

New Town and Broughton Community Council response to TRO/09/60

Sent to:

The City of Edinburgh Council
c/o Dundas and Wilson
Saltire Court
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Background.

The Tram TROs are being released by CEC in three tranches. Tranche 1 covers the immediate activities along the tram route. The actual tram alignment is effectively fixed by the parliamentary Act, but the consequential changes to road junctions and pavements, etc, along the tram route, are the result of CEC/tie planning and modelling and are the subject of these Tranche 1 TROs. Tranche 2 TROs are expected to cover the majority of the traffic alterations off the tram route, which are required to allow for the diversion of traffic from the tram route. Tranche 3 is intended to cover adjustments to both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 (but mainly the latter) which may be found to be necessary.

The Tranche 1 TROs have been reviewed by the statutory bodies, ie police, fire brigade, ambulance services, bus operators, etc. They have been released for formal public consultation as of 22 Feb 2010. No date has been set for Tranche 2.

NTBCC position.

The NTBCC Transport Committee, along with some of the local residents' associations, have been examining the preliminary tranche 1 Tram TROs. The NTBCC position is that we cannot support all aspects of Tranche 1 as we do not yet know the compensatory provisions that may be on the Tranche 2 TRO.

The best example, and our key concern, is the way in which the Moray Feus are being used as a through traffic route for Northbound traffic at the West End of Princes Street. The arrangements at Hope Street and Charlotte Square outlined in Tranche 1 imply that all traffic from Queen Street and Lothian Road to Queensferry Street will be routed via the Moray Feus. This is not acceptable to the NTBCC and goes against our understanding that the present routing via the Feus was a temporary arrangement for the tram construction phase only.

Detail Comments. NTBCC Transport Subcommittee review of tie plans ULE90130-01-TMG-00013 through 00022, being Gayfield Square to Shandwick Place.

Key Issues

There is no traffic permitted from Lothian Road to Queensferry Street, and no left turn to Shandwick Place. This implies that the Moray Feus will be used as a permanent route from Lothian Road to the NW. This is not acceptable and is believed to have been allowed only as a temporary measure during utility/construction works. More information is needed on all permanent diversion routes. It is noted that the Lothian Road - Queensferry Road ban is not mentioned in the TRO Explanatory Note of 11 Nov 2009. The NTBCC do note that signage is being considered for Lothian Road, to send Northbound traffic via the West Approach Road and Manor Place (and we note that the Police have commented on this also). The NTBCC expect that the no-left-turn from North Charlotte Street into St Colme Street will be reinstated at Tranche 2. The NTBCC also supports the Moray Feuars in calling for a 20mph speed limit through this residential area.

The NTBCC also request that Hope Street be made a two-way road, allowing through traffic from George St to access Queensferry Road without going through the Moray Feus. This is seen as particularly important for buses travelling to and from the Dean Bridge and points North and West. We also wish to see the continuous pavement reinstated from Princes Street-Hope Street-Shandwick Place to simplify the crossing and reduce traffic going across the tram tracks.

The prohibition on right turns from Queen Street (Eastbound) into North St David Street is not understood. Surely this is a useful/essential route to access Waverley Station and the Bridges for traffic from the West End and Stockbridge? This prohibition may be related to pavement widening on Princes Street between S St David Street and S St Andrews St. This widening seems to be unnecessary and reducing road capacity.

There is a case for further review of access to/from Blenheim Place. The NTBCC note the strong local feeling, and also the discussion note from Alan Bowen of 26 Jan 2010, and also the support from the Police for the right turn in. Notwithstanding the issues pointed out by Alan Bowen, the NTBCC request that CEC/tie reconsider the option of allowing a right-turn in. This would benefit residents, the local Church, and the hotels on Royal Terrace. Rat-running could be discouraged by traffic-calming.

The closure of Shandwick Place to all traffic is seen as a problem. The NTBCC request that CEC/tie reconsider this in light of the inconvenience to residents and businesses, and the impact of diverted traffic in residential areas.

The new layout of Picardy Place gives rise to considerable concern. The CEC/tie traffic modelling has shown increases in almost all journey times, particularly at peak times. Whilst the NTBCC accept that the tram may have some unavoidable negative impact on other transport modes, it is thought that a more optimal solution may be possible. One suggestion is that the road space (a critical item) within the new Picardy Place gyratory could be maximised by placing the Westbound tram stop on York Place. The Eastbound tram stop would remain at the N side of Picardy Place, with the tram-stop 'platform' being part of the pavement. The NTBCC would like to meet with CEC/tie to help arrive at a better solution than that which is presently on offer.

General comments

Picardy Place (plan 00014) There will be a large number of traffic lights around the circulatory - so it will be very slow-moving. Is this desirable? We do note that Picardy Place is seen as a significant interchange for pedestrian/tram/bus access to St James, Omni, Playhouse, Broughton St, Elm Row, etc, and the traffic design here must be pedestrian-friendly. A tie/CEC traffic modelling session on 3 Feb 2010 may have raised more questions than it answered. This raised above as a key issue.

Blenheim Place access raised above as key issue.

York Place (plan 00015) Appears that there is a bus lane Westbound that (effectively) blocks all other traffic exiting Picardy Place. Suspect this has been left in from present-day plan? We note that both the Police and Lothian Buses have queried this, and that Sunday parking restrictions will be introduced via a later TRO.

Queen Street/North St David St (plan 00017) The prohibition on right turns from Queen Street (Eastbound) into North St David Street is not understood. Surely this is a useful route to access Waverley Station and the Bridges for traffic from the West End and Stockbridge? Raised above as key issue. We note that the Police agree with us on this point, citing the capacity problems via Hanover Street and George Street.

Princes Street -South Charlotte Street (plan 00021) The NTBCC would press strongly for an additional tram stop near the West End junction. The narrowing of Princes St at the South Charlotte St junction (and elsewhere) seems to be causing traffic problems elsewhere. Is this necessary or can it be reversed under the TRO process? We note that the Police have commented on this.

Princes Street -Shandwick Place (plan 00022) It appears that there is to be no left turn at all from Lothian Road into Shandwick Place - not even for buses/taxis. Why? No access from Lothian Road to Queensferry Road, and associated re-routings. Raised above as key issue, with the (repeated) observation that the Moray Feus cannot be used as a permanent through route for all traffic.

London Rd/Easter Rd. The NTBCC understand that the London Rd/Easter Road junction has been redesigned and will include a right-hand filter for traffic travelling from London Rd to Easter Rd. This should be included within TRO2.

Easter Rd/Regent Rd junction. To date no remedy has been suggested for the Easter Rd/Regent Rd/Abbeymount junction, despite more than twelve months of requests from residents. If the right hand turn into Blenheim Place is banned then improving this junction becomes essential. This should be included within TRO2. The Police are clear that they will crack down on U-turns on London Rd if this manoeuvre causes any problems.



Yours,

Patrick Hutton

On behalf of the New Town and Broughton Community Council