

10. WAIRAKEI ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PEDESTRIAN ISLAND

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Brian Neill, Traffic Engineer
Corporate Plan Output: Traffic Signs and Markings	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of progress towards implementing the traffic management improvements along Wairakei Road between the roundabout at the Roydvale Avenue/Wooldridge Road intersection and Stanleys Road. The City Services Committee will also be considering this report and will be making appropriate recommendations to the Council.

BACKGROUND

Board members will recall considering the proposal at its meeting on 29 February 2000. The proposals were first considered by the Council in September 1998 when the ban on parking along the south side of the roadway was approved but not implemented.

At a meeting with three business people on 7 October 1998 the Traffic Engineer agreed to place the work on hold until the then proposed Russley Road/Wairakei Road roundabout was constructed and fully operational. More recently, City Streets Unit officers have been consulting with Tait Electronics Ltd over the possibility of installing a pedestrian island in Wairakei Road between the roundabout at the Roydvale Avenue/Wooldridge Road junction and Sheffield Crescent. The siting of this island was approved by the Council at its meeting on 23 March 2000. To implement this proposal it will be necessary for the Council to relocate a bus stop in the area and ban parking between Roydvale Avenue and Sheffield Crescent.

If the Council agrees, further bans on parking along the south side of Wairakei Road to Stanleys Road could be implemented as part of the complete traffic management plan.

Prior to the roundabout being constructed at the Russley Road (SH 1)/Wairakei Road intersection, traffic volumes along this section of Wairakei Road have been relatively stable at approximately 5,000 vehicles per day. The last average daily total (7 day) count taken before the roundabout was constructed was in 1998 recording 4,871 vehicles per day. Data collected for the week commencing Thursday 24 February 2000 recorded a 7 day average of 6,303 vehicles per day. The average daily total rose to 7,032 on Friday 25 February.

Cycle volumes along this section of Wairakei Road are relatively low but peak at around 30 movements (7.30 – 9 am) with 16% being school cyclists. Between 70 and 120 people cross Wairakei Road in the vicinity of Tait Electronics during each core business hour of the day.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

When the original plan was distributed for comment to businesses in the area we received 16 replies. The revised plan that was distributed as a leaflet in March 2000 drew comment from 13 recipients all of whom had useful comments to make about the proposals. Both in 1998 and in March of this year, most people supported the measures to be taken to improve visibility and access to Sheffield Crescent and business premises along the south side of Wairakei Road between the roundabout at the Roydvale Avenue/Wooldridge Road junction and Stanleys Road. There has been a positive response supporting the cycle lanes from cyclists using this section of Wairakei Road. However, some business people in the area questioned the need for such a facility when cycle volumes are not seen to be high at the present time.

A number of “workers” from the area are concerned about the further loss of kerbside parking. This view has been backed by the management at Norths Bakery and Aerofast Tie Downs Ltd. Although there are approximately 30 kerbside parking spaces presently available along the south side of this section of Wairakei Road only half that number are regularly used for all day parking during the working week.

One suggestion (from Norths Bakery) was that parking be allowed from the bend in Wairakei Road adjacent to Carters Ltd through to the intersection of Stanleys Road. A consequence of this would be for the cycle lane to be diverted up onto the existing footpath connecting with a new facility that will be constructed shortly between Stanleys Road and Russley Road.

Mr Graham Catley from Aerofast Tie Downs Ltd has asked for speaking rights to address either the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board or City Services Committee at the time that this report is being considered. Mr Catley is generally opposed to doing any traffic management work in the area as he does not consider it necessary to provide roadspace for a flush median and cycle lanes. It is understood that Mr Catley has agreed to place his concerns before the Committee at its meeting on 9 May 2000.

DISCUSSION

There has been a marked increase in the amount of traffic using this section of Wairakei Road since the roundabout has been installed on SH1 at the junction of Russley and Wairakei Roads. Many of the industries serving Christchurch International Airport have business premises in Sheffield Crescent. The link between Orchard Road and the airport precinct through the roundabout at Russley Road, along Wairakei Road and into Sheffield Crescent is becoming increasingly important indicating that the proposals to introduce a flush median at the intersections with Sheffield Crescent and Wairakei Road would improve traffic safety. Visibility problems are being sited as a hazard many people who work and/or operate businesses in the area. However, there is a body of opinion that the loss of kerbside parking would cause some inconvenience and must be balanced against the need to improve traffic management.

There are hazards for cyclists travelling through this area and for pedestrians crossing the roadway. With cars parked on both sides of the roadway and a considerable number of right turning movements into vehicle entranceways in Sheffield Crescent add to the risks for all road users.

The introduction of a flush (painted) median will provide more roadspace for turning manoeuvres but must be accompanied by a ban on parking along the south side of the roadway as there is insufficient space for both parking and a flush median. In some respects the proposal to introduce cycle lanes is a “bonus” in that roadspace can be provided for this purpose once a flush median has been introduced. The cycle lanes on their own are not the driver for the proposed traffic management improvements.

CONCLUSION

The management of traffic along the section of Wairakei Road between the roundabout at the Roydvale Avenue/Wooldridge Road junction and Stanleys Road should be improved. This will mean the loss of some kerbside parking. However, benefits of increased visibility from driveways and around the two bends in Wairakei Road, coupled with provision for turning traffic at both intersections with Sheffield Crescent will improve traffic safety.

The Council has approved the siting of a pedestrian island adjacent to Tait Electronics; parking on the south side of the road in this area will need to be banned to enable the island to be constructed.

Although cycle volumes are relatively low, Wairakei Road has been identified as a significant route to be developed for the movement of cycles in this part of the city. The proposed cycle lanes will benefit cyclists already using Wairakei Road as a commuter link and/or travelling to and from schools in the area.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the foregoing recommendation be adopted.