

## 5. STATE HIGHWAY REVIEW

<b>Officer responsible</b> City Streets Manager	<b>Author</b> Stephen Matheson, DDI 371-1653
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The purpose of this report is to obtain the Council's approval of a joint submission from the Council and Transit's Canterbury regional office on possible changes to the State Highway network within Christchurch.

### INTRODUCTION

Transit NZ adopted the present State Highway system in Christchurch following extensive discussions with the City Council in 1990. The review included a study of the appropriate roading hierarchy and a review of the road widening designations on State Highways. There was a further review in 1996 and while some changes were flagged for the future there were no changes made to the State Highway network within the City as a result of this review.

The change in classification does not alter the traffic flows in Christchurch but reflects the importance and function of the roading system. There have been no major changes in traffic patterns since the last review except for general increases in volumes on all roads.

### PRESENT STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

#### *Present System*

Four State Highways service Christchurch as part of the major roading system. These are illustrated on the attached map. The basic statistics about these routes are shown in the following table.

	<i>State Highway 1 @ Main North N Johns</i>	<i>State Highway 73 @ Brougham E Collins</i>	<i>State Highway 74 @ Cranford N McFaddens</i>	<i>State Highway 75 @ Halswell N Glovers</i>
<i>Volume</i>	29,000 vpd	26,000 vpd	18,000 vpd	6,600 vpd
<i>% Heavy Vehicles</i>	11%	16%	11%	8%

#### *State Highway 1*

State Highway 1 acts as the north/south bypass using Johns and Russley Roads to connect between Main North Road and Main South Road. This route provides the most direct and logical connection between the north and south of Christchurch City. It allows a significant number of vehicles to access the northern and southern industrial areas and Christchurch International Airport which is the major generator of tourist traffic and freight in the area. This function is possible without traffic entering the central city.

A significant proportion of heavy vehicles use this route as a means of bypassing Christchurch City to access other regions to the north and south. There is no current feasible alternative to this State Highway. Any parallel route available would involve significant diversion and delays. Routes further to the west would involve significant additional distance to travel. Routes closer to the central city would have a significant impact on residential areas with a consequential reduction in the safety of the road.

#### *State Highway 73*

State Highway 73 acts as the connection between the West Coast, Canterbury plains and Christchurch City. It proceeds along Yaldhurst Road to State Highway 1 at Russley Road and continues along Main South Road and Brougham Street to State Highway 74. Brougham Street traffic flows generally comprise up to 20% heavy vehicles. This indicates the vital role it performs in the movement of heavy vehicles between the Port of Lyttelton to the main southern industrial areas and further to other regions.

The route provides an easy and direct connection from the port to the west by avoiding the main inner city congestion. The high level of service provided by the route allows longer distance trips to be undertaken safely and without interference from shorter trips also using portions of the route. There is no feasible alternative to this State Highway. The section of Moorhouse Avenue which was State Highway prior to the construction of Brougham Street is subject to significant delays and passes through extensive commercial development areas. No alternative routes are available to the south of Brougham Street. The section of Yaldhurst Road and Curletts Road which lost State Highway status in the 1990 review provides a shorter connection than using State Highway 1. Reinstatement of this section provides the only alternative and is being requested as part of this joint submission.

## State Highway 74

State Highway 74 connects the central area of Christchurch City and the north. It also provides a connection between the commercial centre of Christchurch and the industrial areas to the south and to the Port of Lyttelton but passes through residential and commercial areas. It provides the most direct and convenient connection for inter-regional trips between the north and the Port of Lyttelton while performing a distributional function for trips to and from the city centre. It provides the main access for the major tourist interests in the city centre and other regions to the north.

There are a number of alternatives to the present State Highway 74 but the recommendation from the 1996 review was that it be relocated to follow Marshland Road and the Woolston Burwood Expressway route to Lyttelton.

## State Highway 75

State Highway 75 acts as the only major and direct access linking Christchurch to the significant areas of tourist interest on Banks Peninsula. The route follows Curletts Road and Halswell Road out of the City. There are no practical alternatives but it is proposed the route should be reviewed when the Southern motorway extension is completed.

