

North-South Corridor Program Torrens to Darlington Business Reference Group Meeting Notes of Discussion (Northern Tunnel)

Reference Group:	Torrens to Darlington Business Reference Group (Northern Tunnel)
Meeting No:	7
Date:	Thursday, 9 September 2021
Time:	6:30PM – 8:30PM
Location:	West Adelaide Football Club, 57 Milner Road, Richmond

Attendees	Position
Mark Douglas	Facilitator
John Chapman	Small Business Commissioner (Presenter)
Steve Sibonis	North-South Corridor Program Delivery Office; Department for Infrastructure and Transport (Presenter)
Nicole Walsh	North-South Corridor Program Delivery Office; Department for Infrastructure and Transport
Nicki Johnson	North-South Corridor Program Delivery Office; Department for Infrastructure and Transport
Jeff Faust	Total Workwear
James Franzon	Hilton Hotel
Charles Mountain	RAA
Arthur Patiniotis	State Surveys
Kym Wundersitz	City of Charles Sturt
Evan Knapp	SA Freight Council
Apologies	
Sue Curran	City of West Torrens
Ron Goldfinch	Safe Fire Electrical
Greg Mander	Brickworks Marketplace
George Mocatta	Railway Terrace Development
Shane Wingard	Renewal SA

1. Opening Formalities

1.1. Welcome and Apologies

Agenda items and introductions

1.2. Work Health and Safety

- Reminded attendees that masks are not required while sitting but if attendees move around masks will be required.

2. Items for Discussion

2.1. Previous meeting actions / Notes of Discussion

- Nil comment on the Notes of Discussion - accepted as a record.

2.2. Small Business Commissioner – John Chapman

- John explained the role of the Commission and legislation that the Small Business Commission deals with – some recent amendments have been made to cover COVID-19. The Small Business Commission cover nine Acts.
- 38 councils have signed up to work with the Small Business Friendly Council.
- A new Small Business Commissioner will be announced in the coming weeks.
- Previous Project examples;
 - South Road Overpass: working closely and engaging businesses and assisting business with compensation.
 - Jetty Road Tram Tracks: lack of communications to business, didn't know the project was coming/timing. Huge impacts on traders. Assisting to compress program to 3 weeks working 24/7.
 - Torrens to Torrens: ordinary outcomes for businesses, worked with the Department to come up with solutions for businesses.
 - Bank Street, Adelaide: disaster involving two arms of government and an inexperienced contractor.
 - Oaklands Crossing: business access blocked complaining to the Commission, contacted the department and were able to find a solutions and a laydown site.
 - Gawler Place: impacts to businesses - early engagement, night works where possible. No complaints from business due to good engagement.
 - King William Street: early engagement with businesses. Assisted to compress timeframe - change in methodology to limit time on project.
 - King William Road, Unley: Road closure for a month. Early engagement and managed timeframes.
 - Magill Road Upgrade: early engagement, understood business concerns early on.
- Lessons learnt: Seek feedback from businesses regarding the wording of signage such as 'open for business' rather than 'business as usual' signage. Developed a guide - do and don'ts on how to engage businesses and a guide for government, small businesses and contractors.
- Encourage businesses to do their own planning and ensure they have the time to plan and evolve.

Additional discussion

- **Can the Department consider forward planning for the empty properties along the corridor (non-acquired but vacant)?**
- **Can the government have a grant to reinvigorate businesses that are going to be staying? Especially those businesses in need of renovations.** John advised to put it forward and talk to local member and Small Business Commissioner.
- **What is an example of road project that has gone really well?**
 - King William Rd Hyde Park project – it was complicated but it went well.
 - Another one that is currently going well is the Port Wakefield and Joy Baluch AM Bridge duplication (Port Augusta) - good communications from the Department. No complaints. Great preparation from the contractor with contingencies in place.
 - Current Intersection projects going well. The Department brief John well in advance to get input and good knowledge of timing of projects.
- Road works are a constant issue that the Small Business Commission deals with. The issue has moved from non-engagement to closer liaison. A shift in attitude which is positive.
- Advocacy a major tool for the Commissioner – has a guide and checklist for government, contractors and business owners which they need to consider in relation to construction projects.
- Very early engagement is key for contractors and government – need to think through the issues and talk with the stakeholders including:
 - Access and parking is a constant problem.
 - Project - prepare to modify plans to account for feedback from stakeholders' e.g. trading hours.
 - Put KPIs around engagement. Enforce these through financial penalties.
 - Have a hotline for urgent issues – incentivise those responsible to act positively.
 - Develop an issues register.

