

## **REVIEW OF GEORGE STREET UPGRADE PROJECT**

Department: Community and Planning and Transport

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1 Kobus Mentz of Urbanismplus has completed his independent review of the preliminary design and community engagement for the George Street upgrade project.
- 2 The review identified two design options that provide significant improvement over the existing road layout and the preliminary concept design. The two options involve the creation of a shared street, either being:
  - (i) a two-way design with the ability to convert to a one-way design in the future and
  - (ii) a one-way design with the potential to convert to a two-way design.
- 3 As part of the review process the criteria for assessing the options have been reconsidered in consultation with the Central City Advisory Group (CCAG) and amended. The staff team has assessed the full range of options set out in Mr Mentz's report based on the revised criteria.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:

- a) **Notes** the the findings of the independent review by Kobus Mentz of the Dunedin Retail Precinct (George Street upgrade) project.
- b) **Approves** proceeding to detailed business case and developed design with a two – way shared street with flexibility to go to one-way for the Dunedin Retail Precinct George Street upgrade. (Option 1).
- c) **Revokes** the Planning and Environment Committee resolution (PLA/2019/025) from 11 June 2019 which endorsed the preliminary design for the George Street – Central City Plan project.

### **BACKGROUND**

- 4 The Central City Plan and George Street upgrade have been reported to Council on several occasions.
- 5 On 11 June 2019 the Planning and Environment Committee was presented with a preliminary design for George Street and resolved:

*“Moved (Deputy Chairperson Damian Newell/Cr Aaron Hawkins)*

*That the Committee:*

- a) **Endorses** the preliminary design for the George Street – Central City Plan project
- b) **Notes** the Activity Plan being developed by staff to encourage activation of George Street prior to and during the construction period

**Division:**

*The Council voted by division.*

*For: Crs Rachel Elder, Christine Garey, Doug Hall, Aaron Hawkins, Marie Laufiso, Mike Lord, Jim O'Malley, Damian Newell, Conrad Stedman, Andrew Whiley, Kate Wilson and David Benson-Pope (12).*

*Against: Cr Lee Vandervis (1).*

*Abstained: Nil*

*The division was **CARRIED** by 12 votes to 1*

*Motion carried (PLA/2019/025)”*

- 6 On 25 May 2020 Council considered an update on the preliminary design work on the George Street upgrade, and reconstituted a Central City Advisory Group to provide feedback throughout the detailed design and business case stages of this project.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Consultation and technical meetings (CCAG)**

- 7 The review process involved a series of consultation and technical meetings held between 3 and 5 August 2020, which included:
  - The Mayor and Councillors, Project Control Group, senior management and other Council staff.
  - Central City Advisory Group (CCAG)
  - Aukaha
  - Chamber of Commerce, Retail/hospitality and property owner representatives.

### **Central City Advisory Group**

- 8 The CCAG, reconstituted in June 2020, took part in the review process, through engagement sessions held on 4 August and 8 October 2020. The sessions focussed on establishing how the different design elements supported or detracted from achieving the objectives of the different stakeholder groups. Feedback from the CCAG is summarised in Attachment A.
- 9 Kobus Mentz briefed the CCAG on his interim findings on 8 October 2020. At that briefing session, members of the CCAG were invited to discuss what they agreed with or disagreed with in terms of the peer review and any aspects they felt were missing. After the meeting attendees were invited to respond to a questionnaire. Responses were received from 17 of the 25 members of the CCAG.

10 The questionnaire asked members:

- What they agreed with or disagreed with in terms of the peer review and any aspects they felt were missing.
- To rank from not important, somewhat important to very important - the level of importance they placed on several criteria. Mr Mentz had highlighted in his interim findings the need for these to be clarified in order to determining an appropriate design option.
- To rank four options for a George Street concept design from most to least preferred.

11 The results and full analysis from the survey are set out in Attachment B.

### **Independent review**

12 In July 2020 Kobus Mentz of Urbanismplus was appointed to undertake an independent review of the project following concerns expressed by stakeholders about the impacts of the proposed design on the retail sector and a perceived lack of community engagement on the project.

13 The focus of the review was:

- (i) to review the work done to date and assess whether the data supported the preliminary design (endorsed by Planning and Environment Committee in June 2019), and whether the preliminary design would create a successful retail precinct
- (ii) to review the proposed engagement approach and
- (iii) advise on how to make the proposed concept design into a successful retail precinct which meets the needs of the community, stakeholders and the Council.

