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Community Alliance
South Australia

Project Director Torrens Road to River Torrens
Project Assessment Report
Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure
GPO Box 1533
Adelaide SA 5001
Sent by email to: dpti.southroad@sa.gov.au

11th August 2014

Submission on the proposed Torrens Road to River Torrens Upgrade

Dear Project Director,

The Community Alliance SA is an umbrella organisation of resident and community groups from Adelaide and other areas of South Australia concerned with planning and development.

This submission addresses the proposed Torrens Road to River Torrens Upgrade as part of the North South Corridor project. The Community Alliance SA would like to make the following points on the lack of publicly available information and inadequate community engagement in the planning process for the project:

- There is no public evidence of a rigorous investigation of alternatives for dealing with congestion and increasing traffic levels on South Road eg improving and making use of other roads as a network for greater dispersal of traffic, developing an alternative route for freight, improving public transport, introducing schemes to encourage people to live closer to their employment, or a combination of approaches.

The Community Alliance wants to see publicly available reports on alternative proposals to the North South Corridor proposal with the research and analysis open to public and expert scrutiny.

- No alternative ways of upgrading the road have been presented to the public such as placing the corridor, or sections thereof, in a tunnel, elevating the road, building a lowered road that is capped, or designing the expressway for a lower traffic speed. Tunnels and capping could allow parks or other high amenity areas to be developed over the road at ground level. Unlike the current plans, these would maintain or increase the neighbourhood connectivity and property values, and attract investment. They would also mitigate the negative aspects of a surface freeway corridor such as levels of higher crime, increased traffic fatalities and increased vacant properties.

The public needs to be given the opportunity to review the pros and cons of alternative ways of upgrading the road.

- The need for the upgraded road as proposed is unclear. As far as we are aware, the figures for future traffic levels have been released without the public seeing what assumptions these are based on (eg population increases, induced demands and modeling for commuter, freight traffic and other traffic). It is also not clear how the high number of short trips currently made on South Road will be accommodated. Furthermore, there is no available information on what future levels of congestion are expected ie at what point congestion on the upgraded road will reach today's levels, and what plans there are for when that occurs.

The traffic modeling reports and assumptions made need to be made available and open to public scrutiny.

- Most worryingly, the North South Corridor is being planned section by section and the merits of and financial costs for the project as a whole are unclear. As we understand it, no business case or benefit cost analysis for the project has been presented for evaluation by Infrastructure Australia, nor are they publicly available.

A business case and benefit cost analysis for the North South Corridor need to be provided publicly and to Infrastructure Australia for evaluation as soon as possible.

- It appears that community connectivity is being considered at the end of the planning process, rather than at the beginning. This is particularly a problem as the upgrade of the Corridor is being considered section by section and not in a comprehensive way. As a consequence, the South Road upgrade proposal doesn't adequately address the critical issue of allowing people to get around in their neighbourhood.

The best way to address community connectivity is to give communities the opportunity to review the pros and cons of alternative ways of upgrading the road (as in the second dot point).

The overall view of the Community Alliance is that public consultation is occurring too late in the planning process with the public excluded from considering vital information and not being consulted on other options. This leaves community members with little faith that their views will change anything but minor details. This is a major flaw throughout Adelaide's planning system, which is currently dominated by politics and engineering needs with little consideration given to the social, environmental and economic implications. This is not planning for the people of Adelaide.

Thank you for considering this submission on the proposed Torrens Road to River Torrens Upgrade. If possible, I would very much appreciate a reply addressing the matters raised.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Wilmore

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