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Campbell, Jacqui

From: Roads Eastern Srit
Sent: 11 March 2015 09:25
To: 'John@nthbp.com'
Subject: York Street Interchange Formal Consultation

John

Thank you for your response to the consultation on the proposals for the York Street Interchange. Your views have been recorded as part of this process and will contribute to the decision on whether The Department should hold a Public Inquiry into the scheme.

Regards

Colin Pentland

Strategic Road Improvements

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Campbell, Jacqui

From: John McCorry [John@nthbp.com]
Sent: 10 March 2015 16:12
To: Roads Eastern Srit
Cc: Megarry, Michael; John McCorry; Fiona Surgenor
Subject: York Street Interchange - Draft Orders and Environmental Statement Consultation
Attachments: York Street Interchange consultation 3 3 15.docx

To whom it may concern,

Please find attached a submission from North Belfast Partnership and stakeholders who attended the local consultation event.

This submission is representative of the views expressed at that meeting.

Regards

John McCorry

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EVENT: NORTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP - YORK STREET INTERCHANGE CONSULTATION

DATE: Tuesday 3rd March 2015

PRESENTING: Michael McGarry, URS & Roy Spiers, Transport NI

VENUE: North Belfast Partnership offices, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast

Please find attached the following comments from North Belfast Partnership (NBP) in response to the York Street Interchange Public Consultation which is due to close 10th March 2015.

- NBP acknowledge the importance of upgrading The York Street junction as it is used by 100,000 vehicles per day. The proposal to make it a grade-separated interchange, ie have a number of roads running through tunnels under the York Street/York Road junction is acknowledged as the preferred option.
- NBP supports the key drivers for this development as the Belfast Port which forms part of the Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor and the need to seek an improved solution to the transport related problems as identified by the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan.
- NBP understands that this development is a Strategic Road Investment scheme (SRI) and as such follows an agreed process which is set out in three stages:
 - Stage 1 Scheme Assessment: this identified 6 proposals for the improvement strategy for the area. Four proposals were identified as going forward to Stage 2.
 - Stage 2 Scheme Assessment: This stage examined the four proposals and chose a Preferred Option.
 - Stage 3 Scheme Assessment: Following the announcement of the Preferred Option a preliminary design is developed to inform the preparation of the draft Designation Order (planning), and the draft Vesting Order and Environmental Statement.
- NBP acknowledges the consultation process that is underway via letters, emails, and presentations and that the Environmental Statement, copies of which were available at the Consultation, also includes the communications plan. The formal consultation ends on 10th March 2015.
- NBP welcomes the estimated economic multiplier associated with this project, forecast at for every £1.00 cost, £2.33 benefit is delivered to users. However, this does not take into account disadvantages and inconvenience incurred by residential areas and communities on the fringe of this project development i.e. Little George Street.



- NBP welcomes the inclusion of Cycles-Lanes incorporated into the design for York Street/York Road and the single use lane northbound, and a multi-use lane southbound (cycles and buses).
- NBP encourage Transport NI be mindful of the needs of residents and surrounding properties and gardens. NBP wish to highlight the concerns of residents relating to overshadowing of their property and potential reductions in natural light cause by these project improvements. NBP welcomes proposals to establish reinforced slope which can be planted.
- NBP acknowledges project timelines related to construction will commence in April 2018 and complete in March 2021 if the contractors are given the authority to proceed. The Procurement period for the contractor is envisaged to be approximately 18 months to 2 years and that this is industry standard procurement times.
- NBP ask that traffic displacement is addressed as it is anticipated that implementation of this project will increase significantly traffic on Corporation Street due to Nelson Street being closed off. This was acknowledged however an assessment has been undertaken and it indicated that the thoroughfare can cope with the increase in traffic.
- NBP highlighted concerns that improvements to the York Street Interchange will increase traffic from the M2 and Westlink exiting at this junction towards the city centre therefore creating additional pressure on local traffic. This should be reviewed and catered for as part of the project.
- It was highlighted that Corporation Street/Dunbar Link/Fredrick Street and North Queen Street, is already stopped up and that traffic will increase considerably due to the extension of Ulster University and city traffic at the Clifton Street on/off slipways to the Westlink. This junction already experiences significant traffic congestion at all times of the day and should be reviewed as part of the Interchange project improvements.
- NBP feel the project plans as presented are almost exclusively car orientated. Arguably there is a requirement for the integration of more pedestrian friendly and person friendly environment to attract footfall activities to and from the city. NBP ask is the public thoroughfare and associated walkways being improved best effect? NBP would argue there is a need for creative and attractive solutions for pedestrians that are complementary to road usage. On this basis it is recommended that the York Street Bridge does not break the eye line vista along York Street for pedestrians and offers more than a roadway to serve movement of traffic. People need a pleasant built environment, and bridge façade with places to stop, areas to shelter, and spatial planning that fits with the UU Campus build.



