MAG

DRD Consultation: Roads (Speed Limit) (No. 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014

MAG Response

31 | 7 | 2014

MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP
FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

MAG RESPONSE TO DRD PROPOSALS FOR A 20MPH SPEED LIMIT IN BELFAST CITY CENTRE

MAG SUPPORT
MAG, the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment, advises the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure on the implementation of the Architecture and Built Environment Policy. MAG is fully supportive of the proposed 20mph speed limit in Belfast city centre published as part of Schedule 1 of The Roads (Speed Limit) (No. 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014 (Schedule 1 items 6 to 81).

REINFORCEMENT
The reduced speed limit should be reinforced by an ambition to remove traffic signals from the city centre area served by the new speed limit and the creation of junctions which should be conceived as places of priority for pedestrian and non-motorised vehicles and are "naturally safe by design".

EXAMPLES FROM EUROPE
There are good examples of creative design of such shared places in many European cities and with its new speed limit of 20mph, Belfast can expect to become an inherently safer city centre that is more attractive for people who are less able, whether younger or older, and promotes better and more considerate behaviour by all street users.

INTERIM PHASING OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS
In the interim, while signalised crossings remain, these should be phased to favour drivers who drive at or just under 20mph so that they reinforce good driving practice until the signals can be removed and junctions become self-regulating, favouring people walking or using non-motorised vehicles.

BELFAST'S FIRST SHARED PLACE JUNCTION
The work to provide shared place junctions should begin now at the city's most central junction, Castle Place, where observations show that people use their senses to navigate the junction, responding primarily to the presence or otherwise of traffic rather than to the colour of the pedestrian signals. The reduced speed limit should allow the traffic signals to be temporarily suspended at Castle Place with appropriate notice given to users and relevant signage introduced for a traffic experiment. Logically, until a level junction can be provided for people walking and using non-motorised vehicles, an artistic paint scheme on the existing junction surface would help to identify this as the first shared junction in Belfast. Excellent precedent for this has been set in Portland, Oregon, where an initial junction of this nature

Design for one of Portland, Oregon's highly successful painted shared space junctions

City Repair, Portland, Oregon.
http://cityrepair.org/about/how-to/placemaking/intersectionrepair/

was created experimentally many years ago and the technique has been extended across the city. Belfast's residential streets could similarly benefit. Two reports of successful junction experiments in the UK are noted in Annex A.

CONCLUSION

MAG therefore fully supports the introduction of the proposed 20mph speed limit on the streets in Belfast city centre named in Annex B and congratulates the Department for Regional Development on this significant advance in placemaking which will improve safety and attractiveness of the city for everyone. It will assist social inclusion by making the city centre more accessible, make non car users more equal in the city centre. By increasing its attractiveness to investors and customers, the city centre improvements will make an inherently more economically productive city, helping to reduce poverty in the longer term.

Arthur Acheson   Chair   Ministerial Advisory Group
6 | 8 | 2014

Sign in Cushendall, Co Antrim,
5 August 2014
Appropriate signage would indicate the proposed traffic calming shared place in Belfast's Castle Place and residential areas

ANNEX A
UK examples

1. Report of Gloucestershire junction experiment November 2009 – April 2010

"Road markings removal success in Stroud"

By This is Gloucestershire | Posted: January 06, 2010

The trial removal of road markings and signs in Minchinhampton is proving a success.
The 'give way' and 'stop' lines were blacked out and the signposts were taken away from The Cross junction in the middle of the village in a traffic calming experiment.
High Street, Well Hill, Westend and Tetbury Street meet at the crossroads.
Now, a third of the way into the six-month trial, there have been no recorded accidents.
Consultation about whether the changes should become permanent is awaited now.
Coun Stan Waddington (Con, Nailsworth and Minchinhampton), Gloucestershire County Council's cabinet member for the environment, said: "From what I hear locally people seem to think it is a success."
Coun Waddington is also a member of Minchinhampton Parish Council, which supported the experiment. The trial runs until April.

Read more: http://www.gloucestercitizen.co.uk/Road-markings-removal-success-Stroud/story-11879740-detail/story.html#ixzz39c70QnDj

2. Report of successful junction experiment in Portishead, Someret

""Naked Streets" Without Traffic Lights Improve Flow and Safety"

By Jonna McKone | October 18, 2010

Portishead is a coastal town in England about 120 miles west of London. The town of 22,000 people experimented with turning its traffic lights off on a major road in September 2009. Despite the traffic chaos, the streets still seemed safe.

The removal of the lights in Portishead, a city that has grown quickly in the last decade, was part of a four-week study "to solve long-standing congestion at the junction," which was so debilitating and disruptive it sparked street protests and political campaigns from frustrated residents.

But the intersections became permanent after travel times for vehicles fell with no loss of pedestrian safety despite increases in the number of people using the road (more than 2,000 vehicles and 300 pedestrians per hour.) An article in a local Bristol newspaper explaining the effort stated, "drivers will now be expected to use a combination of common sense and courtesy to negotiate the junction of the town's High Street, Wyndam Way and The Cabstand." The method is much in contrast to one British publication's description of car drivers' relationships with traffic signals:

> The thinking is based on the way drivers habitually race through lights before they turn red and who are lulled into a false sense of security by the confidence that they have right of way – making them less aware of potential hazards

For the trial period, roads were monitored using cameras to see the impact of no traffic signals on congestion. (A 20 mile-per-hour speed limit was instituted over that same period.) In the video and in comments on articles about the initiative, residents said there have been big improvements—drivers pay more attention to the road and nearby pedestrians as opposed to traffic lights. Plus, there are savings, as each traffic lights usually costs 30,000 to 50,000 pounds to maintain.

Self-Organizing Leads To Less Chaotic Streets

These lightless traffic junctures are known as "naked streets." Trial projects that challenge the importance of traffic lights have occurred in other areas of England and Europe. (The first traffic signal, according to this video report, was erected in London in 1868.) The Portishead experiment is not alone in its redesign. Transport for London (TfL) worked to remove lights in the central downtown with hopes of getting rid of as many as 20 percent of existing traffic lights with support from Mayor Boris Johnson. Recently the city aimed to eliminate 145 lights it deemed useless."

http://thecityfix.com/blog/naked-streets-without-traffic-lights-improve-flow-and-safety/

