

18. ROLLESTON AVENUE PROPOSED UNDERPASS

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Corporate Plan Output: On Street Management	

The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's approval in principle to the construction of an underpass to cross Rolleston Avenue adjacent to the Gloucester Street intersection.

An approach has been made to the Council for consideration to construct an underpass between the Christ College site on the western side of Rolleston Avenue and the School's Day Boy Houses and car park on the south eastern corner of the Rolleston Avenue and Gloucester Street intersection. The underpass will start adjacent to the administration building of the College and emerge on the north western corner of Rolleston House. The proposed underpass has been sited so that the ends are located in the school property and it will not therefore be available for general public access. The underpass is planned to be 2 meters wide, 2.4 meters high and located 0.5 meters below the road surface.

The proposed underpass has been designed to allow for the safe movement of pupils between two of the school's three properties adjacent to this intersection. The school presently has a roll of some 620 pupils and over a third of the school cross the road to and from Rolleston House and the car park several times each day. The school is providing this facility to ensure for the safe movement of pupils, to overcome problems with large groups of pupils crossing the road and to minimise inconvenience to other road users in this area.

The school has received a proposal to construct the underpass using precast units 3.5 meters long. By using these units it is planned that only half the road will be used for construction at a time. Details of the construction process have not been considered and there are a number of matters that need to be studied before technical approval can be given. Apart from the construction process the only visible impact of the underpass is the removal of the tree adjacent to the south side of the school entrance.

The depth of the underpass is planned to be only 0.5 meters beneath the road and footpath surface. This will impact on both existing and possible services. This depth will conflict with the tram rails and foul sewer. At this stage there has been no investigations and there may be ready solutions to these changes. While the obvious solution is to lower the underpass this can significantly impact on the cost of the underpass because of problems with the ground water

There are no direct benefits to the Council, as the road controlling authority, as a result of the construction of the underpass. The traffic signals at the intersection will still be required and there could be possible conflicts with the provision of future services. There are however direct benefits to the College and to the public in general with a safer route across the road and fewer conflicts.

The cost of construction of the underpass is to be funded by the school. It will be necessary that an easement is granted to the College and lease entered into for the use of the space under the road. Before the full impacts of the underpass and the opinions of service authorities are assessed, the views of the Committee as the property administrator are sought on the proposal as this is unique.

Recommendation: That the Council approve in principle an underpass in Rolleston Avenue subject to agreements from the Service Authorities, satisfactory lease/easement arrangements and the work being at no cost to the Council.

Note: The Parks Unit has since commented:

“A significant tree would need to be removed if the tunnel is constructed on the present alignment shown on the plans. Rolleston Avenue is a special purpose road zone and in terms of the City Plan rules (4.5.4(a)) a resource consent would be required before the tree could be removed.

As the area between the school boundary and the road forms part of the Botanic Gardens Reserve an easement in terms of section 48 of the Reserves Act would be required. This would also require the consent of the Minister of Conservation.

Approval from the Parks and Recreation Committee should also, in accordance with Council policy, be obtained prior to any removal of the tree.

Approval in principle by the Council should not therefore apply to removal of the tree.”