

# MRT PHASE 1 CONSULTATION – Leeds Civic Trust’s Response

## 1. General

The Leeds Civic Trust supports Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposals from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) on the proposed corridors. For the purpose of this response it has been assumed that the MRT mode to be employed on the Phase 1 routes will be an articulated tram.

We have some concerns that this stage of the consultation process does not provide people with sufficient information to be able to express informed views. It does not indicate clearly the locations which each different route option might serve so that consultees can make informed choices between alternatives. People will attempt to read between the lines and guess where it is intended that the tram will go.

In some instances, the quotation of end-to-end journey times is misleading. For some routes, e.g. central Leeds to central Bradford, rail is likely to remain the mode of choice. The purpose of the tram will be to connect the suburbs between Leeds and Bradford with the city centres. In this context, end-to-end journey times are not so important. WYCA should provide some comparisons of travel times from intermediate locations before and after MRT to better illustrate this to the public.

A series of plans have been produced in order to illustrate the Leeds Civic Trust response and these are included in the Appendices:

- Appendix A      Bradford Routes
- Appendix B      Central Leeds Routes
- Appendix C      South Leeds Routes

## 2. Criteria

Leeds Civic Trust sees the following principles as important for the development of Mass Rapid Transit. We will use these principles later to assess the merits/drawbacks of each route option.

- **Segregation.** A high proportion of each of the routes should be segregated. This will help to ensure reliability (a key criticism of current bus services) and enable trams to run at higher speeds. Examples: a lack of segregation in Sheffield has been a challenge while segregation in Nottingham (with street running in the central area giving good access to facilities) has helped MRT success.
- **Minimising conflict with/or finding alternative routes for heavy traffic.** Where trams are not segregated, they should operate on routes that minimise conflict with heavy traffic, or alternative arrangements should be made for heavy traffic. Sometimes this may mean trams operate on 'quiet' or low traffic routes. In all instances, the tram should best serve local areas and places that people want to go, which will inevitably mean some routes which are currently heavily trafficked.
- **New Travel Opportunities.** The tram should open up new travel opportunities and serve areas which are currently poorly served by public transport, rather than operate on transport corridors which work currently work well. Focus should be placed on connecting people who are disconnected currently.
- **Destinations.** The tram should serve a range of destinations that people want to go e.g. residential, social, amenities, local services, retail, education, employment, leisure, park & ride, transport interchanges, etc.
- **Integration with other modes.** The tram should provide people with alternative transport options through seamless integration with other transport modes. This can simplify complex journeys, increase speed & ease of travel and accommodate trip-chaining. There may be opportunities to develop, for instance, express bus services to supplement tram corridors and/or introduce local feeder 'hopper' routes from MRT stops at key destinations.
- **Balancing short/long-term transport investments.** The development of the tram should, where possible, attempt to retain or not undo recent transport investments. We recognise this may not always be possible and that the tram is a longer-term project than some shorter-term transport investments such as highways infrastructure.
- **Regeneration.** The tram should be developed in line with Leeds City Council's broader strategy of improving health and wellbeing, tackling climate change and delivering inclusive growth. E.g. enabling opportunities for new housing development, supporting more deprived areas in the city, etc. Similar strategies for Bradford should also be addressed.
- **Placemaking.** Trams can support the development of a 15-minute city mindset and improve connectivity and access to places that people can visit and enjoy. The development of the tram is an opportunity to improve and provide new public spaces/realm.

### 3. Bradford to Leeds (see Appendix A)

	B1	B2	B3
Segregation	P	G	M
Minimising conflicts	P	G	P
New Travel Opps	P	G	M
Balancing Short/Long term	P	G	M
Destinations	G	G	G
Integration	M	G	M
Regeneration	G	G	G
Placemaking	M	G	M

(G = Good, M = Medium, P = Poor)

**Preferred Option - B2 is our preferred option and best reflects the LCT preferred route.**

B2 Pros	B2 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared route with South Leeds line through Holbeck to reduce costs.</li> <li>• Removal of heavy rail services from Bramley will speed through services.</li> <li>• Serves new communities e.g. Pudsey (which is a major suburb not currently well served by public transport) and Holme Wood.</li> <li>• Access to rail network remains at New Pudsey with existing/potentially improved bus connections.</li> <li>• Serves potential new Bradford NPR station.</li> <li>• Important that tram goes to Foster Square station to provide connectivity there to rail services north of Bradford.</li> <li>• Potential for extensions to Bradford Royal Infirmary (largest hospital in WY outside of Leeds), University of Bradford, St Luke's Hospital, etc, opening up possibility of new through journeys from West Leeds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WYCA route does not necessarily serve Central Holbeck.</li> <li>• Working alongside live rail line could be difficult.</li> <li>• Adverse impact on residential/education uses along former Pudsey rail line.</li> <li>• Significant engineering challenges as in WYCA document.</li> </ul>

