



Regent Street Flyover Reconstruction

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Leeds Civic Trust has noted that work is to start soon on the reconstruction of the Regent Street flyover and that this will involve reconstruction of the highways below and above the structure.
- 1.2 However, we were disappointed to see that the plans for the highways below the new flyover simply replicate the existing traffic arrangements and do not take the opportunity to address the Council's long term aspiration to reduce traffic flows along St Peter's Street. The scheme also introduces overly complex cycle routes and staggered pedestrian crossings which will not address connectivity between Mabgate and the city centre.
- 1.3 We acknowledge that engineering designs for the new flyover will have been prepared and so we have produced an alternative scheme which sits within the proposed column layout while diverting through traffic away from the Eastgate/St Peter's Street route. The sketch drawing on page 4 of this note is not to scale and is intended to show principals only.

2 A61 Southbound Traffic

- 2.1 The objective here should be to redirect this traffic away from the city centre and onto the principal route along Marsh Lane and East Street, so enabling pedestrian links between Quarry Hill and the Victoria/Markets area to be strengthened. To that end, two lanes on southbound Regent Street [1] should be designed to funnel traffic left under the IRR. The appropriate advance notice and signage/markings will need to be installed further north along Regent Street.
- 2.2 It is accepted that traffic may need merge into a single lane once under the ring road in order to prevent queues forming on the slip road from the motorway to Marsh Lane and Burmantofts [2]. However, could this perhaps be an area where 'queue busting' traffic signals could be used intermittently so as to allow two lanes to run through from Regent Street to Marsh Lane?
- 2.3 This north to east flow could operate almost continuously, only being stopped on demand when cyclists or pedestrians are detected at the crossings.

3 A61 Northbound Traffic

- 3.1 At present, this traffic is directed along St Peter's Street but there is an option to use Marsh Lane and the A64(M) to reach North Street and then the Sheepscar intersection. This could be signed as the principal route for the northbound A61 but it would introduce significantly more traffic to the Vicar Lane/New Briggate/North Street junction - this will already be getting more complex given the changes to make Vicar Lane two-way for buses. It would also have an adverse impact on businesses in North Street, cutting them off even more from the city centre, and potentially on the reliability of bus services on this important northbound route.
- 3.2 Our suggestion is that northbound A61 traffic could be allowed to turn right at Eastgate [3], so removing it from St Peter's Street and North Street. It is accepted that queuing lengths at the junction would be short but should be minimised were priority to be given to northbound vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians on Eastgate/Regent Street at the New York



Road junction. Ideally the slip road from the A64(M) westbound would be widened to two lanes for a significant part of its length to hold more vehicles - there is space alongside the highway for this to take place although a short retaining wall might be required and some greenspace would be lost.

- 3.3 Again, making this the principal traffic flow would allow a long green phase for the traffic to cross Eastgate and the lower end of New York Road - given lower traffic flows on New York Road and Eastgate, we feel that this could be accommodated.

4 Quarry Hill

- 4.1 Given all the development that will be taking place on Quarry Hill, further consideration needs to be given to access to and egress from the site.
- 4.2 It is acknowledged that our suggested layout would restrict access to Quarry Hill to approaches along Regent Street southbound and A64 westbound (the route from New York Road would be lost). However, it is felt that the benefits outweigh this loss and that vehicular traffic to Quarry Hill should not be significant given the proximity of the site to employment areas and high-quality public transport.
- 4.3 Under the LCC scheme, exiting Quarry Hill is only possible by turning left onto Eastgate, with any traffic wishing to head north needing to turn at the Eastgate roundabout to head back up Regent Street. Given there is an aspiration to simplify traffic flow at this roundabout (could it be redesigned to create more generous public open space at the bottom of Eastgate?), it will be necessary to give northbound vehicles leaving Quarry Hill an opportunity to turn right onto Regent Street. It is acknowledged that this will be a tricky manoeuvre to programme into the signals but flows are likely to be light for most of the day so could be demand-responsive.
- 4.4 At present, the only occasion when significant queues build up is when the Playhouse empties and these have now reduced given the closure of the on-site parking and greater use of the Victoria car park by theatre patrons - should the Quarry Hill MSCP be constructed signal controls might need to be added/amended (or specially programmed at such peak flow times).

5 New York Road Eastbound

- 5.1 In order to simplify the Regent Street flyover junction, we have removed the potential for traffic to travel directly from New York Road to the Woodpecker junction with Marsh Lane [5]. An alternative to this is available through use of the loop around Centenary House at Lovell Park and then leave the A64(M) above Regent Street to drop down to Marsh Lane. It is acknowledged that this section of the IRR is designated as a motorway and this restricts certain classes of vehicle - is this an opportunity to down-grade key stretches of the motorway to general purpose status?
- 5.2 At the bottom of New York Road, traffic will be able to turn north and south to provide an exit from the city centre and access to the eastern side car parks and bus station. However, the flow here should be significantly lower, so allowing pavements to be widened (tree planting?) [6] and drop-off bays provided for the residential properties and Hilton Hotel.



6 Cycles and pedestrians

- 6.1 Our suggestions simplify the cycle lanes in the area and remove potential conflict with pedestrians in key locations.
- 6.2 Under the flyover (on the southbound side), the removal of a traffic lane provides space for a two-way cycle lane [7] which links directly to the two-way cycle lane which has been constructed along St Peter's Street in front of the Playhouse [8]. This removes the need for cyclists to cross Eastgate at the roundabout to reach Regent Street heading north. The crossing can be made more easily just before the flyover if heading up the west side of Regent Street or there is a simple link to the proposed Mabgate 'mini-Holland' scheme for cyclists heading northeast towards St James' Hospital and Roundhay [9]. A short section of two-way cycle lane provides a direct link into Quarry Hill with its Colleges, offices and residential accommodation [10].
- 6.3 This arrangement reduces the number of routes beneath the flyover, so providing more space for widened footways. Pedestrians are kept to the east of all cycles to minimise potential conflict and allow cyclists to ride more smoothly - the latter will encourage riders to use the cycle lanes rather than the general highway.

7 Public Transport

- 7.1 Given that a large proportion of the general traffic will be removed from Eastgate and St Peter's Street to the south of the flyover, there could be potential to provide dedicated public transport lanes along the length of both streets either to speed bus flows or as a route for any future MRT scheme [11]. Pavements could be widened to create a boulevard effect.
- 7.2 A longer-term ambition could be to reveal the Lady Beck which runs under the highway in this area.

8 Summary

- 8.1 Although it is understood that the flyover needs to be replaced urgently due to its structural condition, it is felt that this is an opportunity to solve other issues on the east side of the city centre. We should not simply recreate what is there now (with minor amendments) but look to address long-standing aspirations to 'do something' with the separation of Quarry Hill from the main part of the city centre.
- 8.2 We feel that this is the sort of radical review that should be undertaken at this time although we appreciate that further work on the details will be required to deliver the principles illustrated below.

