

4. OPAWA ROAD (GARLANDS ROAD TO CURRIES ROAD)

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of progress on the upgrade of Opawa Road, in particular Stage 2 (Garlands Road to Curries Road) and to seek approval to adopt the scheme plan subject to minor adjustment resulting from feedback from local residents. Given that the budget and plan in concept for this stage has previously been approved by the Council, it is intended that the draft scheme plan will soon be released for feedback by local residents primarily on a 'for-information' basis. The draft scheme plan will, however, still be open to the community suggestions of minor amendments to the scheme. This report has also been provided to the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board who recommended that the Committee approve the project for consultation.

BACKGROUND

Opawa Road from Garlands Road towards the Port of Lyttelton is part of the State Highway Network in Christchurch. Transit New Zealand (Transit) is usually responsible for improvements to this network. However, some years ago the residents of Opawa Road raised concerns at the increasing volume of traffic on the road, and the adverse effects of increased traffic noise, vibration, local air pollution and accessibility to their properties. Realignment of the road was considered necessary to overcome all of these effects.

In 1996 the Council and Transit jointly commissioned a study into the potential improvements of Opawa Road and Port Hills Road. Many options were examined but all of the realignment options had a BC ratio of less than one and therefore were not eligible for full funding from Transfund. Reconstruction of the existing road was the only realistic option for Transit given their reliance on Transfund for funding. This would have gone some way to reducing the traffic noise and vibration but the benefit to local residents was minimal.

Transit did, however, agree to consider improvements above and beyond those economically justified for the betterment of the community. They could apply to Transfund for funding part of the improvements that could be justified, but the balance of the funding would have to come from the Council.

The Council subsequently reached an agreement with Transit and Transfund where Transfund funds that part of the work it considers economically justified, and the Council pays the costs above and beyond that. Both the Council and Transit/Transfund now have funding allocated over the next few years and the project planning is well underway.

The first stage of the improvements to this part of the Opawa Road was the recently completed traffic signals at the Garlands Road intersection (Stage 1). This was fully undertaken/funded by Transit as this project gained a BC ratio of greater than four. The next stage is Opawa Road from Garlands Road to Curries Road (Stage 2), followed by the final stage of Port Hills Road to Scruttons Road (Stage 3).

The Council budgets for Stage 2 of this project are:

- 2003/04 \$240,352
- 2004/05 \$2,822,897 (Transit are contributing \$331,000)

Stage 3 is still in the preliminary planning phase; a separate report will follow shortly.

STAGE 2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In the late 1990s the local resident's groups helped to identify the objectives that the re-alignment project should aim to satisfy. The project team defined these during the planning phase:

- Reduce adverse effects of the major arterial experienced by local residents (specifically noise, vibration and accessibility).
- Improve/maintain road safety and efficiency for all users.
- Enhance the streetscape.

The scheme discussed below meets these objectives.

STAGE 2 PROPOSED SCHEME PLAN

Stage 2 will provide a new two-lane road to the north of the existing road. The existing road will be used to provide a buffer zone and service lane for residential properties on the south side of the road. Some land was required on the north side of the road within the 30m designation that exists in the Transitional Plan. All necessary land has now been purchased, or is on track to be purchased prior to construction starting.

The attached plan shows the proposed Stage 2 road improvements. The new two-lane road extends from the Garlands Road Intersection to just past Curries Road. A flush median is provided the entire length with four pedestrian refuge islands available for crossing the road. Recessed bus bays allow the cyclists using the cycle lanes to pass the stopped buses without entering the traffic lanes. The service lane accessing the southern properties is divided into four sections, the longest two have separate entrance and exit points while the shorter two have one dual access point. A recessed parking bay with a 10 minute parking restriction is proposed outside the dairy on the corner of Grange Street.

The buffer zone allows the inclusion of street trees the entire length. Clumps of smaller trees are proposed within the open spaces on the south side of the intersections with seating provided outside the dairy.

The construction is programmed to start in later this calendar year and will take approximately one year to complete.

STAGE 2 - FEEDBACK

The plan will be distributed to local residents and other stakeholders primarily on an 'inform-only' basis, given that the concept of the plan has already been approved. Feedback on minor amendments will, however, be considered for inclusion in the final scheme. The project team will pay particular attention to any key issues that may be raised from feedback but it is considered unlikely that the plan will need to be changed in any major way as the general layout has already undergone much discussion and engineering with local residents, road users and Transit New Zealand to satisfy their requirements.

Recommendation: That the draft scheme plan be adopted, subject to any minor adjustment resulting from the feedback from residents.