Invercargill
CITY COUNCIL

Monday, August 4, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS
CIVIC REPORTERS

Trial 'world first' pedestrian system launched in Invercargill

The trial of a 'world first' crossing system for Invercargill that promises to help slower pedestrians while increasing safety and improving traffic flow begins at 1pm today.

The launch will take place at the Queens Drive-St Andrew Street intersection and involve Chairman of Community Services Cr Lindsay Abbott, Chairman of Infrastructure and Services Cr Lindsay Thomas and stakeholder representatives.

The new system provides a longer crossing time for users when the crossing button is pressed. The Queens Drive/St Andrew Street crossing is the first in Invercargill to have the system installed, with two more planned to be implemented at Gala Street/Queens Drive and Leven Street pedestrian crossing between Farmers and Warehouse at later dates.

Council Senior Traffic Engineer Eddie Cook said signs would inform people how to use the system. "There will be an audio message when the button is pushed to advise people to hold the button down for a longer crossing time and braille stickers are being produced which will be placed on the crossing button," he said. "These features cater for elderly pedestrians and for people with sensory, intellectual, neurological or physical disabilities."

The system was designed by Mr Cook and Fivepower Systems Ltd Director Brian Ward, who devised the system when Mr Cook was completing his Masters in Transportation.

The results of a survey conducted by Mr Cook in June into pedestrians' habits at crossings highlighted a need for the system to be implemented on intersections that were wider than usual. The survey also highlighted the need

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to include an audible message system. “This was a strong recommendation made by 75 percent of respondents in the survey.”

The initial design provided a reduced time for the standard pedestrian, with an increased time if the button was held down. The new design keeps the current time and provides extra time if the button is depressed. “The introduction of reduced crossing times for pedestrians at traffic signals, to reduce vehicle delays, will occur when the timing is right to do so,” Mr Cook said.

Representatives of the following stakeholder groups have been invited to the launch of the trial system: Blind Foundation, Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand, CCS Disability Action, Idea Services, Plunket, Office for Senior Citizens, Grey Power, New Zealand Automobile Association, Road Safety Southland, Epilepsy New Zealand (Southland Branch), Parent to Parent, New Zealand Police, Southern District Health Board, Te Puni Kokiri, Te Rūnanga o Waihōpai, Hearing Association Inc. (Southland Branch), Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand, New Zealand Transport Agency, and the Invercargill City Council.

A karakia and blessing will be conducted by local Kaumatua Michael Skerrett, followed by the first use of the system.

ENDS.

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