

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

INVERNESS CITY COMMITTEE – 8 June 2009

Agenda Item	8
Report No	ICC 39/09

Inverness City Centre Streetscape and Transport Project

Joint Report by Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services and Inverness City Manager

SUMMARY

This report updates Members with progress and stakeholder engagement on the Inverness City Centre Streetscape and Transport Project.

This report supports the Programme of the Highland Council “Strengthening the Highlands” to implement by 2009 an agreed £6 million programme of traffic management and streetscape improvement measures in Inverness City Centre and consider other arrangements which will reduce traffic congestion and improve the quality of the environment, and the SOA 2 Local Outcome 9 to support the economy access is improved to housing, transport and high speed broadband.

1. Introduction

1.1 Members received a report on progress and stakeholder engagement for the Inverness City Centre Streetscape and Transportation Project at the City Committee on 20 April 2009. This report updates members on progress since then and progress overall. Also included is an update on the Inverness Old Town Arts project.

2. Construction Progress

2.1 Work carried out in the period since the last report has included:

- Ness Walk – kerbing, carriageway surfacing and lining along with the installation of street furniture
- Church Street – carriageway surfacing and lining, shared surface and parking/loading bays
- Queensgate – loading bay and footway
- Hamilton Street/Inglis Street – footways adjacent to Academy Street being progressed
- Stephen’s Brae – Continued progress on granite setts and terraced areas
- Lombard Street alleyway completed
- Mealmarket Close commenced and underway

Temporary traffic restrictions were removed on 14th May.

- 2.2 Work for the tie – ins to Academy Street at the end of Union Street and Queensgate is due to commence on 1st June. The latest contractor's programme shows that the works will be complete during week beginning 22nd June apart from items remaining on the snagging list. Many completed areas are of course already in operation. It is proposed to carry out an independent Stage 3 safety audit in the second half of June as is normal for schemes of this type.
- 2.3 As explained at previous Committees there have been several reasons for delay throughout the works not least the need to accommodate: water mains renewal; uncharted basements; shallow services, substandard drainage systems, building repairs in Union Street, Drummond Street, Lombard Street, Church Street and Queensgate; and the need to programme around keeping a busy city centre moving. Significant re-programming of works has been necessary to overcome these obstacles.
- 2.4 As areas have been completed the general impression after initial teething problems have been overcome is one of significant improvement and the delivery of a lasting streetscape upgrade for the centre of Inverness.

3. Traffic Management Action Plan

- 3.1 The latest version of the Traffic Management Action Plan is included at Appendix 1. This has been revised to focus on current areas of activity. The opportunity has been taken to update Members on programmed modifications to traffic signals in Academy Street which form part of the Streetscape works and recent maintenance work and alterations to signals in Bridge Street.
- 3.2 The Order for coach parking combined with pay and display car parking in Ardross St will be advertised as soon as concerns raised in relation to coach parking in the pre-consultation have been thoroughly considered. The proposals for pay and display parking have been well received. It is proposed to introduce solar powered ticket machines as part of the implementation of the pay and display parking.
- 3.3 A separate item is being taken to this Committee reporting on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in the core City Centre streets.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1 A stakeholder meeting was held on 22nd April where issues relevant to the streetscape and traffic management project were discussed. The next Stakeholder meeting is proposed for 24th June. The future of the stakeholder meetings is considered in a separate report to this Committee.
- 4.2 ROK continue to engage directly in person and with letters to businesses. Press releases continue to be made to publicise significant events with the most recent at the end of May.

5. Inverness Old Town Art (IOTA)

5.1 Running in parallel with the construction works there have been ongoing artwork projects for the Victorian Market entrances, Street Texts and the Imagining the Centre event planned for September this year. This opportunity is taken to update Members on these activities. Within Appendix 2.

6. Resource Implications

There are no resource implications resulting from this report.

7. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is invited to support the position regarding progress and stakeholder engagement with the City Centre Streetscape and Transport Project.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Signature:

Designation: Inverness City Manager

Date: 25 May 2009

Report Author Cameron Kemp, Integrated Transport Manager
Shane Manning, Traffic Officer
Susan Christie, IOTA Commissions Manager

Background
Papers

Appendix 1

Priority/Action	Responsible	Target date	Status
1. Fraser Street enforcement 1. Establish effective method of ongoing enforcement considering ANPR CCTV, using bus onboard CCTV and rising bollards	TECS Integrated Transport/Police & Procurator Fisc.	June 09	Review when traffic returns to normal.
2. Enforce Bus Station/Margaret St. access restriction 1. Look at measures to reduce rat running through, and maximise efficient use of, the bus station.	TECS Integrated Transport team/Area Roads team and bus companies	Aug 09	Development of traffic management solution required under Streetscape 2
3. Tour bus drop-off points (for external coach operators) 1. Review and assess possible locations/consult as necessary and report back. This item covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day visitor coaches e.g. Wallace Arnold, Shearings • Foreign tour coaches • Cruise liner coach 2. Develop and promote new arrangements for 2009	TECS Area/Integrated Transport	By Feb 09 Spring 09	Focussing on developing a solution involving Bus Station, Ardross Street and Huntly Street which will consider pick up/drop off areas and bus stop over parking. These arrangements will be publicised on the Council website in order to inform coach operators.
4. Positive promotion/Communication 1. Issue press releases at significant stages of progress 2. Hold regular Stakeholder Meetings for City Centre	TECS Integrated Transport	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Rok proactive in issuing letters and visits to premises as they move into each new area.
5. Disabled Parking 1. Investigate potential to introduce short stay disabled parking in core streets to assist shoppers and deter commuters. 2. Consult with Inverness Access Panel and disabled users. 3. Consider revision to Parking & Loading Order and advertise for objections as appropriate.	TECS Integrated Transport	July 09	Three hour traffic restriction agreed at City Committee 17/9/08. Meeting being held with objector on 28/5/09. Revised parking & loading order to be promoted in due course.
6. Huntly St/Young St Junction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the potential to remove traffic signals from this junction in order to reduce network congestion on the West side of Inverness. • Bring forward the proposal to install a pedestrian facility crossing Young Street at the Riverside House Offices 	TECS Integrated Transport	August 09	Ongoing as part of Streetscape 2 proposals.

Priority/Action	Responsible	Target date	Status
<p>7. 20mph Speed Limits Introduce 20mph speed limits in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Street • Drummond Street • Baron Taylor's Street • Church Street • Post Office Avenue • Fraser Street • Queensgate • Ness Walk between Ness Bridge and the Cathedral 	TECS Integrated Transport	September 09	Item taken to City Committee for consultation.
<p>8. Academy Street Final changes to be made to the traffic signal stages at Margaret Street and Queensgate. These junctions are currently serviced by 6 stages which cause lengthy delays to all road users. On completion of the works the following changes will allow the junction to operate around a 3 stage cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove pedestrian crossing opposite William Hills on Academy Street – Now replaced with the new facility at MacKay's • Ban the Right Turn from Margaret Street – by allowing the right turn it was intended to benefit buses however this has not been utilized and has only encouraged use of Margaret St by illegal traffic. <p>These final alterations will greatly improve movement by all users and considerably reduce delays on Academy St and to Pedestrians waiting to cross.</p>	TECS Integrated Transport	June 09	Commenced as part of Streetscape project.
<p>9. Bridge Street Technical repairs recently carried out to the key traffic signal controller operating the junction of Bridge St/Ness Bridge. This has also benefited the overall SCOOT network reducing congestion throughout the Network. TECs are currently working to link the pedestrian crossings outside the Town House to ensure maximum progression from the Ness Bridge to Castle Street.</p>	TECS Integrated Transport	July 09	In progress

IOTA - ART PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

Victorian Market

The IOTA (Inverness Old Town Art) team have been working on the public art commission to provide new entrances and information panels for the Victorian Market. This is a significant Highland Council/ Scottish Arts Council funded project that will highlight the location of the market from the street, raising the profile of both market and street, and will greatly improve the experience of visitors entering the market through three different routes.

The project will:

- result in **three new entrance features** for Union St, Queensgate and Church Street.
- potentially adopt a new agreed **palette of colours** for use in a variety of ways (refresh passageways, transform shop fronts, etc);
- create a series of new **information panels** in the form of illustrated lightboxes that reflect the range of current businesses in the market;

A newly completed model of the entrances by the commissioned artists was delivered to IOTA on 11th May and presented for discussion later that day at the Central Ward (15) Business meeting along with the designs for the Union Street gates. Overall the response to the designs has been positive and a display to present them to the Victorian Market traders and the public is being planned from 9th-11th June in one of the empty shops in the market. A small opening event will be planned during the early evening of 9th to allow traders, Ward members & other interested parties an opportunity to interact with the IOTA team & hear about the specific ideas that contributed to the completed designs and talk through any questions.

The IOTA team have prepared and distributed a special newsletter showing the updated artists' visuals and introducing several key questions for the traders to comment on. A second newsletter will be prepared shortly focusing on the gates for Union Street and will outline the proposed design by local artist Gordon Robin Brown, the proposed timetable to achieve all the necessary permissions & install the gates.

Liaison with BID, the Ward members, key staff within the Council will continue over the coming months to ensure the successful delivery of the entrances and that information is shared on a regular basis.

Street-text

Four stones by artists DUFU (Fin Macrae & Al MacInnes) were laid last month as part of the Street-texts Project incorporating historic quotes and fragments of narrative from Inverness's rich history. Three slabs of carved Caithness stone are still to be installed in the final stages of the Streetscape. They will

be the last of 25 street-texts commissioned and the final one will be located outside the Town House. It is hoped that this historic moment may form part of the official completion ceremony for the Streetscape on 29th June. The IOTA team will work in conjunction with the contractors & staff at Highland Council to ensure the successful completion of the project next month.

Event in September – RE: Imagining the Centre

An outdoor arts event and seminar is being planned for this September . This will be a high quality and participative event building on the success of ***Imagining the Centre*** in Sept 06. The original event involved asking the public what kind of Old Town they wanted to see develop. This event will present the re-imagined centre back to local people and visitors through high quality art and participative art interventions. Specifically the events will highlight the distinctive character of the old town, imaginatively embrace the public, celebrate unusual and/or hidden places, and draw people into the new spaces that have developed as part of the Streetscape.

Numerous partners have come on board. Newcastle University, Public Art Scotland (facility funded by Scottish Arts Council) and HI-Arts have all expressed their support and desire to being part of an event and seminar (*Creative Spaces in Public Art*).

More information will be provided in the run-up to the event & will be publicised through numerous channels including Council's events website, etc.

Susan Christie
IOTA Commissions Manager
26th May 2009