

10. CENTAURUS ROAD AT BOWENVALE AVENUE – SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941 8656
Officer responsible:	Transport & Greenspace Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board to proceed to final design, tender and construction of the safety improvement works in Centaurus Road near Bowenvale Avenue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. In 2004 the construction of a centre pedestrian island was proposed for this location in an earlier programme involving Centaurus Road from St Martins Road to Colombo Street (detailed later in this report). A local resident objected strongly and the project was delayed. The objection related to why a zebra crossing was not being installed at this location. The Council undertook a safety report to review the current road layout, comment on the proposed design, and investigate alternative options for the safe crossing of pedestrians. The report recommended that a splitter island with pedestrian facilities be installed in the location of the Bowenvale Avenue intersection. In February 2006 the then Transport and City Streets Unit proposed to:
 - (a) Develop a pedestrian island on Centaurus Road, east of Bowenvale, positioned between the two bus stops.
 - (b) Re-assess usage of the crossing point after 12 months in operation to determine whether it could or should be upgraded to a zebra pedestrian crossing – ie, any change in warrant conditions.
 - (c) Look at its safety programmes and assess the opportunity for improving pedestrian safety at zebra crossings.
 - (d) Examine its pedestrian network planning priorities with a view to resolving community severance and safety concerns for the crossing of Centaurus Road and the Heathcote River.
3. The principal aim of this project is to provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians on Centaurus Road near the intersection with Bowenvale Avenue. The full set of project objectives, developed after assessing overall issues in the area, is outlined in paragraph 22 of this report.
4. The preferred option includes:
 - (a) Implementation of “no parking” restrictions in combination with cycle lanes and a flush median along the road, which continues from Bowenvale Avenue to tie in with the existing “no parking” restrictions at the intersection of Major Aitken Drive.
 - (b) Installation of a pedestrian refuge island opposite 56 and 58 Centaurus Road.
5. The owners and occupiers of this section of Centaurus Road and the adjacent side streets (ie, Bowenvale Avenue, Major Aitken Drive, Caldwell Lane, Trumble Place and Enticott Lane), and Beckenham and Thorrington Schools were sent leaflets outlining the proposed project. Quantities of the same were placed at the South Christchurch Service Centre, and the notice was placed on the Council’s “Have Your Say” website.
6. Twelve responses were received. The resident whose concerns had caused the project to be deferred in 2004 was also consulted by phone. He said he would not actively pursue his opposition.
7. The only negative feedback asked that the cycle lanes be wider than proposed. The Beckenham School Principal was not entirely supportive but did not oppose the project. One man asked about the size and capacity of the centre island and was happy with the answer. Other responses were positive and several thanked the Council for building this island.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8. This safety improvement project along Centaurus Road near Bowenvale Avenue is programmed in the Transport and Greenspace Unit's capital programme, for implementation in the 2006/07 financial year, with a budget of \$57,000. The cost estimate for this project is \$45,000.
9. Aside from the resolutions relating to the new traffic restrictions set out below, there are no legal implications for this project.

BACKGROUND ON SPARKS ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Local area description, between Bowenvale Avenue and Major Aitken Drive

10. Centaurus Road is classified as a Minor Arterial Road. Traffic counts were last undertaken at a location east of Landsdowne Terrace which returned a traffic volume count of 10,035 vehicles per day (vpd), and at a location southwest of Whaka Terrace which returned a traffic volume count of 8,590 vpd. Both counts were undertaken in July 2003. Centaurus Road has become a popular link between areas to the east and south east of the city (Linwood, Sumner, Woolston, Opawa etc), and the southern and south western suburbs (Cashmere, Lower Cashmere and Westmoreland), as well as servicing the residential areas adjacent to it.
11. This section of Centaurus Road is approximately 500 metres long with several side streets – Bowenvale Avenue, Major Aitken Drive, and the Bowenvale Bridge that crosses the Heathcote River to Eastern Terrace, almost opposite Bowenvale Ave. The width of the existing roadway is between 10.1 metres to 13.2 metres.
12. The Land Transport New Zealand Crash Analysis System shows that there have been five crashes recorded for the five-year period between 2002 and 2006. The majority of the crashes have involved turning traffic at both the intersections with Bowenvale Avenue and Major Aitken Drive. The remaining crashes were loss of control incidents with the vehicles travelling too fast through the bend.
13. Centaurus Road is located in the Spreydon/Heathcote Ward. This project focuses on Centaurus Road to the east of the junction of Bowenvale Avenue. The surrounding area is mostly residential, with the north side of the road being bounded by the Heathcote River.