6. Academy Street, Unclassified No. 0620-02, Belfast.
7. Ann Street, Unclassified No. 0624-16, Belfast.
8. Arthur Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-29, Belfast.
9. Arthur Place, Unclassified No. 0624-23, Belfast.
10. Arthur Square, Unclassified No. 0624-19, Belfast.
11. Arthur Street, Unclassified No. 0624-11, Belfast.
12. Bank Street, Unclassified No. 0621-21, Belfast.
13. Berry Street, Unclassified No. 0621-18/35, Belfast.
14. Bridge Street, Unclassified No. 0620-11/28, Belfast.
15. Brown's Row, Unclassified No. 0620-19, Belfast.
16. Callender Street, Unclassified No. 0624-10, Belfast.
17. Castle Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-09, Belfast.
18. Castle Place, Route No. A0501-02, Belfast.
19. Castle Street, Route No. A0501-03, Belfast.
20. Chapel Lane, Unclassified No. 0621-20, Belfast.
21. Chichester Street, Route No. A20-13, Belfast, from its junction with Donegall Square North, Route A1, to its junction with Victoria Street, Route A20.
22. Church Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-18, Belfast.
23. Church Street, Unclassified No. 0620-15, Belfast.
24. Clarence Place Mews, Unclassified No. 0624-28, Belfast.
25. Clarke's Lane, Unclassified No. 0620-17, Belfast.
26. Coar's Lane, Unclassified No. 0620-18, Belfast.
27. College Court, Unclassified No. 0624-01, Belfast.
28. College Street, Unclassified No. 0624-02, Belfast.
29. College Street Mews, Unclassified No. 0624-06, Belfast.
30. Corn Market, Unclassified No. 0624-17, Belfast.
31. Curtis Street, Unclassified No. 0620-01, Belfast.
32. Donegall Place, Route No. A6-01, Belfast.
33. Donegall Square East, Route No. A1-01, Belfast.
34. Donegall Square North, Route No. A1-02/03, Belfast.
35. Donegall Square South, Route No. A20-15, Belfast.
36. Donegall Square West, Route No. A1-04, Belfast.
37. Donegall Street, Unclassified No. 0620-23, Belfast.
38. Dunbar Street, Unclassified No. 0620-06, Belfast.
39. Edward Street, Unclassified No. 0620-04, Belfast.
40. Exchange Street, Unclassified No. 0620-22, Belfast.
41. Exchange Street West, Unclassified No. 0620-20, Belfast.
42. Fountain Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-22, Belfast.
43. Fountain Street, Unclassified No. 0624-04, Belfast.
44. Francis Street, Unclassified No. 0621-16, Belfast.
45. Gloucester Street, Unclassified No. 0624-13, Belfast.
46. Gordon Street, Unclassified No. 0620-07, Belfast.
47. Gresham Street, Unclassified No. 0621-29, Belfast.
48. Hector Street, Unclassified No. 0620-03, Belfast.
49. High Street, Route A0501-01, Belfast.
50. Hill Street, Unclassified No. 0620-08, Belfast.
51. Howard Street, Route A1-21, Belfast.

52. King Street, Unclassified No. 0621-30, Belfast.

53. Law's Court, Unclassified No. 0621-23, Belfast.

54. Lombard Street, Unclassified No. 0620-13, Belfast.

55. Lower Garfield Street, Unclassified No. 0620-25, Belfast.

56. Marquis Street, Unclassified No. 0621-19, Belfast.

57. May Street, Route A20-16, Belfast.

58. Montgomery Street, Unclassified No. 0624-12/34, Belfast.

59. Music Hall Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-27, Belfast.

60. North Street, Unclassified No. 0620-27, Belfast.

61. Patterson's Place, Unclassified No. 0624-31, Belfast.

62. Queen Street, Unclassified No. 0624-03, Belfast.

63. Rosemary Street, Unclassified No. 0620-12, Belfast.

64. Royal Avenue, Route No. A6-02/03, Belfast.

65. Samuel Street, Unclassified No. 0621-14, Belfast.

66. Seymour Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-33, Belfast.

67. Seymour Row, Unclassified No. 0624-30, Belfast.

68. Seymour Street, Unclassified No. 0624-14, Belfast.

69. Skipper Street, Unclassified No. 0620-10, Belfast.

70. Smithfield Square North, Unclassified No. 0621-33, Belfast.

71. Talbot Street, Unclassified No. 0620-05, Belfast.

72. Upper Arthur Street, Unclassified No. 0624-24, Belfast.

73. Upper Church Lane, Unclassified No. 0624-25, Belfast.

74. Upper Queen Street, Unclassified No. 0624-26, Belfast.

75. Waring Street, Unclassified No. 0620-09, Belfast, from its junction with Bridge Street, Unclassified No. 0620, to its junction with Victoria Street, Route No. A20.

76. Wellington Place, Route No. A1-20, Belfast.

77. Wellington Street, Unclassified No. 0624-08/32, Belfast.

78. William Street, Unclassified No. 0620-14, Belfast.

79. William Street South, Unclassified No. 0624-21, Belfast.

80. Winetavern Street, Unclassified No. 0621-28, Belfast.

81. York Street, Route No. A2-17, Belfast, from its junction with Royal Avenue, Route A6, to its junction with Great Patrick Street, Route A2.