

4. NORTHLANDS REDEVELOPMENT: ASSOCIATED TRAFFIC MEASURES

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The purpose of this report is to present and seek approval for a recommended plan for a revised traffic management scheme for Langdons Road.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting in February 2003, the Committee received a report that presented a draft plan for proposed traffic management measures associated with the redevelopment of the Northlands Shopping Centre, for the purposes of consultation. The measures covered the portions of Langdons Road and Sawyers Arms Road east of the railway line and the section of Main North Road between these two roads. The Committee decided *“that the information be received, that the proposed scheme be endorsed and additional information in relation to the use of the proposed roundabout by cyclists and the provision of traffic signals, as opposed to a roundabout, be reported back to the Committee together with the results of the consultation.”*

The Committee was advised at their February 2003 meeting of the tight timeframes required for certain of these measures to be implemented, in order to be integrated with the programme for the redevelopment of the Mall.

In this respect, the immediate priority is for resolution of the measures that might be implemented on Langdons Road, and it is on this section only that this report concentrates. As a result of the consultation process, described below, further design work is being done on the affected sections of Main North Road and Sawyers Arms Road, to consider the submissions made and come up with a fully-considered modified scheme plan for recommendation to the Council. These sections will therefore be covered in a report to the next round of Council meetings.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The draft traffic management proposals were circulated for comment via a leaflet drop to owners and residents in adjacent properties, in potentially-affected adjacent local streets and via a display at the Mall. In addition, two public meetings were held at Papanui High School to present and discuss the proposals in greater detail and receive feedback. A specific meeting was also arranged with the (pupil) Council of Papanui High School. The consultation period closed on 21 March 2003. The public were advised in this process that certain parts of the draft plan were fixed by conditions attached to existing resource consents held for the Mall redevelopment, for example the principle of the roundabout on Langdons Road where the new Sissons Drive meets Langdons Road and Restell Street. The plan circulated for comment is shown in the attachment.

FEEDBACK AND REVISED (RECOMMENDED) SCHEME

Railway to Restell Street

In this section, feedback from the LTSA suggested that the proposed no-stopping be extended on the south side of the road to the eastern side of the railway; that the flush median should be carried through to the other side of the rail crossing and that a refuge be supplied to assist pedestrians and cyclists to cross safely, especially cyclists using the cycle path along the railway line. The revised Recommended Plan (see attachment) incorporates each of these elements.

The extension of the flush median will provide safer access into and out of the main school entrance, whilst the refuge will prevent abuse of this flush median when the rail crossing signals operate, as well as offering improved protection for users of the railway cycleway. However, due to budget constraints, the scheme does not provide at this stage for a full refuge and signalised cycle/pedestrian crossing at the railway. Such a scheme will, however, be considered and prioritised against other cycle network improvements in future programmes.

Students and the LTSA expressed concern that limited provision (apart from a flush median) appeared to have been made in the draft plan to cross Langdons Road and enter or exit the school directly at the eastern entrance. The recommended plan thus now extends and widens the traffic splitter island west from the proposed roundabout to encompass a solid refuge at this point, in addition to the crossings provided further east on Langdons Road. This extension will, however, prevent a direct right turn to be made into Langdons Road from the driveway exit running alongside the western boundary of the Library, but alternative access for this manoeuvre of course exists via Restell Street.

The draft plan circulated for consultation had incorporated feedback from the Shirley/Papanui Community Board by incorporating a lay-by for two short-term car parks immediately outside the Library/Service Centre. This proposal was well received and has been retained in the recommended plan.

Restell Street/Langdons Road/Sissons Drive Intersection

Feedback on this intersection was limited.

Regarding the form of the intersection (that is the proposal for a roundabout as opposed to another form of intersection, such as traffic signals), it was noted that the Council had accepted the principle of a roundabout in December 2001 and this duly formed part of a legal agreement between the Council and the mall owners, as well as their resource consents.

Whilst no written responses were received requesting traffic signals at this location, as noted above the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee did express some reservation about the proposal for a roundabout when compared to a potential alternative for traffic signals. The Project Team had considered the pros and cons of each of these forms of control in coming up with the draft plan, but in response to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee feedback, again canvassed the alternatives. The Project Team has, however, reaffirmed that its clear technical recommendation to the Council would be for a roundabout at this location.

