

## 22. CHRISTCHURCH NORTHERN ROADING OPTIONS SCOPING STUDY CONSULTANT'S COMPLETED REPORT

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The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the consultant's completed report on the Northern Roading Options Scoping Study (NROSS), recently received from Traffic Design Group, and to provide context for the receipt of this report.

### **The Consultant's Completed Study Report**

The consultant's completed study report is formatted in two volumes. These are essentially the Interim Assessment Report (November 2001), which covers in detail the study up to the stage four consultation phase, undertaken between October and February last; and a second, new volume which includes work from the consultation phase to the current point of the study contract (essentially its completion). This new volume includes an overall executive summary, the summary and assessment of the stage four consultation submissions, the results of additional modelling and analysis undertaken to consider concerns raised during consultation, and the final consultant's conclusions and recommendations.

A clear and unequivocal outcome of the current study is that coordinated action will be required to deliver a staged programme of improvements. A 'do-nothing' stance on improvements to the road network in this part of the city is the worst possible outcome for everyone. Such action needs clear decisions to be made and direction given in association with this study. However, the decisions needed shortly primarily relate to which potential strategy elements should be taken to further investigation of detail and assessment of effects. Some of these decisions should be firm commitments to concepts and others may be to further test a concept/proposal prior to final adoption at this level.

With the receipt of this report by the Committee (copy tabled), the consultant's completed study report becomes available for the public to freely access. As instructed at a seminar dealing with this study, the completed report will be made available to the public at no cost, rather than the normal charge of copying cost associated with provision of other major reports.

### **Proposed Release And Decision Process**

The Committee may recall adopting a process for dealing with this report at its October 2002 meeting. This process in summary is as follows:

- 6 November 2002 - Transit New Zealand (TNZ) Board meeting receives a regional office submission on the NROSS completed study report and makes decisions in principle, related only to Transit-related projects.
- Mid November 2002 - Seminar One (Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee and members of Community Boards, Burwood/Pegasus, Fendalton/Waimairi and Shirley/Papanui) - a briefing on the consultant's completed report. This will also provide an opportunity for Transit's position to be outlined from its Board's consideration of the report.
- 26 November 2002 - This report to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee, to table the completed consultant's report.
- Late November/early December 2002 - Briefing of the five local action groups by staff.
- Mid February 2003 - Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee and Community Board members hold a seminar meeting with local interest groups.
- Early March 2003 - Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee and Community Board members meet with members of the community who wish to express views on the completed consultant's report, Transit representation will be invited to these meetings.
- March 2003 - Seminar Two - Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee and Community Board members meet to consider responses to community views and the completed consultant's report.
- March 2003 - A meeting between Transit and Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee Councillors between Seminar Two and the decision-making round of Council meetings to discuss a way forward.
- April 2003 - Report to Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee for decisions on the conclusions and recommendations of the NROSS completed report.

## **Background of the study**

The NROSS project is a joint study with main partners including the City Council, Transit New Zealand, and minor partners being Environment Canterbury, Waimakariri District Council and Hurunui District Council. It is a scoping study intended to provide a new, first-cut look at the road improvement options available to address the road network needs in the study areas over the coming 25 years in north Christchurch.

By their very nature these types of studies do not include a high degree of detail in terms of designs and effects. They are intended to identify the best initial ideas for future more detailed study, and to allow the dismissal of those ideas which clearly are not as viable or useful. Following scoping studies, there are a series of further projects/pieces of work to investigate in further detail the ideas supported in the scoping study allowing confirmation, or otherwise, of their viability. These further investigations may be ultimately taken through to the point of the civil design. Throughout such processes there are numerous opportunities for re-examining proposals to refine and modify them to be the most effective outcome in terms of efficient design and minimising adverse effects, and if necessary to abandon them. It is very easy to have over-developed expectations of the outputs of scoping studies, and the community during the consultation phase of this study were certainly looking for a far higher degree of detailed answers than could be provided from such a study. The NROSS project has in fact gone significantly beyond what is typical of scoping studies, at least in part, in recognition of the sensitivity of the project.

## **Seminar One**

The first seminar outlined in the above programme was held on Friday 22 November 2002 with the consultant briefing elected members on the results of the study and discussion to clarify understanding of the results and Transit's current position. This briefing should allow the key affected elected members to be able to respond confidently to approaches from the wider public and media. It is not the intention to encourage decisions on the study from the Council at this point, but rather to enable informed discussion and allow the community the opportunity to express their views to informed elected members.

## **Partner Organisations Considerations**

As noted above, TNZ's Board have considered the NROSS project, and have adopted a number of recommendations. Key to these is that the board wishes to discuss the study with the Council to establish a preferred way forward agreed to by both organisations to integrate and co-ordinate the proposed improvements.

The other partner authorities will also be receiving reports on the outputs of the study, with the Regional Land Transport Committee considering it on 27 November 2002. The timing of reporting to Waimakariri and Hurunui District Councils by their staff is not known.

## **Other Transport System Improvements**

There has been a number of comments over the course of NROSS that it does not provide sufficient detail or consideration of non-riding improvements to the network.

The study has included consideration of the effects of a 500% increase in public passenger transport patronage in line with the public passenger transport strategy, but not the detail of projects that might achieve that increase. The effect was to delay the timing of projects by up to five years, but did not alter the type or location of the proposed improvements. This indicates that the Council may face a fundamental change in its approach to transport planning if it does not wish to implement road network improvements, as even to achieve the 500% patronage improvement will involve major investment by the City and Regional Councils in the Public Transport System, integrated with significant measures to discourage the use of the single occupant motor vehicles (much more than has been the past expressed levels of comfort in many transport planning decision, even in the recent past).

Nevertheless, there have been many enquiries and submissions associated with this project as to the place and effect of Park 'n' Ride initiatives for this area of the city. There has been a project underway by a Lincoln University student in recent months considering this, and a staff member will shortly return from a significant period working in the United Kingdom in Oxford which has advanced experience of Park 'n' Ride systems.

This information on the potential of Park 'n' Ride being integrated with NROSS (or in this area generally) will be reported alongside the discussions on NROSS through the coming months. However, it has to be acknowledged that its effect is likely to not significantly affect the basic results of NROSS. Other information on alternatives can also be sought during this period if requested by the Committee.

**Staff**

- Recommendation:**
1. That the consultant's completed report on the NROSS project be received.
  2. That the timetable for consideration of the report as set out above be confirmed.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.