

<b>ORDINARY MEETING</b>  <b>18 DECEMBER 2013</b>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

## LAKE MORRIS ROAD – PROPOSED ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

MDR: 1/3/21: #4208180

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **That Council:**

- **Approves road safety works on Lake Morris Road as recommended by the October 2013 Road Safety Audit**
- **Endorses a trial traffic restriction on Lake Morris Road between the first lookout and Copperlode Dam from 5pm to 8am daily to commence in March 2014 following appropriate public advertising**
- **Brings forward funding for the proposed works from the 2014/15 financial year to the 2013/14 year in the January 2014 Capital Works Budget review**
- **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 to finalise all works in this report.**

---

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Council resolved at the Infrastructure Committee Meeting on 10 July 2013 to investigate the use of extra signage and options to assist the safety of users of Lake Morris Road, and requested a report be presented back to Council. The request was in response to public complaints about safety, particularly in relation to cyclists using Lake Morris Road following a serious crash involving a cyclist on 2 July 2013.

This report discusses the results of the safety investigation, options to improve safety for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, and the consultation carried out. A number of relatively low cost safety improvements have been identified along with a proposed trial traffic restriction from 5pm to 8am daily for consideration by Council.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Lake Morris Road is a winding range road which carries a mix of cars, small buses, bicycles and pedestrians. The road is seen as a training circuit for cyclists and pedestrians, with generally more cyclists than motorists using the road in the early mornings and evenings when the dam is not open to the general public. Cyclist activity increases prior to organised cycling events such as the Cardiac Challenge Cairns to Cooktown charity ride. During the recent Active Towns program events the road was closed on 3 Saturday mornings, which attracted up to 300 cyclists using the road each time.

The road functions as two separate sections. Section 1, from Cairns Western Arterial Road to the 'first lookout' is about 2km long and provides access to residential properties, and access to the lookout overlooking the city. Section 2, from the first lookout to Copperlode Dam provides access to the dam, Water & Waste infrastructure, and a Power Link Transmission line, but does not provide access to any residential properties. Section 2 is about 14km long. A map of Lake Morris Road showing section 1 and 2 is presented as Attachment A.

Lake Morris Road is closed at Copperlode Dam to all traffic between the hours of 6pm and 8am daily. The road is also closed either partially or fully, when specific roadworks are being carried out.

Council has already installed various cycle warning signs and 'Share the Road' signs following the serious crash involving a cyclist and a small truck on 2 July 2013.

### **COMMENT:**

#### Road Safety Audit

A road safety audit was carried out on 2 & 3 October 2013 to determine the specific safety issues on the road, in accordance with current road safety best practice. The audit found that improvements should be made with respect to:

- delineation of the road edge and horizontal curves,
- linemarking changes to increase traffic lane width and remove unsafe turnaround locations,
- signage to improve awareness of safety issues on the road.

A summary of the audit signage recommendations is presented as Attachment B. The full list of audit recommendations is available from the Manager Infrastructure Planning.

Further road safety investigations were carried out on 5 December to analyse the swept path of a long vehicle traveling the road. This was carried out specifically in relation to tour buses driving to the first lookout at night. Although the audit found these vehicles generally traversed the road safely, additional signage is recommended at the lookout to warn other motorists and cyclists of large vehicles turning.

It is recommend that Council carry out the road safety works recommended in the audit. The approximate cost of these works is \$70, 000.

#### Traffic volumes

Traffic volumes on the road are as follows:

	Section 1 – vehicles per day up to first lookout	Section 2 – vehicles per day past the first lookout
Week Days	Up to 210	Up to 110
Weekends	Up to 360	Up to 185

It is noted that generally, traffic use section 1 of the road, i.e. up to the first lookout, up until about midnight. Only a few cars use section 2 of the road after 5 pm, i.e. between

the first lookout and the dam. These vehicles are leaving the dam prior to the gate closing at 6pm. Very few cars are on section 2 of the road after 6pm as access to the dam is not possible.

### Crash history

There have been five known crashes on Lake Morris Road between 2008 & 2013. Three of these have been single vehicle crashes, and two have involved cyclists. Two of these crashes resulted in hospitalisation, one received medical treatment, and one crash resulted in minor vehicle damage. These figures include the serious cycle crash on 2 July 2013. Anecdotally there are frequent 'near misses' between users of the road.