14 The independent assessment report 'Retail Quarter Upgrade Review' drafted by Kobus Mentz is attached as Attachment C.

15 The review identifies potential issues with the design for the Farmers, Golden, and Edinburgh way blocks. Mr Mentz recommends a shared street designed so that it can convert from one-way to two way (or the other way round) depending on when an appropriate public transport service (ideally a bus service) through George Street can be provided.

16 He presents two possible options / pathways for the three central blocks. The options involve the creation of a shared street being either:

Pathway 1: Two-way design with an appropriate public transport service in George Street.

Pathway 2: One-way without public transport in George Street (but designed as two-way so that it can be converted to two-way once an appropriate public transport service is able to be provided).

17 Mr Mentz's advice is that either of these options will provide a significant improvement over the existing layout. Mr Mentz suggested that the preference should be informed by the importance and feasibility of providing an appropriate public transport service (meaning a service using smaller buses with an environmentally-friendly fuel source) through George

Street. He also commented that it may be more appropriate to retain 2-way traffic through the period of the Hospital re-build to provide more flexibility to deal with the traffic effects of that project.

18 Mr Mentz also makes a number of other recommendations relating to:

- a possible extension to upgrade Moray Place to the Octagon
- reduced number of streetscape elements (compared with preliminary design)
- parking
- provision of a public transport service
- location of bus stops
- traffic management techniques to improve safety at George St / Frederick St intersection
- design flexibility.

#### **Multi-criteria analysis assessment criteria**

19 Originally there were six criteria used to evaluate the options. These have been reconsidered as part of the review, with input from the CCAG and original design team.

20 Based on the feedback from Mr Mentz's review and from the CCAG on their preferences, staff have amended both the list of criteria and how they should be measured to provide an appropriate framework to select a preferred option. The recommended changes are detailed in Attachment D.

21 The full list of criteria (as revised) is as follows:

- (i) Safety (road users)
- (ii) Opportunities for placemaking (space to provide for amenity features and activation)
- (iii) Cycling / Micro-mobility
- (iv) Overall network function
- (v) Retail accessibility (support for passing trade by car, easy access to car parking areas/buildings)
- (vi) Ability to support appropriate public transport (e.g. electric buses) – options with two-way traffic movement will score higher based on this criterion
- (vii) Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) – options that provide for passive surveillance will score higher based on this criterion
- (viii) Flexibility of the design to adapt to future needs
- (ix) Public acceptability.

22 Staff have undertaken an analysis of all the options identified through the independent review process using the above criteria. The results are shown in Attachment E and were used as the basis of the options analysis which follows.

## **OPTIONS**

- 23 Three options relating to the George Street project are presented for Council's consideration. None of the options are the same as the preliminary design from 2019.
- 24 The option of proceeding with the preliminary design endorsed by the Committee in June 2019 (which is referred to as Option D 'One-way shared – Corridor severed' on Page 17 of Mr Mentz's report) is no longer considered feasible following the review. It was discounted based on the multi-criteria analysis.
- 25 On that basis, approval of any of the options below would require the revocation of the 2019 resolution.

### **Option One – Proceed to Detailed Business Case with two-way shared street with flexibility to go to one-way. Recommended option.**

#### *Advantages*

- Can accommodate public transport services, e.g. bus services albeit of a different design than currently operates.
- Option preferred by 70% of the CCAG (70% of CCAG ranked this option as 1st or 2<sup>nd</sup> preference).
- Streetscape will allow vulnerable users to access George Street more easily.
- Increased vehicle through movement may support retail passing trade by car.
- Easy access to carparking areas / buildings.
- Flexibility of design to adapt to future needs.
- Meets CPTED (Crime Prevention through environmental design) objectives.

#### *Disadvantages*

- More space is allocated to vehicle movement providing less opportunity to create people-focussed spaces.
- Less favourable for cycling and micro-mobility than one-way. This was shown in the CCAG feedback from representatives of disability groups.
- The ability to improve the safety of the five-way (George / Pitt / London Street) intersection is reduced, which may impact on the Funding Assistance Rates (FAR) available from NZTA.

