

TO: Infrastructure Services Committee
FROM: Senior Transportation Planner, Transportation Planning
MEETING DATE: 24 November 2008
SUBJECT: **CAVERSHAM VALLEY CORRIDOR PROJECT**

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to:

- o update the Council on the progress of the Caversham Valley Corridor Project;
- o gain the Council's endorsement of the preferred option before progressing with formal consultation; and
- o begin consideration for urban design elements associated with the project to ensure DCC has input to the design of the "gateway to Dunedin".

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is progressing investigations to develop this project and gain approval for construction. This report will update the Council on the preferred option and the work to be undertaken to allow the project to be implemented.

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

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| (i) Policy: | No |
| (ii) Approved Annual Budget: | No |
| (iii) LTCCP/ Funding Policy: | No |
| (iv) Activity Management Plans: | No |
| (v) Community Boards: | No |

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- 1 Note and endorse Option 3A as the preferred option.
- 2 Note that the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) are progressing the scheme assessment phase for the project which will include widespread public consultation.

INTRODUCTION

The upgrading of the Caversham Valley Corridor (from Andersons Bay Road to the north and Lookout Point to the south) has been a long standing project, for which both the Dunedin City Council (DCC) and New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA - formerly Transit NZ) have had a 'long term vision' of a four lane grade separated expressway/motorway from Andersons Bay Road to Mosgiel (originally Andersons Bay Road to Milton).

Subsequently the concept of a grade separated motorway between the Glen and Lookout Point has been reconsidered in light of the economic climate and "buildability". Following discussion a preferred option has been developed which is more in line with an "Urban Arterial".

BACKGROUND

The concept of a four lane motorway between Dunedin and Milton arose in the 1950's. Over the years the proposal has been scaled back in the light of growth and affordability with various portions of the corridor being upgraded to a range of standards as funds became available. The Caversham Valley portion has not yet been progressed due to high costs and lack of economic viability in road funding terms. Over the last few years following Government road funding increases in 2006, further work has been undertaken to better develop the project.

A scoping report was undertaken last year to investigate a variety of improvement options for each of the four main sections which make up the corridor (the 2 lane section from the Glen to Barnes Drive, Barnes Drive intersection, Caversham Valley hill, and Lookout Point).

From the scoping report, two initial route options were developed, and called the Partial and Full (expressway) options. The Partial Option, met cost expectations (<\$25M), but fell short of meeting all functional and safety objectives. The Full (expressway) Option, met all functional and safety objectives but was overbudget (\$60M+).

NZTA determined that the expressway option was no longer considered a viable solution in the short-medium term, and that any option which is progressed needed to remain consistent with the State Highway 5-year forecast (SHF5) as announced in 2006 (construction costs \$25M).

In February of this year, a scoping review workshop took place between DCC and NZTA. From that workshop, the concept of an urban arterial emerged which is known as Option 3A and this has become the preferred option. Option 3A is a variation of the Partial Option and addresses the original four main issues:

1. The four laning of the existing two lane bypass from the King Edward Street overpass to the Goodall Street footbridge;
2. Barnes Drive is to remain an at grade signalised intersection, with additional turning lane capacity and a restriction on some turns;
3. Improvements will be made through Caversham Valley Road to Lookout Point with the provision of a service road (for access to properties as well as on street parking) on the southern side separated from the arterial and connecting into South Road at the top of the hill; and
4. The provision of an overpass at Lookout Point, connecting Mornington Road to South Road and Riselaw Road.

Option 3A, the preferred option is shown in Attachments 1-4. This option has a design speed of 60 kmh and avoids substantial cutting at the top of the hill and additional impacts on property which higher speed values would require.

DISCUSSION

Option 3A represents a substantial change from previous thinking however from a technical issues it addresses the major issues of capacity and safety on the corridor, is buildable as there is no major earthworks to undertake at Lookout Point, and is believed to be economically viable. It will also offer the opportunity to improve the entrance to the City.

With the preferred Option 3A, there are a number of issues to bring to Council's attention prior to public consultation:

1. Closing of the Glen onramp

There is difficulty in achieving 4 lanes if the Glen onramp remains. Currently this is a low volume ramp. This issue is common to all options. It may be possible to retain an opening to provide access for special events such as the Southern Festival of Speed.

2. Potential closure of Burnett Street (above Barnes Drive)

Burnett Street is the location of the former petrol station. It was always assumed that Burnett Street would not be connected to the arterial.

3. Short Street – access issues

NZTA would like to see limitation on access at this location but still providing full access for the Fire Station. A possible option is to maintain a barrier arm for the Emergency Services access only.

4. Lookout Point – access issues

This is the location of one of the major changes to the corridor in regards to existing access arrangements. It was always assumed there would be no connections between the highway and local road network at Lookout Point with the full motorway. The preferred option will allow some connections and DCC would like to retain a northbound offramp (left off into Mornington Road) if possible.

While there will be loss of access from Caversham Valley Road, the new overbridge will replace the staggered at grade intersection of Mornington Road and South Road with a safe overbridge, providing for local connections of all modes of transport. It will allow for school children to walk or cycle, as well as the possibility of introducing a new bus service for along the ridge.

5. Rail Tunnels

The question of the future of the rail tunnels was discussed between DCC and NZTA. It is understood that access to the tunnels will need to remain for service utilities. The improvements to the roading corridor will not hamper possible future use by cyclists. DCC is keen to preserve this possible cycle link as part of plans for a larger regional cycling network. Currently the existing cycling route goes over the hill which creates a barrier for many cyclists.

6. Retention of Goodall Street Footbridge

The existing footbridge connecting Caversham with Goodall Street has an issue with height clearances for heavy vehicles. Currently, a number of heavy vehicles are detouring down South Road to avoid it. The project does require alterations to the footbridge and to quantify the needs of the footbridge, as well as the impacts of heavy vehicles on South Road, two separate surveys will be undertaken by NZTA. This data will be beneficial in determining the best options.

7. Property impacts – Lookout Point

There are a number of properties affected by the improvements necessary at Lookout Point. The affected parties have just recently been contacted by NZTA. They have been shown the plans for the Caversham Valley Corridor upgrades and how the road improvements will affect them. In some cases where affected landowners are elderly, NZTA has met with extended family members as well as landowners to ensure their understanding of the impacts of the corridor project.

8. Urban Design

The project offers an opportunity to improve urban design throughout the corridor and NZTA have offered an Urban Design Consultant to work in partnership with DCC to look at urban design for the Caversham Valley Corridor. This is the major entry to Dunedin and NZTA's offer will ensure Council's input in this matter.

TIMING AND FUNDING

NZTA is currently preparing their Scheme Assessment for the Caversham Valley Corridor Project. The final report is due in April 2009. They would like Council to endorse the option before proceeding further in preparation of taking their report to the Regional Land Transport Committee.

Until the Scheme Assessment is completed and there is more reliable costing and benefits, we are unable to determine with any certainty where this project will fit into the Regional Land Transport Programme.

CONCLUSION

The Caversham Valley Corridor Project has been a long standing project in partnership between DCC and NZTA. The former expressway has been reconsidered and replaced with the preferred option, Option 3A. Option 3A is an urban arterial rather than the former "Partial" Expressway Option. Some issues have arisen as a part of the Scheme Assessment process and are either being investigated further or have some preferred solutions. With Council's endorsement, NZTA will now go out for Public Consultation. The Scheme Assessment will better define the benefits and costs of the project. The final Scheme Assessment report is scheduled to go to the Regional Transport Committee in April 2009.

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Date report prepared: 11 November 2008

Attachments

1-4. Maps of Caversham Valley Corridor Project