

4. EVENTS ON LEGAL ROAD

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The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the current issues relating to events on legal road and to recommend that processes for the management of traffic (through traffic management plans) be adopted.

This report is supported by the Coordinating Committee for Traffic Safety and the Festivals and Events Subcommittee. Policy recommendations relating to events on roads in the city will need to be adopted by the Council.

BACKGROUND

On 1 July 2001, Transit NZ brought into effect the requirements set down in the National "Code of Practice for Temporary Traffic Management". The Christchurch City Council has formally adopted this code in lieu of developing its own. Although the code relates primarily to the requirements for traffic management at roadworks, it was seen as being ideal for controlling all other events on roads as well. Roadworks usually involve a well defined site, the presence of trucks, machinery and roadworkers help to highlight the fact that hazards may be encountered when passing the site. Some events such as 'street parties' are relatively confined and can be easily controlled. On the other hand events such as cycle or running races can involve competitors spread out over a large area of the city.

During the summer months in particular, the city is busy with events such as displays, parades, filming, sporting and other commercial and community activities.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Police contacted the Council in 2001 following fatalities that had occurred in Queenstown (during a car race) and in Banks Peninsula (during a cycle race). Legal action resulting from the Queenstown incident has been completed and charges have only recently been laid against the organiser of the cycle race which passed along roads under the control of the Christchurch City Council.

The legal implications for the Council (and Council staff) revolving around the staging of events was discussed with the Police and appropriate action was taken to put into place procedures for future events. This has resulted in roads having to be closed for events involving people walking or running on the carriageway.

Staff require traffic management plans to be submitted with each event application where organisers must demonstrate that they have followed the procedures set out in the "Code of Practice for Temporary Traffic Management" (the code). Over the last few months guidance from City Streets staff has assisted organisers of events. Training for personnel has been undertaken and forms supplied to organisers responsible for conducting events in the city.

The new processes involving these procedures are being followed and were recently audited. There is now a need for the Council to set some policies with regard to the staging of events on roads in the city.

TRAINING

To facilitate this process the Council's City Streets Unit has funded the necessary training to enable 19 event organisers to become qualified as "Site Traffic Management Supervisors" (STMS).

A requirement of the Code is that all Traffic Management Plans are to be prepared by a qualified STMS. To date, the Council have not insisted on this as STMS qualified staff have been able to assist during the phasing in of the new requirements. This has proven to be quite time consuming and it is therefore proposed that a qualified STMS prepare Traffic Management Plans from 1 July 2002. This is likely to result in the Council providing additional training for voluntary event organisers. Some organisations have already taken steps to train their own event officials.

APPROVALS

The approval of Traffic Management Plans has also proved to be time consuming for staff. This process needs to be carried out by a qualified STMS. In the future, this activity may be able to be contracted out and event organisers could use other (qualified) event organisers to prepare plans.

There is no formal process in place that checks the event on the day, to ensure that what is shown on the Traffic Management Plan is actually in the right place on the road. It is therefore proposed to implement a random audit process. This process has to have the ability to close an event down if it is found to be in non compliance with the traffic management plan. This could be implemented after 1 July 2003, to give the event organisers time to set up their own processes to ensure compliance with the code.

The main issue that the Council has responsibility for is permission to use Council roads. Many events such as marches and demonstrations have requested the use of Colombo Street. With the central city location of the bus exchange and the fact that almost all bus services use Colombo Street, this creates major problems for bus operators. It is therefore proposed to severely limit events on Colombo Street between Moorhouse Avenue and Armagh Street. Exceptions could be celebrations such as an America's Cup parade and the annual Children's Christmas Parade. These exceptions should be kept to an absolute minimum. Criteria to determine which events/parades may take place on Colombo Street can be developed and/or a limit imposed on the number of such events allowed per annum.

EQUIPMENT

The main problem for some event organisers at present is the lack of available signs, cones, safety jackets and barriers that are required to meet the standards set down in the Code. To overcome this the Council's Leisure Unit has facilitated the formation of an equipment trust. A seeding grant has enabled this to happen. The Trust is now awaiting the outcome of applications to organisations like the Lotteries Commission for funding. It is anticipated that in excess of \$100,000 worth of equipment is required for this system to cope with the demand. The idea is that a small charge will be levied to cover wear and tear and administration of the equipment.

CHARGES

At the moment there is no formal charging process for events on legal road. The Parks and Waterways Unit charges for the use of parks and reserves with a formalised fees structure.

If Traffic Management Plans are prepared by a qualified STMS and are approved by a different STMS outside the Council, then an approval fee is not necessary. The Council's role of giving permission to use the road can be done without charging. However, when roads are closed to traffic for events for a commercial organisation it seems logical to involve a charge to cover costs such as public notification of road closures, loss of revenue from parking meters and rental for road space.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the following policy recommendations be adopted:
 - (a) That all Traffic Management Plans for events on roads be prepared by a qualified Site Traffic Management Supervisor (STMS) from 1 July 2002.
 - (b) That staff consider ways of reducing the cost involved in processing Traffic Management Plans with the view of implementing charges by 1 July 2003.
 - (c) That independent audits be carried out on a random basis on events from 1 July 2003.
 - (d) That events run for commercial gain (including those involving large film companies) be required to meet all processing and advertising costs, equipment hire, roadspace rental and parking charges.
 - (e) That, due to the problems faced by bus operators, Colombo Street and Cathedral Square between Moorhouse Avenue and Armagh Street be used for major events/parades only, with other events/parades being required to avoid this area.
 2. That Worcester Street between the Museum and Cathedral Square be offered as an alternative route for parades and events as a means of reducing the use of Colombo Street.