### Part Time Road Closure Proposal

Closing the road to cars between the first lookout and the dam from 5pm to 8am daily will increase the opportunities for safe walking and cycling on the road, and maintain a traffic function to the first lookout and to the dam during opening hours. This part time closure to traffic is proposed for the following reasons:

- There is very little traffic on the road past the first lookout after 5pm, and no traffic on the road before 8am.
- Most of the cycling activity on the road occurs after 5pm and before 8am.
- The part time closure would improve safety on the road and encourage cyclists to only use the road past the first lookout when it is closed to traffic
- The part time closure would encourage people to use the road for walking recreation and exercise.

The part time closure is proposed by installing an automatic gate at the first lookout that would restrict traffic past the lookout but allow cyclists and walkers to use the road when it is closed. The gate would probably be solar powered due to the lack of 240 volt mains supply, and Council could utilise a 'green power' solution such as the recently used wind / solar installation used for lighting at the Hartley Street car park. The installation of a solar powered automatic gate is estimated at \$25,000.

The proposed daily closure time is 5pm because anything later would not realise the safety benefit of separating cars and cyclists. Council can also consider closing the gate at the dam earlier (4.30 pm) to ensure motorists leaving the dam are off the road prior to the first gate being closed or shortly thereafter. The proposed opening time of 8am coincides with gate opening at the dam. Gate closing and opening times would be monitored and adjustments made, if required, to ensure the access needs of motorists, cyclists and walkers are balanced.

The part time closure of Lake Morris Road is proposed as a trial, for a 12 month period from 1 March 2014, after the gate has been installed.

### **CONSULTATION:**

Consultation was carried out with various stakeholders as described below.

Cairns Works

Consultation was carried out with the Senior Construction Supervisor, Cairns Works. The Supervisor often drives the road and arranges necessary maintenance activities and is in support of the proposed road safety works and part time traffic restriction to improve safety.

Water and Waste Department

The Copperlode Dam 'Care Taker', supports both the proposed safety works and part time traffic closure to improve safety. The Manager Operations Cairns Water was also consulted, there was no objection to the proposal provided Cairns Water has 24 hours access for maintenance and emergencies.

Ergon

Ergon Energy was consulted about the proposed traffic restriction past the first lookout and the impact to Ergon and Powerlink access to the transmission line. Ergon did not object to the proposal, provided access was granted at times of emergency.

Tour Operators

Doki Doki Tours has been consulted with respect to safe access to the first lookout. The proposed traffic restriction will not impact tour operators who use the lookout to view the city.

CBUG and Cairns Cycling Club

Both CBUG and Cairns Cycling Club support the safety improvements and the proposed trial closure.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**Risk management:

Council has carried out a formal road safety audit of Lake Morris Road, which has recommended various safety improvement works. Council could be exposed to litigation if the recommend works are not carried out.

The risk of a crash will be reduced if the road safety works are carried out, and the risk of a crash involving a cyclist on Lake Morris Road will significantly reduce if traffic is restricted on the road when most of the cyclists are using it, as proposed.

Financial

The cost to implement the recommendations of the Road Safety Audit is approximately \$70,000. The approximate cost to install an automated gate is \$25,000. Council has an approved Lake Morris Road project on the FNQROC TIDS program, with an allocation of \$130K. This allocation is 50% funded by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The proposed works in this report can be carried out under the scope of the existing project. As the estimate of \$95,000 for the proposed works is based on concepts only, it is likely that this will change when final designs are completed. Due to the TIDS funding of \$130,000, it is envisaged that the maximum amount Council will be required to contribute to the works is \$65K. Funding is currently included in Council's

2014/15 Capital works program. This can be brought forward if Council requires the proposed works to be carried out within the next 6 months.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The recommendation supports Council's Corporate Plan in regards to the following:

Strategic goal 2.3.3 "Develop and maintain a quality and efficient infrastructure network, including road, drainage and water networks":

Statutory:

The part time closure of Lake Morris Road will require an official 'road closed' sign, regulatory 'no entry' sign and 'bicycles excepted' sign on the gate, and Council will have to notify the public. This can be done via the Cairns Post for two consecutive Saturdays prior to the trial beginning. A sign at the start of the road advising of the time restrictions would also be installed to advise motorists of the closure.

