

Traffic Issues - Dundee Waterfront

Introduction

The Waterfront Masterplan and associated traffic planning was subjected to an extensive public consultation exercise during its preparation from 1998 to 2001. The final layout received substantial support from a large majority of respondents prior to it being formally approved by the Council and the Masterplan is now a component part of the recently adopted Dundee Local Development Plan 2014. We are now well into the task of implementing the approved street layout and all of these works will be complete within two years.

Whilst we have discussed at previous meetings our response to Gordon Fleming's traffic planning issues I thought it would be helpful to set out below our broad strategic response to those issues and other associated issues raised by the Civic Trust.

1) Traffic Impacts

Given that the Waterfront is a major entry point into Dundee City Centre, we are aware that there will be significant traffic flows in the area and we have fully considered this during the many years and iterations of design of the road layout. Micro – simulation modelling has been used to test and predict future traffic movements and the proposed road layout will be able to handle all future traffic demand associated with the waterfront.

The traffic signalised junctions will be linked to the council's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system. Dundee's UTC is a very modern system and will be able to control traffic movements in and around the waterfront area in order to ensure that traffic congestion is minimal. Combined with extensive CCTV coverage and other journey time measurement technologies, any road network issues will be quickly identified allowing the UTC operators to intervene in traffic management to ensure that the network functions. All entry points to the Central Waterfront (Marketgait, Riverside Drive, East Dock Street and Tay Road Bridge) will have traffic signals which can allow operators to meter the flow of vehicles entering.

We are, therefore, confident that the proposed layouts will be able to handle future traffic demands without significant congestion and delay while also providing much improved pedestrian access down to the river and the V&A. The artist's impressions which we use on our promotional material are simply that, and are therefore provided to provide the public and developers with a vision of how the area will be developed in future. If we over populated the images with vehicles they would simply obscure the views of the public space and buildings, thereby denying the public an opportunity to view those proposed developments.

The scale of the streets has been given very careful consideration to ensure they are not overbearing but still allow for essential traffic needs. The northern and southern boulevards, for example, are almost identical in scale to Queen Street in Edinburgh which is an attractive main thoroughfare in a World Heritage site which incorporates easy pedestrian movement between the its City Centre and Queen Street Gardens.

With a grid layout and traffic signal control, several safe and direct pedestrian routes will be provided.

2) Southern Boulevard

This proposed street is an essential component of the approved grid-iron street pattern; if it were to be omitted, then the northern boulevard would have to be substantially widened to carry the necessary east-west traffic and this would create a major barrier to pedestrian movement down to the waterfront. During the development of the Masterplan, we did investigate an option to bury the southern boulevard in a tunnel, but decided against it for a number of reasons. Not least of which were the very high costs associated with such a proposition.

3) Scale of Street Blocks and Public Spaces

The street pattern has been carefully designed to create street blocks for future development that are of a size which recreate the scale of the existing street blocks in Dundee City Centre. For example, the very fine street block of historic buildings which is bounded by Whitehall Street, High Street, Union Street and Whitehall Crescent is smaller than the proposed street blocks in the Central Waterfront.

The associated access and parking arrangements for the V&A have been carefully planned to both accommodate the design principles and functionality of this iconic building. The V&A will be surrounded by approximately 3,000 square metres of public space including a variety of water features. Immediately to the east of the V&A will be over 5,415 square metres of public space which is almost double the size of City Square and will be designed to compliment the external environment of the V&A and provide a high quality environment for the public. Immediately to the north of this area will be a 10,738 square metre public square which will be over three times the size of City Square, the construction of this square will commence this year.

4) Concluding Remarks

I do appreciate that you and your colleagues have taken the time and effort to raise your concerns with me and to make alternative suggestions, I hope that my comments have given you some reassurance that all of these matters were fully considered during the master planning work at the beginning of the project. We believe that we have adopted the correct design principles for our city and we have received the overwhelming support of Dundonians for the approved Masterplan.

The implementation of the project is beyond its half way stage and in the next couple of years the new street pattern will be complete, as will the V&A and other major buildings. I trust you will then see and experience a vibrant new urban quarter which will help transform our city's appearance and future prosperity for the better."