Prior history of this road safety project

14. In 2004 an upgrade of the cycle and pedestrian facilities on Centaurus Road, between St Martins Road and Colombo Street was undertaken. This involved continuous on-road cycle lanes marked in each direction and a number of central pedestrian islands, within central painted medians and improvements to an existing zebra pedestrian crossing by Sloan Terrace. Islands were installed near Rossmore Terrace, Major Aitken Drive, and Austin Kirk Lane. In addition, islands were situated either side of the Centaurus shopping village at Whaka Terrace and Palatine Terrace.
15. An island was also proposed at Bowenvale Avenue, however, this was not installed as explained below.
16. The decision to include an island at Bowenvale Avenue was made due to a past "safe routes to school" project carried out at Beckenham School in past years, where staff and school representatives agreed at the time that a central pedestrian island facility was desirable.
17. A local resident objected to the installation of an island at Bowenvale Avenue, requesting a zebra crossing instead. The pedestrian island was then removed from the project until the issue was investigated. A consultant (MWH) was commissioned to investigate the options for crossing at this location. The subsequent report did not strongly recommend a zebra crossing in this location – rather, it is considered as an option along with the provision that it be properly written up and warranted.
18. Due to the location's failure to meet Ministry of Transport warrant conditions, and the knowledge and experience of zebra crossings in this type of road environment, the Transport and City Streets staff could not recommend the installation of a zebra pedestrian crossing near the Bowenvale/Centaurus intersection.

19. It is considered that a central pedestrian island is the most appropriate facility on Centaurus Road at Bowenvale Avenue.
20. This issue was discussed with staff from the then Land Transport Safety Authority, who agree that at this site, installation of a zebra crossing has the potential to compromise pedestrian safety when crossing the roadway. Land Transport NZ are currently developing a national standard relating to "Pedestrian Facilities and Network Development Guidelines", which will help with respect to pedestrian facilities in the future.
21. In conclusion, the then Transport and City Streets Unit decided to undertake the following:
 - (a) Develop a pedestrian island on Centaurus Road, east of Bowenvale, positioned between the two bus stops.
 - (b) Reassess usage of the crossing point after 12 months in operation to determine whether it could or should be upgraded to a zebra pedestrian crossing – ie, any change in warrant conditions.
 - (c) Look at its safety programmes and assess the opportunity for improving pedestrian safety at zebra crossings.
 - (d) Examine its pedestrian network planning priorities with a view to resolving community severance and safety concerns for the crossing of Centaurus Road and the Heathcote River.

Project Objectives

22. To provide a pedestrian road crossing facility across Centaurus Road adjacent to the intersection with Bowenvale Avenue:
 - (a) Provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians at this location on Centaurus Road.
 - (b) Maintain or improve the existing level of service for all modes of transport.
 - (c) Provide cycle facilities at the pedestrian islands.
 - (d) Maintain or improve residents' vehicle access to and from their properties.

Scheme Plan

23. An island was originally to be installed just to the east of Bowenvale Avenue, very close to the intersection. The location has been revisited and Council staff now believe that the best location is to the east of Bowenvale Avenue, positioned between the two indented bus stops. (See **Attachment 1**).
24. This location provides better visibility and enables separation of the intersection movements and the pedestrian's movements. It also caters for bus users who were found to be a high proportion of the peak hour pedestrians.
25. The scheme plan developed for this project includes the following main features:
 - (a) A pedestrian island between bus stops, on Centaurus Road, 50 metres east of Bowenvale Avenue.
 - (b) On-street parking is prohibited due to the presence of the no stopping markings.
 - (c) This project includes minimal carriageway widening on the north side of Centaurus Road to allow for the construction of the pedestrian island.

