

3. BLENHEIM ROAD DEVIATION

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PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Property and Major Projects Committee of progress to date on the Blenheim Road Deviation Project.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 14 December 2000 the Council resolved to proceed with the Blenheim Road Deviation project and approved a budget to do so. The key resolutions were to:

- *Carry out further public consultation to augment the consultation already undertaken for the current year's annual plan, giving full details of the now fully developed proposal and increased capital expenditure, by 15 January 2001.*
- *Adopt and implement the road alignment and design recommended in the report, (subject to the successful outcome of the specific requirements), and subject to variation in the alignment of the southern portion to minimise or avoid the effect on the McLean Institute Land.*
- *Consider the development of the relevant part of Deans Avenue for car parking for Hagley Park as a separate project at a later time.*

PROGRESS REPORT

Since the Council's resolution the following progress has been made:

1. The City Streets Unit has engaged City Solutions to manage the project.

The aim of the project has been specified as:

"To construct a new roadway with a new railway over-bridge connecting the Blenheim Road/Mandeville Street Intersection with the Moorhouse Avenue/Deans Avenue intersection thereby significantly improving traffic flows and safety in the area and providing a cost effective solution to replacing the existing substandard railway over-bridge on Blenheim Road".

The key objectives in the brief to City Solutions are specified as:

- *To provide a four lane carriageway link with appropriate intersection configurations at either end;*
 - *To construct a new rail over-bridge for this link, which provides clearances for future rail and road requirements.*
 - *To provide a safe and direct cycle and pedestrian link between Blenheim Road and Hagley Park;*
 - *To demolish the existing bridge and thereby provide a first grade pedestrian/cycle link in the existing Blenheim Road corridor;*
 - *To collaborate with the developer of adjoining projects so that each parties requirements are met;*
 - *To achieve Council/electoral member "ownership" of the project by regular reporting and involvement;*
 - *To maximise the rent recovery from properties required for the project and recoveries from sale of surplus land thereby reducing the cost to the rate payers;*
 - *To manage risk by using best practice risk management procedures;*
 - *To use value management and engineering techniques to ensure the most cost effective design, materials and methods are used; and*
 - *To use the most appropriate contract type and implementation method for the delivery of the project to ensure budget, quality and time milestones are met.*
2. Legal agreements have been negotiated and signed for the purchase of all land necessary to achieve the Deviation. The Council is now legal owner of the 'South Railyards' site and the 'Ayton (Togega)' site.

3. Site investigations have been conducted to provide more certainty in planning the scheme. These include sub-soil testing and location of services.
4. The draft scheme has been developed, in consultation with affected land-owners. This has taken considerably more time than anticipated because of the complex design issues that have arisen.
5. The consent of Tranzrail has been obtained (in principle) to the designation requirement for the Deviation.
6. Expert advice has been engaged to support development of the project. This includes engagement of Tony Hearn QC as legal counsel together with consultants to advise as required on planning, traffic, landscape, noise, vibration and valuation matters.
7. Lodgement of the Designation Consent was made in late November 2001 and it was publicly notified on 19 January 2002. Submissions close on Friday 1 March 2002.
8. The budget schedule has been refined to accord with the scheme proposed for the Designation

DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Legal advice is that Council is required to obtain a designation to the Transitional District Plan and the Proposed City Plans to allow the project to proceed to construction. Given that the Council is the applicant, the application will be heard before an independent commissioner. In making the application, the Requiring Authority (Council) has shown why the designation is needed, provided a physical and legal description of the required site, described the nature of the proposed works, described the effects on the environment and any proposed mitigation works. The alternatives considered are noted, along with the consultation undertaken with potentially-affected parties.

The Notice of Requirement states that the designation is needed to provide for:

- *upgrading of the eastern end of Blenheim Road to safely cater for the needs of all road users (including cyclists and pedestrians).*
- *maintaining and upgrading of the eastern end of Blenheim Road to a high standard and to withstand a significant earthquake event.*
- *addressing the continuing problem of car parks for Hagley Park.*
- *encouraging redevelopment of the former saleyards site for residential purposes by limiting the adverse impacts of adjoining road traffic which is expected to increase in part because of the development of a major retail outlets on former railway land in the vicinity.*
- *provision of safe and efficient access to the proposed retail development occurring on the Tower Junction and Southern Site (owned by Ngai Tahu).*

The deviation of Blenheim Road from its intersection with Picton Avenue through to the western end of Moorhouse Avenue enables all the above objectives to be met.

The extent to which the deviation and other options satisfy the above objectives is also detailed in the discussion of alternatives in 1(e) of the Notice of Requirement. This assessment will indicate that the proposed deviation achieves all of the objectives and achieves them efficiently and effectively.

Public consultation has been conducted via distribution of a publicity pamphlet to some 2000 businesses and residents in the area principally affected by the project. A series of open meetings were also conducted to allow people to obtain more detailed information via a series of panels and officers who were on-hand to answer questions from the public.

The response from the public in general viewed the project positively. There was however a considerable concern from business owners and residents of the Lowe Street/Tyne Street area regarding the proposed access to this area. In response to this feedback, the draft scheme was modified to allay these concerns in consultation with and to the satisfaction of the affected parties.

PROGRAMME

The tentative programme for the project is:

Designation Consent

- *Closing of Submissions:* 1 March 2002
- *Public Hearing:* April 2002
- *Commissioners Recommendations to Council:* May 2002

Design and Construction

- *Complete Design:* September 2002
- *Tender Contract:* October 2002
- *Acceptance of Tender:* December 2002
- *Start Construction:* January 2003
- *Complete Construction:* June 2004

This programme is subject to change due to a number of factors; **including granting of a designation consent without appeal.**

BRIDGE AND APPROACHES

The proposed railway overbridge and approaches are to be constructed across a site with particularly weak soils. Large static settlements, seismic settlements and liquefaction are predicted. This site is in close proximity to high voltage cables on one side and a proposed new shopping development on the other. This further complicates the design of the bridge and its approaches as it limits the options for soil improvement using techniques that cause vibration and settlement. The interface between the approaches and the bridge is also complicated due to the different seismic behaviour of each structure. Several options have been investigated to date for ground improvement to minimise settlement of the bridge and roading embankment foundations. Other options using geotextiles to contain the embankment are also being investigated. It is currently proposed to construct the bridge in one 26.3m clear span using either hollow core units or N beams, possibly with light weight concrete to reduce load. A two span option is being considered to reduce structural depth and therefore approach layout and length. The conclusion of these investigations will be reported to the May committee meeting.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The approved budget for this project is \$9,945,000 + \$1,500,000 allowance for potential escalation as result of adverse ground conditions, making \$11,445,000 net cost after recoveries through sale of surplus land.

A detailed schedule has been prepared for the designation and was presented to the Land Transport Sub-committee in July 2001. Updating of this schedule for the project has been continuing however final estimates for the bridge and approaches will be finalised and reported to the May Committee meeting.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.