

3. BOWENVALE AVENUE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval of the preferred option to do nothing at this time in relation to traffic calming measures along Bowenvale Avenue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Bowenvale neighbourhood improvement project was originally included in the Capital Works Programme following historical complaints received by the Council, which identified vehicles travelling at high speeds as being a problem in Bowenvale Avenue.
3. Consultation was undertaken in September 2004, which included a questionnaire sent to residents of Bowenvale Avenue and side streets. The conclusion from the questionnaire was that while the majority of residents did see speed as a problem in the street, a speed survey showed that high speeds were recorded in the early to mid-morning, through to late afternoon period. This is a time that predominantly relates to local residential traffic, rather than late night speedsters, or mountain bikers, who are generally evening or weekend users.
4. Some residents expressed the view that they should not be burdened with the cost (through rates), and inconvenience of traffic calming measures, when only a small minority of motorists speed.
5. A letter was sent to residents in December 2004, summarising the consultation feedback. Residents were advised that it was the Council's view that engineering solutions would not be the best solution to resolving the speed matter. In particular, as it is the residents who are concerned about speed in the street (and it appears to be residents predominantly doing the speeding) it is considered by the project team that the residents would be the best people to resolve the problem.
6. It was anticipated that once the matter of speeding was clearly identified, then the letter sent out to all residents would be as effective as traffic calming measures. It was also made clear that if residents' actions did not reduce the problem, then the Council would re-address the issue in 2006/07.
7. No responses were received in relation to the December 2004 letter and the initial consultation findings.
8. The preferred option is to do nothing at this time. The project's capital has been delayed a year, and the speed matter will be re-tested in February/March 2006.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9. The neighbourhood improvement works for Bowenvale Avenue were programmed in the Transport and City Streets Unit's capital programme for implementation in the 2005/06 financial year. However, as no further action is proposed during this year, the funding will be reprogrammed as part of a new planning phase to review the traffic speed issue in 2006/07. Unit processes will manage the budget transfers between years.
10. There are no legal implications for this project.

BACKGROUND ON BOWENVALE AVENUE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT

11. The Council has historically received requests to address traffic speed in Bowenvale Avenue from the residents, who identified vehicles travelling at high speeds as being a problem. Bowenvale Avenue has a closed and defined catchment, and therefore does not have a high number of vehicles commuting through the street to join onto other streets.

12. Consultation was undertaken with residents of Bowenvale Avenue and side streets in September 2004 to investigate the traffic speed issue and to ascertain whether this problem has since been resolved.
13. A letter was delivered to all residential owners and occupiers of Bowenvale Avenue and side streets, which asked residents to confirm if there was a problem with traffic speed along Bowenvale Avenue. A cut-off slip and freepost envelope were provided to encourage residents to express their concerns, if they had any.
14. It was explicitly stated in the letter that this initial feedback would determine if the project proceeded or not. If it were found that there was a general concern relating to traffic speed in Bowenvale Avenue from residents, the Council would consult further with residents regarding the types and locations of options to be investigated.
15. The Council had a good response to the initial consultation letter, with a 45% response rate (i.e. 147 responses received out of 326 delivered). Of these responses, 108 indicated that there was a speed related problem, 23 considered there was no problem, and 7 did not provide an answer to this question, but raised other issues.
16. Where no response was received from residents, it was assumed that they had no problem with traffic speed in Bowenvale Avenue. This was explicitly stated in the letter sent out for consultation.
17. The other common issues arising from the initial consultation included:
 - Cyclists (including mountain bikers) – 47 responses
 - Hoons/boy racers – 54 responses
 - Bus route and bus issues – 9 responses
 - Dark street (i.e. lighting issues) – 2 responses.
18. Due to the reasonably high response rate identifying speed-related issues along Bowenvale Avenue (i.e. 33% of the total delivered), a speed survey was carried out in late October/early November 2004. This survey found that the majority of speeding (64%) was generally occurring over the mid-morning to late afternoon period on weekdays, with the speed in one instance recorded at over 100 kph. There were 3-4 instances of speeds recorded between 80 to 100 kph on each day during the survey period.
19. Based on these findings, the project team concluded that the timing of speeding vehicles related predominantly to local residents, rather than late night speedsters, or cyclists/mountain bikers.
20. It is important to note that this finding does not discount the occasional record of speeding vehicles late at night or in the early hours of the morning. Generally, hoons/boy racers tend to speed at night, while cycling/mountain biking generally occurs in the late afternoon (in summer) and on the weekends. However, the high speed issues identified appear to be the result of residents themselves speeding during the day.
21. It was therefore concluded that:
 - Of those respondents who indicated that there was not a speed problem, it is interesting to note that they generally live in rear sections (i.e. not directly fronting Bowenvale Avenue) with the exception of 34, 99, 102, 103 and 109 Bowenvale Avenue.
 - While some respondents indicated the exact location of the speed problems, many of the respondents took an holistic approach and considered that speed was a problem for the entire length, and “speedsters” were seen along many parts of Bowenvale Avenue.
 - Of the other issues raised, the findings indicated that 32% of respondents perceive that cyclists and/or mountain bikers are the cause of the speed problem, while 37% perceive that hoons/boy racers are the cause of the problem.
 - Analysis of the speed survey data clearly shows that the higher speeds are occurring during the mid-morning to late afternoon time periods on weekdays. This time period does not occur when hoons/boy racers or cyclists/mountain bikers would commonly be in the area.

