

STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Members, Engineering Services Committee
FROM: Roger Ashworth, Transportation Manager
REFERENCE: RD3335
DATE: 20 March 2007
SUBJECT: RICHMOND TOWN CENTRE (CROUCHER SQUARE)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on progress in:

- a) Consultation
- b) Design
- c) Timing

2. BACKGROUND

At the August 2006 meeting of the Engineering Services Committee held in Murchison the following resolution was passed:

**Moved Crs Kempthorne/O'Regan
WK06/08/04**

THAT:

- a) **\$400,000 is reallocated within the LTCCP roading budget to give a total town centre development allocation of \$1.72 million;**
- b) **The McGlashen Avenue funding of \$632,000 be advanced to the 2006/2007 financial year.**

CARRIED

Following the August meeting Council staff and consultants have, as part of the design and consultation process, held several meetings with the business community, directly affected landowners and also residents of Talbot and Croucher Streets and McGlashen Avenue.

The last meeting held was an evening meeting on Thursday 15 March 2007 chaired by Deputy Mayor Tim King and attended by Richmond Ward Councillors, Council staff and consultants plus other invited and interested parties. The minutes of this meeting are attached.

The meeting discussed the following issues:

- Shifting lane one-way, two-way etc.
- Trees – type/shading
- Service lane – safety
- Heavy vehicle access
- Loss of car parks
- Loading zone/disabled parking/time limited parking
- Open public space
- Physical works disruptions
- View lines
- Timing – ring road

3. COMMENT

The project aims are basically unaltered over the years since it was first proposed. These include:

- Provides a destination within Richmond and an identifiable town centre;
- Provides residents with a quality urban park;
- Caters for all ages and a range of activities;
- Improves pedestrian links and safety;
- Encourages business development;
- Activates space for community use in public ownership;
- Encourages public use of town centre;
- Provides a flexible venue for outdoor activities;
- Reduces traffic flow through Croucher Street;
- Community pride in Richmond town.

From Council's perspective we need to acknowledge that to satisfy every individual's vision and therefore provide the ultimate design is "mission impossible". We also need to acknowledge that this isn't a greenfields development and comes with several design fish hooks such as the service lane behind the Star and Garter. This and other difficult design issues do not lend themselves easily to accommodate all desirable requirements in a town centre development. In acknowledging these facts the issues raised and highlighted in the attached minutes are not insurmountable and are being worked through.

To optimise the Croucher Square development from Council's perspective we believe the following main design concepts are not negotiable:

1. A single lane running between Queen Street and Croucher Street/McGlashen Avenue. Exact location of the lane, ie either on the western or eastern side of Croucher Street potentially negotiable however Council's preference at this stage is for the western side. Also the direction in which the traffic would flow, ie one-way either from Queen Street to Croucher Street or from Croucher Street to Queen Street is possibly negotiable. However, again Council's preference is for directional flow from Queen Street through to Croucher Street.

To retain a two-way road will defeat the purpose of a town square.

2. Open public space – There needs to be an open public space generally consistent with the size and dimension as shown in concept plan. The exact configuration will need to be finally determined by the lane and car park layout.
3. Trees – again there needs to be trees and we believe that there are tree species that will in general satisfy most, if not all, requirements.
4. Loss of car parks – The Croucher Square development does come at a cost of losing some car parks. However, this number is less than 10 and we believe has been satisfied by Council reconfiguring other car parks within Richmond (Warring and Harkness) that have seen an accumulation of more than 100 additional car parks over the last 18 months.
5. Timing – Another issue for consideration is the timing of the project. Initially it was anticipated that a contract start in July this year would have enabled the project to be completed by the end of November 2007, thereby leaving the busy Christmas period free of interruption and for use of the Croucher Square. However in ensuring that the final design is to achieve a desired outcome for most, if not all, of the issues raised during the consultation rounds and that further consultation on the final design aspects can be undertaken, a project start of February 2008 would be more logical.

We do not see the delayed start date as being an opportunity for re-litigation of all of the issues that have been raised but rather more time and opportunity to refine the major issues that have been raised and to ensure a well-planned and developed project.

4. RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Croucher Square development construction phase be deferred until February 2008.

Roger Ashworth
Transportation Manager