Options:

That Council:

- a) Approves the road safety works on Lake Morris Road and trials a traffic restriction between the first lookout and Copperlode Dam from 5pm to 8am daily;

OR

- b) Approves the road safety works on Lake Morris Road and does not restrict traffic on the road between the first lookout and Copperlode Dam;

OR

- c) Does not carry out any works on Lake Morris Road and makes no changes to traffic using the road.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Map of Lake Morris Road

Attachment B – Road Safety Audit signage recommendations

Michael Ringer

**Co-ordinator Infrastructure Planning**

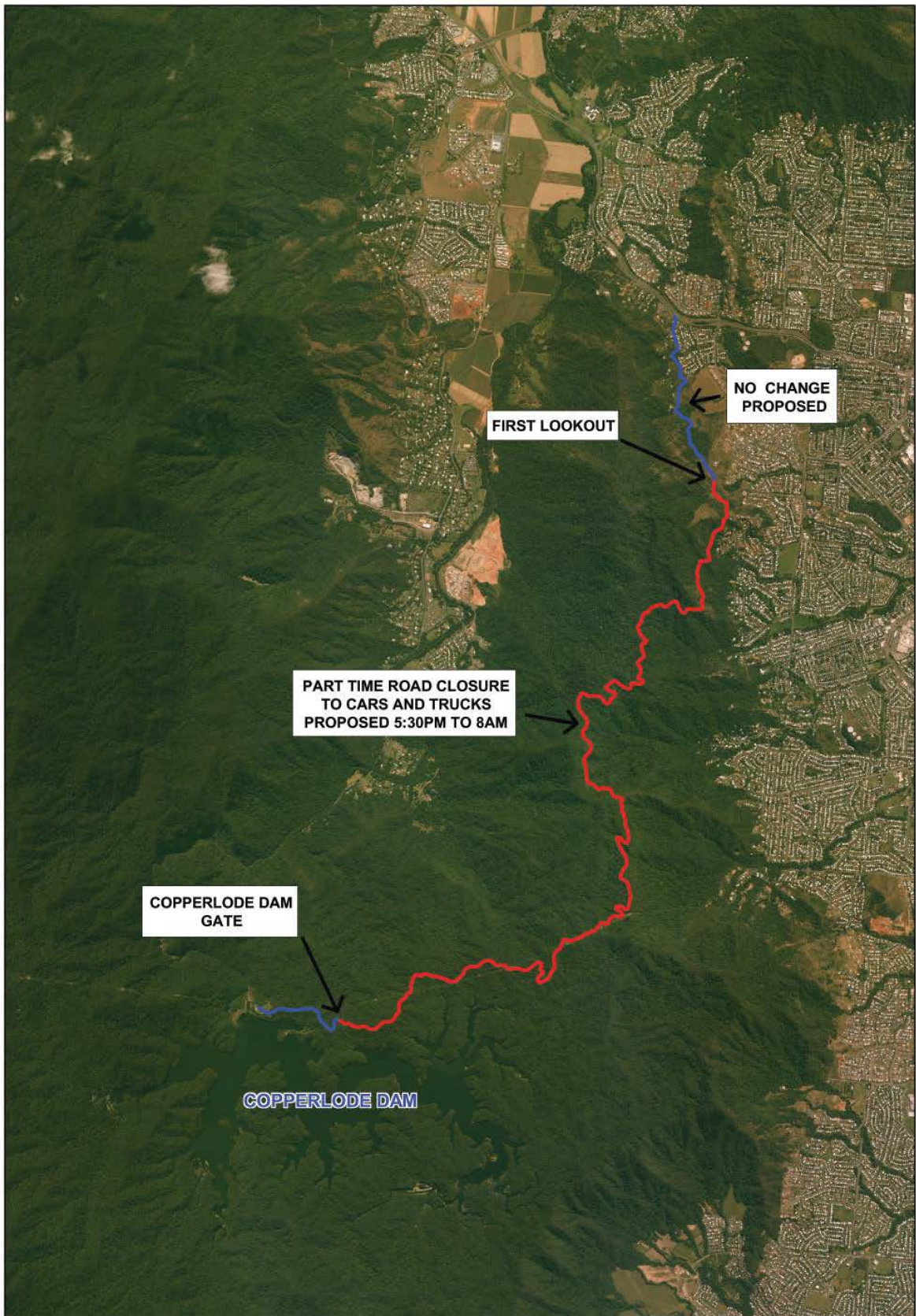
Helius Visser

**Manager Infrastructure Planning**

Bruce Gardiner

**General Manager Infrastructure Services**

Attachment A – Map of Lake Morris Road



Attachment B – Road Safety Audit signage recommendations

