

2. HARAKEKE STREET – PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE

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The purpose of this report is to:

1. Advise the Board of a concern raised about the lack of footpath facility across the Harakeke Street river bridge.
2. Seek endorsement from the Board for a project to mitigate this issue, and approval to proceed with consultation with local residents.

BACKGROUND

Board members are aware of residents' concerns about the traffic management of Harakeke Street. Many of the concerns have been addressed in the accompanying report to this meeting entitled "Harakeke Street/Rochdale Street – Traffic concerns".

There are two further concerns raised by residents regarding the Harakeke Street river bridge, namely:

1. Lack of footpath facilities at the Avon River bridge.
2. Potential confusion created at the Avon River bridge regarding vehicle right of way. (Note: While this bridge is wide enough for two vehicles to pass, it is very tight, due to the 6.5 metre width.)

The Avon River is the boundary between the Fendalton/Waimairi and Riccarton/Wigram Community Boards. This report is being considered by both Boards. The renewal of kerb and channel will provide the opportunity to address many of these traffic issues. Reconstruction of the bridge would provide the opportunity to provide footpath facilities, however, the river bridge is in good condition, and is some years away from renewal.

CURRENT REQUEST

A resident, who lives on the west side of Harakeke Street, just north of the bridge is sight impaired. He needs to cross the river bridge, on the west side, to access public transport etc. Due to his sight impairment, he has received injuries when falling on the hazardous south side approach to the bridge.

During my own site visits, I have felt very intimidated by motorists in large vehicles, who appear to have little regard for the pedestrian using the bridge.

THE RECOMMENDED PROPOSAL

The City Transport Unit has a budget available for minor footpath works which improve access. A footpath can be created on the west side of the bridge, using kerb blocks to create a separation between vehicles and pedestrians. The creation of a 1.9 metre wide footpath, and 0.6 metre kerb block width, would result in a 4.0 metre road widths on the bridge. There are a number of benefits that can be achieved from this:

1. Footpath on the western side, suitable for all users, including wheelchairs.
2. Separation of pedestrians from vehicular traffic on the bridge.
3. Remove the present confusion for motorists, travelling in each direction, who arrive at the bridge at the same time. The current 6.5 metre width reduced to a 4.0 m width would make the bridge clearly a one lane bridge. (This would require a formal resolution to install a Give Way control, in one direction.)
4. The narrowing of the bridge for traffic, will act as a traffic calming device in regard to speed.
5. A resident and a Riccarton/Wigram Community Board member has suggested that the Give Way should control southbound traffic. This can act as a disincentive for any buses and all traffic, to use this road as a bypass.

CONCLUSION

A suitable width footpath, with appropriate delineation between pedestrians and traffic is not possible to be achieved on the existing bridge width. Should a footpath be introduced, the resultant road space would be insufficient for two vehicle lanes. While this proposal will not solve all issues raised by residents, it will assist in mitigating existing problems, and remove the unsatisfactory situation for the sight impaired resident. It would appear to complement future traffic management on Harakeke Street, when budgets permit, or when the road is reconstructed. This can be constructed immediately due to available funds.

Both Community Boards are receiving this report, due to the "boundary" nature of the project. If both Boards resolve to proceed with the proposal, then appropriate "One Way Bridge" signs will be erected on the bridge approaches if the footpath is constructed following a favourable response from the local community.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Board endorses this proposed project to improve safety and convenience for pedestrians on the Harakeke Street, Avon River bridge.
 2. That the Board approves consultation with local residents.