

## Safer Active Transport and Strategic Servicing: A Briefing to Geraldine's Community Board

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### Summary

This brief tables two interrelated issues that need to be addressed:

1. **Active Transportation Pathway:** The establishment of a dedicated pathway for pedestrians and cyclists along Main North Road is essential. There are serious safety concerns at present. Investment will also promote active, carbon-neutral transportation between the Woodbury and Geraldine communities.
2. **Wastewater Infrastructure Investment:** If a pathway is to be developed, Council should also consider this as an opportunity for strategic and fiscally responsible investment in wastewater infrastructure along Main North Road. Doing so will address the wastewater issues associated with the existing, outdated septic systems and ongoing infill occurring at the Northern End of Geraldine.

Main North Road serves as a critical corridor for Geraldine.

Main North Road resident Heather Elwood pushed for the addition of a bike lane and footpath along Main North Road in the TDC's Long-Term Plan (LTP) due to safety concerns, over 15 years ago. As yet there has been no move to progress this beyond inclusion in the plan.

Previously, in the early 2000s, the Timaru District Council considered extending wastewater services along Main North Road and consulted with residents. Unfortunately, the project was postponed when only 3 (of many) residents said they would not connect voluntarily.

Moving forward, it's imperative to revisit these initiatives with a contemporary perspective, ensuring that both transportation and wastewater infrastructure meet the current and future needs of the Geraldine and Woodbury communities.

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### 1. Active Transport Corridor: Safety and Sustainability

#### Main Issue:

- The Main North Road is a vital link for safe active transport between the Geraldine and Woodbury communities.
- The area is built up rural-residential use along both sides of the highway. Over this stretch, the highway also transitions from a 50 to 80km speed zone. The narrow berm subsides steeply to uneven ground, especially at the northern end of Main North Road (refer Appendix 1a). There is very little clearance between motor vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists, and the blind bend approaching the Bennett Road and Woodbury Road intersection is especially dangerous (refer Appendix 1b). This stretch of road poses major safety risks.
- Many people do not obey the speed limit. This has resulted in several accidents, including my own (Appendix 2). It was alleged that I was struck by a motorist going at between 95 and 115 km/ph at the Woodbury intersection.
- Cyclists and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable. Children regularly use this route to cycle to school / town.

#### Community Voice:

- Residents, including young families, express fear, and frustration at the lack of safe pathways for walking or cycling along Main North Road, which forces reliance on cars.

- Anna Clubb, a young mum (1 year old baby) who lives on Woodbury Road with her partner, Chris Main, voiced frustration with paying urban rates without urban services and raised how she can't push her pram into town, because there is no footpath along the busy stretch of road to the Woodbury intersection. She describes the journey along Main North Road as "terrifying".

#### Proposed Action:

- Community Board should advocate for an immediate feasibility study to be conducted for the development of a footpath and bike lane along Main North Road.
- Highlight the need for prioritisation to progress beyond its current inclusion in the Long-Term Plan (where it has sat for the last ~15 years).

#### Community Benefit:

- Enhances safety, where it is only a matter of time until a cyclist or pedestrian is seriously injured or killed along this section of road.
- Encourages active transport, reducing car reliance and carbon emissions.
- Aligns with the Community Board's goals for prosperity and sustainability for Geraldine and Woodbury.

## 2. Wastewater Reticulation: Environmental and Health Concerns

#### Main Issue:

- I understand that aging and failing septic systems along Main North Road present health and environmental risks and overflow issues are unpleasant for neighbouring residents.

#### Proposed Action:

- Urge the Community Board to take a proactive stance in advocating for strategic wastewater reticulation before further infill occurs (refer Box 1, below) and infrastructure costs continue to rise.
- Applying a foresight-based investment ideology, if an active transport pathway is to be developed (as already included in the LTP), it would seem fiscally sensible and feasible to simultaneously put wastewater servicing beneath this proposed pathway along Main North Road.

#### Box 1: Ongoing Infill Development

In addition to the residential development already along Main North Road, recent infill has included:

On west-side of Main North Road: Numbers 39 (Acland); 65; 67 (Woodley); 77 (Selbie- previously un-lived in Lowen homestead, I am unsure whether they replaced the septic with new renovation or if it's legacy); 95 (Lill); 115; 127; Gateway Vets (corner of Main North and Woodbury Road).

On east-side of Main North Road: Numbers 54 (McColl – 2 residences); 56 (Farmshop & Café - 5 toilets, large capacity); 80 (Harper, new house on septic and 4 other latent lots); 112 (Morris).

Off Bennett Road: Numbers 2 (previously Faulks-Beck); 2B (McCambridge) – both previously accessed from Main North Road.

Total: 14 new residences and commercial holdings, in addition to existing.

In addition to current homes, there are undeveloped lots that would require septic systems if development proposals were sought.

Regulative context means that ECan are actively discouraging clusters of septic systems, putting the onus on District Councils to invest in alternative solutions.

**Community Benefit:**

- Protects the environment by mitigating the cumulative effects of outdated septic systems.
  - Improves amenity by avoiding septic overflows and discharge issues to land and air.
  - Provides effective servicing of current residents and supports responsible future growth with infrastructure that will pay for itself over time (e.g., if appropriately leveraged through development contributions, user pays approach and emerging government focus on GST rebates on infrastructure.).
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**Synthesis:**

- In this situation, both active transport and wastewater reticulation are interconnected issues that significantly impact the quality of life for local residents and the responsible future growth of Geraldine.
  - A coordinated approach to address both issues simultaneously is not only strategic and fiscally prudent, but also aligns with Council's broader regulatory context and sustainability objectives.
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**Call to Action:**

Request the Community Board's support in advancing these initiatives.

In terms of the Community Board's role, this emphasis would show insight into future proofing Geraldine.

Sculpture walks and other initiatives that improve amenity and raise the profile of Geraldine externally are important, but this initiative represents addressing the pressing need for better infrastructure outcomes for Geraldine residents. Active transport and responsible wastewater services should be priorities.

It is strategic and sensible to consider active transport access and wastewater reticulation along Main North Road simultaneously.

Investment in reticulation would be a quick win for sustainability (removing cumulative discharges over time and support ongoing infill in this area strategically) and would be cost-neutral for council over time if done appropriately.

As many titles already exist / lay latent / unbuilt on, further infill is inevitable.

Appendix 1a: Photos of narrow steep berm and uneven roadside.

Figures a, b, c, d (Looking north up Main North Road)



Figures e and f (Looking south down Main North Road)





Appendix 1b

Photos illustrating extremely narrow separation between pedestrians/cyclists and motor vehicles around the blind bend to the south of Woodbury, Bennett Road Intersection.

Figures g, h, i



a.



b.



c.

Appendix 2: A personal experience of this dangerous stretch of road.

Figures j, k, l, m.



Notes: