

7. BRIDLE PATH ROAD SHARED FOOTPATH

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The purpose of this report is to request that the Board approve distribution of the attached Bridle Path Road footpath concept plan to stakeholders for consultation.

BACKGROUND

Pedestrian access along Bridle Path Road, linking the retail/commercial area at Ferrymead and Heathcote Valley, is at present unsafe and discontinuous between Ferrymead Park Drive and Cannon Hill Crescent. Along this stretch, pedestrians are presently required to walk on the inside of a bend with no shoulder for a safety buffer. This issue has been raised by Heathcote residents, and has led to the allocation of budget for the proposed footpath work in the 2004/05 capital works programme.

Bridle Path Road is a minor arterial road carrying 3200 vehicles per day. It forms part of a known cycle training network and is to become a bus route from November 2004. It has an open, rural feel, with large oak trees along both sides of most of the alignment. Except at intersections, there is no kerb and channel, with the edge of seal leading on to grass berms, and a narrow footpath on the west side only.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to provide a two metre wide off-road shared path on the west side of Bridle Path Road, from Ferrymead Park Drive to the existing path in the Ferrymead Historic Reserve (the Reserve) opposite Cannon Hill Crescent. The path will pass through existing trees and shrubs within the berm area between Ferrymead Park Drive and the Tramway Society driveway, and then in front of a pump station located on the north side of the Tramway Society driveway, before connecting into the existing footpath within the Reserve. The length of the proposed path is 246 metres.

The works will also involve the development of a service access at the rear of the pump station off the Tramway Society entrance and installation of fencing around the pump station for security.

The Tramway Society entranceway will be slightly altered to provide better road and footpath definition, and a safer crossing for path users. Work will also be undertaken to improve the existing surface at this entranceway.

There is presently a sealed area and roundabout between the Tramway Society entrance and the old Ferrymead Park Access Road. The sealed access at this point will be removed and replaced with landscaping.

Some thinning of existing vegetation along the proposed path route is required to provide better visibility, improved sight lines to the existing toilet block, and to reduce any possible "stranger danger" for the new path. Some preparatory vegetation thinning work was undertaken earlier this year, as outlined in a memorandum to the Board dated 26 March 2004.

DISCUSSION

A number of options were considered for the alignment of the footpath between Ferrymead Park Drive and the Tramway Society entrance, and for the provision of service access to the pump station.

Footpath Alignment

Option 1: Off road path along old Ferrymead Park access road

Under this option, the alignment of the path between Ferrymead Park Drive and the Tramway Society entrance would follow the old Ferrymead Park Access Road, which is no longer used by vehicles. This option would require less footpath construction as the existing road surface could be used. Trees and bushes at the eastern side of the old access road would require extensive trimming and some removal to open up the area to improve "perceived safety" and provide clear sight lines. Minor illumination would also be required for after dark use.

This option was discounted because it conflicts with future development planned by the Tramway Society.

Option 2: Off road path within berm area between Bridle Path Rd and old Ferrymead Park access road

There is a five metre to nine metre wide landscaped berm area between Bridle Path Road and the old Ferrymead Park access road. The width of this area allows for the development of a meandering, off road path for both pedestrians and cyclists. This option would require trimming and thinning of existing vegetation within the berm area to open it up, improve “perceived safety” and provide clear sight lines.

Option 2 is the preferred option.

Option 3: Off road path along the kerb line

This option involves installation of a footpath against the kerb, and would require the installation of kerb and channel along the path length, and the removal of several mature Oak trees from the roadside.

This option was discounted because the continuous length of kerb and flat channel that would be required would not be in keeping with the Bridle Path Road environment, and because having the path against the kerb means traffic would be passing pedestrians at relatively high speeds.

Service Access to Pump Station

Option 1: Kerbside indented parking bay

This option involves the development of a kerbside indented parking bay adjacent to the pump station. This would provide access to the pump station for routine maintenance and servicing, including flushing of the pump station, which occurs every eight weeks for four hours at a time.

This option was discounted on the grounds that the footpath would be blocked during servicing of the pump station, and because of safety issues associated with accessing the site on a bend, on a narrow section of Bridle Path Road.

Option 2: Service access off Tramway Society entranceway

This option involves the development of a service access at the rear of the pump station off the Tramway Society entrance, along with the installation of a fence and gate for security.

This is the preferred option for the provision of service access to the pump station, as it provides safe and effective access, and avoids the potential problem of service vehicles blocking the footpath.

CONSULTATION

The scheme proposed has been reviewed by Transport and City Streets Unit staff and meets the scheme objectives.

Internal consultation has been undertaken with the Greenspace Unit, the Water and Waste Unit, the Property Unit, and the project team working on the proposed Heathcote Valley developments.

Discussions have been held with the Tramway Society, and the Heathcote Valley Community Association have been advised of the proposed project and are fully supportive of it.

It is proposed that consultation be on an “inform” basis. This will involve sending stakeholders a copy of the attached Concept Plan and a covering letter explaining the proposed works and indicating the expected start time for construction. Contact details for the consultation leader will be provided for any questions, issues, or points of clarification, and due consideration will be given to any issues raised.

This consultation approach is proposed due to a number of factors, including:

- it is considered that there will be minimal, if any, change in the impacts on adjoining landowners, as pedestrians and cyclists already use this route (despite the lack of safety or a formal path) because there are existing paths at either end of the project length;
- the project addresses an issue originally raised by local residents;
- the project affects a very short section of Bridle Path Road, and directly impacts on only a limited number of properties;
- the Tramway Society and the Water and Waste Unit, which will be most directly affected in terms of access requirements, have been involved in the development of the concept plan; and
- the Heathcote Valley Community Association has been kept informed of the proposal and is fully supportive.

In the event that any questions or issues raised by stakeholders result in any changes to the proposed works, the Board will be kept informed.

Staff

Recommendation: That the proposed footpath construction on Bridle Path Road be approved for public consultation on an “inform” basis.

Chairperson’s

Recommendation: That the recommendation be adopted.