

2. STRAVEN ROAD SIGNALISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AT MATAI STREET

Officer responsible
City Streets Manager

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The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the installation of a pedestrian actuated signalised crossing on Straven Road at Matai Street.

BACKGROUND

A report to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee in November 2001 (which had also been considered by the Fendalton/Waimairi and Riccarton/Wigram Community Boards) which involved a plan to replace kerbs and channels for Straven Road, between Fendalton Road and the Kilmarnock Street/Kahu Road intersection, was adopted by the Council at that time.

Incorporated into the kerb and channel work was a new traffic management plan that included installing cycle lanes on both the east and west sides of Straven Road and the installation of three pedestrian and cycle refuges.

The placement of refuge islands on Straven Road at Rochdale Street and at Te Kura Street received good public support during the consultation process. However, the placement of the third, and largest, pedestrian and cycle refuge at the intersection of Straven Road and Matai Street, while initially gaining community support, lost the majority of this support once residents realised that it would require the banning of right turn vehicles movements into and out of Matai Street.

Because of the high volume of pedestrian and cycle movements across Straven Road at the intersection of Matai Street it was suggested that to provide maximum protection, the island should be at least 28 metres in length. It was proposed that the island, could be installed outside No 53 Straven Road, and continue in a southerly direction ending at the south/east side of the Straven Road/Matai Street intersection. This would provide protection for those cyclists travelling south on Straven Road and needing to turn right into the Christchurch Boys' High entrance, opposite Matai Street, as well as providing protection for the large number of pedestrian and cycle movements across Straven Road at Matai Street. However, right turn vehicle movements would not be possible with this option.

Further community consultation resulted in a public meeting being held at the Sockburn Service Centre on 10 April 2002, followed by a subsequent (informal) meeting between members of the Fendalton/Waimairi and Riccarton/Wigram Boards, and the City Streets Unit. At these meetings board members and staff were asked by the community to consider a traffic signal option as well as the 'traffic island' proposal for controlling pedestrian and cycle movements at the Straven Road/Matai Street intersection.

While the local community acknowledged the need to provide a safer crossing facility for students at this intersection they felt that the installation of a refuge island and the banning of right turn vehicle movements was too restrictive.

The City Streets Unit concluded that the safest option for pedestrians and cyclists, if right turn vehicle movements were to be retained, is to install a signalised pedestrian and cycle crossing.

The proposed pedestrian and cycle crossing initiative would be similar to that recently installed on Peer Street for Villa Maria College students and on Curletts Road for Riccarton High School students for very similar reasons.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

- Straven Road is a minor arterial and carries 18,500 vehicles per day.
- It is difficult for students to cross Straven Road, both to and from the Christchurch Boys' High hostel in Harakeke Street and to and from the Christchurch Girls' High School, because of the traffic volume.
- The number of students crossing range between 200 - 250 and these crossing movements coincide with peak vehicle movements along Straven Road.
- Surveys undertaken by City Streets Unit with both Christchurch Boys' High and Christchurch Girls' High students clearly identified that they consider the intersection of Straven Road and Matai Street as one of the most hazardous road crossings on their journey to and from school.

SIGNAL HARDWARE

The crossing would include overhead mast arm signals so that good visibility of the crossing is provided for vehicles on the north and south approaches. The crossing will have 'sensors' located in the footpath adjacent to the signal poles with the pedestrian call button. This 'sensor' requires pedestrians and cyclist to remain standing on it until the pedestrian phase comes in. If pedestrians step off the 'sensor' it will automatically cancel the pedestrian phase and this means that vehicles travelling along Straven Road are not required to stop unnecessarily. A plan showing the proposed layout is attached.

Subsequent consultation with the Christchurch Boys' High Principal and Board of Trustees Chairman and the local community has shown that the installation of a pedestrian actuated pedestrian crossing at Straven Road and Matai Street, and the retention of right turn vehicle movements, is fully supported.

FUNDING

The total budget for Straven Road	\$732,000.00
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The estimated total cost of physical work, including the pedestrian actuated traffic signals, and professional fees	\$725,000.00
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CONCLUSION

Road safety research indicates that a pedestrian actuated set of traffic signals may be the best solution at mid-block locations where pedestrian and cycle activity is concentrated along a short section of road, carrying high volumes of traffic. In addition, providing 'crossability' for pedestrians, especially the most vulnerable, children and the elderly, is an important part of the 'Living Streets' philosophy adopted by the City Streets Unit and supported by the Council.

This matter was also considered again by the Fendalton/Waimairi and Riccarton/Wigram Community Boards at their June meeting and both boards support this proposal.

Recommendation: That a signal control pedestrian crossing be installed in Straven Road at Matai Street adjacent to the entrance to Christchurch Boys' High School.