### **Option Two – Continue to Detailed Business Case with one-way shared street, with flexibility to go to two-way**

#### *Advantages*

- Second ranked option by CCAG (53% ranked this option as their 1st or 2nd preference).
- Flexibility of design to adapt to future needs, (including accommodating appropriate public transport services in the future).

- Safer than a two-way option, therefore may attract a higher FAR.
- Greater opportunities to create public amenity, than two-way option.
- Better provision for cycling and micro-mobility (e.g. scooters) than two-way option.
- Addresses safety issues at the five-way (Pitt / London / George Street) intersection.

#### *Disadvantages*

- Less potential for CPTED than the two way option, due to less through movement by vehicles.
- Accessibility to car parking and retail buildings is reduced (compared to two-way option).
- Reduced vehicle through-movement may impact on retail passing trade.

#### **Option Three – Proceed to Detailed Business case with one-way and two-way shared street options (as above)**

#### *Advantages*

- As for options 1 and 2 above.
- Stakeholders can continue to contribute to the options.

#### *Disadvantages*

- As for options above.
- Cost and time will increase due to evaluating two options, rather than one.

### **NEXT STEPS**

26 If Council approves the recommended option to proceed to Detailed Business Case and Developed design with the two- way shared street, the next steps will be to:

- (i) Brief NZTA on the Council decision regarding which options to be assessed further.
- (ii) Initiate the detailed business case / developed design phase.
- (iii) Continue discussions with mana whenua and stakeholders (including Central City Advisory Group and building owners / affected parties). These will be ongoing through the detailed business case stage.

27 The high level timeline for these activities is:

- November 2020: Options decided by Committee.
- January / February 2021: Project team start Detailed Design phase.

**Signatories**

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Authoriser:	Robert West - Acting General Manager City Services Simon Drew - General Manager Infrastructure Services

**Attachments**

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
A	Stakeholder Feedback from CCAG/Stakeholder and broader Community Engagement	
B	CCAG Survey Feedback on preferences and options	
C	Urbanismplus (Oct 2020) George Street project review	
D	Assessment Criteria	
E	Multi Criteria Analysis (Staff Assessment)	

## SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS

### ***Fit with purpose of Local Government***

This decision enables democratic local decision making and action by, and on behalf of communities. This decision promotes the social and economic well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

### ***Fit with strategic framework***

	Contributes	Detracts	Not applicable
Social Wellbeing Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic Development Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts and Culture Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Waters Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spatial Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated Transport Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks and Recreation Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other strategic projects/policies/plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The George Street upgrade project contributes primarily to Council's Spatial Plan and Economic and Social well-being strategies, by revitalising the environment of the retail quarter with a design based on sustainability principles. The project is a key element of the Central City Plan.

### ***Māori Impact Statement***

Mana whenua are involved in the project team for the George Street upgrade and involved all aspects of the project development and delivery. Mana whenua are also represented on the Central City Advisory Group.

### ***Sustainability***

Environmental sustainability is one of the principles underpinning the design, with rain gardens and planting incorporated into the design. Economic and social sustainability ensuring the continued visibility of George Street as a retail centre and as a place for social interaction are also key objectives of the project.

### ***LTP/Annual Plan / Financial Strategy /Infrastructure Strategy***

The 10 Year Plan provides \$66.54M funding for the Central City Plan between 2021/22 and 2030/31 (including \$23.53M for George Street in 2021/22 – 2023/24).

### ***Financial considerations***

The financial considerations are detailed in this report.

### ***Significance***

The significance of this report is assessed as low – medium in terms of Council's Significance and Engagement Policy given the value of the project and the high degree of public interest.



## **SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***Engagement – external***

There has been engagement with the Central City Advisory Group, a group of stakeholders convened to provide stakeholder feedback on the George Street part of the Central City Plan. Its members include representatives of Grow Dunedin Partnership; Chamber of Commerce; Aukaha; Disability sector; Generation Zero; Automobile Association; Heart of Dunedin; Youth Council; Hospitality Association.

### ***Engagement - internal***

Relevant staff and managers from Transport, City Development, Community and Planning and 3 Waters have been involved in the review process and analysis of the stakeholder feedback.

### ***Risks: Legal / Health and Safety etc.***

There is a risk that options which score lower on pedestrian safety may not achieve a full Funding Assistance Rating (FAR) from NZTA.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

There are no known conflicts of interest.

### ***Community Boards***

There are no specific implications for Community Boards.