

## 22. NORTHERN ROADING OPTIONS SCOPING STUDY - UPDATE

<b>Officer responsible</b> Environmental Policy and Planning Manager	<b>Author</b> Stuart Woods, Senior Transport Planner
Corporate Plan Output: Transport Policy Advice	

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on progress of the Christchurch Northern Roding Options Study (NROSS) since the previous report to this Committee in December last year. It should be noted that there have been a number of meetings of the elected member sub-committee overviewing this study in the interim.

To briefly review, this study has been structured around 6 stages - stages 0-5, as outlined below.

- Stage 0 Traffic model development
- Stage 1 Issues and problem identification
- Stage 2 Strategy identification
- Stage 3 Assessment
- Stage 4 Evaluation and consultation on strategies
- Stage 5 Final reporting and further study brief writing

The current study programme is attached. It will be recalled that decisions from the previous report resulted in the target completion date for this study as being identified as 23 May 2000. The current programme indicates a completion date of 30 August.

Several matters have impacted on progress of the study causing this deferment of the completion date.

In late January and early February, the final brief for the Waimakariri District Transport Study (WDTS) came to the attention of the Study Management Team. This is a joint study commissioned by the Waimakariri District Council (WDC) and Transit New Zealand, with officers from the City and Regional Councils present on the management team. In that study, there is a requirement to assess the possibility of an additional bridge crossing of the Waimakariri River (upstream of the existing motorway bridges). This network option was identified as being an unlikely candidate by the NROSS management team and was not included in the NROSS study brief. However, the raising of the issue by the WDTS required the management team to reassess whether or not to address the issue, as it could have a major impact on the validity of NROSS outputs (if an additional crossing was provided, the entry point and distribution of traffic from north of the Waimakariri River onto the Christchurch road network would be significantly different). The Study Management Team discussed this matter in several meetings and revisited earlier internal scoping work assessing the viability of such a crossing. It was concluded that an additional crossing was too unlikely to be viable to justify amending the current NROSS study and was a matter between the two Councils (WDC & CCC). This was also the stance of the City Council's elected member sub-committee. This diversion occurred at a point where the consultant was wishing to identify options and was consequently delayed for 3-4 weeks whilst the matter was resolved.

The methodology for the study required converting the CTS computer traffic model into another software suite. At the time of accepting the tenders for this study, the proposed software offered some technical advantages over the existing software suite that were considered especially appropriate to this study. The process of conversion of the model to the new software did not go as smoothly as had been anticipated. Also significant difficulties were experienced in achieving acceptable, stable and realistic results from the model for both current traffic demands and future travel demands on the “do-minimum” road network. This network is used as the basis for comparison for the various strategy options. (The “do-minimum” network is the existing road network including programmed roadworks.) The model development difficulties were principally because most improvements needed to create a stable set of results are in fact options for the strategies and therefore could not be included in a “do-minimum” road network. Many possibilities have now been explored including extensive work by the consultant and an acceptable methodology to resolve the matter has been adopted by the Study Management Team. The computer traffic model has now therefore been accepted for use in the study. Whilst this delay has been frustrating to all involved, it should also be acknowledged that:

- this will provide a better and more confident result from the modelling exercise. In other words, we have been seeking a model that will give us the *right* answer (with as much confidence as we can have), not just *an* answer.
- The additional time required to bring the computer traffic model for the study up to an acceptable level has been at the consultant’s expense.
- City Council, Transit New Zealand and Transfund New Zealand decisions whether to and where to spend millions of dollars on roading projects in north Christchurch hinge on the results of this study.

During this period in which work on building the computer traffic model (stage 0) was being finalised, other work has progressed in other areas not dependent upon the model. This has allowed stages 1 (Issues and problem identification) and 2 (Strategy identification) to be largely completed.

At the time of writing, final documentation of the traffic model and reporting for stages 1 and 2 is being completed.

From this point, progress on the study should proceed as programmed with no obvious impediments to prevent completion by the indicated date. The programme has been reviewed by the Study Management Team in conjunction with the consultant with a view to earlier completion. However, no reduction in the proposed programme appears possible.

The study is now moving to assessment of the various strategy options in a process to identify the five preferred options. A meeting of the elected member sub-committee will be arranged with the production of the initial results in mid-May to review and provide opportunity for comment on the initial analysis.

Following the stage 3 assessment work, there will be a period of public consultation in which the results of the options will be made available for comment to the wider public and interested stakeholders. This is programmed to occur in July.

The Committee will recall that in addition to NROSS, a parallel study looking into alternative transport options (recognising that the NROSS study focuses on roading based solutions) is to be undertaken and discussed with the Regional and Waimakariri District Councils. It may be known that there is a divergence of view between the elected members' sub-committee and the Regional Council regarding the management of this study. The elected members' sub-committee has expressed the view that the study should be a City Council study, with close collaboration with the above two Councils; the Regional Council position is that it should be a joint study with potentially similar partners to NROSS.

Approaches have been made to Waimakariri District Council to arrange an elected members' meeting on this matter, but they have requested a briefing report before agreeing to arrange the meeting.

A brief for this wider study is largely complete, but requires the outcomes of the above meetings to finalise and tender. Progress on these latter two items has been affected by lack of staffing resources over recent months, but this should improve with more staff available again. It is becoming a matter of urgency with NROSS likely to make significant progress again. There is a need to integrate the outcomes of the two areas of investigation prior to entering detailed study of any comprehensive strategies in the next stage of the process of resolving the north Christchurch transport system.

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

**Chairman's**

- Recommendation:**
1. That the brief be considered by the Land Transport Subcommittee and submitted for approval by the Council via the City Services Committee in June.
  2. That the study be conducted by the Christchurch City Council in close collaboration with Environment Canterbury and the Waimakariri District Council and meetings with the two Councils be arranged as soon as convenient.