



NORTHENDEN CIVIC SOCIETY

Regional Centre Transport Strategy Consultation
Transport Policy Unit
Manchester City Council
Room 308
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 3LA

24 January 2008

Dear Sir / Madam

Response to consultation on draft Regional Centre Transport Strategy

Northenden Civic Society is a voluntary body with 270 paying members. Our primary area of focus is Northenden Village. We offer opinions on wider issues where they impact on Northenden's residents, businesses, heritage, general standards, etc. Transport in and to/from Northenden is one such issue. This letter is Northenden Civic Society's response to the RCTS.

The contact person for the Civic Society with regard to this issue is:

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1) Introduction

We have concerns about some aspects of the RCTS and welcome other proposals in it. In this response, however, we focus solely on our two greatest concerns – firstly the apparent lack of improvement to bus services connecting Northenden with the Regional Centre (Section 2 below), and secondly the proposed route changes in the City Centre affecting services from South Manchester and the closure to most buses of Piccadilly Gardens (Section 3).

2) The lack of investment in bus services from the Northenden area

- a) We note with concern that none of the proposed new Bus Transit services, nor Cross-City services, will serve our area – despite the fact that we lie outside the M60 and hence will have to pay the maximum Congestion Charge if travelling by car into Manchester. In fact, as a general point, we note that most of the proposed new high-frequency services will be starting and finishing within the M60 – benefiting primarily residents in those areas.
- b) We contend that the new investment in bus services, and associated bus priority and infrastructure, should be focused on routes to be used by residents of areas



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outside the zone travelling across the charging points towards the Regional Centre or other suburbs within the charging zone. This is particularly important for areas such as Northenden without rail or Metrolink connections. Northenden is currently relatively well-served by buses into the Regional Centre – and these services are well-used as a trip on the 43 or on one of the Princess Rd services at rush-hour demonstrates. Connections by bus from Northenden to suburbs which do not lie on these radial routes are not particularly good, and those that exist are less well patronised. However we see little in the plans that will enhance any local bus services, radial or peripheral – and yet the alternative - travelling by car - will incur the £5 congestion charge.

- c) Civic Society members are also concerned that levels of traffic just outside the zone are likely to increase once the Congestion Charge is introduced, particularly over time, as people make alternative decisions about place of work, shopping and leisure. The fact that travelling around the M60, as opposed to coming off it inwards, will remain free, could well encourage motorists living both within and outside the M60 to make travel plans in which they travel to or through areas just outside the M60. We see it as essential that public transport in such areas is improved to try to counter these effects.

3) The proposed relocation of bus services from Northenden to the Regional Centre from Piccadilly Gardens to Chorlton St, and associated re-routing.

- a) The proposals in the RCTS will mean that all the bus services into Manchester from the Northenden area – as well as the wider Wythenshawe and West Didsbury area - will terminate in future at what is now Chorlton St Coach Station. This includes all services into Manchester via both Palatine Road and Princess Road.
- b) Piccadilly Bus Station is currently well used by passengers from Northenden who appreciate its convenience for shops and workplaces. Chorlton St Coach Station is further out from the centre. It may be only a few more minutes walk, but that walk multiplied up by every passenger adds up to a lot of inconvenience in total – an inconvenience we do not feel is outweighed by potential gains for pedestrians in the Piccadilly Gardens area. The alternative suggested, of changing to a MetroShuttle bus, is also inconvenient for a lot of passengers – having waited for the bus to come into town, and travelled in, we do not like to be faced with a further wait of up to 10 minutes before completing a last, short, leg of the journey. Additionally the MetroShuttle buses do not run after 7.00 pm. The fact that the new, high quality, services will terminate at Parker St / Piccadilly Gardens, is a tacit admission that it is a preferable location to Chorlton St at which to arrive in the City Centre.
- c) Additionally we are concerned about the reduced ease of access to the Peter St and Albert Square areas for bus passengers from the south. Currently the Palatine Rd services come into the City Centre along Oxford St and Mosley St, affording



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opportunities to alight at the top of Oxford St and St Peter's Square, a short walk from the Albert Square / Cross St areas. In fact, the RTCS document describes the Metrolink stop at St Peter's Square as

"one of the busiest in the city centre providing good access to the commercial, administrative and retail areas"

We would argue that the St Peter's Square bus stop is just as important as the Metrolink stop for just the same reasons. However, under the proposals, buses will turn off Oxford St along Whitworth St towards Chorlton St – a much further walk away from the Albert Square area and its facilities.

- d)** We do not accept that Mosley St is blighted by congestion from buses. With adjustments to traffic signals and rearrangement of the road layout for entering and leaving Parker St, the congestion could be reduced further in our opinion without the need to divert services. In any event, any disbenefit to pedestrians walking along Mosley St alongside buses currently would surely be outweighed by the disbenefit to thousands of passengers of extra walking or waiting time at the end of their journey.
- e)** In summary, we wish to see services via Palatine Road and Princess Road into Manchester continue to terminate at Piccadilly Gardens.

Yours sincerely,

Conor Jerram
On behalf of the Executive Committee