This recommendation is made for a number of reasons: Whilst it is acknowledged that anecdotal evidence would tend to support an assertion that traffic signals are (generally) perceived as safer for pedestrians, and cyclists, than roundabouts, the Project Team considered that:

1. Given the proposed design, a roundabout at this particular location will ensure a slower speed environment than traffic signals (at which drivers frequently speed up on seeing a yellow signal!).
2. The opportunities for pedestrians to cross will undoubtedly be greater with the roundabout when compared with signals (given the traffic flows and proposed solid refuge islands at this particular location). Pedestrians will therefore have less delay, and it will be much safer crossing (Langdons Road) than at present.
3. The projected turning movements of vehicular traffic at this location are fairly heavy (eg into and out of Sisson Drive) and in this case signals do not necessarily represent an advantage in terms of improved pedestrian safety when compared to roundabouts.
4. The demand from cyclists through the existing intersection is generally low - some 24 being counted between 3:30pm and 6:30pm, or an average of about eight per hour. During the morning peak hour this count is even lower. That said, cycle lanes have been proposed to promote improved cycle safety on this route and hopefully encourage increased demand. The proposed cycle path on Sisson Drive will also hopefully encourage (more) cyclists to turn right from Langdons Road and use this path, and it is considered that this movement will be better served by the proposed roundabout than traffic signals.
5. The efficiency of vehicle flows will be significantly better with a roundabout, given the projected traffic demands at this location. The Signals Engineer advises that it would be difficult to provide coordination with the controlling signals at Main North Road and for this, and the above reasons, he clearly favours provision of a roundabout.
6. The Office Solicitor advises that the Council is in a "grey area" concerning whether approvals have, or have not been given to the mall owners to proceed with the construction of the roundabout on legal road, according to their resource consent. Despite the legal position, the City Streets Unit of the Council has advised the owners that the go-ahead for roundabout construction cannot be given until Council have formally decided on the form of the intersection.

A number of respondents did, however, express concern regarding the detail of the draft plan concerning the pedestrian paths at the proposed roundabout. These related to the width and breadth of the crossings and a desire that these crossings be consistent. The width of each of the crossings has been checked and is more than adequate to accommodate a cycle within the refuge. The breadth of all of the crossings has been increased in the recommended plan, to ensure adequate space for adults assisting children by hand to use the crossings. With respect to consistency, the draft plan proposed 'chicane-type' crossings on three legs with only the Restell Street leg being a more standard ('straight') crossing. The 'chicane-type' crossings were proposed because these allow users to cross behind a vehicle stopped on approach to the roundabout, whilst maximising visibility of pedestrians crossing the exit leg to any approaching vehicles. It was, however, physically not possible to incorporate such a design on the Restell Street approach because of the very limited width of this street.

The advantages of the 'chicane-type' crossings are, however, considered by the City Streets Unit to be significant for the vast majority of users. However, the recommended plan now provides for some improvement in consistency by adopting 'chicane-type' crossings across Langdons Road and 'straight-type' crossings along Langdons Road (ie across Sisson Drive and Restell Street).

Restell Street to Main North Road

Little feedback was received from respondents over this section, which may be taken to indicate a general endorsement of the draft proposals.

Nevertheless, in light of some concerns related above about pedestrians crossing Langdons Road at Restell Street, some attention has been paid in this section to the proposed solid island refuge also proposed opposite the main mall entrance. A pedestrian count indeed confirmed that this location was clearly the main centre of demand, with some 820 pedestrians (24% children) counted crossing in a three hour period on Friday between 3:30pm and 6:30pm. This compares with 23 pedestrians (5% children) counted crossing Langdons Road at Main North Road, 59 (40% children) counted crossing between here and Restell Street and 277 (34% children) counted crossing between Restell Street and the school. Whilst these other movements will all be catered for, the Project Team have also added to the recommended plan a zebra crossing at the mid-block crossing point and modified the crossing to be a 'chicane-type' for consistency with those on Langdons Road at the proposed roundabout.

Further east, school pupils did express some concern over the use (or rather abuse) of the left turn slipway exit recently installed from the Mall car park, with drivers frequently blocking the footpath. The solid refuge included in the draft plan is considered likely to improve this situation somewhat, as it will limit the ability for drivers to turn right, but the recommended plan also includes extension of the red cycleway marking across this entrance and an offer would be made to the Mall owners to install a give-way stop line at the back of the footpath and appropriate signage with the Mall site.

