

4 LITTLE RD BRIDGE - CLOSURE TO TRAFFIC

FILE REFERENCE INT1767456

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RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council commence the statutory procedures in accordance with clause 9 schedule 11 of the Local Government Act, 1989, (the Act) to block the passage of vehicles across Little Rd bridge as shown on the attached locality plan.
2. Council publish a notice in the local paper for Officer under sections 207A and 223 of the Act advising of the proposal.
3. In the event of no submissions being received, the Chief Executive Officer be authorised on behalf of Council to affect the proposal.
4. In the event of submissions being received, a committee comprising of the ward Councillors be appointed and the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to set the day, time and place for the hearing of such submissions.

Attachments

- 1 Location and images of Little Road bridge 3 Pages

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Little Rd bridge is located across Bunyip River at the north end of Little Rd, Iona. The bridge is an old style timber deck bridge with steel support beams with heritage significance. Due to its current condition the bridge is proposed to be closed to vehicular access and made a shared path.

The Little Rd bridge has a 7 tonne load limit and is located between two bridges on major collector roads that provide an alternative route. As such there is expected to be no impact to commercial and agricultural businesses and minimal impact to the local community with the closure of this bridge to vehicular traffic.

As the closure of Little Rd bridge to vehicular traffic is a road closure it must be completed in accordance with clause 9, schedule 11 of the Local Government Act, 1989 and requires a public notice to be published by Council under sections 207A and 223 of the Act.

BACKGROUND

The Little Rd bridge is located across Bunyip River at the north end of Little Rd, Iona connecting Main Drain Rd South and Bunyip River Rd. The bridge is an old style timber deck bridge with steel support beams with heritage significance. Due to its current condition the bridge is proposed to be closed to vehicular access and made a shared path.

The Little Rd bridge has a 7 tonne load limit as a result of a 2013 Level 3 condition assessment. This report also identified that as a long term solution the bridge would require strengthening or replacing to meet the traffic demands. In the past 12 months the bridge headstock on the south abutment has been repaired and reinstated. However, this is a temporary fix as the approach slab

abutment on this side of the bridge is dropping and currently being monitored. The bridge will require significant maintenance works in the short term if vehicle access is maintained including deck timber and pier replacements.

The Little Rd bridge is located between the bridge at Thirteen Mile Rd (1km to west) and the recently constructed bridge at Bunyip-Modella Rd (2.9km to east). These two bridges are considered strategic bridges across Bunyip River able to support large and heavy commercial and agricultural vehicles and are on the major north-south collector roads running through the area. The 7 tonne load limit of Little Rd bridge prevents these vehicles from being able to use this bridge.

A 2014 report indicated that 148 vehicles per day use the Little Rd bridge and that the surrounding bridges have the capacity to support the closure of Little Rd bridge.

The Little Road Bridge has heritage significance as it is evidence of the massive swamp drainage project carried out and the eventual development of transport networks, when this area was turned into rich farming land. The construction of many of these timber bridges along the drains also symbolises the devastation of the 1934 floods, when the previous timber bridges were washed away.

Due to the heritage significance of the Little Rd bridge, it supports extending the bridges life for as long as possible. As such it is considered that the safest and most cost effective option is to close the bridge as a road preventing vehicular access and convert it to a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists. This will continue to allow the local residents non-vehicular access across the river using this bridge, which includes access to St Joseph's Catholic Church, and maintain the heritage associated with the bridge. The impact on the local residents is considered minimal given the nearby bridges that are located on the area's major collector roads.

As the closure of Little Rd bridge to vehicular traffic is a road closure it must be completed in accordance with clause 9, schedule 11 of the Local Government Act, 1989 and requires a public notice to be published by Council under sections 207A and 223 of the Act.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

This proposal is relevant to the following actions in the Council Plan:

3.1.1. Maintain all Council roads and supporting infrastructure in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004.

3.1.4. Manage Council's assets like roads, drainage, footpaths and buildings, etc. in a way that ensures they are adequately maintained over their life.

5.3.3. Manage the municipality's finances and assets in a responsible way

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

A road closure under clause 9, Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act, 1989, requires that under sections 207A and 223 that a person be given the opportunity to make a submission under section 223.

