

Tasmanian Government
2012 Submission to Nation Building 2 Program

Greater Launceston Transport Planning: Key initiatives

(Concept only)

September 2012

Context

In partnership with local government and other key stakeholders, the Tasmanian Government is undertaking three major transport initiatives within the Greater Launceston metropolitan area and the Northern Region more broadly:

1. Review of the Northern Integrated Transport Plan
2. Development of a Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan
3. Launceston Traffic Modelling

The aim of these initiatives is to better understand Greater Launceston's metropolitan freight and passenger transport system, including underlying demand drivers and relationship to land use; identify key challenges; and develop effective, evidence-based solutions.

The initiatives build on and inform each other. The Northern Integrated Transport Plan provides the overarching regional context to inform planning and investment in the regional and metropolitan transport network. The Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan addresses a key policy gap, identifying strategies and key initiatives to improve passenger transport outcomes over the long-term within the Launceston urban area, with a particular focus on public transport and alternative modes. The Launceston Traffic Modelling project examines the issues affecting performance at the corridor and intersection level.

All three initiatives are well underway, and will be completed in 2013. It is anticipated that the priorities identified by all three initiatives will influence and support the investment decisions of all levels of government. Appropriate projects identified through these initiatives will be presented at a future time for inclusion under Nation Building 2.

In addition, Launceston City Council is developing a Greater Launceston Plan, which will focus on a strategy for sustainable land use planning and management to inform a coordinated approach for municipal planning and investment in the greater urban area of Launceston.

Nation Building Two themes

The projects comprising the Greater Launceston Transport Planning Project have not been identified. However, there is a clear focus within all projects on improving freight efficiency and connectivity through and within the Greater Launceston area, and delivering greater modal choice and improved accessibility to the community.

In this context, the Nation Building 2 themes related to Moving Freight and Connecting People are most relevant to this project.

This project aligns with the National Urban Policy's strategic priorities of integrating planning of land use, social and economic infrastructure and investing in urban passenger transport by better understanding the Greater Launceston's passenger transport system.

The project also aligns with the National Land Freight Network Strategy strategic priorities of planning for relevant corridors and places by understanding the metropolitan freight system.

Overview of key initiatives

1. Northern Integrated Transport Plan

Project description

Regional plans provide a coordinated and strategic framework to identify and address regional transport issues over the long term. Each is developed through a partnership approach between state and local government.

The existing *Northern Tasmanian Integrated Transport Plan 2004* was the first regional transport plan completed in Tasmania. Review of this Plan is identified as a priority in the

Tasmanian Infrastructure Strategy and by both the Tasmanian Government and northern regional councils.

A substantial amount of transport planning work has been undertaken in the Northern Region since release of the 2004 Plan, and the updated NITP will build on these transport policies and plans. The key outstanding gap is metropolitan passenger transport. This area is covered by the Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan, with outcomes of that Plan feeding directly into the new NITP.

The project is being undertaken in three stages:

1. Background Report, including review of existing NITP;
2. Consultation – Strategies Workshop; and
3. Development of new Northern Integrated Transport Plan

Project objectives

The overall objective of the project is to deliver an efficient, accessible and safe regional transport system that supports economic and social development. The specific objectives of the project, as articulated in the regional transport plan, will be developed in consultation with councils, key stakeholders and the community.

The joint development of a Northern Integrated Transport Plan (NITP) by DIER and the Northern Tasmania councils is the key output of the project. The Plan will build on a review of the existing Plan; consider the key challenges facing the northern region; and identify effective, prioritised strategies to improve regional transport outcomes.

The final Northern Integrated Transport Plan will:

- Identify and agree the priority challenges and opportunities for the Region;
- Review the Region's transport network, focusing on its relationship to the broader transport network (state and national); key demand drivers; major corridors and nodes; and relationship to land use;
- Integrate with, and support existing major transport, economic development and land use policies and plans;
- Consider both infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions;
- Develop investment and planning principles to guide decision-making by government and stakeholders; and
- Encourage a partnership approach between the State Government, the NTD and the northern councils in prioritising transport system improvements to benefit the broader region.

