

## **Ely underpass scheme feedback**

Following the opening of Ely Southern Bypass, the existing level crossing on Station Road will be closed to all traffic. We recently gave people an update on the changes that will be implemented as part of the underpass scheme – the principles of which were consulted on and included as a condition of the Ely Bypass planning permission.

We have looked into the feedback received and included below are responses to the most frequent comments:

### **1. Traffic flows – do you have more up-to-date traffic flow data?**

The underpass scheme is part of the planning condition and aims to discourage through traffic from using the underpass and encourage use of the new bypass. It will not prevent local traffic from using this route should they wish to do so.

We expect from traffic impact studies we've carried out, the majority of vehicles on the A142 will use the new road, greatly reducing the number of vehicles using the underpass. The waiting times at the proposed signals will therefore be short compared to the existing delays caused by the level crossing and make journey times much more reliable.

In 2014, we carried out a traffic count to look at the traffic flows on the A142 and this was used to model future traffic flows, up to 2031, both with the bypass and without. Further counts were undertaken in 2016, before work started and compared with the 2014 modelled flows. This has shown that the actual changes are in line with those predicted.

The traffic modelling which was done took into account likely traffic increases from growth in the area. This included a new retail/business park off Angel Drove and traffic generated by Tesco or other commercial development in the area. It gives a robust indication that the signals will handle the volume of traffic using the underpass with no significant delay.

### **2. Will there be any impact on traffic using the station?**

With regards to people wishing to turn right when leaving the railway station car park, we have assessed this and believe the traffic lights will allow more gaps in the traffic. By changing the traffic to single file and installing traffic lights it should deter through traffic from using this route, which will in turn reduce traffic flow, therefore making it easier to exit the car park.

### **3. How will the traffic lights work?**

We understand there are concerns amongst local residents about the traffic being single file and the use of traffic lights and we can assure you these concerns were considered in our traffic impact studies.

Elements of the design specifically focus on minimising delays by making sure the lights are activated by vehicle detectors. This means they will respond as vehicles approach and at times when there is no demand the lights will show red in both directions which will allow them to respond more quickly. We have also brought the stop lines closer together to reduce the time that a driver will need to wait for opposing vehicles to clear the underpass section and for their signal to turn green.

Within the design we've allowed for traffic to increase, we will also monitor and adjust them to make sure they're as efficient as possible after they're installed.

Whilst some delays are inevitable the wider benefits are:

- Traffic lights will provide scope for significant improvements for pedestrians and cyclists
- The signals will discourage non-essential traffic from using the underpass and encourage use of the bypass but still allow local use
- Air quality improvements in the area will result from the reduction in traffic
- Encouraging as much traffic as possible to use the bypass will facilitate improvements to the station area
- Reduce the risk of bridge strikes.

### **4. Why not wait until after the bypass has opened to see what the traffic flows are like?**

There is currently nowhere for lorries to turn around in the vicinity of the underpass, therefore turning areas are being provided as part of the scheme. We need to ensure this work is done at the same time that the level crossing is closed to ensure lorries can turn safely as soon as the alternative route is closed.

We want to improve the area for pedestrians and cyclists and achieve the above benefits as soon as possible. We have received support from various groups in the area such as local allotment users and cyclists. We want to reduce the number of bridge strikes and encourage people to use the new bypass as soon as it opens.

### **5. Who is this going to benefit?**

The new road is a bypass and has been designed to take non-essential traffic away from this area of Ely, benefiting Ely residents and businesses.

As you're probably aware, during the development of the Ely Southern Bypass there was also a clear desire to improve conditions in the area of the underpass and station for pedestrians and cyclists. This will also help the potential for future development in the station area.

Once the bypass has opened, the level crossing will be closed. Traffic using the existing underpass at the low railway bridge will be single file and controlled with traffic lights. This will then provide significant benefits for pedestrians and cyclists. Local school children that are regular users of the area will also be able to access the playing field on the south side of the underpass.

By improving the cycle and pedestrian facilities we are encouraging more people to walk or cycle into the city and it will reduce the number of cars. The proposed improvements will also provide a link to the viaduct walkway on the bypass, this will give pedestrians access between the public rights of way along both flood banks of the River Great Ouse.

## **6. What is being done to address the bridge strikes?**

The new bypass and underpass scheme will solve long-standing congestion problems by removing the need for lorries to use the railway level crossing and reduce collisions with the vulnerable low-bridge.

As part of the underpass scheme we will be providing improved signage. There will be new over-height vehicle illuminated flashing signs, additional 'low bridge' signs and we will be adjusting the location of the signs to provide more advance notice.

With regards to large vehicles needing to turn around, a widened area is included within our design on both sides of the underpass if an over-height vehicle has inadvertently attempted to use this route.

## **7. Concerns over the bus-stop locations?**

As buses will no longer be able to use Station Road when the level crossing is closed, the bus-stops will be moved to Angel Drove. While the walk to the station will be slightly longer it is along a designated footpath alongside the road with significantly reduced traffic.

Consideration was given to using the bus-stop on the access road to Tesco, but some bus operators have highlighted problems with access that would make keeping to timetables difficult. Therefore, they would not use this stop for all services as it adds time to their schedule making them less reliable.

## **8. What happens when there is an accident that results in the new bypass being closed?**

It would be treated the same as any accident on any of our roads. Drivers will be able to use alternative routes.

## **9. Could the underpass be closed completely?**

Some people suggested that the underpass should be closed completely. This was considered as an option but not pursued because it would cause too much inconvenience to local traffic. By making it one-way it was considered to provide the best balance by allowing local access, and at the same time giving the opportunity to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. This gives local traffic who can use the underpass an alternative route if necessary.

The poster detailing the key features of the scheme, updated drawings and further details are available on our website: [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ely-bypass](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ely-bypass)