

14(ii)

Campbell, Jacqui

From: Roads Eastern Srit
Sent: 10 March 2015 14:39
To: 'paul.oneill@ashtoncentre.com'
Subject: York Street Interchange Formal Consultation

Paul

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

DRD - Eastern Division, Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road, Belfast BT8 8JL.

14 (11)

Campbell, Jacqui

From: Paul O'Neill [paul.oneill@ashtoncentre.com]
Sent: 09 March 2015 12:31
To: Roads Eastern Srit
Subject: Formal submission reference York Street Interchange
Attachments: formal submission.doc

Dear Sir/Madam
Find attached formal submission reference York Street Interchange.

Could you please acknowledge receipt of this submission by return email?

Thank You
Yours sincerely
Paul O'Neill

Paul O'Neill
Community Development Worker

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**Formal Submission
York Street Road Interchange**

Please treat this as a formal submission in relation to the proposed construction of the York Street Interchange.

We are a group of residents and community activists living and working within the Greater New Lodge /North Queen Street area of North Belfast. Our group was formed following public meetings at Clifton House, Tuesday 23rd Sept and North Queen Street Community Centre 13th of October.

We would like to raise a number of points for your consideration. Over the past number of months we have raised these concerns in the form of a letter sent to the different departments involved in the proposed motorway change. We have also spoken in person to DRD /Transport NI and URS officials at;

- Clifton House, Tuesday 23rd Sept 2014
- York Street Interchange Orders Exhibition' in the Ramada Hotel Belfast on 9th February 2015
- North Queen Street Park Play Centre Wednesday March 4th 2015.

We fully understand and appreciate the long term strategic importance of the new road development. However, equally important is the principle of shared decision-making to ensure that this project will not unduly undermine the needs of our community. Given the gravity of this project and its potentially life changing impact on our community we feel that the points raised in this submission should be given the fullest consideration.

1. Residents have serious concerns about the inevitable disruption during construction. They have worries about potential evening, night and weekend working. We believe that the impacts at street level should be clearly illustrated, explained and discussed and mitigation measures agreed in advance with the community.
 2. In relation to houses at Little Georges Street, our understanding is that the retaining wall to the rear of houses is to be extended upwards and the carriageway moved towards some houses. It seems that existing screening landscape will be removed. There is no indication of safety, visual screening (landscape) and sound screening proposed.
- Any sound and safety screening is likely to add to the obstruction caused by the raising of the new retaining walls which lie to the south (sunlight) aspect of the housing.

- No compensation measures such as acoustic glazing are being proposed.
- No landscape plan for each house in mitigation is provided.
- There are concerns over health and children's play in gardens.
- The residents have an established legal 'right to light'.

The widened motorway is only 10 metres away from existing houses, the traffic is being moved one lane closer to some houses, essentially these issues are a 'Catch 22' for the designers; any visual, safety and sound mitigation measures will only add to the obstruction effect of the new retaining wall cutting out southern light rights to existing housing. The re-housing and compensation of residents on this street should be open for discussion.

3. There is a Parade Interface at the bottom of Henry Street/York Road proposed bridge. Residents highlighted that the current screen, wall and fences are part of an Interface during parades where a DOJ project is ongoing. The raised approach road to the York Road overpass will change the nature of the layout. Residents suggest that the issue is addressed with local involvement and with reference to work with existing agencies such as DOJ and local neighbourhood police.
4. Noise and Air pollution locally. Whilst the Interchange may reduce these issues on a wider scale local residents have raised concerns about long term exposure particularly in relation to the existing houses 10 metres away from the elevated carriageway and in the area around the former North Queen Street Barracks site with reference to the new housing project which is currently under construction there.
5. McGurk's Bar Memorial Site. DRD will be aware of the McGurk's Bar Memorials. The road was built over this site. The current proposal indicates a completely rebuilt wall and widened flyover some 5-6 metres over the memorials. The traumatic impact and enduring legacy of the McGurk's Bar bombing on the families of those killed and indeed on the general New Lodge community cannot be overstated. The enduring emotional and symbolic significance of this memorial site is of huge importance. We therefore suggest that any process relating to the memorial site must be done with the direct involvement and agreement of the relatives of those killed in McGurk's Bar.
6. Undercroft and extension of North Queen Street Bridge underpass including ramps and blighted lands adjacent. Some years ago a neighbourhood group worked up proposals at the pedestrian ramps and lands adjacent to the North Queen Street flyover. These blighted lands exist from the earlier road building of the Westlink. The left over area is not visually secure or safe, and the ramp walls give cover to anti-social behaviour and stone throwing onto North Queen Street. The proposals create a new similar unresolved space towards the new housing site at the former PSNI station. The Interchange project needs to include addressing the blighted spaces and strips of land caused by the road. This should be co-designed with local groups who understand the context from experience.

7. North Queen Street Flyover. The flyover is to be widened. Currently it is a dark unimaginative space that blights investment and amenity for wider inner North Belfast. The design, materials and lighting of the space under and the fence over the bridge needs to be addressed and co-designed with the community and wider civic interests, with public space that is of high quality and civic.
8. Traffic system approach to Thomas Street This group of houses exists off a one way system and has only one way in/out. The arrangement is already awkward for residents. Concerns were raised about the construction phase were access may be further restricted and diverted traffic causing increased disruption. Fears of noise, amenity disturbance and drainage during the construction phase in particular were also expressed. The street is currently screened by planting, concern that this will be lost and not replaced.
9. Equity and compensatory projects. The Interchange is suggested to be of regional importance for DRD extending throughout the East coast between ports and trunk routes. The project has, as drawn, large negative impacts both at a personal street scale and for the wider neighbourhoods. Along the route, it is our community that suffers severe negative impacts without any sense of equity and compensatory measures in amenity. In the region we observe rural and urban areas where roads are screened with large areas of careful tree planting, stone walls (such as the road through Cultra) along with roundabouts and urban approaches where large investments have been made in visual amenity. We believe the same approach must be taken in our area. Compensatory projects should be undertaken in a co-design approach that clearly demonstrate that our area has been respected and treated in an equitable manner with the expenditure of such a significant amount of public funds.

Yours sincerely on behalf of the Committee Members

Paul O'Neill (Community Development Coordinator Ashton Community Trust)

Committee members

Barry Kilfeather (Resident)

Bernie Caughey, (Resident)

Brenda Murphy (Resident)

Brendan Callan (Resident)

Jason Heron Resident)

Kate Clarke (Resident)

Liam Wiggins (Resident)

Lily Torbitt (Resident)

JJ Magee (BCC Councillor)

Pat Irvine (Resident)