



11. WAIRAKEI ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT/PEDESTRIAN ISLAND

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Brian Neill, Traffic Engineer
Corporate Plan Output: Traffic Signs and Markings	

The purpose of this report is to reactivate a proposal to improve traffic management along Wairakei Road between Stanleys Road and Roydvale Avenue and construct a pedestrian island near Tait Electronics, a project first considered by the Council in 1998. This report was considered by the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board on 29 February 2000. The Board supports the revised plan and siting of the refuge proposed.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 23 September 1998 the Council, on the recommendation of the City Services Committee, approved traffic management improvements for the section of Wairakei Road between Stanleys Road and the Roydvale Avenue roundabout. The Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board had approved the installation of “Give Way” signs which have been placed in Sheffield Crescent and in Stanleys Road at their intersections with Wairakei Road. The Board also approved of the traffic management changes which included the extending of the flush median from the roundabout west to Stanleys Road.

At the time there was some discussion about the hazards faced by people crossing Wairakei Road between Sheffield Crescent and the roundabout at the intersection of Roydvale Avenue and Wooldridge Road. Tait Electronics, a major employer in the area has factory, administration premises and training facilities on both sides of Wairakei Road which generate much to-ing and fro-ing by staff.

In August last year, an approach was made by Tait Radio Communications to the Council about the prospect of providing a pedestrian island in Wairakei Road to cater for the pedestrian crossing movements that occur in this section of roadway during the day. Following site meetings between Tait Radio Communications management and City Streets engineering staff a preferred site for a pedestrian island has been chosen.

PREVIOUS TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

Although the Council approved the marking of broken yellow “no stopping at any time” lines along the south side of the roadway, this plan, due to pressure from a number of businesses west of Holt Place, was not implemented. The case made by the businesses revolved around the need to implement the plan as they did not agree that a flush median was necessary nor the installation of cycle facilities (lanes) with the relatively low traffic volume at that time. The main concern was for the removal of some kerbside parking which is used by employees as an all day parking area.

The plan was placed on hold until the then proposed Russley Road/Wairakei Road roundabout was constructed and fully operational. It was considered that the construction of the roundabout by Transit NZ would increase the volume of traffic using Wairakei Road and place more pressure on the section between Stanleys Road and the roundabout at Roydvale Avenue. The compromise with the businesses at the time was that the plan would be resurrected once traffic data was available following commissioning of the Russley Road/Wairakei Road roundabout.

A copy of the previous traffic management plan is attached to this report.

THE NEW PLAN

There is a need for the Council to reconsider the traffic management plan that was proposed in 1998. The new (but similar) plan now includes a pedestrian island mid block between Sheffield Crescent and the roundabout at Roydvale Avenue, the relocation of a bus stop on the south side and the banning of all other kerbside parking along this short section of roadway. Cycle lanes have been included along both, not just one, side of the roadway and more roadspace allocated to turning traffic at the Stanleys Road intersection. Existing kerbside parking is retained along the north side of Wairakei Road up to the entrance to Tait Electronics opposite the eastern intersection of Wairakei Road and Sheffield Crescent.

The “Give Way” signs from the original proposal have been installed in Sheffield Crescent and Stanleys Road. A number of enquiries have been received from businesses along the south side of the roadway concerning lack of visibility from driveways and the possibility of assistance through the banning of kerbside parking a feature of the previous plan.

A copy of the new traffic management plan is attached to this report.

TRAFFIC DATA

Traffic volumes have risen since the roundabout at Wairakei Road/Russley Road was commissioned. The speed of traffic through the area indicates that the majority of motorists are travelling at under 60 km/h with the average speed being 54 km/h.

Between 70 and 120 people cross Wairakei Road in the vicinity of Tait Electronics premises during each core business hour of the day indicating that the proposed pedestrian island is needed. Although cycle movements are relatively low along this section of Wairakei Road it is regarded as a strategic link to the airport now that the roundabout at the Russley Road/Wairakei Road intersection has been provided. The proposed flush median will assist right turning traffic and introduce a traffic calming measure on an arterial road where traffic volumes are increasing.

For the last 5 years, traffic volumes along this section of Wairakei Road have been relatively stable at approximately 5,000 vehicles per day. Since the roundabout was constructed at the Russley Road/Wairakei Road intersection this volume has increased to 5,703 vehicles per day.

Approximately 30 kerbside parking spaces are presently available along the south side of Wairakei Road (between Stanleys Road and the roundabout at Roydvale Avenue) with approximately half that number regularly used for all day parking during the week.

PROCESS

The Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board will be reconsidering this project and in particular the siting of a pedestrian island adjacent to Tait Electronics. The plan will need to be recirculated to businesses in the area and the City Services Committee appraised of the situation with a view to recommending to Council that, subject to satisfactory consultation with businesses in the area, the traffic management plan first considered in 1998 and now modified be implemented.

CONCLUSION

The original plan to improve traffic management along Wairakei Road between Stanleys Road and the roundabout at Roydvale Avenue was not fully implemented when agreed to by the Council in 1998. Over the past two years pedestrian activity at the eastern end of this section of Wairakei Road has increased along with traffic volumes. The problem of sight visibility from entranceways into businesses along the south side of the roadway remains.

With the establishment of the new roundabout at the Russley Road/Wairakei Road intersection and potential for even more traffic to enter this area, it is appropriate that the plan be reviewed by the Council with a view to installing a pedestrian island midway between Sheffield Crescent and the roundabout at Roydvale Avenue, the banning of kerbside parking along the south side of the roadway between Stanleys Road and the Roydvale Avenue roundabout, the extension of the flush median to Stanleys Road and the painting of cycle lanes along both sides of the roadway.

The Committee supported the revised plan for improving traffic management in Wairakei Road between Stanleys Road and the roundabout at Roydvale Avenue and, following satisfactory consultation with businesses in the area, will make appropriate recommendations to the Council concerning bans on kerbside parking.

Recommendation: That the Council approve the siting of a pedestrian refuge island in Wairakei Road as shown on the attached plan.