquisition process (even if successful) would be likely to take two to three years.

In terms of whether a compulsory acquisition could be successful, there is a real risk that it would not. This is because it is unlikely that the Environment Court would allow a compulsory acquisition to proceed when the land has not yet been designated and the Council does not have a resource consent to allow the road deviation. I am presently checking the case law to see whether there are any cases where the Environment Court has allowed a compulsory acquisition when a designation or resource consent has not been in hand. I am not presently aware of any.

As part of any compulsory acquisition, the Council must have first served a notice of desire to acquire and then negotiated with the land owner in good faith for three months. At the expiry of that three months, the Council can issue a notice of intention to take. That notice must give reasons why the taking of the land is considered "reasonably necessary". Again, I am reviewing the case law on those words to evaluate whether the Courts would consider that the road deviation is reasonably necessary when Blenheim Road is already in existence.

A person who has been served with a notice of intention may object to the taking of the land to the Environment Court. The Environment Court is required to ascertain the objectives of the Council and inquire into the adequacy of the consideration given to alternative sites, routes and other methods of achieving those objectives. They may send the matter back to the Council for further consideration. They must then decide whether in its opinion it would be fair, sound and reasonably necessary for achieving the objective of the Council for the land of the objector to be taken.

Any party may appeal to the High Court on points of law."

2.2 Resource Consent

"If the resource consent process is used, the Council will need to appoint a commissioner. The commissioner will need to make a decision as to whether the matter is notified, although that seems highly likely.

*With regard to the two options, the designation process is likely to be more time-consuming than the resource consent process. In either case, objections and appeals would prolong the process. Without any objections and appeals, the resource consent could take a **minimum** of three to four months."*

Given the time constraints faced by the Council as a consequence of Ngai Tahu Property Development Limited's imminent development programme a designation process was not seen as a viable alternative because of the potential delays should appeals be lodged and as such the subcommittee sought to acquire the land by agreement.

1 Cont'd

3. OTHER ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

The subcommittee considered a wide range of alternative alignment options, ranging through those that essentially were potential developments of the “do-minimum” (retaining the existing bridge), those that traversed the former Saleyards site (rather than the former workshops sites), to those that traversed the southern Saleyards site but had alternative alignments north of the railway west or east of Lowe Street. Land and construction cost estimates for some 11 options in all were developed and considered by the subcommittee along with other relative advantages and disadvantages including net property cost.

Further alternatives also arose through discussion with the owner of Togega Imports (4 Moorhouse Avenue), who has gone to some effort in preparing alternatives that redirected Moorhouse Avenue from Lincoln Road along the railway corridor before swinging north at various locations. Unfortunately various technical requirements including rail clearance and intersection arrangements precluded the further consideration of such options.

As stated above, after careful consideration, the favoured alignment, **should** a deviation be pursued, traverses the eastern boundary of the Tower Junction site (west of Lowe Street). It crosses the railway and is then routed close to the eastern boundary of the southern former railyards site before swinging east to join Moorhouse Avenue. It should be noted that this option now traverses across land currently occupied by the southern-most The McLean Institute building at the south-west corner of Hagley Park. This alignment, shown in the attached plan, is now preferred to the alignment presented in earlier reports, both in terms of providing a better and safer layout in road engineering terms and in avoiding acquisition of land from potentially unwilling vendors.

3.1 In considering the various options the subcommittee noted the following in respect of each option:

Status Quo with Minimal Maintenance

- (i) This offered the cheapest solution if the existing roading pattern was to be retained with its inherent traffic problems.
- (ii) The existing bridge was a risk in a major earthquake which the Council could ultimately be called to replace.
- (iii) It offered no solutions to the continuing problem of car parking for Hagley Park. In effect it virtually removed the possibility of it being provided by virtue of the cost of acquiring additional land.
- (iv) It did not encourage the redevelopment of the former saleyards site for residential purposes because of access, noise and traffic (including pedestrian safety) problems.
- (v) With the development of the major retail outlet the road could be expected to attract higher volumes of traffic increasing the above adverse effects.

