

## 16. ROAD WIDENING DESIGNATIONS

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Corporate Plan Output: City Plan	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the road widening requirements in the Proposed City Plan and also to report on the status of the road widening designation on Northcote Road.

### DESIGNATIONS IN THE PROPOSED CITY PLAN

The Resource Management Act (RMA) provides that a “requiring authority” can serve a requirement on the Council to include a designation for a work or activity in its District Plan. A requiring authority is either a Minister of the Crown, a local authority or a network utility operator that has been approved by the Minister for the Environment to provide utilities or other works. The requiring authority must be financially responsible for the work proposed.

The Proposed Plan contains a large number of proposed roading designations which have been imposed by either the Council or Transit New Zealand as a road controlling authority. Many previous designations have not been “rolled over” into the Proposed Plan from the Transitional Plans.

A designation lapses 5 years after the date it is included in the Plan unless a longer period is specified in the Plan, or an application is made within 3 months of expiry of that period and substantial progress has been made towards completion of the work. The Council has chosen to provide for 5 year and 10 year road widening designations in the Proposed Plan recognising the need for longer term planning for major improvements to the road network. All road widening designations included in the Proposed Plan by Transit New Zealand are specified as 10 year designations. The time for a designation to lapse is taken to be from the time the Proposed Plan becomes operative. Until this time all designations in the Transitional sections of the City Plan remain legally in force unless uplifted by the designating authority.

The lapsing of a designation within a set time frame is a significant change from the Town and Country Planning Act under which designations could be used as long term holding measures, sometimes without any specific work in mind.

A designation permits land not owned by the requiring authority to be identified for the proposed work and future purchase by the authority. This prevents it being used in a way that would make it more difficult for the designated work to be established. That is, no one can do any other work on the site without the consent of the requiring authority, even if it complies with the underlying zoning of the site. Once included in a District Plan, a designation therefore has the effect of a rule.

## **NORTHCOTE ROAD DESIGNATION**

The road widening designation of 5.5 metres on the properties along each side of Northcote Road has been continued from the City Section of the Transitional City Plan. The designation is to provide for a four lane median divided road reflecting the function of Northcote Road as a major arterial road and its importance as part of the western section of the Ring Road. This designation is specified for 10 years in the Proposed Plan.

The timing of the proposed widening of Northcote Road is reliant on a number of factors. Generally, two lane roads can carry a maximum of 20,000 vehicles per day (vpd) comfortably and up to a maximum of 27,500 vpd with corresponding congestion. The amount of congestion is dependent not only on the traffic flows but also for how long they last. Peak flows in Christchurch last from 15 to 60 minutes depending on the location, day of the week and time of day. The amount of intersection widening and adjacent land use are also factors. The two lane sections of Fendalton Road carry almost as much traffic as Riccarton Road but with significantly less congestion.

Historic and projected trends of traffic growth along Northcote Road indicate that the dramatic growth in traffic flows since the opening of QEII Drive has levelled off. The timing of the four laning of Northcote Road is dependent on the benefit cost ratio for the project exceeding the Transfund cut-off of 4 if the Council is to receive the 48% subsidy. (Note: This is likely to be lowered to around 3.5 next year).

No detailed B/C analysis has yet been undertaken but current traffic flows on Northcote Road are currently approximately 21,000 vpd and are predicted to exceed 27,500 vpd around the year 2012/13. At this time there is likely to be significant congestion and the B/C is likely to exceed the cut-off at about the same time. The timing of this project is in line with the 10 year designation which is currently in place on Northcote Road.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

There are 5 and 10 year road widening designations in the Proposed City Plan. The time being measured from the time the Plan becomes operative.

Present traffic growth on Northcote Road indicates that the road widening designation will not be required until 2012/13.

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

### **Chairperson's**

**Recommendation:** The a subcommittee of the Board meet with the Chairman of the City Services Committee to discuss this road widening designation, particularly in relation to the Papanui West Local Area Traffic Management meeting and the concern raised at the Local Area Traffic Management meeting.