GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: **Capital Projects**

DATE: **15th January 2010**

SUBJECT: **Metrolink Mosley Street Stop**

REPORT OF: **Metrolink Director, GMPTE**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on the potential closure of the Mosley Street Metrolink stop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That approval now be granted to commence the procedure for the closure of the Mosley Street stop by the issue of notice to DfT in accordance with the closure process set out within and in the report to Capital Projects Committee on 18th September 2009.

2. That Real time Passenger Information displays be installed at agreed locations to show the time and departure of the next service.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Development and Operations Committee 28th November 2008 – Metrolink City Centre track Update Paper
Development and Operations Committee 27th February 2009 – Metrolink City Centre Track Update Paper
Development and Operations Committee 1st May 2009 – Metrolink City Centre Works Paper
Capital Projects Committee 18th September 2009 – Mosley Street Stop Assessment report carried out under s.25 Railways Act 2005

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1 Introduction

1.1 As a result of site constraints, the Mosley Street stop was originally constructed with varying platform height, and consequently does not allow full height access to trams. For single unit trams only, the central doors (2 out of 4) open on to a full height, level platform; the front and rear doors open onto a ramp. For double units, access requires retractable steps which are fitted to the existing fleet of T68 vehicles.

1.2 A report was produced for the Development Committee on 28th November 2008 which explained that the retractable steps on the T68 vehicles have significant reliability issues requiring high attendant costs in order to maintain them in a functional condition. The cost of maintaining the steps on the new vehicles, if they were fitted, is in the region of £6,000 per tram per year, which could lead to a cost of £18 million for the full fleet of vehicles over their 30 year life.

1.3 During the procurement process for the new trams, the cost of fitting retractable steps during manufacture was identified as £150,000 per tram. To date forty trams have been ordered for the capacity improvements on phase 1 and 2, Media City and for the Phase 3a extension. To fit steps to these vehicles would have cost £6 million. For future proposed extensions, a further 58 trams will be required which will cost in the region of £9 million to fit retractable steps.

1.4 A recommendation was therefore made to the Metrolink Steering Group in May 2007, not to order retractable steps for the new trams on the basis of the following:

1) there is a very high capital expenditure of fitting the steps to the new fleet of trams (up to £15 million) along with the high maintenance cost of the steps over the life of the trams (up to £18 million);
2) the retractable steps on the current fleet are inherently unreliable providing a high risk to the vehicles availability for service;
3) there are only two stops on the system that require retractable steps:
   - St Peters Square (since then, this stop has been re-developed and re-modelled as part of the City Centre Track Upgrade Project, eliminating the need for the steps);
   - Mosley St – Modifications to this stop could be made to accommodate trams without retractable steps; and
4) the cost of stop modifications is far less than the cost of fitting and maintaining steps on the new tram fleet.

1.5 The outcome of the above was that the Mosley Street platform was either to be modified to full height, over its entire length or the stop is to be removed completely.

1.6 To gain a better understanding of the impact the removal would have on passengers and revenue, a report was commissioned to carry out passenger surveys at the stop and to provide analysis of the results.

2 Passenger Survey

2.1 The surveys were carried out on a week day and weekend in February 2009, at a time with no school or bank holidays, to capture all possible activities and journeys that would be work or leisure related. This survey was based upon current journeys (shown below) however, the analysis took into account the predicted increased patronage generated by phase 3a destinations being added.

2.2 A summary of the report findings is included below:

- In the peak evening period the average number of boarders per tram is 34.
- The whole day average number of boarders per tram is 19.
- In the morning peak period the average number of alighters per tram is 4.
- The whole day average number of alighters per tram is 2.
- The report forecasts an increase of 34% patronage at Mosley Street following the opening of phase 3a.
- The patronage analysis associated with the opening of the phase 3b accelerated package, including a second city crossing, shows no overall increase in patronage at Mosley Street. The increase in patronage at Mosley Street following the opening of the accelerated package, prior to a second city crossing being built, is expected to be approximately 15%.
- The average journey time (including walk time) decreases if the stop is removed.

2.3 The survey indicates that the increase in passenger numbers to Piccadilly Gardens, St Peter's Square and Market Street will not create passenger flow issues at these stops. To eliminate overcrowding and increase passenger handling capacity for future requirements improvement works have been carried out at Piccadilly Gardens (to widen the stop from 4.1 metres to 6 metres wide) and St Peters Square (full length height improvement and re-modelling). In addition to these improvement works, an additional 10 trams per hour will run North to South within the city centre.