Problem identification

The priority problems for the Region will be identified and prioritised through the Plan development process, including in consultation with councils and the community. These may include:

- Changes to logistics and export arrangements;
- Uncertainty regarding future of various industries sectors, including forestry and forest products, heavy industry and agriculture;
- Disparity in population growth areas – high metropolitan growth versus declining rural populations;
- High dependence on private vehicle use and lack of alternative transport options; and

- Ageing infrastructure and high maintenance costs.

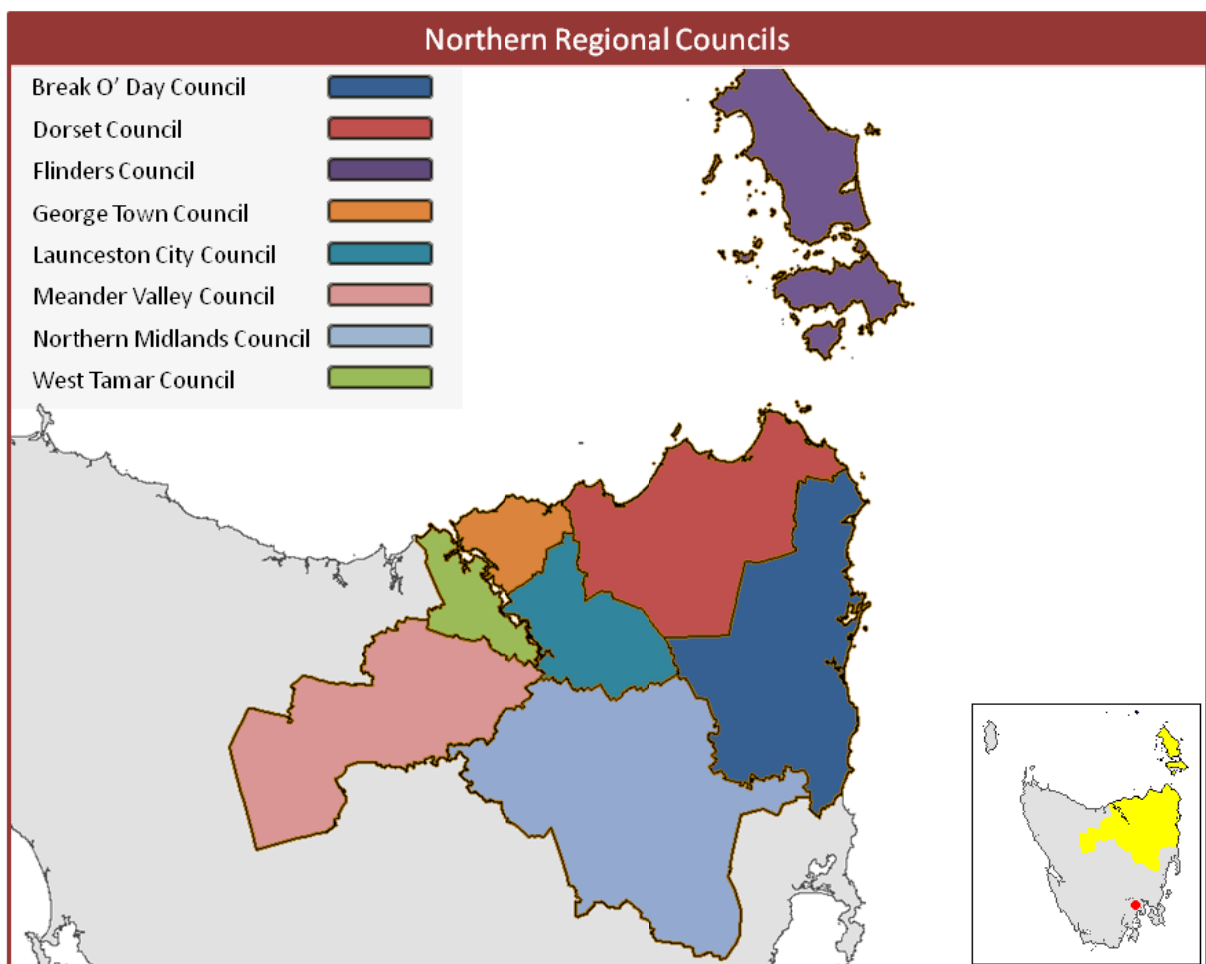
The final list of priorities will be agreed to by the project steering committee and included in the final Plan.

Work to date

The project is overseen by a joint state-local government steering committee. A draft Background Report has been released for comment to all northern region councils. Consultation with council and key stakeholders on the development of high-level strategies was conducted through a Strategies Workshop (September 2012).

