

# High Street revitalisation and tram extension consultation report

## 1. Background

Property owners, businesses and tram operators were advised of the revitalisation and tram extension project in March 2018. Various concepts to upgrade the street were discussed with them at drop-in sessions.

Proposals were discussed with the Joint Technical Review Panel, including representatives from Environment Canterbury, the New Zealand Transport Agency and Ōtākaro Limited.

Emergency services representatives were shown the concept plans at a meeting arranged for them and raised no concerns.

Staff twice presented concepts to the Central City Transport Liaison Group comprising representatives of a wide range of city groups with an interest in transport.

When the project area was expanded in January 2019 to include the Cashel Street block, other stakeholders who were most affected were invited to view possible options.

## 2. Formal consultation

Consultation on a preferred plan opened on 14 May and closed on 10 June 2019. Emails were sent to 330 stakeholders inviting them to provide feedback on the Council's have your say site and 600 printed booklets were hand delivered to central city businesses on or near High Street.

In addition, 140 copies were posted to property owners and another 100 booklets were provided to Council service centres and libraries. The consultation was promoted on social media, radio and in local newspapers.

Two drop-in sessions were organised for those who wanted to discuss any issues with members of the project team.

Ninety individuals and organisations commented on the High Street revitalisation and 62 provided feedback on the tram extension.

## 3. High Street revitalisation

People were asked to comment on the project. Of the 90 submitters who provided feedback on the revitalisation plans:

- 40 indicated that they supported or generally supported the proposals.
- 44 indicated they did not support the plan or had concerns. Twenty three submitters, including nine who supported or generally supported the proposals, commented that there should be less emphasis on cars and on-street parking in the plans. Another 25 said more parking was needed to support local businesses. (An alternative plan was submitted for the southern block from Tuam Street to St Asaph Street.)
- 6 did not indicate their view of the overall plan.

## 4. What people liked about the High Street proposals in the consultation plan

Comments from those who supported the plan referred to the overall design, additional trees and planting, slower speed limit and shared space.

Supporters of the upgrade included the Community and Public Health section of Canterbury District Health Board, which commended the Council on the consultation plan: "It clearly

incorporates aspects of a Healthy Streets approach, given the emphasis on reduced speed, shared use and an interesting streetscape which will encourage people to stop, rest and relax.”

The Road Transport Association, said it would be “great to see this when completed as I am sure the people utilising the area will enjoy the new environment”.

Specific features of the plan that appealed to submitters were:

#### 4.1 Slower speed limit – 10 km/h

Twelve submitters supported slowing the speed of traffic to 10 km/h. Six opposed this proposed speed limit restriction. They were advised that the slower speed limit will help make the street a safer and more pedestrian and cycle-friendly environment. The street is intended as a destination and the lower speed limit supports this intention.

#### 4.2 More trees and planting

Additional trees and planting, including the proposed rain garden, would enhance the streetscape, according to six submitters. Several respondents queried the species of trees and two asked for more native planting.

The alternative plan for the southern block, submitted by respondents, includes small trees rather than replacement oak trees to avoid obscuring the heritage façade of the Duncan’s Building.

They have been advised that in the project team’s preferred plan there are fewer trees proposed in front of the heritage building than pre-earthquake, and they are further away from the building.

#### 4.3 Simplified Tuam Street intersection

Several submitters supported the redesign of the Tuam Street intersection where the number of poles is reduced from 19 to six.

A cyclist asked who has right of way at the proposed intersection layout. He has been advised that when using the Tuam Street cycle lane, vehicles and cyclists are expected to follow the give way rules. Vehicles left turning into High Street give way to cyclists left turning into High street, but have priority over cycles who are right turning in. This is the same as at any other intersection in the city.

#### 4.4 No kerbs in two blocks

Several submitters referred to the kerbless design in the mid and southern blocks, noting that the street layout could be adapted in the future.

Kerbs remain for the Cashel Street to Manchester Street section of High Street and Cashel Street between High Street and Manchester Street. This road was upgraded before the earthquakes and the kerbs are in good condition.

### 5. Main issues raised by submitters who did not support the plan

#### 5.1 Too much emphasis on cars at the expense of other types of travel

Comments from the 23 submitters who wanted less emphasis on cars and parking ranged from the need to provide fewer parking spaces for motor vehicles to full pedestrianisation of the street. Reasons given included the climate change emergency and the requirement in the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements on High Street.

Those who provided feedback included Ōtākaro Limited which suggested a shared zone pedestrian mall that would enable businesses to take full advantage of the character of the area,

utilise the space for dining, cafes, and support other activities such as events and busking. Seven submitters said High Street should be pedestrianised either now or in the future.

## 5.2 More parking required to support businesses

Twenty five submitters wanted more parking spaces to support local businesses, particularly those trying to get established in newly reopened buildings. They said there was no close alternative parking available to replace the on-street spaces lost in the consultation plan.

With regard to the loss of parking, the consultation plan indicated a reduction of 26 of the existing 94 on-street parking spaces across all three blocks. Following consultation the number of car parks has been increased overall by one in the preferred plan.

### 5.2.1 Alternative plan for southern block

Nineteen submitters opposed the proposed parking reductions in southern block of High Street, saying this would have a significant negative impact on the commercial viability of their businesses. They submitted an alternative plan for High Street from Tuam Street to St Asaph Street.