Option 1 – Preferred Deviation

With respect to the preferred option the subcommittee noted the following should the Council resolve to proceed:

- (i) This was the cheapest and most cost effective design of the alternative deviations considered.
- (ii) It was satisfactory from a traffic design point of view.
- (iii) It minimised the impact on neighbouring properties.
- (vi) Resulted in the Council only needing to deal with two property owners as opposed to up to 12 on other alternative alignments.
- (v) Achieved the objectives of securing car parking for Hagley Park without direct property purchase which has been a problem for the Council for many years.
- (vi) Reinforced the residential boundary of the saleyard site.
- (vii) Provided for continued traffic movement along Deans Avenue between Moorhouse Avenue and Riccarton Road at a greatly reduced level which could enhance and promote the prospect of further residential redevelopment within the area.

1 Cont'd

- (viii) The reduction of traffic on Deans Avenue would create a safer environment for the users of Hagley Park, particularly children.
- (ix) It noted that this was the only opportunity available to the Council to proceed with a deviation on this preferred alignment given the imminent development of the retail outlet.
- (x) The preferred alignment maximised the area available for commercial redevelopment on the southern site to be purchased from and sold back to Ngai Tahu.
- (xi) It minimised the cost of the bridge over the railway by reducing the span width compared to other alignments considered.
- (xii) The alignment increased the visibility of the existing businesses in Lowe Street which could lead to redevelopment within the area.
- (xiii) It released areas of Blenheim Road when stopped for subsequent sale to adjoining owners including potentially Placemakers which it is believed is considering redeveloping the site as well as enabling the saleyard site which is currently separated by the road to be amalgamated to provide additional opportunities for residential development.
- (xiv) The deviation created a more direct and convenient route to the proposed retail development which it perceived would be a destination point.

4. LAND ACQUISITION

As indicated above in terms of option 1 there are only two property owners directly affected, these being Ngai Tahu Property Developments Limited and The McLean Institute. Full details of the potential acquisition costs of the respective properties are included in the public excluded section of this report. With respect to each transaction the following should be noted:

4.1 Ngai Tahu Property Developments Limited (NTPDC)

As the Council is aware, the NTPDC is holding resource consent to proceed with alternative developments depending upon whether the deviation proceeds. Their preferred development provides for access from Blenheim Road without the deviation which has a planned opening date of 1 October 2001. To achieve this date the company requires a decision from the Council by 1 December 2000 if it is not to incur substantial losses through development and construction delays.

The Company has however indicated a willingness to accommodate the deviation but is understandably concerned at how long the process could take given the need for the Council to publicly consult over the funding process and to obtain a Resource Consent to proceed with the deviation. The Company is prepared to facilitate the deviation subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (i) By 4.00 pm on 1 December 2000 the Council approving the roading deviation and entering into an unconditional agreement for the sale and purchase of the property required.
- (ii) The Council purchasing the southern site comprising 4.6380 ha with the Ngai Tahu Property Group entering into an unconditional contract to purchase back approximately 3.8960 ha. The buy-back to be settled within 24 months of granting of resource consent and not later than 1 January 2003.

The company to have the right of entry on to the site to erect signage to market the property, to carry out investigative work, construct roads and buildings on the site and to lease such buildings until settlement.

The Council as owner of the land to execute all documents to provide for the subdivision of the site and the erection of the buildings on the site.

When constructing the Deans Avenue / Moorhouse Avenue cross roads the Council to construct at its cost a road complete with water, sewer, stormwater, power and telecommunication connections protruding 15m into the site.

1 Cont'd

- (iii) The Council to sell to the Company land surplus to its requirement following the completion of road stopping procedures. Payment for these sites to be the later of 30 days after completion of the deviation or 20 working days after the Council has:
 - (i) produced a clear transferable title.
 - (ii) Removed all Council services from the site including but not limited to sewer, water, stormwater, power, telecommunications and roading.
 - (iii) The Council removing all roading and other designations affecting the sites.
- (iv) The Council completing the construction of the deviation and all associated road works, demolition and services within 15 months of Resource Consent being obtained.
- (v) The Council meeting all survey and title costs to enable the sale and purchase of the land and the completion of the deviation to occur.
- (vi) The Council entering into an agreement by 8 December 2000 setting out the above matters.
- (vii) The offer is subject to Te Runanga O Nga Tahu approval.

