

TRANSPORT DECISIONS COMMITTEE - 1 OCTOBER 2009

BANBURY, SPRINGFIELD AVENUE PROPOSED HUMPED ZEBRA CROSSING

Report by Head of Transport

Introduction

1. This report describes the proposed scheme, its location which is close to the main pedestrian entrance to Blessed George Napier Roman Catholic Secondary School and presents both objections and support received in response to a public consultation with comments on the objections from County Council officers. The recommendation of the report is that the proposed scheme should be implemented.

Background

2. The scheme is part of the Better Ways to School Highway Schemes 2009-10 programme. The Schools Information Management System indicates (from 2008 data) that about 250 Blessed George Napier School pupils walk to and from school and most of them have to cross Springfield Avenue. In addition, many who travel by car, and some who travel by school bus, are set down/picked up on the opposite side of Springfield Avenue from the school because there is more space available for stopping there than on the school side. Of those who travel by car, about 50 live within 20 minutes' walk of the school.
3. There are seven round-top humps on Springfield Avenue between Grange Road junction and Horton View junction and they are effective in keeping speeds almost entirely below 30mph. However, in peak periods, congestion on the A4260 Oxford Road between Grange Road junction and Upper Windsor Street junction causes many drivers to use Springfield Avenue instead.
4. As vehicle speeds are almost entirely below 30mph, and there are private accesses close to the proposed crossing location, a zebra crossing is considered to be the most appropriate crossing type. A further advantage is that a zebra crossing costs only about half as much as a traffic-signal-controlled crossing. The location needs to be ideally between 5 and 10 metres from the school entrance so that students approaching on foot from both directions will use it. To the north-west of the school entrance, private accesses and a mature tree make that location unsuitable. Therefore, the proposed location is about 10 metres south-east of the school entrance and at the site of an existing round-top hump, which would be reconstructed as a flat-top hump with the zebra crossing on top of it. A layout/location plan is shown at Annex 1.

Public Consultation

5. In July 2009, letters were sent to representative organisations, emergency services, elected representatives, Blessed George Napier School and also to local homes. Of the twelve responses received - six, including Blessed George Napier School and Cherwell District Council, supported the proposal. The representative of visually impaired people in Banbury had also expressed support but would have preferred a traffic-signal-controlled crossing. (A zebra crossing is proposed for reasons explained above).
6. Two respondents (Thames Valley Police and the bus route operator) were neutral. The Police had no objection, but suggested that the limited visibility due to tree trunks should be considered. As vehicle speeds are almost entirely below 30mph, this limited visibility is not expected to be a problem.
7. Two local residents and one school bus operator objected to the proposal and expressed concerns about the effects of the proposed crossing. Their responses are summarised and tabulated at Annex 2. The responses themselves (and also the responses in support or neutral) are available in the Members' Resource Centre.

Effects of other projects on the project

8. The Banbury Premium Bus Routes project (programmed for 2010/11) includes Bus Route B1, which runs along this part of Springfield Avenue. In order to improve comfort for bus occupants, the existing round top humps are to be replaced with trios of speed cushions. The proposed humped zebra crossing will not be affected. However, to improve the ride for bus passengers, the gradient of the ramps on the humped zebra crossing will be restricted to 1 in 25.
9. The Premium Bus Routes project is programmed for 2010/11. However, it is hoped that the hump replacements in Springfield Avenue can be carried out in March 2010, immediately after construction of the humped zebra crossing in February. Public consultation on the hump replacements may have started by 1 October, so that the responses to that consultation can be reported to the Transport Decisions Committee for consideration at the meeting on 26 November 2009.

How the project supports LTP Objectives

10. The crossing is expected to encourage walking to/from school and discourage parents on the school run from bringing their cars into Springfield Avenue. Within Springfield Avenue the crossing is expected to reduce congestion and reduce air pollution, enhance safety for pedestrians, particularly children going to and from school. and accessibility, particularly for disabled people.

Financial and Staff Implications

11. The construction cost would be approximately £31,000. Sufficient finance is available in the Better Ways To School (Transport Schemes) budget. The preparation and supervision work required can be accommodated within existing staff resources in Oxfordshire Highways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