This requires the issuing of a public notice and a minimum 28 days for submissions to be made following the issuing of the public notice. A person making a submission that wishes may request to be heard in person at a meeting of Council, in this case a committee comprising of the ward

Councillors should be appointed and the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to set the day, time and place for the hearing of such submissions.

It is proposed that the public notice be authorised by Council at the October Council meeting and published shortly following the meeting.

Should no submissions be received the Chief Executive Officer should be authorised on behalf of Council to affect the proposal.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

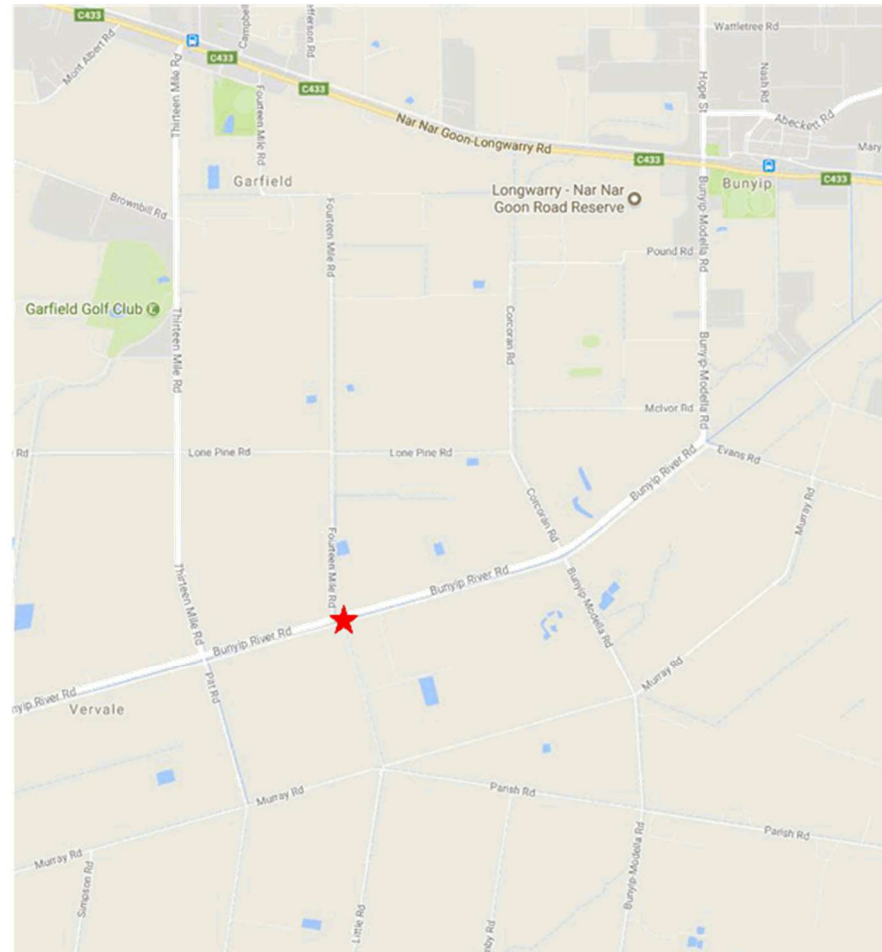
The road closure is expected to save significant costs to Council in the short term, as it will reduce the future maintenance requirements for the bridge, as the bridge will no longer need to accommodate the same loads that it currently accommodates. In the recent years Council has spent several thousand per annum on minor maintenance works for the bridge. In future years it is expected that major maintenance works will be required if the bridge stays open to vehicular traffic. The cost to replace the current bridge structure and to bring it up to current standards would be well in excess of \$1.4 Million

The financial costs to close the bridge can be accommodated within the 2017/18 bridge program

CONCLUSION

Little Rd bridge is in need of significant major works to maintain access for vehicular traffic. Given the nearby alternative routes available and heritage components, the safest and most cost effective solution is to close the bridge to vehicular traffic and convert the bridge to a shared path. This is expected to have minimal impact on the local community and no impact on commercial and agricultural businesses due to the existing load limit on the bridge. As this is a road closure a public notice must be published and consultation undertaken in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1989.

Location of Little Rd bridge



Aerial photo of Little Rd bridge



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Images of Little Rd bridge



Looking south along Little Rd bridge



Looking at west side of Little Rd bridge