Next steps

- Finalisation and public release of the Background Report – October 2012
- Release of a Draft Plan for public comment – March 2012.



2. Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan

Project description

The Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan assesses the Greater Launceston metropolitan area from a passenger transport and land use perspective. It considers the effectiveness of alternative travel demand measures, and will provide an integrated package of strategies and actions consistent with the overall objectives of the Plan.

The Plan is being developed in three stages:

- Stage 1: Report 1 – Past, Current and Future Land use patterns and the passenger transport system (including problem identification);
- Stage 2: Report 2 – Options identification; and
- Stage 3: Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan

Stage 3 will identify key measures, including specific focus areas, recommended actions and how the actions will deliver on objectives. A prioritised list of projects to address identified problems (see below) will also be developed, to guide future planning.

Project objectives

The objective of the Plan is to promote the more effective delivery of public transport services and transport infrastructure in Greater Launceston, through implementation of the *Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework*. The Project focuses on building a strong case for the implementation of an integrated package of measures that support and encourage the increased use of alternative transport modes in Launceston.

To further the outcomes of the Framework, the Project will be conducted to achieve the following project specific outcomes:

- Shared understanding of existing land use and transport patterns;
- Confirmation of existing transport challenges and opportunities in Greater Launceston;
- Identification and agreement on likely areas of demographic change, and changes in travel patterns, to 2030;
- Identification and prioritisation of projects capable of contributing to the achievement of the Framework objectives; and
- Agreement between major stakeholders to the Passenger Transport Plan and prioritised projects.

Problem identification

Problem identification is being informed through data analysis and stakeholder input. Current areas of investigation include:

- Changes in land use, residential and population growth and structure
- Access to activity and employment areas, education centres and essential services
- Current reliance on private vehicles for daily trips and impact of growth in traffic volumes
- Availability of and access to modal options
- Current low levels of passenger transport patronage for non-student trips
- Student peaks on PT services and the impact of student only services

- Parking availability and its effect on mode choice
- Current and potential PT corridors.

Work to date

Research and data analysis has been undertaken and stakeholder interviews conducted to inform development of the background reports. Current work involves consolidating the analysis and stakeholder input, identifying the agreed problem areas and considering potential options to address the problems.

DIER has engaged consultants to develop a Launceston Passenger Transport Economic Analysis Model (Launceston PTEAM), which will allow testing of different PT scenarios and variables.

