

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Roger Ashworth, Transportation Manager

REFERENCE: T601-3

DATE: 17 August 2007

SUBJECT: North Nelson to Brightwater Corridor Study

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on current developments with particular respect to consultation on the North Nelson to Brightwater Corridor Study and to seek resolution from Council to formally withdraw from the study, and the NCC/TDC Regional Transport Committee.

2 BACKGROUND

The North Nelson to Brightwater Corridor Study has involved three major players, Transit New Zealand (the lead agency), Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council. These three, plus eight appointed members, make up the NCC/TDC Regional Land Transport Committee.

The study was commissioned in 2004 and has therefore been ongoing for some three years. The purpose of this study was to develop a long-term transportation strategy for the Nelson and Richmond urban areas. The study area includes State Highway 6 from the Teal River Bridge in the north to Brightwater in the south, as well as State Highway 60 from State Highway 6 to Pea Viner Corner and the wider Nelson and Richmond urban areas including local roads.

The Study has a strong consensus as to appropriate solutions with the TDC area (Brightwater to Stoke). Unfortunately reaching a consensus on the NCC area (Stoke to Nelson) has proved more difficult.

After extensive analysis and consultation on many different types of projects and packages a preferred package and two roading options were proposed for the next round of consultation. The preferred package includes small and large-scale roading upgrades, improvements for connectivity and safety, travel demand management measures, enhanced bus services and improvements to cycling facilities. In addition to the preferred package there are two roading options to address capacity issues in the NCC area, between Nelson and Stoke.

These options have been well publicised but in summary:

- Option 1 includes the introduction of peak hour clearways for use by high-occupancy vehicles north bound on State Highway 6 and south bound on Rutherford Street/Waimea Road.
- Option 2 proposes the southern corridor local arterial road.

Submissions for the North Nelson to Brightwater Corridor Study closed on 17 August 2007. Debate over the options that are currently out for public consultation has generated a high level of interest and already the Nelson-Tasman Regional Land Transport Committee (RLTC) has received a large number of submissions.

Over the intervening period between the release of the consultation document there has been concern expressed by TDC as to the adequacy of the consultation document and the process for dealing with the options in the study. Council is concerned that the continuing process proposed by Transit could be flawed and as such may be challenged in terms of the Land Transport Act.

Council recognises that any decision by the joint NCC/TDC RLTC can effectively be vetoed by NCC not agreeing to fund its share. Given the deep division within the Nelson community, any NCC decision may also be challenged by those opposed to that decision.

Tasman District Council acknowledges that this is a very important strategy for the region; however Council considers that the overall goals could be achieved more efficiently and effectively by separate regional strategies for each district, rather than the joint process.

TDC notes that:

- As the biggest unitary council with the full powers of a Regional Council, it is perfectly possible for TDC to have a separate TDC Regional Land Transport Committee (both Marlborough District Council and Gisborne District Council are unitary councils, and each has its own RLTC).
- There is no dispute as to the appropriateness of the Land Transport solutions proposed within the TDC area (ie Brightwater to Richmond)
- The only area of dispute lies in the NCC areas and whatever final solution is decided on by NCC, there is no conflict with the TDC solutions. Whatever happens in Nelson can be accommodated by the TDC solutions.
- Whatever solution is decided for Stoke to Nelson, the cost implications for NCC remain the same, whether or not TDC is involved.
- Nelson opinion is deeply divided between Option 1, Option 2, both options in sequence, or the 'do nothing' option.
- TDC believe that the accountability should rest with those who have electoral mandate to impose the subsequent rating requirements.
- Transit has now agreed to undertake further exploratory work to ensure that any further consultation will be fully informed on both options.

TDC therefore concludes that the interests of both NCC and TDC will be best served if the final decision for the Nelson to Stoke section of the Nelson to Brightwater Corridor Study is the transparent responsibility of the NCC utilizing its own Nelson Regional Land Transport Committee.

It is Council's view that the proper process should be as follows:

- 1 The existing consultation is closed without any decision being made, although the submissions should be carefully analysed to identify questions and concerns.
- 2 Transit uses the questions and objections received during the consultation and in the Russell McVeagh letter to conduct further exploratory work to provide answers as to how those questions and objections would be handled.
- 3 Transit then publicly:
 - a) Acknowledges the completion of the existing consultation;
 - b) Advises that it will be recommending to the joint NCC and TDC RLTC that the existing consultation document be withdrawn, and;
 - c) Undertakes to prepare a new consultation document that makes all reasonable efforts to provide the information sought by Russell McVeagh and others.
- 4 The joint NCC and TDC RLTC will then meet to confirm that it has withdrawn the current consultation document.
- 5 Tasman District Council will then withdraw from the joint NCC and TDC RLTC. In doing so, TDC will publicly acknowledge that Nelson City Council and its ratepayers will be the parties responsible for the provision of the 'local share', whatever option selected for the Nelson area, and that in those circumstances TDC believes that it is inappropriate for TDC to remain in a position where its views could be contrary to the publicly expressed sentiments of many Nelson Councillors and ratepayers.
- 6 TDC would then exercise its right to proceed with its own TDC RLTC, in conjunction with Transit and the appropriate appointed members.
- 7 In a similar fashion NCC would constitute a new NCC RLTC.
- 8 The new NCC RLTC would then receive the new revised consultation document from Transit and subject to any amendment by the NCC RLTC, either run a new and separate consultation on that aspect only, or alternatively incorporate that in a Draft NCC Regional Land Transport Strategy. Effectively, it will be over to NCC to decide just how much and what type of consultation it prefers.
- 9 The chosen form of consultation will run its course and at its conclusion, the NCC RLTC, and the NCC will reach a decision.
- 10 Meanwhile, TDC would also have set up its own TDC RLTC, put out a draft RLTS, completed its consultation and adopted a final RLTS.

In terms of other aspects of developing individual Regional Land Transport Strategies, Tasman District Council Officers will continue to work closely with Nelson City Council

3 RECOMMENDATION

THAT Tasman District Council formally write to both Transit New Zealand and Nelson City Council advising of its intention to resign from the joint Regional Land Transport Committee and from the tri-party agreement (Corridor Study), in accordance with the process set out in this report.

Roger Ashworth
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