- It was suggested using the footpath for both pedestrians and cyclists as in other parts of the country. This was the preference of those attending the meeting who were made aware that cyclist forums are lobbying for segregated cycle lanes.
- NBP felt that money needs set aside to soften the area and any harsh physical infrastructure associated with project improvement plans i.e. quality materials, spatial layout and design around the bridge areas at North Queen Street, York Street and Clifton Street and that foliage and environmental enhancements are used to improve the aesthetics overall.
- NBP would welcome regular feedback from the working group that look at finishes and aesthetics, including an opportunity to meet representatives collectively, the Arts Council and two independents, Forum for Alternative Belfast being one of those independents.
- Participants wanted cognisance taken of sensitive local issues such as the area.
- NBP are pleased that the project is giving due consideration to nature and wildlife in the area.
- NBP proposed early opportunities should be used to dispose of unused areas with a redevelopment brief that relates to the wider environmental conditions. Transport NI are encouraged to make every effort to ensure these areas are accessible and safe spaces. It was stated that the land will be disposed of via department procedures. However, it was felt that this would limit the ability for the land to be used creatively, as unused land is usually earmarked for car parking, landscaping or roads and nothing else. This land should be used creatively and to stimulate investment, job creation and social enterprise, perhaps via a local Development Trust or Enterprise Agency.
- The City Centre Master plan was raised for discussion. It was felt it would be useful to have early integration of these areas in their strategy.
- It was felt by those present that any spare land should be kept green and landscaped.
- NBP proposed Social Clauses were incorporated into the procurement process. It was felt that this would be beneficial for the area to have these clauses placed in the procurement Brief for the Interchange project. Transport NI advised they always include social clauses in large scale contracts and that DEL will monitor this. NBP felt local input to the uptake and Implementation of the project Social Clauses would be advantageous
- Those representing the Business community at the meeting were content with the project proposals did not impede their business services to any significant level.
- NBP proposed that compensation for residents be considered where alterations to homes such as triple glazing are required to reduce noise pollution.



- NBP requested that Transport NI monitor noise levels and pollution changes to minimise disruption locally for residents. It was acknowledged that if people/residents are not losing land, then there will be no compensation available. Part 2 claims are assessed one year after the opening of the road. NBP acknowledged if the rateable value of a property has reduced directly as a result of the road works project then claims can be made.
- NBP was informed that there is no compensation for disruption to businesses but the contractor must maintain access to places of business and residence throughout the project.
- NBP was informed that the progress of the project was dependent upon government and available budgets, however, the scheme should be well supported as it is in a key regeneration area and is likely to get all party support.
- It was suggested that it is very possible that the scheme will go to public enquiry.
- NBP enquired if an additional rail halt was mentioned at Gamble Street. Transport NI advised that they have raised this issue with Translink and the Transport Holding Company NI. NBP was informed that in order to install a dual rail line, the foundations work would need to be upgraded. Once the scheme is complete there will be no other opportunity to do this in the future.
- NBP proposed the possibility of Translink upgrading Yorkgate Train station as this stop will become the main feeder station for the Ulster University Campus. This will see an increase in pedestrians, Park and Ride and cyclists along the York Street arterial route.
- NBP was informed that BCC are working on cycle routes and that Transport NI is linking in with BCC in this respect.
- The meeting enquired if it is feasible to include crossing points at some agreed interval along the York Road. Transport NI and URS were asked to consider the distance between crossing points for pedestrians along this York Street route and new bridge.

These comments are submitted on behalf of North Belfast Partnership and those stakeholders in attendance at the consultation evening.

John McCorry

Chief Executive
North Belfast Partnership

CC: Consultation Stakeholders.