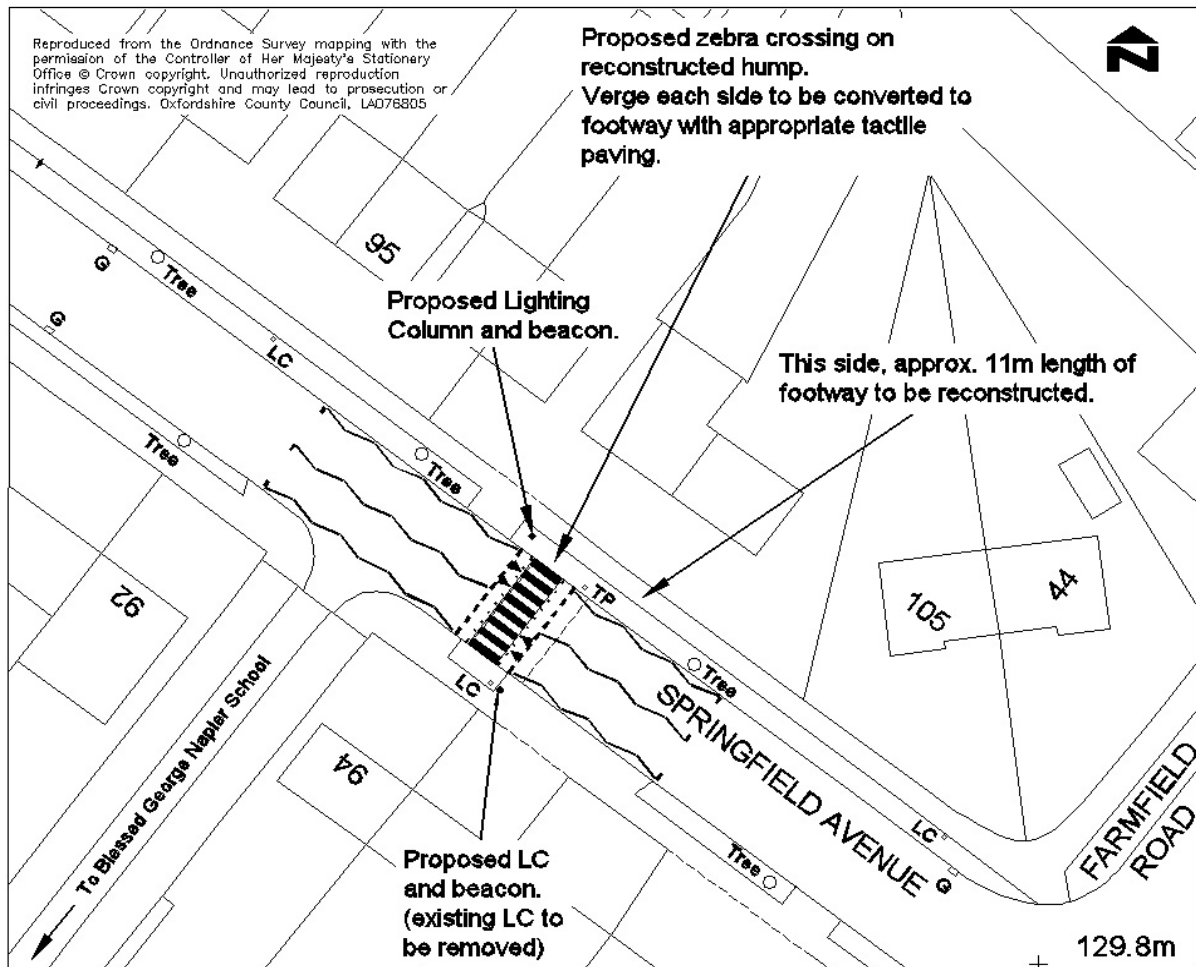
12. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to authorise implementation of the proposed humped zebra crossing on Springfield Avenue, Banbury close to the main pedestrian entrance to Blessed George Napier Roman Catholic School.**

STEVE HOWELL
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Background papers: Consultation documentation and responses.

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August 2009



BANBURY, SPRINGFIELD AVENUE
PROPOSED HUMPED ZEBRA CROSSING
LOCATION / LAYOUT PLAN

**BANBURY, SPRINGFIELD AVENUE
PROPOSED HUMPED ZEBRA CROSSING**

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Objector ref no.	Objection	Officer comments
2	Parking space for residents and their visitors will be lost.	Approximately 6 car parking spaces will be lost. However most properties have off-street parking. More on-street space is available nearby.
2	Drivers picking up school students might park close to the crossing, on the proposed zigzag lines. At present, some of them park on the "School Keep Clear" markings.	Parking on "School Keep Clear" markings is not an offence in this instance because there is no Traffic Regulation Order. Parking on zigzag lines associated with a zebra crossing is automatically an offence, and most drivers are well-aware of that.
1	Drivers picking up school students will park across driveways.	It is hoped that some drivers will pick up and set down a greater distance away, knowing that their student passengers will be able to use the zebra crossing.
1	The flashing beacons will shine into bedrooms at night.	The beacons will be fitted with standard hoods to prevent this.
1	The replacement of one street light by two will increase the amount of light shining into windows of nearby houses.	Modern street lights spread less light into gardens and windows than those made over 20 years ago. Therefore it is likely that less light will shine into windows.
1	Nearby property values will be adversely affected.	From experience of other new zebra crossings, this is unlikely.
1	The crossing will be a bottleneck for traffic and will cause congestion.	This might happen for a few minutes at the busiest times of day, However it might be beneficial by discouraging through traffic from using Springfield Avenue.
2	The crossing is probably not needed.	The crossing is widely supported. A high proportion of the users of it will be unaccompanied students aged 11-18.
3	With the loss of parking space, the remaining space will be taken by cars. School buses will have difficulty in picking up and setting down near the School.	Loss of parking will be only about 8 metres on the School side, but about 36 metres on the opposite side. School buses which pick up / set down on the opposite side could do so in Farmfield Road without causing an obstruction.