
PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE – BLAIR ST, NOVEMBER 2012

1. Purpose of report

To seek approval of the Regulatory Processes Committee for the temporary closure of Blair Street to enable licensed premises an area to trial the operation of outdoor seating areas.

2. Executive summary

The Wellington City Council has received an application from licensed premises owners to close half of Blair Street at the Courtenay Place end for a trial of outdoor seating. The Council supports the trial for Friday and Saturdays nights during November in order to:

- Increase the safety of pedestrians in the area at peak times
- Trial measures to reduce the instances of alcohol related harm and damage in the area
- Enable licensed premises owners in the area to trial the operation of outdoor seating areas

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Regulatory Processes Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree to close Blair Street from half way to the Courtenay Place end to all vehicular traffic at the following times and dates:*
 - (a) *from 10:30pm Friday to 4am Saturday and from 10:30pm Saturday to 4am Sunday on the following dates:*
 - (i) *2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 30 November and 1 December 2012.*

4. Background

The Council has received requests from licensed premises owners in the area to trial the operation of outdoor seating areas

- The licensees have raised an equity issue with Council. They note that most premises along Courtenay Place have seating areas in front of their establishments and wish to have the opportunity to do so as well.
- Their customers are already spilling into the public areas in front of their establishments and so they are asking the Council to agree to a formalised and legal way to accommodate this behaviour.

- Blair Street was designed to accommodate a mix of uses including outdoor markets and seating areas. This trial provides an opportunity for the space to be used in those ways.
- Council has a desire to be 'open for business' and therefore thinks that a trial is a good way to try and address these issues.
- Council and licensees have agreed a set of requirements around the trial covering noise levels, the use of plastic glasses, the quality of seating arrangements, the size of the outdoor areas etc.
- The intention of these requirements is to improve the visible nature and address issues of safety, noise etc.

5. Discussion

5.1 Proposal

It is proposed to close half of Blair Street at the Courtenay Place end for a trial of outdoor seating. The area of the closure is shown on the attached plan. The closure would take effect from 10.30pm to 4am the following day on Friday and Saturday nights during November. This is expected to increase the safety of pedestrians in the area at peak times and address the following key issues:

- Blair Street is a popular destination within the entertainment precinct of Courtenay Place
- The licensed premises operate up until 6am. Consequently, people are often inebriated in the area.
- The number of people using the area increases in the lead up to Christmas and over summer.
- As a result of the above, it is not safe to have vehicles passing through when there are a large number of people in the area late at night and early in the morning.
- The timing of the proposed street closure is aligned to when the above safety issues are greatest.

5.2 Consultation and Engagement

Discussions have been had with affected stakeholders. The following actions will be ongoing through and after the trial:

- An evaluation of the trial will take place and the results considered in any decision to continue with the use of outdoor seating in the area
- It is proposed that a group be established to oversee the trial and evaluation. It will include representatives from Council, Police, the premises and local residents.
- Meetings will be held after each weekend to ensure the trial evolves in response to any issues raised as it progresses.

5.3 Financial considerations

There are no significant financial considerations to be addressed in regards to the proposed closure as any costs will be met by the licensees.

5.4 Traffic Impact Assessment

The proposed closure is not expected to unreasonably impede traffic. The closure allows parking up to 10.30pm and the road will be open to normal operation by 4am the next day. Safety of pedestrians and night revellers is expected to be improved by the closure and will be monitored as part of the trial. Past closures of Blair Street for events have caused little disruption or inconvenience for local residents and businesses and have caused no problems for the wider travelling public.

5.5 Long-term plan considerations

The Chief Operating Officers Group have assessed the proposal with regard to its contribution towards the Council's strategies and policies. The proposed trial supports the Council's strategy to be the "events capital" of the country and will contribute to the economic success of the city.

6. Conclusion

The trial of closing Blair Street from the Courtenay Place end is supported by officers to improve the safety of pedestrians and reduce the instances of alcohol related harm in the area. If approved it will enable licensed premises owners in the street to trial the operation of outdoor seating areas to improve the vibrancy of the area.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

Temporary road closures for events contribute to the council's desire to be the events capital of New Zealand. Specific council strategies that are supported by this include:

- More liveable – through prudent management of the road network.
- More eventful – some events may not be possible without temporary road closures.
- More actively engaged – affected stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed closures.
- Better connected – through better management of traffic flows. Conversely road closures could sever key transport routes.
- More prosperous – the film industry relies on road closures, and other types of events increase commercial activity.

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Administration of the proposed closures is budgeted for under Annual Plan Project C481 Network Activity Coordination and contributions from the licensees. There will be no long term financial impact to the Council resulting from these closures.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

No significant Treaty implications.

4) Decision-making

This is not considered to be a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General consultation

Key event organisers and other stakeholders (such as public transport and emergency services) have been consulted to assess and measure the impact the proposed closures will have. The appropriate traffic management plans have been developed to manage traffic accordingly.

b) Consultation with Maori

No specific consultation with Maori was carried out.

6) Legal implications

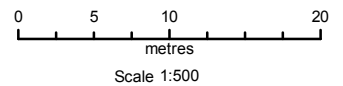
The process used to consider the proposed closures for approval is in accordance with the advice provided by the council's lawyers.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The plans for the proposed closures and this report have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice for Temporary Traffic Management and the process approved by the Regulatory Processes Committee.



Blair Street
Proposed Trial Closure Area



Property boundaries, 20m Contours, road names, rail line, address & title points sourced from Land Information NZ. Crown Copyright reserved. Property boundaries accuracy: +/-1m in urban areas, +/-30m in rural areas. Census data sourced from Statistics NZ. Postcodes sourced from NZ Post. Assets, contours, water and drainage information shown is approximate and must not be used for detailed engineering design. Other data has been compiled from a variety of sources and its accuracy may vary, but is generally +/- 1m.

MAP PRODUCED BY:
Wellington City Council
101 Wakefield Street
WELLINGTON, NZ

ORIGINAL MAP SIZE: A4
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