4.2 The McLean Institute Property

If the deviation is to proceed it would be necessary for the Council to acquire the southern-most office block from The McLean Institute situated on the corner of Deans Avenue and Moorhouse Avenue. Discussions have been held with the Institute over this matter and although it is prepared to sell, at this point in time, agreement has not been reached over price. In addition to the cost of the building the Council would be responsible to make good alterations to the stair and lift well which is common between both of the office blocks as well as meeting disturbance costs to provide the existing tenant with alternative accommodation. If agreement is reached it is anticipated that possession would not be required until mid-2001 given that should the deviation proceed road construction works will probably commence at the Blenheim Road end.

4.3 TranzRail

It should be noted that the consent of TranzRail will be required to construct the bridge over the railway and that this will be sought should the proposal be approved by the Council.

5. OVERALL PROJECT COSTS

It is estimated that the net present value of the offers from Ngai Tahu and The McLean Institute of the deviation, including land costs / road construction together with land recoveries, car parking costs and benefits and contingencies to be \$12.023M. Based upon the subcommittee's counter-offer the net present value costs of the deviation is \$9.390M.

Full details of the project costs are included in the public excluded section of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL / TRAFFIC / PLANNING / LEISURE EFFECTS

The advice from the Council's professionals in the above areas is as follows:

6.1 Deviation Option

The Council's Senior Planner advises:

"Planning Benefits

Living zones

- *The land zoned Living 3 adjacent to Hagley Park (and which is currently divided by Blenheim Road) would be consolidated through down-grading of this road and removal of the bridge. This would reinforce the pattern of residential activity surrounding the Park.*

1 Cont'd

- *The downgrading of Deans Avenue and the eastern end of Blenheim Road (with the latter effectively becoming an access leg to adjoining allotments) would have a corresponding reduction in traffic noise, fumes etc. The removal of the overbridge would therefore be beneficial to the establishment of housing on the Living 3 zoned land to the south of the bridge. The bridge currently shades a significant portion of the area and is noisy due to vehicles (particularly large trucks) undertaking gear changes on the upward approach. The new overbridge would be in proximity to fewer residential activities and therefore have a reduced impact.*
- *The deviation would establish a boundary between industrial and residential activity. This would also support the retention of the Living 3 Zone to the south of Blenheim Road (this area has been referred to the Environment Court (A329) with a request to amend the zone to a Business 4 zoning). The deviation may therefore provide a further incentive to develop the land for medium-high density housing.*

Access links

- *The reduction of traffic on Deans Avenue results in a better linkage between living zone land and Hagley Park. Ready, safe access to the Park would encourage the use of this recreational space (walking, exercise etc).*
- *Downgrading this portion of Deans Avenue reinforces a link between the central city and surrounding residential environments, thus assisting in central city revitalisation initiatives.*
- *The deviation would provide a more direct route for traffic to Moorhouse Avenue and the central city.*
- *A down-graded Blenheim Road could become a pedestrian/cycle link due to a reduced conflict with high traffic volumes.*

Car Parking

- *The establishment of formal car parking to serve Hagley Park would assist in addressing the large numbers of vehicles currently parking informally along the verge around the Park. This has been estimated at \$1.064M being the cost of securing an appropriate area of land to provide for up to 225 car parks which will subsequently become available should the deviation proceed. Weighed against this cost is the formation cost which is estimated to be \$750,000 although this need not be provided immediately with only minimum works being required initially to provide for the two laning of Deans Avenue. In the interim period the site could be used for casual parking by users of Hagley Park until formally laid out.*

Planning Disbenefits

Development Plan

- *The proposed deviation is not in accordance with the development plan for the area and a resource consent for a controlled activity would be required, however a controlled activity cannot be declined.*

Business Developments

- *The area of B4 land to the south of Blenheim Road and to the east of Whiteleigh Avenue is currently split only by minor roads and the railway line. The deviation of Blenheim Road would further split the zone into smaller pockets, thus placing a further limitation on any proposals for comprehensive commercial/industrial developments. This has been accounted for in the land values.*
- *If the eastern portion of Blenheim Road is effectively to become an access leg, this may affect the access and visibility of the B4 sites between Mandeville Street and the railway line and therefore have an impact upon their future sustainability for business activities. However this maybe offset through the disposal of surplus land to adjoining owners.*