22. It is therefore recommended that the residents and local community should be encouraged to take ownership of the speed-related issues at this time, and that a further review of traffic speeds in this area should be carried out in 2006/07. At this time, if there is still an issue with high traffic speeds along Bowenvale Avenue, then the option of traffic speed reduction measures can be further investigated.

OPTIONS

23. While the consultation phase was largely an investigative process, potential options to address traffic speed along Bowenvale Avenue were identified as follows:
- Speed humps
 - Chicanes
 - Road narrowing
 - Police enforcement.
24. Respondents to the letter divided their opinions on these options as follows:
- Speed humps – 22 for, 17 against
 - Chicanes – 6 for, 11 against
 - Road narrowing – 8 for, 12 against
 - Police enforcement – 18 for, 1 against.
25. Of those respondents who indicated a preference for an option addressing traffic speed, 36 were in favour of engineering options, with 40 against. The non-engineering option of Police enforcement was favoured by 18 respondents, and opposed by one.
26. Other suggestions to address traffic speed included the potential for construction of raised platforms on Bowenvale Avenue at each intersection with a side road and/or lane, and the installation of a centre white line.
27. It has been acknowledged that downhill mountain bikers or hoons could be speeding, on occasions, and discussions have been initiated with the Canterbury Downhill Mountain Bike Club to make them more aware of their responsibilities.
28. It is also considered that liaison with the NZ Police to investigate the option of a localised Police enforcement campaign could be effective.
29. If the above initiatives fail to reduce traffic speed, then it is considered that it would be fair and reasonable to develop engineering solutions, such as those identified above.

PREFERRED OPTION

30. It is considered that the most cost effective solution for the Council to reduce speeds along Bowenvale Avenue is to inform residents of the findings of the initial consultation and investigation with a view to encouraging residents and the local community to take ownership of the speed-related problem. This consultation and investigation was carried out in December 2004.
31. Therefore, the preferred option is to do nothing at this time in relation to traffic speed reduction measures along Bowenvale Avenue. A new planning phase has been recommended to review traffic speeds in this area, and it has been recommended that funding be reprogrammed into the 2006/2007 budget, should other solutions (e.g. engineering solutions) be required for investigation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board approve that no further traffic speed reduction work be undertaken at this time along Bowenvale Avenue.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendation be supported.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT

The Bowenvale Avenue residents could be encouraged to be involved in Neighbourhood Week. Also, the Council's speed trailer could be utilised for educational purposes.