Next steps

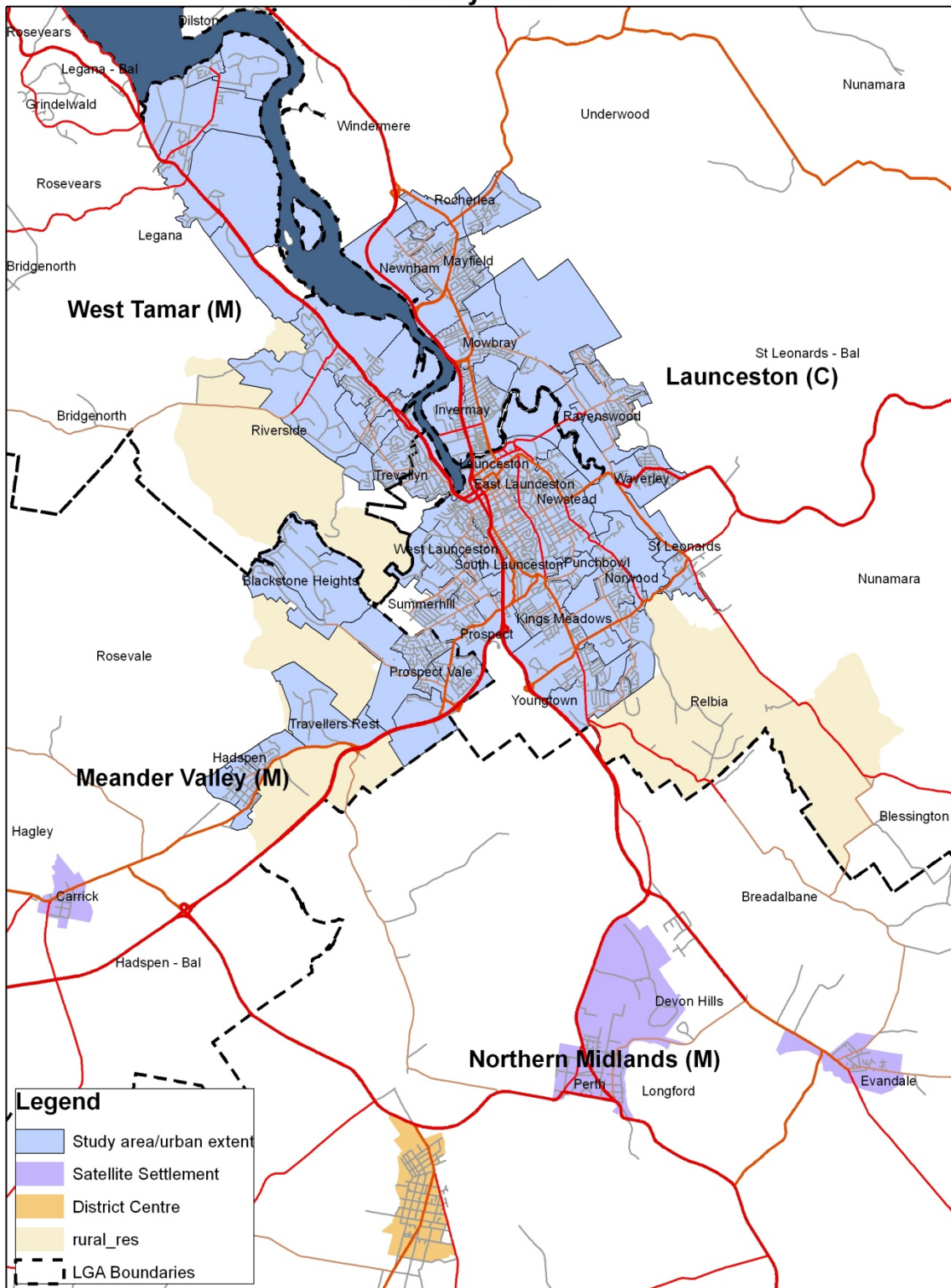
The indicative timeline for the project is:

- Background Report, Land Use and the Passenger Transport System - September 2012
- Report 2- Travel Demand Measures- December 2012
- Final Report (Draft) - March 2013
- Final Report - May 2013

The Passenger Transport Plan will include recommendations for implementation of prioritised projects. Funding will be sought for specific initiatives for preliminary planning and design work leading to the delivery of projects to achieve project outcomes.

Map of study area

Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan Study Area



3. Launceston Traffic Modelling

Project description

The project involves the assessment of strategic routes through Launceston, focusing on key issues affecting network performance, and identifying opportunities to improve the capacity, efficiency and safety of existing infrastructure. A review of longer-term alternative routes for through traffic will also be considered.

Project objectives

To review freight and passenger networks in the Launceston metropolitan area, and identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and safety of this network.

Problem Identification

Key road routes from the Midland and Bass Highways to Bell Bay and connecting to other key commercial and industrial areas pass through central Launceston. The Bathurst-Wellington couplet, running north-south through Launceston, carries particularly high freight volumes.

High volumes of passenger and freight vehicles can generate travel time delays, particularly during peak periods. Travel times on major freight corridors have increased in recent years, and are expected to continue to worsen. Locations that experience the most crashes are also generally on these routes.

Work to Date

A Transport Issues Paper has been prepared by consultants, in collaboration with DIER and Launceston City Council. The report considered current volumes (both passengers and freight), travel times (including comparison of results from 2008 and 2012), congestion at intersections and the crash history in and around the CBD. No intersection modelling has been completed to date, with the congestion analysis relying on a "Congested Minutes" assessment using data from the SCATS traffic signal control technology.

Launceston City Council also hosted an on-line survey through the "Your Voice Your Launceston" program, which asked respondents about their transport patterns and opinions on various transport issues. There were 77 responses received, as well as specific submissions from the Tamar Bicycle Users Group (TBUG) and the Truck Drivers Association.

Next Steps

Traffic modelling of the Launceston road network is required to assess the impacts of potential bypass options that have been previously identified, as well as to assess the impacts of safety improvements at key junctions, such as imposing turn restrictions to reduce vehicle conflicts.

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation will continue to be a critical task.