

ITEM NO: 12

**SUBJECT: RESTRICTION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC, LOFTUS STREET,
LAWSON**

FILE NO: F00874

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council note that there is currently a temporary barrier restriction to through traffic in Loftus Street, Lawson under Part 8 Division 1 (Section 115) of the Roads Act 1993.*
 2. *That public consultation including letter box drop, public notification in the Gazette and on the Council's Web page occur as part of the RTA required Traffic Management Plan.*
 3. *That the Council note that application, including a Traffic Management Plan, will be made to the Roads and Traffic Authority for consent to close Loftus Street, Lawson to through traffic under Part 8 Division 2 (Sections 116 to 119) of the Roads Act 1993 and that the Local Traffic Committee has been consulted on the closure.*
 4. *That a review of the Local Links Road Strategy be reported back to the Council by June 2008.*
-

Report by Group Manager, Community and Corporate:

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information on whether to seal the remaining section of Loftus Street or to permanently close this road to through traffic.

At the Council meeting of 15 May 2007, it was resolved:

"That, subject to safety considerations and consultation with the local traffic committee, the Council close Loftus Street, Lawson, to through traffic pending a report to the Council regarding options for Loftus Street, Lawson, including:-
- sealing the remainder of the road; and/or
- permanent closure of the road to through traffic."

(Minute No. 128, 15/05/07)

At the Council meeting of 7 August 2007, it was resolved:

"That the Council immediately close Loftus Street, Lawson to through traffic pending a report to the Council regarding the options for Loftus Street, Lawson including:
- sealing the remainder of the road; and/or
- permanent closure of the road to through traffic. "

(Minute No. 218, 7/08/07)

Loftus Street, Lawson has been temporarily closed in accordance with this resolution. This report addresses the options raised in Minute No. 128.

Background

The Council adopted a Local Link Road Strategy (LLRS) in August 1999 which was aimed at providing improved local linkages which would:

- Improve safety for local residents and highway users;
- Improve convenience by making areas more accessible;
- Improve bushfire access; and
- Reduce the traffic conflict with the highway.

The Council resolved at its meeting on the 13 February 2001 to formally accept the offer of \$950,000 from the State Government, over a five year period, to fund the projects identified in the LLRS.

The LLRS was consistent with the announcement by the State Government of a \$360 million upgrade for the Penrith to Orange Transport Corridor Strategy. The Council reviewed the sites in the LLRS against the RTA criteria and identified 18 sites across the mountains, which should be jointly funded by the RTA and Council.

Loftus Street, Lawson and Railway Parade, Wentworth Falls near Taylor Road were rated as high and medium priority and scheduled for sealing in 2002/2003. However, Loftus Street, Lawson was not sealed at this time due to the cost of construction on Railway Parade, Wentworth Falls, being greater than estimated due, to on site geotechnical issues. The RTA funds used for this work have since been reconciled with the RTA, who are satisfied the money was spent in accordance with the conditions for which the money was approved.

Closure of Loftus Street, Lawson to through traffic

Since the Council adopted the LLRS, there has been further discussion and investigation into the preferred treatment of Loftus Street, Lawson. Recognition has been given to the fact that through traffic will be able to use the sealed route along Hay, Lurnea and Engadine Streets to the sealed eastern section of Loftus Street, effectively providing a sealed link road. Furthermore, the unsealed section of Loftus Street is relatively straight, and downhill (in a eastbound direction) which increases the likelihood of speeding traffic (refer to the locality map as Attachment 1). This is particularly a risk at the Engadine & Loftus Streets intersection, which would need considerable improvements at significant cost to ensure a safe intersection was created. The intersection is currently a very flat 'Y' intersection that would have speed and decision time issues as well as a potential ambiguity of priority.

For these reasons, it is recommended to permanently close Loftus Street, Lawson to through traffic.

The locality map (see Attachment 1) shows the unsealed section of Loftus Street and the potential area where a lockable gate or barrier could be placed to restrict vehicle access. If the Council adopts the recommendation to permanently close Loftus Street, Lawson to through traffic, appropriate 'no through traffic' signage could be erected at the intersection of Loftus and Hay Streets. It is suggested that by restricting through traffic at the Engadine and Loftus Streets intersection, local traffic could access the western section of Loftus Street from Hay

Street. This would also provide access to the blocks of Crown land located on the unsealed sections of Loftus Street, Lawson (refer to the locality map as Attachment 1).

Local Traffic Committee

The proposed restriction to through traffic in Loftus Street was referred to the Local Traffic Committee members as is required under the Transport Administration Act 1988 and the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999. The following points were noted:

- The restriction is to prevent through traffic along this unsealed section of Loftus Street for traffic safety and road maintenance reasons.
- The restriction to through traffic in Loftus Street at Engadine Street will allow local access to Loftus Street from Hay Street.
- Through traffic will be able to use the sealed route along Hay Street, Lurnea Street, Engadine Street and Loftus Street.
- The restriction to traffic treatment and signposting will be undertaken in accordance with appropriate Roads and Traffic Authority standards and guidelines.
- The bend at the intersection of Hay Street with Lurnea Street will be improved by provision of signposting, better sight lines and shoulder widening.

The LTC committee members are in agreement with the Council's proposal to restrict through traffic via a barrier and/or a lockable gate.

Local Links Road Strategy

The LLRS, adopted in 2001 is due for a review, the finding of which will be reported back to the Council towards the end of the 2007/08 financial year.

Sustainability assessment

This assessment is conducted on the basis of closing Loftus Street to through traffic, and it remaining a gravel road.

Effects	Positive	Negative
Environmental	Very little change. Reduction in use would potentially reduce maintenance and reduce impact from dust.	Little or no change.
Social	Reduction in traffic flow and speed would improve pedestrian and driver safety.	Dust and sediment run off, characteristic of gravel roads would still be present. Sealing roads can improve these factors.
Economic	This section is currently graded annually at a cost of \$1,476.00. By restricting through traffic, the Council may have a reduction of on-going maintenance costs associated with this section.	If sealed, this road would need considerable funding from the Council to ensure this road met safety requirements. The cost of minor improvements to the bend at Hay Street and Lurnea Street.

Consultation

The Local Traffic Committee have been consulted in preparation of this report. The Traffic Management Plan, as required as part of the application to the RTA, will include a local letter box drop, and notification in the Gazette and on Council's Web page.

Conclusion

It is noted that the Local Traffic Committee has been consulted and application will be made to the Roads and Traffic Authority to permanently close Loftus Street to through traffic under Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993. Loftus Street is currently temporarily closed to through traffic under Section 115 of the Roads Act 1993.

It is also recommended that a review of the Council's Local Links Road Strategy (LLRS) be carried out by Council staff and reported back to the RTA on the progression of the projects and that the Council receive a report on the revised strategy.

* * * * *

Attachment: Locality Map