- Develop a complaints procedure.
- Assess impact on Access/Visibility.
- Will there be an impact on services and comfort - noise/dust /mud/hours of operation.
- Consider effects on supply and delivery chain.
- Have a contingency to address trader issues as they arise.
- Have a plan to celebrate completion of the project.

2.3. Business Engagement approach

- The Department is committed to working with small businesses to minimise impacts resulting from project construction activities.
- There is a department wide Small Business Framework has been established to provide a consistent approach to the support of small businesses throughout construction.
- A three-phased approach to engaging with business
- First phase: **Construction readiness** - is focused on understanding businesses, who's out there and start planning for future impacts to minimize that disruption. Also looking at what is it in the short term that can be done to help identify what potential support measures businesses may need and want.
- Generally includes:
 - Register all businesses
 - Business surveys – capability, needs
 - Analysis of surveys outcomes
 - Regular and tailored advice and communications to businesses – about project design progress etc
 - Case managers will be appointed (two more people)
 - Design briefings and refinements
- **Construction resilience** – support provided to help businesses get through the construction including:
 - Works notifications and briefings - look-aheads to provide plenty of warning
 - Customer access maps and wayfinding - used to good success for hotels on the City Tram project. Also used for GPs and health outlets extensively on the City Tram and Oaklands Crossing projects to help them inform their regular customers of how access changes and where they can park or get dropped off.
 - Promotional assistance - simple assistance to produce and deliver communications to the local area (e.g. pamphlets used for food outlets at Oaklands Crossing and at R2P)
 - Place activation - to minimise impacts on the appeal of an area for customers or to help with wayfinding. At Oaklands, local artists were used to create temporary wayfinding art from pool noodles to help show the way between the train station and the swimming centre
 - Local procurement planning - working with contractors to ensure they have local businesses on their systems and preferred suppliers lists
 - Impact mitigations – things like vibration loggers, regularly cleaning windows, water carts to manage dust etc.
- **Post construction launch** –
 - Launch and celebration - At Oaklands Crossing an opening event was undertaken that invited all local businesses to set up a stall in the new plaza area that was advertised and promoted to the local community.
 - Rehabilitation works – small but make a big difference -like fixing a footpath, tying in a drain, reinstalling removed signs
 - Customer advertising – use social media and other promotion that reinforces 'open for business' message

Additional discussion

- Could we have no interest loans during construction to renovate our business?

2.4. Surveying businesses

- As part of the 'Readiness' phase, small group exercise to explore potential content for surveying businesses that address a range of areas of business. What areas will businesses likely need further support – ahead of construction starting? Key things that businesses should be asking themselves?
 - Business capacity
 - Business capability
 - Business type
 - Level of support required
- What other areas will business need support. Looking ahead of construction starting what could we do over the next 6 -12 months to get businesses prepared?
 - Feedback and suggestions will be used to develop future surveys and will be circulated to the group for comment/sounding prior to going out.

