

22. MAIN NORTH ROAD - MEDICAL CENTRE OPPOSITE SAWYERS ARMS ROAD

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Lindsay Eagle, Area Engineer
Corporate Plan Output: Signals Signs and Shelters 9.5.94	

The purpose of this report is to provide information for the Board concerning problems with vehicles accessing and departing from the Main North Road Medical Centre opposite Sawyers Arms Road

The entrance to the Main North Road Medical Centre car parking area is within the signal-controlled intersection of Main North Road and Sawyers Arms Road. Entering the driveway from a stream of traffic on either road is generally not a problem. However when vehicles are leaving, it is difficult for drivers to determine the phase of the signals and to pick a gap in both directions of traffic flow.

Over the past five years there have been four crashes recorded (one minor injury) at this intersection that involved vehicles leaving the driveway. When attempting to turn right or to proceed straight across the intersection, cars leaving the medical centre are coming into conflict with other vehicles that have priority on the road, particularly those travelling north.

The location of a vehicle crossing within a main road intersection would not be permitted within current planning rules. However, because a doctors' business has been located on this site for many years there are existing use rights. While traffic generated by the business is considerably higher than that from a private residence, it would not be described as high and is very minor compared with the volumes on the frontage roads (26,000 and 5,600 vpd). Similar situations exist at Blenheim/Hansens/Colombo/Tennyson, Bealey /Sherborne intersections.

It is difficult to find a solution that will be practical, safe and acceptable to visitors to the medical centre. To address the historical crash problems the simple solution is to attempt to stop the manoeuvres that have led to crash situations. Directing traffic to only turn left when leaving the Centre can be seen to remove the manoeuvres that generate crash conflict situations. It is doubtful that this turn left requirement can be enforced. It will also create long detours for motorists who wish to travel to the north.

Including the driveway as a leg of the signalised intersection was earlier considered as an option but has been rejected as confusing for other turning motorists, unsafe and impractical. Adding a separate intermittent phase to the intersection signals was also considered. However, this would heavily penalise the main road users and would deny visitors opportunities in the off peak traffic periods. Consultant traffic engineers conducted independent studies of the problems with vehicle egress from this site but it is believed that no internal changes to the layout have resulted.

Recommendation: That the tenants/owners of the property be requested to erect a sign at the exit from its car parking area advising motorists that 'Left turn is safest'.

Chairperson's Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted and the Medical Centre be advised in writing of the Board's decision.