B1 Pros	B1 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves Stanningley, Farsley &amp; Thornbury but these are relatively well served by buses and New Pudsey station.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant impact on City Square and Wellington Street westwards – MRT terminus assumed to be in City Square.</li> <li>• The A647 Stanningley Road corridor has been enhanced by Connecting Leeds and is one of the better bus corridors. This reduces the potential benefits.</li> <li>• Does not serve key destinations such as Wortley, Pudsey and Laisterdyke.</li> </ul>

B1 Pros	B1 Cons
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not serve potential New Bradford NPR station and high impact on Leeds Road traffic.</li> <li>• Significant engineering issues as in WYCA document.</li> </ul>

B3 Pros	B3 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of heavy rail services from Bramley will speed through services.</li> <li>• Serves new communities e.g. Pudsey, (which is a major suburb not currently well served by public transport) and Holme Wood.</li> <li>• Access to rail network remains at New Pudsey with existing/potentially improved bus connections.</li> <li>• Serves potential New Bradford NPR station.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant impact on City Square and Wellington Street westwards – MRT terminus assumed to be in City Square.</li> <li>• The A647 Stanningley Road corridor has been enhanced by Connecting Leeds and is one of the better bus corridors. This reduces the potential benefits.</li> <li>• Does not serve key destinations such as Wortley, Stanningley or Thornbury.</li> <li>• Significant engineering issues as in WYCA document.</li> </ul>

## 4. Leeds City Centre (see Appendix B)

	L1	L2	L3	L4
Segregation	M	M	M	P
Minimising conflicts	M	M	M	P
New Travel Opps	G	M	M	G
Balancing Short/Long term	G	M	P	P
Destinations	M	M	G	M
Integration	M	M	M	M
Regeneration	M	M	M	M
Placemaking	M	M	M	P

(G = Good, M = Medium, P = Poor)

The LCT preferred Options are L1 or L3 in that these routes better serve crucial destinations and minimise impact on recent environmental improvements. However, the tram needs to be carefully designed as part of the overall streetscape, as in Nottingham but unlike the impact of the tram in Manchester.

L1 Pros	L1 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better serves the office quarter, the LGI, Innovation Arc and Universities.</li> <li>• It also provides the opportunity of a future extension to the University of Leeds, and Hyde Park Corner.</li> <li>• There is also an opportunity to link with LCC work on Woodhouse Gateway, with an option to re-vision the public space along Clay Pit Lane linking to the Arena and Queen Square.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further from the retail area.</li> <li>• The consultation document mentions the need for closure of Portland Way and revised non-emergency vehicle access to the Infirmary - a detailed study is required to examine the implications of the new hospital and determine whether this is necessary and, if so, how could it be delivered.</li> <li>• There could be added complexity to junctions with Woodhouse Lane at Portland Way and Clay Pit Lane although this can be resolved as part of changes to Woodhouse Gateway.</li> <li>• Significant engineering works may be required at Sheepscar to avoid conflict with key traffic routes.</li> </ul>

L3 Pros	L3 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best serves a wide range of crucial destinations.</li> <li>• Simple crossings of key traffic routes where required.</li> <li>• Route potentially largely segregated from general highway traffic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park Row and Cookridge Street are the obvious and most direct routes, running closer to the retail quarter. Recent work to repurpose these for pedestrians, cyclists and buses makes this a more challenging choice but Nottingham experience demonstrates this is possible.</li> <li>• Significant engineering works may be required at Sheepscar to avoid conflict with key traffic routes.</li> </ul>

L2 is a hybrid of L1 and L3 which suggest should only be considered if L1 is found to be unfeasible due to interaction with the Infirmary.

L2 Pros	L2 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced impact on current traffic arrangements as a result of the provision of a single tramline along key streets, allowing retention of recent enhancements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split route could be confusing for users.</li> </ul>

L4 Pros	L4 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depending on final stop locations, links the Leeds rail and bus stations – provides connections to buses serving East &amp; Southeast Leeds and other parts of West Yorkshire.</li> <li>• Serves the core office, retail and entertainment quarters, together with development areas in Mabgate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It involves use of The Headrow, which has recently been transformed as a bus and active travel corridor – reconstruction would be politically challenging.</li> <li>• The Headrow is a major bus route and so any stops would need to be located in such a way as not to impede either mode.</li> <li>• Regent Street and Roseville Road are very busy roads, with no viable alternative for general traffic – junctions at Eastgate, New York Road and Skinner Lane would be very complex, causing significant traffic issues.</li> <li>• This route does not serve the Infirmary, Universities or Arena.</li> </ul>