Consultation

26. On 15 August 2006 the Community Consultation leaflet draft was discussed with Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board and a minor detail in the text changed, prior to the leaflet being distributed to households and property owners in Bowenvale Avenue and adjacent streets, Centaurus Road from Bowenvale to Major Aitken Drive, and Major Aitken Drive up to and including Caldwell Lane, Trumble Place and Enticott Lane. Beckenham and Thorrington School were also sent leaflets, quantities were placed at the South Christchurch Service Centre, and the notice was placed on the Council's "Have Your Say" website. Twelve responses were received from the consultation exercise. Refer to **Attachment 2** for the Consultation Summary.
27. The resident whose concerns had resulted in the project being deferred in 2004 indicated after lengthy phone discussions that he would not pursue opposition to the project, despite continuing to doubt that the centre pedestrian island would enhance safe pedestrian road crossing at that point.
28. The Principal of Beckenham School reported that the Board of Trustees of the school was not opposed to the island, but did not support it either, following their experiences with a similar island in Tennyson Street. His comments were to the effect that children will cross the road where they want to, despite being given instructions by adults. He did not want any of the publicity to refer to children using the riverside path, as his Board of Trustees believes this is a dangerous area for unaccompanied children.
29. Seven responses were in support of the island and some of these thanked those concerned for bringing the project to fruition.
30. One response asked questions about the 'capacity' of the island, referring to the small one in Tennyson Street as not being large enough for several children with bikes, scooters, prams etc to stand on together.
31. One response was critical of the design of the cycle way and made a "recommendation that the width of the proposed cycle lanes exceed the 'desirable minimum width' of 1.5m and is increased to a more socially acceptable 1.9-2.2m; also that the vehicle lane be widened to meet best-practice at closer to 3.5m (rather than the proposed 2.9m)." Referring to the designer, they stated that the minimum width for a cycle lane and vehicle lane in Christchurch is 4.5m, and this being 4.6m was totally acceptable. A width of 1.9m-2.2m would require significant widening through this section and be inconsistent with existing cycle lanes along this route.

OPTIONS

32. Initially two options were considered as part of the Centaurus Road (Bowenvale Avenue - Major Aitken Drive) Safety improvement project:
 - (a) Option 1: Maintenance of the status quo.
 - (b) Option 2: Bowenvale Avenue – construction of a centre Pedestrian Island.
33. Option 2 was originally proposed as a result of the community consultation process. The option involved the construction of a small pedestrian refuge island immediately east of the Bowenvale Avenue intersection. The option also involved the inclusion of cycle facilities at the pedestrian island.

PREFERRED OPTION

34. The preferred option for the safety improvement of Centaurus Road (Bowenvale Avenue to Major Aitken Drive) is Option 2 as described below and illustrated in **Attachment 1**.
35. The preferred option consists of the construction of a central pedestrian island 50m east of Bowenvale Avenue. Cycle facilities will be provided at the pedestrian island. No stopping markings will be included on the south side of Centaurus Road between the intersections of Bowenvale Avenue and Major Aitken Drive.

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

Preferred Option

36. The aims and objectives for this project are met by the preferred option, in that it provides a safe mid-block crossing point for pedestrians on Centaurus Road, by including a pedestrian refuge island with uninterrupted sight lines for pedestrians. The existing level of service is maintained or improved for all modes of transport, by defining road user space for all modes of transport and increasing safety. Cycle facilities are provided at the pedestrian facilities and from Bowenvale Avenue to Major Aitken Drive with cycle lanes.
37. On-street parking is to be prohibited on the south side of Centaurus Road due to the inclusion of no stopping markings between the intersection of Bowenvale Avenue and Major Aitken Drive.
38. There are two existing bus stops and no bus shelters along this section of Centaurus Road. The bus stops and bus lay-bys will not be relocated and remain in their current locations. There are no additional bus shelters proposed.
39. The following consent and legal issues have been considered:
 - (a) Trees – There are no protected or notable trees along this length of road.
 - (b) Buildings – There are no heritage or historic buildings, places or objects in the area of the proposed works.
 - (c) Road Widths – No consent resource will be required.
 - (d) Bylaw Changes – Amendments and/or additions will be required to the Christchurch City Traffic and Parking Bylaw 1991 for parking restrictions.

Maintain the Status Quo (If Not Preferred Option)

40. The option to maintain the status quo essentially means to do no capital works along this section of Centaurus Road. This would retain the road environment in its existing condition.
41. This option would be inconsistent with the Community Outcomes outlined in the LTCCP, and would be inconsistent with Council strategies such as the road safety, pedestrian and cycling strategies.
42. Therefore, it is considered that it would not be appropriate to maintain the status quo because of the opportunity to ensure an efficient, safe and sustainable transport system, whilst providing for all modes of transportation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board approve:

- (a) The Centaurus Road Safety Improvement Project, as illustrated in TP176301 – Issue 1 (**Attachment 1**), to proceed to final design, tender and construction.
- (b) That the stopping of vehicles be prohibited at any time on the south side of Centaurus Road commencing 6m east of its intersection with Bowenvale Avenue and extending in an easterly direction for a distance of 101.5m.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendation be supported.