



3. SHIRLEY SCHOOLS CYCLE PROJECT

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of the Shirley Schools Cycle Project, and seek approval to proceed with a stand-alone section.

INTRODUCTION

The Shirley Schools Project was started in 1997 with the intention of creating a safer environment for school children to move to and from the three schools on North Parade. The schools have a combined role of over 2000. Shirley Intermediate in particular, has commented in the past that parents are not sending their children there as the school is too dangerous to get to.

The first stage of the project was completed in 1998 with the widening of the pathway on the western side of North Parade, between the crossing signals and Shirley Road.

It was recognised at the start of the project that the North Parade pathway was not the only work that was required in the area. However, after completion of the pathway, the consultation process was criticised. Hence the working party decided to expand and improve the consultation process to ensure that the additional stages were more inclusive of community views.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The extended consultation process started with a flyer to every letterbox in the immediate area surrounding the schools. It also included an appearance on local TV and newspaper articles. All asked members of the public who lived or passed through the area to advise on problems or concerns they had for cyclists, pedestrians and overall traffic issues. Over 400 pamphlets were distributed. Approximately 40 responses were received.

This consultation input was extended by a school survey asking the children how they travelled to school, and whether there were any areas where they felt uncomfortable or had had collisions. The school staff were also asked to comment on the problems and issues as they saw them.

A City Streets working party studied the responses, and developed a series of options for works in the general area. As these were assessed and evaluated, a set of preferred options finally emerged. These options were given approval to go to wider public discussion by the working party.

The drawings, explanations and questionnaires were located in 6 Community facilities in and around the schools. Over 300 letters were sent to local residents advising them of the displays and seeking their comment. Approximately 190 responses were received.

The responses were assessed within City Streets, and a set plans showing recommended works were produced. At a working party meeting in February the concepts were given general support. The plans will now go to a public meeting and to Community Board meetings as the “strongly favoured” works prior to coming to City Services.

REQUESTED ACTION FROM THIS REPORT

It is intended to report the full Shirley Schools Project to the City Services Committee at its April meeting, after the required public meetings and presentation to the Shirley/Papanui and Burwood/Pegasus Community Boards.

At this meeting, however, it is hoped to progress one particular section of the project - North Parade, east side, from New Brighton Road to Banks Avenue. This work is put to the City Services Committee for approval ahead of the full project and its process because this section of the road is due for kerb and channel renewal in this current financial year. Completing the design and approval process for this work will allow the on-street works to be commenced this financial year.

The attached diagram shows the proposal for this section of North Parade. Its key features include:

- Widening the path from 1.5m (with powerpoles in the pathway) and 1.2m berm, to 2.5m (without powerpoles in the path) and 1.5m berm to provide both pedestrian and child-cyclist access.
- Reducing the traffic lane from 4.5m to 3.5m.
- Retaining on-road cycle lanes.
- Retaining most on-road parking.
- Providing a bus-shelter.
- Providing a kerb build-out at the New Brighton/North Parade corner to reduce vehicle turning speed and de-emphasise North Parade.
- Provide a kerb build-out adjacent to the central island crossing point to reduce road-crossing distance.

This design configuration will provide cycle access for cyclists of all ages and competency levels, retain most parking, and provide reduced risk for pedestrians with a wider pathway and narrower crossing facilities.

The proposed changes to this section of pathway can stand-alone, and will not affect, or be affected by, any of the other proposed changes (whether they go ahead or not). It is therefore appropriate to seek approval for this section of work to stay up with the kerb and channel programme.

There has been only one objection from the consultation process to this part of the project. A local resident believes the widened pathway is inadequate for all the proposed users. In considering this objection, the following points are raised:

- The path is to be widened from 1.5 to 2.5m, while the usage will remain substantially the same.
- Access design standards indicate that a path width of 2.5m is fully adequate for up to 25 users per minute - a volume level which may be met at only the busiest times.
- The Disabled Persons Assembly access designer indicates 2.5m is adequate (1.5m is a minimum).
- Proposed options to separate the pathways, or paint a white line in the centre are considered impractical, as the resultant width per side would be inadequate for all users.

Overall, the proposal for this section of North Parade is considered to offer considerable stand-alone merits, and it is proposed that it proceed as a kerb and channel project, in this financial year.

CONCLUSION

The proposed work to the section of North Parade (east side, between New Brighton and Banks) can stand-alone, regardless of the other Shirley Schools project work that may or may not proceed around it. This work was supported by the Shirley Schools working party. There is one objection, but this person's concerns are not supported by others working in the same field of expertise.

It is considered that the work to North Parade will offer considerable improvements to movement to and from the schools in the area. It is therefore recommended that this work be approved and proceed as part of the scheduled kerb and channel replacement work.

Recommendation: That the widened pathway for North Parade, between New Brighton Road and Banks Avenue proceed.