1 Cont'd

Do-Minimum Option

Planning Benefits

Certainty

- *The existing overbridge would be upgraded, thus maintaining the physical resources provided by the existing network. Certainty would therefore be maintained for those activities that rely upon this transport network.*
- *Certainty would also be provided for those activities relying upon the implementation of the Addington Development Plan.*
- *Resource consent, gazetting and plan changes would not be required, thus providing greater certainty for affected land owners and potentially enabling the physical redevelopment of sites (the Ngai Tahu land in particular) to proceed more quickly.*

Alternatives

- *The long term retention of the current status and alignment Blenheim Road provides for a greater number of transport and access alternatives for this portion of legal road (ie for traffic passing through the area and for vehicles accessing the sites fronting the eastern end of Blenheim Road).*

B4 Land

- *The retention of the current network ensures that no B4 land would be required for, and lost to, the road realignment.*

Planning Dis-benefits

- *Those planning benefits identified above of pursuing the realignment option would be lost.*

PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMEFRAMES

- *Both the Transitional and Proposed City Plan provisions apply, however it is anticipated that greater weight will be given to the Proposed City Plan provisions.*

Resource Consent for Land Use

- *The land over which Blenheim Rd is to be realigned is zoned Business 4 in the Proposed City Plan.*
- *It is subject to Development Standard 4.2.8 of Volume 3, Part 3 (Business Zones) requiring that it be developed in general accordance with the development plan contained in Appendix 5 of Volume 3, Part 3 (Business Zones).*
- *Any development not in conformity with the development plan shall be a controlled activity, with the exercise of Council's discretion limited to access, open space links and landscape buffers.*
- *As a controlled activity, Resource Consent will accordingly be required for the land use not being in conformity with the development plan.*

Resource Consent Process and Timeframes

- *The timeframe for obtaining Resource Consent is determined by pre-application consultation with affected persons, the quality and completeness of a Resource Consent application (with respect to the assessment of environmental effects in particular) and statutory timeframes once the application is received.*
- *Once a consent authority has determined that has received adequate information, it has 10 working days in which to determine whether or not the application needs to be notified.*
- *Resource Consent applications for land use need not be notified if for a controlled activity and written approval has been obtained from every person who may be adversely affected.*

1 Cont'd

- *If notified, the public submission period lasts 20 working days, after which the consent authority has 25 working days in which to hear the application and 15 working days in which to release its decision (at least 3 months on average in total).*
- *If non-notified, the consent authority has a total of 20 working days in which to release its decision.*
- *Given the extent of persons who may be adversely affected in this case, the Resource Consent application to realign Blenheim Rd is likely to be notified.*
- *Resource consent applications for controlled activities shall be granted, but may be subject to conditions in respect of those matters over which the consent authority has reserved control.*
- *Resource consent applications for discretionary activities may be granted or refused, provided that consent may only be refused or (if granted) conditions may only be imposed in respect of those matters specified with respect to restricted discretionary activities.*
- *Resource Consent applications for non-complying activities may be granted or refused, and if granted conditions imposed.*
- *Both notified and non-notified Resource Consent applications are subject to a 15 working day appeal period which starts on the date of receipt of the decision.*
- *Given the heavy workload that the Environment Court is presently subject to, appeals may take years to be heard (approximately 2 years at present).*

Change to Proposed City Plan

- *Once the land over which Blenheim Rd is to be realigned is legal road, it is zoned Special Purpose (Road Zone).*
- *However, a change to the Proposed City Plan will still be required to reclassify the realignment from a local road to a major arterial, as Development Standard 5.2.5 of Volume 3, Part 14 (Subdivision) would otherwise require that the realignment be laid out, constructed and vested in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 5 of Volume 3, Part 14 (Subdivision) for a local road, instead of a major arterial. It will also be needed to reclassify the downgraded portions of Deans Ave and Blenheim Rd.*
- *The timeframe for changing the Proposed City Plan is determined by pre-application consultation with affected persons, the quality and completeness of the Section 32 justification and statutory timeframes once the application is notified.*
- *The initial public submission period lasts 20 working days and the period for further submissions lasts 20 working days, after which the consent authority is obliged to hear the application and to release its decision as promptly as is reasonable in the circumstances.*
- *Changes to the Proposed City Plan are subject to a 15 working day reference (appeal) period which starts on the date of service of the decision.*
- *Given the heavy workload that the Environment Court is presently subject to, references may take years to be heard (approximately 2 years at present)."*

The Council's Senior Planner has advised that the reference to the Environment Court (A329) is still some time away from being determined. L3 is definitely the Council's preferred position and one which the Council intends strongly defending.

