

9. FROSTS ROAD - PROPOSED OFF ROAD CYCLEWAY AND FOOTPATH

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of progress on a proposal to construct an off-road cycle and pedestrian path, along the eastern side of Frosts Road.

It is recommended that the Board endorse the implementation of Option 3 out of four options considered for the development of this project.

BACKGROUND

The Transport and City Streets Unit reported to the Board's 10 November 2003 meeting on a proposed cycle and pedestrian facility on Frosts Road (copy circulated separately to Board members). This report was part of the response to community requests for a pathway.

The Board requested in February 2002 that a path facility be investigated. The Board accepted the Transport and City Streets Unit's recommendations in November 2003 to proceed with detailed design and construction. At that time it was anticipated to construct the path before the onset of wetter, winter weather.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The detailed design process has revealed a number of technical requirements which require further Board approval and which have created a significant cost escalation. The trees between the road edge and the drain are very large in height and width, and have significant root structure. Any proposal to construct a path while retaining the trees would be technically difficult as well as extremely expensive and the Transport and City Streets Unit would not support the continued implementation of this project if they were to be retained (comparative estimates of cost of this option and those below will be presented at the meeting).

The City Arborist has advised that the trees, wilding "crack willows", are mostly in a poor condition and have a history of wind-throw and breakage in high winds. The removal of the trees allows the development of a less expensive option. As part of the design process, four options were investigated:

Option 1 - original option

- Requires removal of all trees.
- Meandering 2.5 metre path.
- Requires relocation of the existing drain in places.

Option 2

- Kerb and channel on golf club side.
- 2.5 metre path parallel to road approximately 2 metres away from kerb.
- Requires removal of all trees.
- No changes to Pressors Drain.

Option 3

- Kerb at either end and at golf entrance.
- 2.5 metre path parallel to edge of seal approximately 2 metres from edge of seal.
- Requires removal of all trees.
- No changes to Pressors Drain.

Option 4

- Kerb at either end.
- Minimum work at golf club entrance.
- 2.5 metre path parallel to edge of seal approximately 2 metres from edge of seal.
- Requires removal of all trees.
- No change to Pressors Drain.
- Regular flooding of pathway will occur over a length of 60 metres (estimated) and last several days.

The recommended option is Option 3, which will overcome potential flooding problems in the vicinity of the golf club entrance. A detailed diagram of the proposal will be displayed at the meeting.

TREE REMOVAL

Frosts Road has many trees situated within the road reserve or on the road boundary. In the report to the Board in November 2003, there was an indication that a total count of trees on the east roadside numbered several hundred. While it was reported that several trees would need to be removed, the recommended option following detailed design requires most of the "crack willows" to be removed.

Many of these trees have structural defects that render them prone to failure and therefore need to be considered as a potential hazard to the public. In the saturated ground conditions existing on the site, the willows have developed shallow root systems in a soil that has poor cohesion and a low shear strength that provides inadequate safe anchorage for roots. The depth of the excavation work required to form a stable foundation for the proposed cycleway will also require the removal of lateral roots growing in the direction of the cycleway, critically affecting the existing stability of any willows nearby.

Given the considerable age, poor condition and safety considerations relating to the trees, combined with the fact that cyclists and pedestrian traffic would be moving closer and directly beneath them on the proposed cycleway, it is considered that the trees should now be removed to protect public safety.

Board members will be aware, however, that the trees are a significant feature and that the proposal that they be removed will require appropriate advice to local residents through the project consultation process.

The Arboriculturist will be available to answer any specific questions relating to these "crack willows".

PATHWAY JUSTIFICATION

The Transport and City Streets Unit is currently developing a process whereby all footpath requests are prioritised against identified factors; that is, safety, convenience, etc. The existing surveyed usage of Frosts Road by cyclists and pedestrians was reported previously. Further reasons to justify the provision of this path are listed below.

JUSTIFICATION

1. Safety. While the road shoulders were recently widened to allow space for cyclists, Frosts Road is narrow and cyclists are still considered to be "at risk". An off-road facility would provide a safe alternative.
2. Improved access for pedestrians and cyclists to QEII Golf Club. Note that this course attracts younger participants.
3. Assistance for sporting events; for example, Kiwi Triathlons at QEII. Children competing will have a safer off-road facility when cycling or running around QEII.
4. General access to QEII from adjacent urban areas, in particular Parklands.
5. Patronage levels at QEII are expected to continue growing following its redevelopment and other improvements, which will further generate usage of Frosts Road for access by pedestrians and cyclists. Note that increased vehicular usage will also occur, and no path provision further compromises safety for these vulnerable users.
6. Completion of pedestrian/cycle links in this area. Pedestrian/cycle facilities exist on Travis Road and Anzac Parade. Provision of a path facility on Frosts Road allows persons who wish to cycle/walk to inner urban areas, to do so with lesser risk from semi-rural traffic.
7. Creates a safer route to school for high school students travelling to and from school.
8. Linkage to the Travis Wetlands paths for recreational walkers.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Board endorse the implementation of a project to provide a cycle and pedestrian pathway on the east side of Frosts Road, as described as Option 3 of the report.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: Not seen by the Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson.