

# 1. **NORTHLANDS REDEVELOPMENT: ASSOCIATED TRAFFIC MEASURES (MAIN NORTH ROAD AND SAWYERS ARMS ROAD)**

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The purpose of this report is to present and seek approval for a revised traffic management scheme for part of the Main North Road and Sawyers Arm Road.

## **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting in February 2003, the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee endorsed a draft plan for proposed traffic management measures associated with redevelopment of the Northlands Shopping Centre, for the purposes of consultation. These measures covered the portions of Langdons Road and Sawyers Arms Road east of the railway line and the section of the Main North Road between these two roads. At its March 2003 meeting, the Committee was presented with a plan for Langdons Road that had been modified in response to the consultation process and approved this plan.

This report concentrates on the remaining sections of the draft plan, namely the Main North Road and Sawyers Arms Road. As a result of the consultation process described below, further design work has been undertaken on the affected sections to consider the submissions made and to achieve a modified scheme plan for recommendation to the Council.

## **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 student 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 Mall access opposite Halliwell Avenue. The plan circulated for comment is shown in the attachment.

## **FEEDBACK AND REVISED (RECOMMENDED) SCHEME**

### **Main North Road/Mary Street/Langdons Road Intersection**

A number of respondents expressed concern about the ability to turn right off the 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 also reported that Sissons Drive and the new parking buildings at the Northlands shopping centre 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 settle down, this intersection will be re-examined with respect to the potential provision of a right-turn arrow. Although a further report will be provided on this aspect in due course it is not proposed to include a green arrow in the recommended plan at this stage.

In response to concerns expressed by both drivers and pedestrians, the recommended plan deleted 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 is required to encompass dedicated (coloured) space for cyclists, with an advanced stop-box, in a slightly-modified format to that shown in the draft consultation plan.

The LTSA commented that the proposed limit lines on the Main North Road approach to this intersection were set too far back and it is now therefore recommended that they stay as they are.

## **Main North Road (Langdons Road - Halliwell Avenue)**

One respondent asked for the median south of Procter Street to be shortened to allow for longer queue lengths for the right turn from Main North Road into Langdons Road. However, this would open up the opportunity for drivers accessing the opposite driveways to turn right at this point, which the City Streets Unit consider to be unsafe. It might also be noted that with the proposed move of the existing bus stop outside No. 50 Main North Road in the nearside southbound lane, this should reduce congestion at this location in any event. The draft layout is thus retained in the recommended plan in this respect.

Current no-stopping restrictions exist over much of the east (residential) side of this section of the road, except between Halliwell Avenue and Procter Street. The recommended plan would require the imposition of no-stopping restrictions, resulting in the removal of approximately 18 on-street car parks, in order to provide the traffic lanes, pedestrian refuge, flush median and on-street cycle lanes proposed over this section. Consultation confirmed some resident frustration due to the take-up of these parking spaces by mall visitors or staff. All the properties in this section also appear to have garaging and most have turning facilities on their property. On-street parking for visitors to these properties (not using the Mall car parks!) would also still be available within Procter Street and Halliwell Avenue, involving a maximum walk of about 90m. Any disadvantage afforded by the removal of on-street parking (when it is available for residents or their visitors) will also be balanced to a degree by a reduction in safety concerns due to the currently-restricted visibility on leaving driveways.

On the residential side of the road (east side), the bus stop outside No. 50 Main North Road (just south of Procter Street) and that outside No. 72 Main North Road (40m south of Halliwell Avenue) are proposed to be relocated outside No's. 54 and 56 Main North Road (just north of Procter Street) and bus shelters provided for passengers. This will place them in a more convenient position to be paired with the proposed stop on the Mall side of the road, with a solid pedestrian refuge proposed to be provided between them. It should be noted that there was strong opposition expressed by the owners of both properties to this proposal, although for one of these at least it seemed to be allied to the required removal of on-street parking currently available, as she was now 'required' to park her truck outside the property given the use of her own driveway by four or five of her tenants. It was suggested that if she required her tenants to park a very short distance around the corner in Procter Street, then she will be able to park her truck in her driveway. Alternative locations were explored for these stops by the design team, but it was concluded that those proposed represent the best balance between the safety and convenience of all road users and bus users.

## **Main North Road (Site Access/Halliwell Avenue)**

As noted above the Mall owners intend to replace the current Sissons Road access with a new site access in a position opposite Halliwell Avenue. They have a right to three accesses along this frontage and propose to reduce this number to two. The owners existing resource consent also provides for an access in this location. The City Streets Unit believes that there will be significant advantages in terms of improved safety and convenience of all road users if this access is signalised and the resource consent provides for the developer to fund this signalisation and associated works, if the Council requires it.

