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Transport for Greater Manchester
Metrolink Second City Crossing
FREEPOST RRHE-RKUU-KSJY
Manchester M1 3BG

2nd September 2011

**Response to Transport for Greater Manchester on the consultation
on Metrolink Second City Crossing**

1. **TravelWatch NorthWest** (TWNW) is an independent organisation that represents users of all forms of public transport in the North West of England.
2. TWNW wishes to make representation to Transport for Greater Manchester in response to the consultation documents on the Metrolink Second City Crossing showing the proposed route and stop locations in Manchester city centre. We are grateful for the opportunity to discuss this proposal with TfGM staff and hope that our representation has benefited as a result.
3. We support the provision of a second city crossing to increase central area accessibility, increase system capacity and improve operational flexibility. We also support the selection of the Cross Street route in preference to the Deansgate route from the earlier consultation, for the reasons set out in the consultation document. We do however have serious concerns regarding the western side of the central area, particularly the Spinningfields area where major redevelopment has taken place without any significant improvement in public transport access.
4. We are very concerned that passengers travelling into the city centre will only have very limited improvement in city centre access as the plan is now presented. Earlier plans showed a route via Windmill Street, Mount Street, Albert Square, Cross Street and Corporation Street to Victoria Station with new stops at Albert Square and Market Street. The plan now proposed only provides one new stop, at Exchange Square, which is only about 340m from Victoria Station, and creates a gap of over 750m between Exchange Square and the relocated St Peter's Square stop. This is an excessive distance for city centre stops.
5. The stop locations proposed do not provide any significant improvement in access by Metrolink to a large part of the central area including Albert Square, the King Street area, Deansgate and Spinningfields. The diagram attached shows the 300m catchment areas for the existing stops and the proposed stop at Exchange Square. (Mosley Street is not shown as TfGM intend to close it).

It can be seen that there is a considerable overlap in the northern part of the city centre but a significant gap to the west. This would be at least partly filled if a stop was provided in the Albert Square area, as shown in the dashed line.

6. If, following consultation, the decision is for only one stop between Victoria and St Peters Square, this should be located at the Royal Exchange (where there is plenty of space), to give a more equal spacing and good access to the shops and businesses. It has been intimated that there has been an objection from the Theatre Company to a stop here which we find very difficult to understand. We urge TfGM to further explore this issue with the theatre – it would be expected that it would be welcomed for the convenience of their audiences.

7. The proposed four platform tram stop at St Peter's Square would provide common platforms for trams to the north and to the south and could provide good access to the Metrolink system. However it will marginally reduce accessibility to the Oxford Street, Lower Mosley Street and Peter Street areas by moving the platforms into Mosley Street/Peace Gardens. The proposed stop is a radical departure from the existing St Peter's Square stop which would be difficult to construct without closing this section of Metrolink for some considerable time, possibly several months. This would cause severe inconvenience to many users and we urge TfGM to consider fully the implications of the resulting disruption.

7. Although not directly a transport matter, we do have some concerns regarding the relocation of the Cenotaph. Its present position is a focal point when viewed from Lower Mosley Street, Peter Street, Mosley Street or Oxford Street. In comparison the new location would be 'hidden away' at the back of the Town Hall. We believe that the site of the former St Peter's Church is still consecrated ground and we would need reassurance that all the relevant stakeholders have given their full support to this move.

9. We are aware of the reasons for not pursuing the Mount Street route option but still consider that the important need to serve the western part of the city centre warrants reconsideration of the options. The very high capital cost of this route and the inevitable major disruption during construction are a high price to pay for only one new city centre stop which is close to already existing stops.

10. The proposals will result in major changes to bus routes including the removal of all buses from Lower Mosley Street between Windmill Street and Peter Street, Mosley Street between St Peter's Square and Princess Street, and the section of Cross Street between Withy Grove and Market Street. In addition a number of important turning movements will no longer be available including Albert Square into Princess Street and Cross Street into John Dalton Street. The right turn from Todd Street into Corporation Street will become more difficult unless traffic signals are provided. The only new bus movement will be the Cross City bus route westbound along Princess Street. No information is available on alternative bus routes and we are concerned that

bus users may be significantly inconvenienced by longer walking distances to bus stops and/or longer journey times.

