

9. VICTORIA STREET CYCLE LANE PROJECT

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Alix Newman, Cycle Planner Officer
Corporate Plan Output: Pages 9.5.37 & 38	

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of plans to develop cycle facilities along Victoria Street and seek approval to proceed to public consultation.

VICTORIA STREET BACKGROUND

Victoria Street is a collector road. Between Kilmore and Salisbury intersections it has a normal two lane configuration with on street parking both sides and a central median. Between Salisbury and Bealey it has an unusual 3-lane configuration, parking both sides and no central median.

The three-lane configuration was initiated in an effort to improve outbound bus times - the theory being that the inside lane would function as a bus lane. This has not worked in practice, as buses tend to straddle the mid-lane line. Additionally, it is very unusual to see two vehicle streams travelling parallel in the two outbound lanes. Vehicles are generally staggered, so two lanes operate no more effectively than one and half lanes in practice.

The three-lane configuration is uncomfortable for cyclists. All traffic lanes are narrower than standard, placing cyclists closer to car doors than other streets (say Tuam Street). In addition, the flush median for much of the remaining section of Victoria Street generates narrower than normal traffic lanes.

Victoria Street is generally a boutique style retail area, with the city's casino at its southern end. There are good pedestrian numbers at most times of the working day.

Victoria Street carries approximately 13,000 vehicles per day.

It is a significant out-bound bus route.

In each section, Victoria Street carries approximately 200 cyclists per day (constant between 1999 and 2000) of which less than 4% are school aged.

There are no clearly defined pedestrian crossing point or pedestrian crossing desire lines, other than the traffic signals already installed.

PROPOSAL TO INSTALL CYCLE FACILITIES

Along with Armagh, Manchester, Tuam and Colombo Streets, Victoria Street is one of the key cycling streets in the central city. In early 1997, both the City Services and Central City Committees approved a recommendation to investigate all of these roads for cycle facilities.

In considering making Victoria Street a cycle route, specific consideration was also given to maintaining or improving pedestrian safety, and maintaining good clearance times for buses.

In addition, consideration was given to trying to not increase delays or congestion at the signalised intersections, and minimising the impact on roadside parking.

The options for cycle facilities are either:

- Do nothing option: not considered appropriate as the known difficulties for cyclists prompted action in the first place;
- Cycle lane option: can meet the needs of most cyclists, will have benefits for pedestrians, and minimal to no impact on congestion, bus transit, or roadside parking;
- Cycle path option: two possible options - wide path on one side or two narrow paths on either side. Both will meet the needs of cyclists and will be neutral in relation to impacts on pedestrians, but will significantly impact on intersection congestion, which will have repercussions on both bus transit times and co-ordination of one-way system.

Considering the above factors, in conjunction with the fact that there is already an off-road pathway alongside Park Terrace, the recommended option has therefore been to consider on-road cycle lanes.

DETAILS OF PROPOSED DESIGN

The proposed cycle lane design (see attached diagrams) includes the following features:

- Single vehicle traffic lane in each direction (removal of 3 lane configuration);
- 1.5m wide cycle lane positioned approximately half a metre out from the parked vehicles. The half metre area is known as a safety strip and is designed to reduce the likelihood of doors opening in cyclists' faces;
- Retention of central median for lower section of Victoria Street (in front of Casino) to accommodate pedestrian wanderings to and from;
- Reconfiguration of lane division at Bealey/Papanui/Victoria which should retain existing capacity (particularly important for bus transit);
- Use of cycle lane surface colouring at the approach to and discharge from intersections.

The benefits of the proposed design are primarily that cyclists have lanes exclusively for their own use, with likely safety improvements over current lanes by inclusion of a safety strip. In addition, pedestrians will gain benefit (particularly in the former 3 lane area) by a reduction to two traffic lanes and a shorter crossing distance.

POSSIBLE OPTIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

Three possible options on the presented plans are available.

1. At the intersection with Bealey Avenue, it is possible to remove the right turn from Victoria into Bealey. It is a very low volume manoeuvre at the moment, and serves very little practical purpose, as those right turning could/should have travelled up Montreal Street and turned as appropriate there.

Eliminating the right turn will undoubtedly improve intersection safety and reduce overall collision numbers. It will also allow the retention of approximately 5 parking spaces on the eastern side of Victoria Street, immediately south of the Bealey intersection.

2. The second option is to close off the left-turn "slip" lane into Peterborough Street (heading east). This will mean left turning vehicles will need to slow significantly to make the left turn, and will increase the area of the "island" zone, which may be landscaped and otherwise enhanced.

Both the slowing of vehicles and the additional landscape space are considered improvements to the safety and aesthetics of Victoria Street.

3. The option of installing pedestrian crossing signals, or kerb-buildouts somewhere along Victoria Street is a possibility. Both would have the effect of reducing crossing risk to pedestrians. However, crossing signals would have an impact on vehicle and bus travel times.

At present, pedestrian movement patterns are not defined enough to identify a practical position for crossing signals and/or kerb build-outs. The pedestrian advocate suggests that neither occurs in the immediate future, but are revisited after the configuration changes have taken place, so that pedestrian movement patterns can be determined.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall project has yet to be released for public consultation, or discussion by the Community Board. The option recommended for consultation is that comprising on-road cycle lanes (marked with safety strip from parked cars), red surfacing at intersections, restricted right turn Victoria to Bealey, and closed-off "slip" lane left from Victoria to Peterborough.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Committee support the Victoria Street cycle route project in principle.
 2. That the Committee consider the optional improvements that should comprise the initial consultation.
 3. That the Committee approve the release of the Victoria Street cycle route plan for public consultation.

Chairman's

- Recommendation:**
1. That recommendations 1 and 3 above be adopted.
 2. That optional improvements 1 and 2 be included in the initial consultation, but not 3 (which can be reviewed at a later time).