Their plan provides 29 car parks (plus a mobility park and loading zone) compared to 11 parks (plus a mobility park and loading zone) in the consultation plan. The proposed footpath – 8.2 metres wide in front of the Duncan's Building – is reduced to a maximum width of 6.7 metres. Those who submitted the plan said their alternative street layout was similar to an earlier plan developed by Council staff, but with more parking.

### 5.2.2 Alternative parking variations for the mid-block

Five submitters called for more parking to be reinstated in the mid-block from Lichfield Street to Tuam Street. Two of them supported an earlier plan developed by Council staff but with three or four more car parks.

## 5.3 Concern re cycle facilities

Eleven of the submitters who wanted less emphasis on cars and parking also wanted to see cycling facilities improved. Their concerns included:

### 5.3.1 Difficulty travelling through the Manchester / Lichfield / High streets intersection.

Response. The Lichfield Street intersection is complicated by the presence of tram tracks. Provision is made for cyclists to use cycle crossings to cross Lichfield Street from High Street. These crossings are provided on three of the four approaches.

### 5.3.2 More space needed for cyclists to negotiate tram tracks in the proposed street layout, especially in the northern block.

Response. The space proposed allows for two-way traffic as well as cyclists to travel safely in both directions. Note that the cycle lane is 1.8 m wide on the southwest side of the road.

### 5.3.3 Entry from High Street to St Asaph Street

Response. Vehicles have a stop control at St Asaph Street and will therefore be approaching the intersection carefully. It is expected that all users of the roadway will be aware of each other. Adding a give way control on one of the exit lanes, with vehicles having to give way where the road splits, would add unnecessary confusion on what will be a low volume, low speed road.

#### 5.4 Need to reflect climate change emergency

Six submitters referred to the Council's climate change emergency declaration on 23 May 2019.

Response: The declaration of a climate change emergency occurred during consultation. Although not specifically considered as a design consideration, the project supports active transport, water sensitive urban design and increased landscaping.

#### 5.5 Defer works while businesses re-establish in southern block

Seven submitters wanted upgrading works in the southern block to be delayed until new businesses had time to get established.

Response: Extensive repair work is required to the footpath on the east side and stormwater / drainage repairs are potentially required if this block is left for a period of up to five years. Provision has also been made for cyclists to safely use the road to provide the link between the existing cycleways on Tuam Street and St Asaph Street. The proposed work is scheduled to start in mid 2020. If reconstruction of this block is delayed, the access to St Asaph Street would also be delayed.

#### 5.6 Impact of construction

Ten submitters were concerned about construction saying that when work does start, it should be completed as soon as possible. Contractors should work at nights and weekends.

Response: The Council will be working with a contractor to ensure that the construction work is undertaken in as short a time frame as possible. We will also ensure that the contractor keeps business owners fully informed of the work to be undertaken and maintains access to all businesses.

### 6. Tram Extension

The proposed extension of the tram route along Lichfield Street and Poplar Street then back up High Street was supported by 50 (81 per cent) of the 62 submitters who responded.

Tram operator, Christchurch Attractions & Hanmer Attractions Tourism Group, said this loop would provide additional safety features and operational advantages than extending the tram into the next block between Tuam Street and St Asaph Street. It would prefer to see the tram stop moved further toward Poplar Street to give passengers a more open view along High street to the south.

The owner of a nearby business said he would like the tram shelter located outside the High Street former Post Office where it would 'have better leverage for Christchurch tourism'.

Seven submitters said the tram should be incorporated in Christchurch's public transport system, and four said the tram route should be further extended.

The tram proposal is subject to the purchase of land at the corner of Poplar Street and High Street.

### 7. Options presented to the Hearings Panel as a result of consultation

7.1 The Project Team's preferred Option 1 – Full revitalisation of High Street and tram extension - incorporates the following minor changes to the consultation plan:

- Northern block –
  - Loading zone outside 198 High Street moved eastward to accommodate a future possible footpath crossing
  - Commemorative plaque retained in its present location in paving in City Mall.

- Middle block –
  - One additional park for motorcycles located outside 174/176 High Street
  - Paid 60 minute parking outside C1 café and opposite 180 High Street changed to shorter term parking
  - Corgis placed on a raised plinth to lessen the hazard of tripping and at the request of the artist.
- Southern block –
  - Motorcycle parking space opposite 155 High Street replaced by paid 60 minute car park
  - Additional motorcycle parking space located outside 143 High Street
  - Street furniture relocated from outside 139 High Street to provide access to the building from High Street
  - Cycle crossing across St Asaph Street added.

7.2 Staff have prepared two alternative options for the southern block between Tuam Street and St Asaph Streets, as subsets of Option 1

Option 1A – full revitalisation but with additional parking in the southern block (four P60 parking spaces) detailed in Attachment B and in 5.5 of the report to the Hearings Panel.

Option 1B - do minimum in the southern block of High Street. Work would include road repairs and changes at the Tuam Street / High Street intersection detailed in Attachment C and in 5.6 of this report. The speed limit would remain at 30 km/h.

7.3 Staff have also included Option 2 – tram extension and asset repairs. This is detailed in Attachment C and 5.7 of the report to the Hearings Panel.

7.4 These options will be presented to the Hearings Panel on 15 August. The Panel will make a recommendation to Council, which is expected to make a decision in September 2019.