11. The three Metroshuttle bus routes would all be affected by these changes and although we understand that they will be re-specified, there is no information to indicate how they may be able to operate.

12. We consider that public transport users will be concerned at any reduction in bus service access and interchange opportunities between buses, trams and trains. On the contrary they will be looking for improvements in these factors which are not apparent from the consultation plans. The possibility of an interchange between trams and cross city buses at Mosley Street/Princess Street would greatly assist this aim. We believe there should be a requirement for the scheme to improve city centre bus service average speed, reliability and access as part of any detailed proposals, as well as ease of interchange. This will require more bus only sections and bus priority measures.

13. We are concerned that trams will have to share their tracks with other traffic at a number of locations with consequent risk of disruption and unreliability. This contrasts with the existing system which is nearly all tram only except for Mosley Street sharing with buses in one direction. While we accept that it is part of the transport strategy for the city centre to reduce general traffic flows, it is still likely that some disruption and delays will occur. It will be essential to ensure that the highest possible level of priority is given to trams including traffic signal priorities.

14. Although no plans are included in the consultation documents for the changes to Victoria station, we have been shown the proposed layout. The three track layout with centre road and two island platforms will provide a good level of operational flexibility and maximise opportunities for interchange. We support this proposal. We do however have some concerns regarding tram and pedestrian conflicts at the entrance/exit to the island platforms which will be more complex than the existing arrangement, particularly as one track will be bidirectional. Careful attention to detailed design and to signs and signals will be essential. The possible changes to track and footway levels could assist this process.

15. There is no indication of which tram services will use the second city crossing but we understand that the most likely option will be the Shaw and Rochdale to East Didsbury service and possibly an Airport service from Victoria. We would support this pattern.

16. In summary, we have the following representations to make on the Metrolink second city crossing:

- ***we support the concept of a second city crossing;***
- ***we agree with the selection of the Cross Street route in preference to Deansgate;***

- *we consider that the present proposal falls far short of the improvements in central area accessibility that users will expect because it only has one new stop location at Exchange Square. We urge TfGM to reconsider the possibility of a stop in the Albert Square area to serve the western parts of the city centre;*
- *the provision of only one new stop (not two as stated in the consultation brochure) at the Victoria end of the route must make the economic viability of this scheme questionable. It will inevitably be a very high cost project and cause major disruption during the period of service diversions and construction. The passenger benefits will be very limited while disbenefits to bus users are likely to be large;*
- *however if only one new stop is to be provided we urge TfGM to reconsider the possibility of a stop in the Royal Exchange area;*
- *we are still concerned about the further reduction in accessibility resulting from the removal of the Mosley Street stop (which is still shown on the plans in the consultation brochures);*
- *the construction of the double platform four track stop at St Peter's Square would require the closure of this section for an extended period which would disbenefit large numbers of users;*
- *we are concerned that the removal of some bus route sections and turning movements will result in severe adverse impacts on bus services in the city centre, including the three MetroShuttle services. We need reassurance that this project will not result in a substantial reduction in accessibility for buses which carry considerably more passengers than the Metrolink system;*
- *we have some reservations about the level of segregation of trams from buses and other traffic which will be less than for the existing network;*
- *we agree with the proposed three track island platform layout at Victoria, subject to careful design of the pedestrian crossing over the tramway.*
- *we do not consider that the scheme as currently proposed adequately meets the needs of passengers.*

17. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

(signed)

John Moorhouse Company Secretary (*author of paper; Tony Young*)

North West Public Transport Users' Forum Community Interest Company trading as TravelWatch

NorthWest

Company No. 6181713

Registered Office: 2 Park House Drive, Heversham, Cumbria LA7 7EG