



Shore councillors sweat on Lake Rd upgrade

by Wayne Thompson

North Shore City Council will decide next month whether to go ahead with the upgrade of Takapuna's busiest corridor — the stretch of Lake Rd from Esmonde Rd to Jutland Rd.

At last night's council meeting, some members were having second thoughts about urgency for improvements to the notorious choke point to follow on from the recent upgrade of Lake Rd's intersection with Esmonde Rd.

A total bill of \$16 million is expected for the intersection and to widen and improve safety and flow on the 550m stretch of Lake Rd between Napier Ave and Jutland Rd.

Councillors have to weigh up scathing criticism of the design by nearby residents against the benefits to 22,000 residents of Belmont, Bayswater and Devonport.

They rely on Lake Rd for access to the rest of the North Shore, the Harbour Bridge and Northern Motorway.

The inadequacies of Lake Rd as the only artery serving the Devonport Peninsula were identified in the 1960s.

Takapuna Residents Association president Gavin Fletcher said last night it recommended that work go ahead but on the condition that the council discuss and resolve local residents' worries.

"There is some concern that the millions of dollars to be spent may not be wisely used considering the lack of thought of the impact on all side roads.

"It is one thing to increase Lake Rd flow but not to the detriment of quiet residential side streets."

Mr Fletcher said no consideration was given to the impact on 1000 residents of widening Lake Rd and several right-turn bans in to and out of adjacent side streets.

Many residents feared their narrow streets would suffer extra traffic due to "rat running" and they would not be able to park outside their homes.

People were also worried about provisions for pedestrians to cross Lake Rd, and about safety of cyclists.

"Cycleways are a third method of moving people, as well as footpaths and roads, and merely painting a white line on the side of the carriageway or a footpath is not a solution to create this third type of movement."

Some councillors want the decision about whether the cycleway should be on-road or offroad delayed until after a review of the city's cycle strategy and public consultation.

However, traffic engineers want the Lake Rd upgrade to go ahead without delay because of critical construction deadlines.

They say construction has to fit in with Watercare Services' dates for installing a new bulk watermain in the carriageway.

Changing the design for an onroad cycleway would mean seeking fresh approval for a NZ Transport Agency subsidy of \$4.47 million.

If the upgrade is deferred, \$430,000 extra would have had to be spent on temporary repairs to Lake Rd's failed pavement.



CHOKER POINT
Lake Rd, Takapuna
39,000 vehicles a day.
2 narrow lanes of traffic each way.
97 crashes in five years.

NARROW STRAITS: A cyclist navigates the heavily used stretch of Lake Rd.

PICTURE / BRETT PHIBBS