

## 12. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE ON THE TEMPORARY BUS EXCHANGE

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager, City Environment Group – DDI 941-7305
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Road Corridor Operations Manager
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council regarding the proposal to establish a temporary bus interchange because the Lichfield Street Bus Exchange is currently unavailable due to earthquake damage to the Exchange itself and to surrounding areas. In addition, the current temporary arrangements are unsuitable. The report and recommendations reflect the discussion and outcome of the Transport Committee Workshop held on Friday 5 August.

### BACKGROUND

2. Christchurch City Council provides the Bus Exchange facilities as part of the requirement for the Road Controlling Authority to provide public transport infrastructure under the Local Government Act. Following the 22 February earthquake the public transport system was re-established within a few days utilising two separate termini, situated on Bealey and Hagley Avenues, with a link service connecting the two termini. While this situation was effective in the short term the lack of ability to through route buses and allow passengers to change between buses freely means that it has become necessary to establish a single site that can act as an effective central bus interchange to provide through routing as well as easy access to central city businesses.
3. The current situation of using two undeveloped kerbside termini means that council is unable to meet the levels of service in Council's Long Term Plan. Passengers are exposed to the elements and transferring passengers are required to travel on a link service between the two termini adding up to an additional 30 minutes to a cross city journey. Bus patronage has declined by approximately 50 per cent since the February earthquake and Ecan believe that up to 30 per cent of this decline is attributable to the inability to through route buses, provide easy passenger transfers between services and provide an acceptable level of service for passengers waiting in the central city. On a month by month basis passenger numbers remain in decline and a contributing factor is inadequate shelter at the current termini.
4. The current Bus Exchange has suffered damage in the February 22 earthquake and while structural damage to the exchange itself is not major, the common areas shared with adjoining buildings is severe. It may be one to two years before it is available for use.
5. It is proposed that a facility be established on part of the site which was previously designated for constructing the new underground transport interchange situated between Lichfield and Tuam Streets to the west of Colombo Street. (**Attachment 1.**)
6. The other two projects closely connected to the interchange project are Restart 29 October 2011 and the Council staff move to the Rexel/Kathmandu buildings.

### RESTART 29-10-11

7. Based around Ballantynes/City Mall, this initiative to commence the re-opening of central city retail has the target of opening in time for the NZ Cup and Show Week and the lead up to Christmas. With many badly damaged buildings in the City Mall, and restrictions due to high rise building "fall zones" east of Colombo Street, the focus has been on the City Mall from Colombo Street - Oxford Terrace, to be extended into Oxford Terrace (The Terrace) as soon as practicable. With a few exceptions, including the main Ballantynes building, most of the Mall buildings are being demolished, to be replaced in the meantime with temporary structures for retail and hospitality.
8. It had been hoped that the Lichfield St carpark building could have been available in time for the re-opening, but to repair and upgrade to acceptable seismic standards is not possible within this timeframe. In any event a need had been identified for some ground level parking, given a negative public perception about the safety of parking buildings while aftershocks continue. Hence, there is parking on the site adjacent to the proposed bus exchange.

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9. Having the Bus Exchange on this site is a good strategic fit, and having good bus connections in close proximity to Restart sends a positive message for public transport, both to customers and staff, and to CCC employees and their customers who will be in the adjacent building.
10. The Committee proposed that the temporary interchange be called the "Central City Bus Station" and marketed and signed as "Central Station" to clearly identify it as being part of the central city fabric as well as well as a destination in its own right.

**FACILITIES AND SITE LAYOUT**

11. Since the facility will operate for one to two years, a reasonably high level of amenity is required (refer to **Attachment 2**) so it is proposed to install facilities for bus patrons such as toilets, shelters, a waiting area, on-site security, lighting, cycle racks, and bus announcement and Real Time Information displays. Where possible recycled equipment from the current Bus Exchange will be utilised to minimise costs, and materials will be recycled at the end of the temporary facility's life.
12. It is proposed the station will consist of two individual raised platforms (each a different width) with eight metre bus lanes. This layout will enable on platform shelters and Real Time Information to be provided as well as a fully enclosed waiting room with appropriate facilities. The use of two platforms will allow operations to be carried out from either direction which will provide flexibility to be able to react to additional roads becoming available for use or roads being closed for demolition or construction works.
13. ECan would operate the facility on a day-to-day basis as occurs at the current Bus Exchange, and they will monitor and control bus and passenger movements.
14. The proposed layout is shown in **Attachment 2**.

**LOCATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR SITE SELECTION**

15. An extensive search for a suitable location for a temporary interchange was conducted in the months following the February earthquake. Council has worked very closely with ECan on site selection, including assessment of all sites considered, the facilities required on site, the site layout and operations. ECan are very supportive of the establishment of the facility. Ten sites throughout the city were considered for further investigation and after input from Ecan, Council planners and bus operators it became clear that the only viable option is the proposed site. During the time between identifying the preferred option and formulating the final proposal other areas were investigated as they became accessible but no further sites were considered suitable.
16. Sites were assessed against the following criteria:
  - Good access to east west corridors.
  - Good access to north south corridors.
  - Best possible access for buses.
  - Safe and easy access for passengers.
  - Ability to allow flexible operations and access by passengers.
  - Provide support for the Central City.
  - Ability to continue operations as the cordon changes and additional roads become available.

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17. The 10 sites considered are listed in the table below and their locations are shown in **Attachment 3**.

Site Number	Location
1	176 Tuam St/Lichfield St
2	196 Tuam St (Council car park opposite former civic building)
3	551 Colombo St (Smith City carpark Old hardware area north of store)
4	26 Allen St
5	196/200 St Asaph
6	54/56/58 Lichfield St (site of proposed underground interchange) (The preferred site)
7	1 Latimer Sq (roadway around the square)
8	445 Hagley Ave (Current Parkside terminus)
9	67 Cashel St (King Edwards Barracks)
10	6 Riccarton Ave (Botanic Gardens Car Park off Park Tce)

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

18. This project is a direct result of the 22 February earthquake and was therefore unforeseen. It is anticipated that the cost of establishing the facility to provide an acceptable level of service will be \$827,400. Costs will be covered by a mix of NZTA funding, insurance, and a Civil Defence claim for Maintenance of Temporary Works.

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND SITE OPERATIONS**

19. In stage one of operation (**Attachment 4**) all buses will operate east along Lichfield Street, through the site, exit onto Tuam Street and travel to the west, dispersing to their destinations using the multi-lane one-way system. Stage two of operations (**Attachment 5**) will occur as the central city cordon is reduced which will allow buses to exit the interchange heading east on Tuam Street, initially exiting the area via Colombo Street to the south with a view to using Tuam Street to the east when it becomes available.
20. The traffic generated by the interchange and the proposed parking area is significantly less than pre-quake levels and it is anticipated that operations will not have any adverse effects on traffic movements. Currently there is no through-route via Lichfield or Tuam Streets and the majority of traffic in the area will be generated by the transport interchange and adjacent car park.
21. The facility has been designed to allow flexibility so that bus movements can be adjusted as more roads become usable. This will allow bus movements to be varied to mitigate any traffic issues as the cordon is moved while allowing more direct routing of buses where possible.

**CONSENTING**

22. Consenting issues are dealt with under the Canterbury Earthquake (Resource Management Act Permitted Activities) Order 2011 which is subject to Council's policy, adopted 31 March 2011 related to Temporary Accommodation Standards. The application is not one for resource consent, it is a request under this special Order for the activity to be "deemed" permitted under the RMA, thereby bypassing the need for a resource consent where one would otherwise be required.
23. The criteria to be considered relates to specific proposals submitted, and the policy makes no suggestion that alternatives need to be considered or any sort of cost/benefit analysis performed as part of the assessment process. An assessment under this Order is guided by the Policy mentioned above and in particular, the desired outcomes from that policy include:

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- The speedy and efficient economic recovery of the City;
- Maintenance of acceptable health and safety standards for those using temporary accommodation;
- City wide and local infrastructure and transport networks function in a safe and environmentally sustainable manner;

This application is currently with the Environmental Policy and Approvals Unit for assessment and will be considered, probably this week, by an independent Commissioner.

**CHAIR'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the information be received.