Separate from the Planning process, it may be possible to make any contract with the owner of the saleyards for the stopped part of Blenheim Road and other land adjoining the saleyards conditional upon the owner entering into a land covenant or encumbrance to be registered over the saleyards title restricting use to residential. That will be a matter of negotiation with the owner of the saleyards at the time of the Council disposing of the stopped part of Blenheim Road and other land adjoining the saleyards.

6.2 Traffic Advantages & Disadvantages

The Transport Planning Engineer reports:

1 Cont'd

"Potential advantages include:

- *Reduction in the safety problems of the existing Blenheim / Deans roundabout. The existing roundabout has an accident rate some 3.5 times higher than the expected average rate (taking into account the traffic volumes carried).*
- *A better level of service for cyclists and pedestrians;*
- *Reduction of traffic on Deans Avenue and, as a result, improved potential for integration of the 'Saleyards' site (zoned for Living purposes) with Hagley Park; This section of Deans Avenue currently carries some 25,000 vehicles per day. This is expected to fall to about 7,500 with the deviation (although it is still important to realise the value of this traffic link to the west of the Park)*
- *Reduction of traffic on Deans Avenue offers the potential to reduce carriageway width and devote more of the road reserve for formalised parking for visitors to Hagley Park. Some 250 spaces could be created in the space currently occupied by the southbound carriageway and verge.*
- *Encouragement of some traffic to use Blenheim Road in preference to Riccarton Road: The deviation would cut the "dog-leg" by 400m for 50% of the traffic making the manoeuvre from Blenheim / Moorhouse (or the reverse). The deviation would also provide the option for an enhanced corridor to cater for added demand should (as yet unforeseen) measures on Riccarton Road to reduce traffic and/or traffic speeds wish to be pursued.*
- *Travel time and vehicle operating costs savings would accrue to arterial motorised traffic;*
- *Direct access could be afforded to the south railyards site from a signalised intersection on an arterial road, rather than a 'backdoor' entrance via Lester Lane.*

Potential traffic disadvantages relate to the proposed removal of the existing overbridge:

- *The 25% of traffic at the Blenheim / Deans roundabout that currently travels between Blenheim Road / Deans Avenue north would be faced with a number of alternatives if this link was removed: (i) Continue to use Deans Avenue and the deviation - incurring an additional travel distance of 400m, but making the turn manoeuvre at traffic signals rather than a roundabout or (ii) Divert to Riccarton Road (and be faced with higher conflicting flows at Nancy's Roundabout). If the driver wishes to join or is coming from Blenheim Rd then a number of options exist, such as Mandeville Street and Clarence Street. In total it is anticipated that traffic volumes on the 'lower' end of Riccarton Rd (east of Mandeville Street) would increase marginally, currently 23,000 vehicles per day.*
- *There are anticipated to be net savings to the transport system as a result of the deviation. A scoping traffic study commissioned from a local consultant concluded that there would be net disbenefits, but this study had deficiencies in terms of calibration, modeling of intersection delays and assumed timing of works elsewhere on the network. However, given the scale of costs now required to implement the work and the fact that the traffic benefits would not approach 3 times this level (the funding threshold), the project is unlikely to receive any normal funding for a qualifying project via Transfund. We do believe that some contribution could however be claimed in lieu of maintenance activity (43%) and potential future replacement (48%) of the existing bridge. In present value terms, this total Transfund contribution is not expected to exceed \$540,000. In other words a significant potential disadvantage is that the vast majority of the project would have to be directly funded by Council."*

6.3 Parks Policy Issues

The Parks Manager advises:

"The proposed deviation will have a significant positive impact on the recreation, amenity and access values for South Hagley Park. By deviating the high volume traffic route away from the Deans Avenue frontage of the park there will be a reduction in noise and a consequential improvement in the park ambience. The Hagley Park Management Plan, adopted in 1991, and a later Council resolution, did not permit the provision of any further large scale parking areas within the park. However it was recognised that there were significant parking and access issues.

