

Submission on Moorhouse Intersections

Prepared by David Palmer on behalf of Greater Ōtautahi Inc.

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1 Introduction

Greater Ōtautahi is an incorporated society which advocates for better housing and transport in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

The South-of-Moorhouse area (SoMo) is likely to become a key part of the Central City in the future. Already, many people park in SoMo and walk to work in the Central City, or to Ara institute. It is likely that infill housing will increase the number of people walking from this area to places like the Pak'n'Save and other nearby amenities.

We believe there is a pressing need for these changes, as these intersections are already unsuitable for the pedestrian traffic currently using it. Waiting for more growth in pedestrian usage will only increase the risks of this area. Safety improvements should be made sooner rather than later.

Greater Ōtautahi members use these intersections to commute or to travel to other parts of Ōtautahi Christchurch, and Moorhouse Avenue as a whole forms a key part of the transport network. Others live locally to this area.

In this submission, Greater Ōtautahi has considered evidence including Council publications, site visits, news media reporting, and engagement with users of the intersection.

Broadly, Greater Ōtautahi **supports** the proposed changes to these intersections, as they are improvements to the status quo. However, in several key areas, the proposals allow the dangerous status quo to remain in place. We ask that Council reviews these areas and makes further adjustments to the plans to prioritise safety.

2 Gasson/Moorhouse/Madras

This is a highly significant intersection for pedestrian activity. This intersection is one of the major points at which these pedestrians cross Moorhouse Avenue, and there are several bus stops within 100 metres of this intersection. Pedestrian safety here is a significant issue, and changes should be made to support this objective.

Overall, we **support** the proposed enhancements to this intersection.

2.1 Madras slip lane removal

We support the removal of the slip lane from Moorhouse to Madras. Site visits, including site visits outside of peak traffic times, indicated that the slip lane was used to an extent that provided little utility to drivers and left little opportunity for pedestrians to cross. Additionally, slip lanes increase the turning radius of vehicles, leading drivers to take the turn at higher speeds than what can be considered safe for pedestrians.

As Council has found in other transport projects, removing slip lanes is unlikely to significantly affect traffic flow, and in this case dedicated turning phase lights are being considered by Council. Moreover, traffic entering Madras is subject to a controlled intersection within 500 meters; it is unlikely that this will affect travel times for drivers. The consequences of vehicle-pedestrian collisions increase with speed, so removing this slip lane will increase pedestrian safety.

We therefore consider the need for this removal to be pressing, given the significant pedestrian safety enhancement.

2.2 Median crossing point

The addition of a crossing with a median waiting area is an enormous improvement to the current design. Site visits indicated pedestrians crossing Moorhouse from outside the McDonald's restaurant, who were forced to cross all three existing pedestrian crossings: first to the west, then north, then back to the east.

This represents a significant time for pedestrians, taking multiple minutes in aggregate. This is especially unfeasible for pedestrians who are elders, who are disabled, who are simply slow walkers, or who have young children with them.

Additionally, by forcing pedestrians to spend a longer period of time in the carriageway, the design increases their risk of harm. Because of this significant time investment, and the real and perceived risk of crossing here, this design provides pedestrians a disincentive to cross at the crossing points that Council has provided, and thus incentivises pedestrians to risk uncontrolled crossings at other points.

The addition of a median waiting area here is therefore important for breaking up what is otherwise a long walk.

On the existing western crossing, the pedestrian lights are quite tightly phased for such a long walk, such that persons with reduced mobility may struggle to complete the crossing before the lights change. Short and infrequent phasing also disincentivises compliance with the crossing, thereby increasing risk to pedestrians and drivers by encouraging uncontrolled crossings. This presents an unacceptable safety risk.

Therefore, the pedestrian phase should be increased in length and frequency. The installation of a median crossing point on the western crossing should also be considered.

2.3 Gasson slip lanes

As discussed above, slip lanes are an undesirable design element. The slip lanes into and out of Gasson street are currently dangerous for pedestrians. While the addition of a zebra crossing marking may help to signal to drivers that they need to give way to pedestrians, we are concerned that drivers often do not give way to pedestrians in slip lanes of this type.

The addition of speed bumps on the slip lanes will certainly help to mitigate this risk, but we question whether these slip lanes are the best solution from a pedestrian safety perspective, and whether dedicated turning lanes with lights would be better.

Installation of speed bumps will come at a cost, and this project provides a key opportunity to redesign road elements. It is not impossible that the slip lane will later have to be removed, particularly if it creates interactions between vehicle traffic and increasing pedestrian traffic. If it is removed now, this will present a cost saving to Council: this can be removed with the same traffic management plan as the rest of the intersection. Removal of these slip lanes will also remove the need for speed bumps.

