

Grant Clark on behalf
of Richmond West
Development.

12/09/19
Full Council
Public Forum.

Good morning Mayor Kempthorne and Councillors

I have been asked by the developers of the Meadows project in Richmond West to highlight concerns around the future needs of residents in the Richmond West Development Area. I am also presenting in my capacity as a traffic engineer working in the industry for almost 40 years.

As the Mayor and Councillors will be aware the Richmond West Development Area has changed significantly from what was originally planned as part of the Plan Change 37. The land was originally zoned for a mixture of industrial and mixed-use with some residential activities. As part of the special housing accord most of the land within the Richmond West Development Area is now going to be developed for residential use. This is a significant change from what was originally planned.

As a result of this change there will be a number of flow on effects in terms of road capacity, amenity, safety and how they should be treated in the future, at different times as the development of the land continues. What is evident is the rate of change in this area is moving at a very fast pace. This is at a faster pace than anticipated by the Plan Change and currently signalled in the long-term plan. Based on current projections the land will be mostly developed within seven years. Major upgrades to roads and intersections in the area are currently much further out in the Long Term Plan.

The completion of the Richmond West Development Area will see a significant expansion of the Richmond Suburban area with around 1200 new homes and other activities. This is going to lead to around 12,000 additional vehicle movements moving along the adjacent road network. There will be noticeable increases in traffic movements along Lower Queen Street and McShane Road. The nature of the vehicles that will move along these roads will also change with a greater number of light vehicles (cars) compared to the current type of movements.

The following key aspects will need to be considered.

Speed limits

The current speed limits along Lower Queen Street and McShane Road will need to be reviewed with consideration given to the adjacent land use and the desired outcomes for the residents that may live along these roads. The existing 80 km/h speed limit on McShane Road will need to be reduced as this is likely to be too high against the residential activities that will form part of the Richmond West development area.

Accordingly, it is recommended that Council put McShane Road (60km/h) and Lower Queen Street (50 km/h) on the list to reduce the speed limit to be considered in the next round of speed reviews.

Wider road network

A number of design decisions made as part of developing the Richmond West area including roading projects that were put into the Long Term Plan. There is a need to reconsider both the design and the timing of those projects as a result of the change in development within the Richmond West area as well as understanding fundamental changes on how roads are designed for the future.

As indicated above the development of Richmond West will see a significant increase the number of vehicles that we use McShane Road and Lower Queen Street to access services and employment areas. The existing traffic movements along Lower Queen Street are around 11,000 vehicles per day is going to roughly double upon completion of the Richmond West area. The pace of development in the Richmond West development area is significantly faster than initially anticipated. This is clearly evident by driving along the new roads within this area. This is going to lead to significant capacity and safety issues in the very near future with the intersection of Berryfield Drive and Lower Queen Street likely to be the first intersection requiring a major upgrade. I note that this is separate to significant improvements required to the Gladstone Road corridor to make this more attractive and function more effectively which is managed by NZTA.

Indications of the limitations of the existing road network can easily be seen at peak times in the vicinity of the Stafford Street/Lower Queen Street intersection. These limitations along with the current intersection controls at other junctions on Lower Queen Street will suffer a similar fate in the near future. Drivers will take more risks as they get frustrated and this will lead to unsafe situations.

Road Design

The design of roads that will form the boundary of the Richmond West development area need to be carefully considered to ensure the right outcomes are provided for the future users of these roads. These will include appropriately designed carriageway widths to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. These designs need to be innovative and appropriate to ensure speeds are managed and users can safely travel along these roads in the future. Some of the old practices around road design need to be rethought to ensure the right outcomes are achieved. The recent reconstruction of Bateup Road highlights the need for more attention to detail to ensure good outcomes in terms of residential amenity and better speed management practices through design.

By way of an example the original designs for Lower Queen Street have building setback 10 metres from the boundary. This will create challenges and how the land is developed and the ability to manage the adjacent road network. The current design for McShane Road has two 3.5 m wide lane along with shoulders and will look like a typical State Highway. The construction of a seven metre wide carriageway proposed for McShane Road is providing a driver environment consistent with a 100 km/h. This will have poor outcomes in terms of residential amenity, road safety and is likely to encourage the use of McShane Road as a bypass route to more appropriate arterial roads.

I thank you for the opportunity to present this to Council. I am happy to discuss the matters raised at any time.