1 Cont'd

This proposal presents an opportunity to solve longstanding traffic and parking issues associated with this portion of Hagley Park through the provision of an off-street parking zone that does not encroach into the park open space. This will create safe and convenient access for the large number of people who regularly utilise this part of the park for recreational pursuits.

Should this proposal proceed the detailed design for the car park will need to be integrated with the landscape features of the park and ensure the protection of existing trees and the park boundary."

6.4 Leisure Issues

The Leisure Manager advises:

"For a number of years both Leisure and Parks Units have reported to Council on the longstanding issue of lack of parking at South Hagley. The opportunity of establishing 250 permanent car park spaces along the Deans Avenue boundary appears an opportunity to partly solve the parking issue.

The current proposal would enable safe parking in a controlled one-way system within close proximity to South Hagley and especially close to the Hagley Netball Courts.

South Hagley is a busy sports and events area. On Saturdays alone netball attracts approximately 7000 people to the Hagley Courts with rugby, soccer, softball, etc at the same time. During the week, especially in the early evening (peak traffic time), training and touch takes place. This is also an overflow area for events eg Circus', equestrian, etc when other entertainment areas in Hagley are full. It is also an important parking area for large events like Coca Cola Christmas in the Park and Rick Armstrong Motors Classical Sparks.

Other opportunities have been explored for additional parking at South Hagley including purchasing the area on the West side of Blenheim Road and Deans Avenue. Occasional parking (Saturdays only) within Hagley Park was firmly rejected by Council a number of years ago. At the moment some temporary parking arrangements have been made available by PDL by this is not guaranteed for future years.

From our perspective the opportunity to relieve the parking congestion in a safe manner and in such close proximity to the park should be considered very positively."

7. FUNDING

The Director of Finance has commented in respect of this issue as follows and also in the public excluded report:

"Variation from the Annual Plan and Long Term Financial Strategy

This project has not been included in the Council's Financial Plan or long term forecasts nor has it been foreshadowed in the City Plan to date. As the cost involved is significant it is doubtful whether such a commitment should be made without some form of public consultation. While there is no strict legal requirement I believe that it is in the spirit of the legislation that as a minimum suitable advertisements should be placed and public submissions called for on the proposal before a final commitment is made."

8. CONSULTATION

A significant issue in considering this project is the community understanding of the costs and benefits of the deviation from a strategic perspective.

Whilst there is a sum of \$.81M in the 1999 / 2000 corporate plan to commence purchase of some of the land required for the deviation, the full project has not been through the usual annual plan public consultative process which allows one month for residents to comment on any issues, including budgeted expenditure / revenue as it relates to specified projects / services. Clearly, the \$.81M provided for in the existing corporate plan has been through this process.

29. 11. 2000

Land Transport Subcommittee 24.11.2000

- 12 -

1 Cont'd

The Director of Finance has commented on the financing options available to the Council. If the Council resolves to run with this project now rather than later, it should then make available details of the project and intended funding and invite public submissions. This month of public consultation should commence as soon after the 29 November Council meeting as possible.

9. SUMMARY

This project presents significant opportunities to benefit the city through improved amenity from and access to Hagley Park. It also reinforces the residential zoning whilst improving traffic flows and safety. In addition there are intrinsic economic benefits resulting from such a development.

On the other side of the coin, the benefits will not be achieved without significant unbudgeted costs. Should the Council be minded to pursue this project, it will have to carefully consider the impact on existing capital programmes (roading or otherwise) existing or contemplated.

The major parties involved will all have elements of risk as outlined in the report. The Council should seek to minimise its costs and risk. There is a need to make a decision at this meeting so as to minimise risk and costs to other parties.

Recommendation: That the Council consider the recommendations included in the public excluded section of this report.

CONSIDERED THIS 29TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2000

MAYOR