### General Points on Leeds City Centre

All four routes include Victoria Bridge, Neville Street and Bishopgate Street to City Square:

- WYCA states that Victoria Bridge would have to be widened – why is this necessary as traffic along here has been reduced and the tram would replace some buses?
- The location of the tram stop for the station is very important to provide a high quality interchange and it is suggested that two locations should be investigated:
  - NEVILLE STREET: handy for station (particularly if below station arches are opened up for access to heavy rail services) but the area is not pleasant at present and may not be wide enough for a tram stop, buses, cycles and access traffic – it is also further from the core retail area.
  - BISHOPGATE STREET: here, access would be facilitated by the lift and steps currently under construction – however, if a further stop is provided in City Square to better serve the retail and office quarters, this could result in two stops too close together.
- Whichever location is chosen for a City Station tram stop, the taxi rank should be relocated to the west side of the station off Aire Street so as to reduce conflict with MRT services.
- There will be a need to review the proposed reconfiguration of City Square to take account of tram plans.

There are a number of issues with regard to the section between City Square and the Arena:

- The L3 route runs closer to the key city centre destinations for most users but is not too far from locations such as the LGI and the Universities, particularly if pedestrian routes to these areas are enhanced as part of, or alongside, the MRT project.
- Taking trams through the city centre in this way has the disadvantage that the route would be affected at times of major events in City Square, The Headrow/Victoria Square and/or Millennium Square.
- A very long term ambition could be to move the tram underground on the route from Bishopgate Street to City Square, Park Row and Cookridge Street, as has been done in Karlsruhe and other cities in Europe.

The route from The Arena to Beckett Street is not clear and needs more discussion:

- It has been assumed that WYCA proposes significant engineering interventions to carry the trams across major roads in Sheepscar and industrial premises between there and St James's Hospital – ground levels are such that approach viaducts can be minimised. However, such an arrangement would remove the opportunity to regenerate the area as part of the City Council's plans for addressing issues in the Rim through place-making and the recreation of lost communities.
- The LCT has suggested an alternative ground level route and traffic arrangement which would facilitate an interchange with bus routes serving northwest and northeast Leeds (see Appendix B)– this arrangement assumes retention of the existing principal road network but would be equally applicable should any significant reworking of road-space take place.
- It has been assumed from the plans that Options L1, L2 & L3 place the terminus at St James's Hospital on Alma Road between the Beckett and Bexley wings. We feel that this is a sub-optimal location as it would be further from the main hospital entrances and make it more difficult to create a comprehensive tram/bus interchange in this location to capture passengers from Northeast and East Leeds. The alternative LCT ground level route from Sheepscar, avoids use of Alma Road and potential conflict with Hospital traffic by using the Lincoln Road, Chapman Street and Rectory Road corridor before turning north along Beckett Street to the site of the existing P&D car park.

## 5. South Leeds – White Rose to Victoria Bridge (see Appendix C)

	L6A	L5	L6	L7
Segregation	G	P	P	P
Minimising conflicts	G	P	M	P
New Travel Opps	M	M	M	G
Balancing Short/Long term	G	P	G	G
Destinations	G	M	M	M
Integration	G	M	M	M
Regeneration	G	M	M	G
Placemaking	G	M	P	M

(G = Good, M = Medium, P = Poor)

**Preferred Option.** Each of the options has its advantages & disadvantages and LCT has prepared a variant Option L6A which addresses a number of areas where there are concerns with conflicts near Elland Road while delivering a better service in other areas such as Holbeck and Cottingley. We feel it is important to serve the new White Rose Station as well as the shopping complex.

L6A Pros	L6A Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar route corridor to WYCA L6 but delivers a number of benefits, including significantly less on-road running.</li> <li>• Shares alignment with Bradford B2 preferred option to reduce costs – potential interchange location in Sweet Street West.</li> <li>• Serves central Holbeck with opportunity for significant place-making.</li> <li>• Does not require major amendments to M621 junctions.</li> <li>• Provides cost effective flyover opportunities over Elland Road at M621 J2 and A6110 at Cottingley (use of existing landform).</li> <li>• Route north of stadium minimises conflict with stadium/police traffic &amp; serves the P&amp;R.</li> <li>• Provides good links to Cottingley once its station is closed – good interchange with Morley buses at White Rose, Cottingley or Elland Road stops.</li> <li>• Runs past White Rose railway station and shopping centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from heavily populated areas of Beeston but potential for ‘hopper’ buses to interchange at P&amp;R site.</li> <li>• Loss of grass verges along A6110.</li> <li>• Complex engineering required in vicinity of White Rose railway station – potentially requiring short single track section alongside existing warehouses &amp; reconstruction of bridge linking westbound platform to lift/stair tower.</li> </ul>