Additional discussion

- It is hard to know without much confirmed project information in the northern end, in particular the design. We are waiting for what is going to happen to the road then how it affects businesses.
- Additional context provided – considering the last 12 months and the challenges that businesses have had to face, what have you had to adapt/consider? More trading online?
- Northern end construction doesn't start for quite some time, it might be best to have a look at the Southern Tunnel businesses as its moving a lot faster, this business group will be likely to have different answer/outcomes to this question.
- What happens if SA Water decide to rip up South Road and how this will affect South Road traffic? What happens if any major construction/roadworks occur on Marion Road and how it will affect South Road? SA Water have a plan in place for Marion Road, so what is the consideration for other utilities? Impacts to all connections and major connecting road. It would be good to do this exercise again in January 2022.
- The group confirmed that it would be better to postpone this question (and survey) to a later date when it will be more relevant and they have received the reference design.

2.5. Business engagement method – what works best for businesses?

- What engagement tools work better for business? Frequency? Type of information?
 - Case managers for each business. A lot of landlords are very concerned what their building will look like, will it deplete their rent? Will there be enough pull through to businesses.
 - Consider communication around unscheduled changes – timing issues and how to communicate this? Case manager is the best strategy - one person to go to for all key issues.
 - One consistent person that understands your business. Personal approach, caring and understanding and working in a business's best interest as project takes place. Continuity. Business don't want to have to repeat the same story to different project staff.
 - Positive experience as well to have a case manager who is able to help evolve businesses – such as enabling discussion for a new or different access to a particular business which could help improve access and make it more desirable for customers.
 - All businesses interpret the project information and maps differently and advantage of having a case manager is that they can give precise information and clarity of that interpretation.
 - It would be good to have one case manager who works with/across a particular industry i.e. retail, hospitality for consistency.

2.6. Wider arterial road network update - Traffic modelling

- Traffic modelling update – Cross Road (SE Freeway to South Road)
 - Does the data assume the Adelaide plains bypass is built? **Action: The Department to follow up.**
- Comment - 15 % increase in heavy vehicles, more heavy vehicles going down Cross Road?
- What are the assumptions of heavy vehicle usage along Cross Road? **Action: The Department to follow up.**
- What are the traffic volumes currently on Goodwood Road, Marion Road? It would be good to see the data for 2020 – 2021. **Action: The Department to follow up.**

- Discussion around the side roads to the Belltower centre, feeder to retail centre. \$15 million a year in turnover, currently customers can access the Belltower Centre from both sides of the road - how will the new road upgrade impact turnover? Main concern is that we will lose customers if there is limited surface road access. How can they turn into our businesses? Concerns we will lose retailers once we see the roadmap due to loss of customers.
- On a positive note, a reduction in traffic equals easy to get to places, so you may have more customers. Positive perspective for the road upgrade.

2.7. Wrap up

- **What is the timing for reference design? Is it still the end of the year?** Yes, the full reference design will be completed by the end of this year (2021). But as sections of the reference design become available (certainty/approved), then they will be communicated to those businesses directly impacted.
- **When is the first soil being turned?** Southern Tunnel - 2023
- **Is there a fixed date for the reference design in December?** No, not at this stage.
- **Will the east - west connection will be part of reference design?** Yes it will be.
- **Traffic flows impact on passing trade. How much does the Belltower rely on passing trade and what is the customer mix? How much is retail?** The biggest concern is how customers get to our business? If they can't get to their business they will keep traveling to a competitor. It's a destination shop if the destination is too hard people won't come.
- Acknowledged the new Darlington interchange is challenging to understand, originally did not have not enough clear signage. Road users will adapt if they are confident with the system. Good signage and wayfinding people will get it. People will quickly adapt.
- **Will the Department run education campaigns so that people can understand how to use corridor?** Yes, there will be campaigns to educate people how to use the motorway safely.

2.8. Next meeting

- Thursday 21 October 2021

ACTIONS

- The Department to reschedule obtaining feedback for potential business survey content to after the full reference design is known – potentially consider post January 2022.
- Follow up traffic modelling information:
 - Traffic modelling update on Cross Road (SE Freeway to South Road) – Question: Does the data assume the Adelaide plains bypass is built?
 - What are the assumptions of heavy vehicle usage along Cross Road?
 - What are the traffic volumes currently on Goodwood Road, Marion Road, 2020-2021 data?