2.4 Cycling

We would like to see this intersection better connect with the new Madras Street shared path, which by extension connects to the Heathcote Expressway, High Street and St.

Asaph Street cycleways. Going from these safe environments to very abrupt, busy and aggressive intersection is very off-putting to less confident cyclists. As Gasson Street already has painted cycle lanes; as Sydenham is an area of high employment and a growing residential area; and as Gasson Street will connect to the new Brougham Street shared path as part of its upgrade: this will be a 'missing link' unless installed now.

We imagine that the existing signalised pedestrian crossings could be adapted to accommodate cyclists at a low additional cost. There could be a cut down either in the pedestrian island after the slip lane, or in the footpath before the slip lane (before cyclists use the zebra crossing to wait at the signalised crossing) — though however it is done, cyclists should be able to seamlessly transition from the painted Gasson Street cycle lanes, or the Madras Street shared path onto the signalised crossing at these intersections. However, the option to use the road as is the case currently should remain.

2.5 Street trees

We are pleased to see that street trees will be planted on Moorhouse Avenue. Street trees are important transport infrastructure. They hugely enhance the amenity of our public spaces, reduce the urban heat island effect, and present vertical clutter that can help to reduce car speeds. We would like to see additional trees planted in the median on Gasson Street as well.

3 Moorhouse/Barbadoes/Waltham

Overall, we **support** the proposed changes to this intersection.

3.1 Crossing with median waiting area

We strongly support the addition of a crossing point on the eastern side of this intersection. The median waiting area will help by staggering the crossing, making it more accessible for those with mobility issues.

3.2 Slip lane

As previously mentioned, we are concerned that slip lanes such as this present a safety risk to pedestrians. Therefore, the addition of zebra crossing markings and a speed bump are important for ensuring safety for pedestrians in this space. However, we prefer that the slip lane is removed entirely.

3.3 Cyclists

We are disappointed to note that there is no provision made for cyclists in this intersection design, save for a single painted green box on the west-bound approach waiting area. Given the close proximity of Catholic Cathedral College, Ara Institute, and

the immediate proximity of the Washington Way skatepark, it is unacceptable that there are no proposed safety improvements for cyclists.

At a minimum, this intersection needs hook turn boxes installed to signal a safer way for cyclists to turn through this intersection. In particular, by moving the traffic waiting point further back to the east, there is now plenty of space to create a larger marked cycle waiting point in the south-east corner of the intersection. This is the perfect place to put a hook turn box for cyclists hoping to safely turn right onto Moorhouse from Barbadoes.

The current approach for cyclists coming from the south on Waltham feels inadequate. A cyclist coming from this direction wanting to access Ara, for example, would need to peel off using the cycle slip lane, and cross at the pedestrian crossing. For this reason, we think it would be good to widen this crossing point and install cycle hold rails to improve amenity for cyclists travelling in this direction.

Additionally, we would like to see this intersection better connect with the Waltham Road shared path for much of the same reasons as for Gasson/Moorhouse/Madras.

As suggested by Spokes Canterbury, Council may be able to approach Ara about installing a cut down to access their car park, which sharrows could then direct cyclists through their car park, onto Coventry Street, then Williams Street, then onto the Ferry Road cycleway. From this connection, Ara, Catholic Cathedral College, Washington Way skatepark and the eastern side of Sydenham are connected to the Heathcote Expressway. Aside from the cutdown, sharrows and signage, the signalised pedestrian crossings should be designed to allow cyclists to also use.

3.4 Street trees

We would like to see additional street trees planted in the median on the eastern side of Moorhouse, and in the slip-lane island at the south-eastern side of the intersection. These trees would provide shade for pedestrians waiting at the median refuge and would present a significant amenity enhancement.

4 Additional notes

We would like to see pedestrian enhancements on the stretch of road between these two intersections. For example, a kerb buildout, speed bump and marked crossing point at the intersection of Moorhouse and Washington Way would present an enormous enhancement to the accessibility of the area. When we visited, we saw children on scooters crossing this intersection to get to and from the skate park. The current wide sweep of the turn creates a safety risk as fairly high-speed vehicles may be crossing an area being used by children.

We hope Council will also consider improvements to bus stops in the area, and whether bus lanes would be appropriate.

Please note that at northern footpath of Moorhouse, joining the western footpath on Madras St, there is a sign currently blocking the footpath (near the slip lane slated for removal). Council should, during the works for this project, move this sign so that it does not obstruct the footpath.

Moorhouse Avenue has the potential to connect communities in SoMo and the central city. Done correctly, this project can take the first steps towards a cohesive and welcoming south-central city area.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on these works. We would like to speak to this submission.