Environment Canterbury have now expressed a preference for retention of the bus stops on the north side of Langdons Road - contrary to the Project Team's understanding from previous consultation with Environment Canterbury that removal of this stop, and provision of a layover stop only on the south side would be acceptable. In discussion it is apparent that Environment Canterbury's recently-expressed concern stems from a desire to retain maximum flexibility for layover stops to cater for future service routeing changes. The Project Team have looked at the alternatives to accommodate this request, however, and believe that the removal of a (layover) stop on the north side, as was proposed in the draft plan, is still in the best interests of the overall plan (given the higher priority given to pedestrians and cyclists).

Main North Road/Mary Street/Langdons Road Intersection

A number of respondents expressed concern about the ability to turn right off Main North Road into Langdons Road, with some of these suggesting a right turn arrow could be installed. It was reported to the public meetings that there was a need to balance installation of a green arrow to provide improved service for this movement (typically 4-7% of traffic using the intersection), against the extra delay this would impose on the other 93-96% of traffic. It was, however, also reported that Sisson Drive and the new parking buildings at the Mall Northlands are anticipated to change traffic flows in the area (possibly reducing demand for this movement) and that when these alterations are completed and traffic flows settled down this intersection will be re-examined with respect to the potential provision of a right-turn arrow. A further report would therefore be provided on this aspect in due course, but at this stage it is not proposed to include one in the recommended plan.

A number of concerns were raised from both drivers and pedestrians (particularly the partially-sighted) about the proposal for an island and free left turn from Langdons Road into Main North Road. It was suggested that vehicles waiting to turn left would block the proposed zebra pedestrian crossing (and the island could not be modified to move the crossing further from the stop-line). Furthermore, it was suggested that the free left turn out of Langdons Road will (continue) to be impeded by the right turners exiting Mary Street. It was noted that this would be unlikely to be a problem when the road rules change after which the right turners will have to give way to the left turners - and there are relatively few right turners from Mary Street anyway, about two a minute during the peak. However, in response to these concerns, the recommended plan deletes the draft proposal for a free left-turn and effectively retains the status quo at this intersection - except insofar as a remarking of the Langdons Road approach to encompass dedicated (coloured) space for cyclists, with an advanced stop-box, in a slightly-modified format to that shown in the draft plan.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee will be aware that, given that Langdons Road is a collector road and the proposed measures thus affect capacity on the designated road network, final responsibility for its traffic management rests with them.

The Project Team thus seek the Committee's endorsement for their recommended plan and approval for its immediate implementation. The appropriate supplementary decisions to legalise this scheme are also given, should the Committee choose to adopt the primary recommendation.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Committee endorse the recommended plan for Langdons Road and approve it for construction.
 2. That the present parking restrictions be revoked:
 - (a) On the north side of Langdons Road commencing at its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 221 metres.
 - (b) On the south side of Langdons Road commencing at its intersection with Main North Road and extending to its intersection with Restell Street.
 - (c) On the south side of Langdons Road commencing at its intersection with Restell Street and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 121 metres.
 3. That the following parking restrictions be imposed on the north side of Langdons Road:
 - (a) That the parking of vehicles be prohibited (at all times), commencing from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 221 metres.
 - (b) That the parking of vehicles be prohibited (at all times), commencing at a point 274 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 67 metres.
 4. That the following parking restrictions be imposed on the south side of Langdons Road:
 - (a) That the parking of vehicles be prohibited (at all times):
 - (i) commencing from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 18 metres.
 - (ii) commencing at a point 59 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 29 metres.

- (iii) commencing at a point 100 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 6.5 metres.
 - (iv) commencing at a point 128.5 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending to its intersection with Restell Street
 - (v) commencing at its intersection with Restell Street and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 18 metres.
 - (vi) commencing at a point 30 metres west from its intersection with Restell Street and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 152 metres.
- (b) That the parking of vehicles be restricted to a maximum period of 30 minutes, Monday to Sunday:
- (i) commencing at a point 18 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 22 metres.
 - (ii) commencing at a point 46.5 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 12.5 metres.
 - (iii) commencing at a point 106.5 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 12 metres.
 - (iv) commencing at a point 122 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 6 metres.
- (c) That the parking of vehicles be restricted to a maximum period of 10 minutes, Monday to Saturday:
- (i) commencing at a point 18 metres west from its intersection with Restell Street and extending in a westerly direction for a distance of 12 metres.
5. That a zebra pedestrian crossing be installed across Langdons Road at a point 75 metres from its intersection with Main North Road.
6. That a bus stop be installed on the south side of Langdons Road commencing at a point 88 metres from its intersection with Main North Road and extending in an westerly direction for a distance of 12 metres.