L5 Pros	L5 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves busy locations such as Crown Point Retail Park, Dewsbury Road shopping parades and, indirectly, John Charles Sports Complex.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilises busy roads and requires significant on-street running – significant conflict with existing traffic.</li> </ul>

L5 Pros	L5 Cons
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the route has been repurposed for buses, cyclists and pedestrians, modes which are more appropriate for frequent stops.</li> <li>• Does not serve Holbeck, Elland Road Stadium, Elland Road P&amp;R, Cottingley, White Rose railway station or White Rose Office Park.</li> </ul>

L6 Pros	L6 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most similar to the LCT preferred option, with differences at Holbeck, Elland Rd and White Rose.</li> <li>• Serves Elland Road stadium &amp; P&amp;R well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not serve Holbeck as well as LCT option.</li> <li>• Complex works at M621 junctions.</li> <li>• Significant lengths of on-street running on Elland Road (conflict with stadium, police &amp; P&amp;R traffic).</li> <li>• Potentially away from area of greatest population density but this could be rectified by local 'hoppers' serving the Park &amp; Ride interchange.</li> </ul>

L7 Pros	L7 Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared section of route with Bradford (B2).</li> <li>• Serves northern Holbeck and Elland Road stadium – P&amp;R site may need to be redesigned if access to MRT is seen to be key.</li> <li>• Minimal conflict with traffic on Elland Road.</li> <li>• Serves area of high population density in Beeston.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gelderd Road section is away from significant resident population and/or major destinations.</li> <li>• Largely on-street running, not segregated, with potential for delays.</li> <li>• If there are future route extensions, running trams through Beeston and Gelderd Road will give slower journeys.</li> </ul>

### General Points on South Leeds

There will be benefits with sharing part of this route with that proposed for the line to Bradford. The LCT preferred options reflect this by adoption of a common section through Holbeck, allowing an opportunity for interchange outside Leeds City Centre (e.g. Bradford to White Rose).

Leeds United Football Club has plans to redevelop major parts of Elland Road Stadium. While this at present appears to concentrate on the West Stand, the South Stand adjoining Elland Road is in poor condition and very cramped. A situation could be envisaged where the Club could seek to build over the road and this would have consequences for any tram route in this location. Post-match crowding would also be an issue with the present layout (Elland Road is closed to traffic at such times).

We feel it is vital to include the new White Rose Station in any MRT network and whichever route is selected, services should provide an easy interchange with heavy rail services – this will maximise the benefits from the investment in the new station.

## 6. Design and Construction

The design of any rail-based MRT system such a tramway should be such as to remove the need for at-grade crossings of major transport arteries – any scheme should include under/over passes in such locations (these could utilise existing bridges where possible).

In designing and constructing any scheme, passive provision should be made for any possible longer term extensions to the network.

A report recently published by Britain Remade entitled “How to Build New Trams in the UK and get Britain Moving” highlights that design and construction of tram schemes in the UK typically costs more than twice that of similar schemes elsewhere in Europe. This has implications for the viability of schemes. We suggest that the findings of this report be considered in taking the proposals forward and in discussion with government. If it were possible to deliver the proposals at lower cost, network extensions could be progressed more quickly.

## 7. Future Extensions

The Leeds Civic Trust notes the need for MRT interventions throughout West Yorkshire but, as noted in the WYCA Vision, an integrated MRT could involve many different modes.

It is stated that WYCA is assessing the viability of an extension south of the White Rose Centre, particularly given the extensive new housing development taking place in Tingley, Ardsley, Woodkirk and Chidswell. The area between the White Rose Centre & the M62, and between Tingley & Chidswell, is sparsely populated and is likely to remain so. Any proposed tram should be evaluated against the alternative of a 4 train/hour local rail service from Leeds & White Rose to Batley & Dewsbury, with bus connections from Chidswell to Batley station, and a high quality stopping bus service along the A653 and through adjoining estates.

We suggest that the following future Phase 2 extensions to the network should be examined:

- From St James’s Hospital to East and North-East Leeds e.g. Seacroft. Passing through Harehills and the major development opportunity of the Burton’s factory site, this could include serving Park & Ride sites by the Outer Ring Road on the A64 and A58. Such a route would complement the existing high quality bus route on the A64 and the rail line to Cross Gates and Thorpe Park.
- From the Clay Pit Lane area to the University of Leeds, terminating at a Hyde Park Corner bus interchange. As well as serving the universities, this would complete a transport backbone for the Innovation Arc.
- A second city crossing would be desirable to increase resilience of the tram network (as has been provided in Manchester). We suggest that this could provide an alternative route to St James Hospital round the eastern side of the city and connect the network to the bus station.