### 1996 REVIEW

The State Highway system was last reviewed in 1996.

A recommendation (conclusion) from the State Highway review panel in 1996 was:

*"It is considered appropriate to relocate SH74 to the east side of Christchurch from SH1 turn-off at Chaney's via Marshlands Road, New Brighton Expressway (QEII Drive and Travis Road), the proposed Burwood Expressway (including Bexley road and Dyers Road) and Tunnel Road once the Burwood Expressway is constructed."*

And

*"If SH74 is relocated as per the above, then it is considered appropriate to extend SH73 via Brougham Street, Opawa Road and Port Hills Road to link with the proposed route of SH74 at Tunnel Road."*

### THIS SUBMISSION

Discussions have been held between Transit NZ Christchurch, and the Council's Land Transport Subcommittee who have agreed to lodge a joint submission:

1. That on completion of Woolston Burwood Expressway Stage 2 (expected June 2003)
  - (a) To relocate SH74 to the east side of Christchurch from the intersection of Northcote/Main North via QEII Drive, and Travis Road, the proposed Burwood Expressway, Bexley Road, Dyers Road and Tunnel Road.

This is a change from the recommendation from the 1996 review in that it is proposed that Main North Road remain as State Highway rather than shifting the SH to Marshland Road. The Main North Road is the higher quality route and any change would be premature until the NROSS is complete.
  - (b) To revoke the existing SH74 from the intersection of Main North Road/Queen Elizabeth Drive via Main North Road, Cranford Street, Sherbourne Street, Barbadoes Street/Madras Street, Moorhouse Avenue, Waltham Road, Brougham Street, Opawa Road, Port Hills Road, to Tunnel Road.

This gives the Council control over Cranford Street and the Barbadoes Street/Madras Street one way pair and should allow for better integration with future central city projects.
  - (c) To extend SH73 via Brougham Street, Opawa Road and Port Hills Road to link with the proposed route of SH74 at Tunnel Road.
  - (d) To create SH74(a) from Dyers/Palinurus intersection via Palinurus Road, Rutherford Street and Garlands Road to the Garlands/Opawa intersection.

The Council considers it is important that the central city and the industrial area immediately to the south of the central city are well served by the State Highway network from all directions. At present the service from the north is provided by SH74 using Cranford, Barbadoes and Madras Streets.

With the removal of SH74 through the centre of the city it is important that all of the eastern ring road becomes State Highway. This route can then be seen clearly as a replacement for the existing SH74 in providing a service from the north of the city to the centre and the industrial area in the south. It will complete the eastern bypass of the city as well as providing access to the port. There is the added benefit of improving the State Highway linkage from south of the city to the industrial areas on the eastern side.

With all of this eastern ring road as State Highway it can clearly be signed and maintained as a high quality route of preference for commercial traffic ahead of roads through the centre of the city.

2. Create SH73 from Yaldhurst/Masham intersection via Yaldhurst Road, Peer Street and Curletts Road to the Curletts/Blenheim intersection.
3. The submission also proposes that a future review should give serious consideration to including the remainder of the ring road in the State Highway network ie adding in the section from the Peer Street/Yaldhurst Road intersection via Peer Street, Waimairi Road, Grahams Road, Greens Road and Northcote Road to the Main North/Northcote intersection.

A copy of the joint submission is attached.

#### **COST IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL**

The proposed changes are reasonably neutral with perhaps a slight increase in the annual maintenance cost for the Council. The submission adds to the length of State Highway within the city and the ring road route has a significant amount of grass berm to maintain. On the debit side for the Council there are 24 more sets of traffic signals for the Council to maintain. Overall there is possibly a \$30,000 net increase (after Transfund subsidy) for the Council.

#### **PROCESS FROM HERE**

Transit NZ will consider submissions and release a draft decision in July 2002. There will be an opportunity to make a submission on this draft during the period July to September and Transit will release its final decision in December 2002.

**Recommendation:** That the joint submission be approved.