The advantages of the signals include:

- A safe and convenient crossing facility will be provided for pedestrians (minor design changes have been included in the recommended plan to promote the safety of pedestrians still further).
- Approach cycle lanes can be incorporated to improved the safety of cyclists.
- Residents and visitors to approximately 56 properties located in the culs-de-sac of Halliwell Avenue and Tulloch Place would no longer have to 'run-the-gauntlet' when turning into (or from) or crossing Main North Road by car, on cycle or on foot. They will have a 'guaranteed' gap in traffic created by the proposed traffic signals.
- Substantial safety (and convenience) improvements are anticipated for Mall users, particularly when compared with the poor safety record of the old Sissons Road.

In association with the signalisation of this site access, some kerb realignment would be required on the west (Mall) side of the road. Together with removal of on-street parking, this will provide space for a left turn lane into the Mall, space for a double bus stop and an on-road cycle lane to be marked on both sides of the street.

It will be seen that the recommended plan retains the draft proposal to install traffic signals at this location. The proposal was almost universally supported by consultation responses from Halliwell Avenue and Tulloch Place residents, with the exception being one Tulloch Place resident who objected strongly to the proposal. The supporters cited the likelihood of a much safer and more convenient level of service afforded by the proposed traffic signals, as well as improved pedestrian crossing facilities. There was however, a call for Halliwell Avenue to be clearly marked as a 'No Exit' street and this would form part of the works, if approved.

### **Main North Road (Halliwell Avenue - Sawyers Arms Road)**

The existing bus stops on the Countdown side (opposite No. 86 Main North Road) are confusing to passengers as they serve both 'inbound' and 'outbound' services. It is proposed to replace these with two separate stops: One for 'outbound' services is proposed to be located at the north end of the new Countdown building, and a further stop for 'inbound' services located in Grassmere Street, between the driveways of 80 Main North Road and 5 Grassmere Street (where there is currently a no-stopping restriction). The consultation plan included a proposed pedestrian refuge to assist passengers crossing between these stops who did not choose to use the Halliwell Avenue or Sawyers Arms Road signal crossings. Two respondents called for removal of this refuge, but the design team still see it as valuable and recommend its retention in the plan.

There were also two requests that the proposed bus stop in front of Countdown be moved further south to provide one or two more on-street parking spaces. This is not possible without compromising the rationale for moving the bus stop in the first place and would not allow further on-street parking to be provided anyway in a safe manner. We were also requested to consider moving the proposed bus shelter(s) back against the building. At the time of writing we are currently still awaiting a formal response from the Mall owner to our request to facilitate this.

### **Sawyers Arms Road**

Again, on this section of road, the principal aims of the proposed draft scheme were to promote safety for all road users and more convenient access to residential driveways on the north side. A flush median (incorporating two solid refuges) and on-road cycle lanes were proposed to assist these objectives. Parking on the south (Mall) side of the road was proposed to be removed (except that an indented parking bay was proposed to service the retail site at the corner with Main North Road), to provide sufficient space for these facilities. Parking on the north side of the road (adjacent to residential dwellings) was proposed to be retained wherever possible.

There was strong opposition to the draft plan from the owner and tenants of the shops on the south-west corner of Main North and Sawyers Arms Roads, insofar as it reduced the existing on-street parking available at the eastern end of Sawyers Arms Road, eg: *"The proposed reduction in on-street parking in Sawyers Arms Road will suffocate our small businesses."* The respondents would have preferred to retain as much of the existing parking as possible, and some suggested that the recently-opened waterway on the south side of Sawyers Arms Road might be covered over to allow this retention, and/or the proposed cycleways or flush median be removed.

These options have all been considered by the design team. Our recommendation is to retain the proposed cycle lanes and the flush median, but we have also sought to maximise the on-street parking provided.

The recommended plan thus incorporates an additional parking bay on the south side of the road which can accommodate three more car parks, as well as retention of a further two spaces on the opposite side of the street. Extension of the parking bay further west would not be possible without compromising the new waterway and/or acquiring land from the Mall. Furthermore, it might be argued that parking this remote from the shops might also be viewed as being of questionable value in any event.

The shopkeepers, and others, also objected to the proposed removal of the pedestrian cross-walk on the south side of the signal intersection. The former group suggested that the removal would further inhibit access to the existing on-street parking (that it is proposed to retain) on the west side of Main North Road, whilst users of the medical centre suggested it was a valuable route to retain. Pedestrian counts have confirmed this to be the case and thus the recommended plan now proposes to retain the existing facility.

## **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

Given that the changes proposed have a significant impact on the function of arterial/collector roads, final decisions for traffic management changes on these roads rest with the Council. The appropriate recommendations regarding legalisation of the road markings to support the recommended plan changes will be put to the Council once final resolution is achieved over the location of bus shelters on the west side of Main North Road.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council delegate the responsibility for final resolution of the issue of bus shelters on the east side of Main North Road to the City Streets Manager.
  2. Subject to the adoption of recommendation 1 above, the attached recommended plan for Main North Road and Sawyers Arms Road be approved for construction.