3 Analysis of Key Impacts

3.1 Economically and operationally the removal of Mosley Street stop has real benefits to the Metrolink system in terms of improved journey times for passengers, reduced maintenance and equipment costs.

3.2 The stop location and size restricts pedestrian flow around a very busy area of the city centre and restricts access and visibility of retailers immediately to the rear of the stop. Removal of the stop would provide much better pedestrian access and create a much improved environment in the vicinity of Piccadilly Gardens. This area would also benefit from a much improved, more aesthetically pleasing, public area with re-instatement of a wider pavement in a finish in keeping with the rest of the area and the new Metrolink surface finish.

3.3 With the introduction of Phase 3A, the number of outbound trams crossing the delta junction will increase from 15 to 25 trams/hour. If all these trams are required to stop at Mosley Street, it will introduce an adverse impact on the movement of trams from Piccadilly Gardens and Market Street through the delta, resulting in tram bunching within the city. This will also have a cascade effect on all service headways and hence the reliability of the service.

3.4 The removal would also realise a cost saving by not having to re-model the platform to accommodate double tram units.

3.5 Closure would require some passengers to make alternative decisions regarding alighting and boarding stops. These decisions will be made easier by the placing of passenger information displays in the Piccadilly Gardens area and on the nearby stops giving real time information on the next tram arrival and from where the next Altrincham service will depart (Piccadilly Gardens or Market Street). These real time displays will inform customers of the time to the arrival of the next tram, its destination and from which city stop. The displays will be positioned in key locations to ensure all customers are aware of the next service.

3.6 A feasibility study on all the options has shown the removal of Mosley Street as a stop to be the lowest capital cost. The cost estimates have been updated and removal of the stop (including refurbishment of the pavement) would cost approximately £0.3 million; conversion to a full height stop would cost approximately £1.2 million.

3.7 Overall the improved passenger journey times, and the improvements to the public environment in the region of Piccadilly Gardens, together with the increased stop capacity at Piccadilly Gardens and St. Peter's Square, provide a strong case for closure of Mosley Street stop. This is made stronger by the considerable savings made against re-modelling the Mosley Street stop to accommodate the new double tram units.

4. Closure Process

4.1 The Railways Act 2005 provides the legislative framework for facilitating station closures. Legal advice and guidance obtained from the DfT indicated that it will be necessary to follow the procedures set out in Section 25 of the Act (as per heavy rail) to formally close the Mosley

Street stop. The timescale for completion of the process is in the control of DfT and ORR, but is likely to take in the region of 12 months.

4.2 The procedure laid down in section 25 applies where the services provided by a particular person ("the service operator") on a particular line or from a particular station are proposed by that person to be discontinued.

4.3 The first step is to undertake a full assessment of the proposal in line with the New Approach to Appraisal (NATA). This step has been completed as detailed in section 5.

The details of the procedure are as follows:

(2) The service operator must give notice to the DfT setting out–

(a) particulars of the proposal to discontinue the services; and

(b) a summary of the results of the assessment carried out in accordance with subsection (4) below.

(3) The particulars set out in the notice must include, in particular–

(a) the services to which the proposal relates; and

(b) the proposal date; and

the proposal date must be a date not less than three months after the date of the notice.

(4) Before giving the notice under subsection (2), the service operator must carry out an assessment of whether the proposal satisfies the criteria set out in the relevant part of the closures guidance; and that assessment must be carried out in accordance with that guidance.

(5) The DfT must then –

(a) consider whether the closure in question should be allowed; and

(b) before the proposal date, form an opinion on that matter in accordance with the criteria set out in the relevant part of the closures guidance.

(6) If the DfT is of the opinion that the closure should be allowed, it must–

(a) carry out a consultation about the proposal; and

(b) after carrying out that consultation, either notify the service operator that it has changed its opinion or refer the proposal (with or without modifications) to the Office of Rail Regulation;and

the service operator must not discontinue the services in question before the Office of Rail Regulation has issued a closure ratification notice.

4.4 Schedule 7 of the 2005 Act contains requirements for the initiation of the consultation and provides that the consultation must thereafter be carried out in accordance with the closures guidance. The initiation of the consultation involves a notice in the prescribed form being published in two successive weeks in a local newspaper circulating in the area affected by the proposal and in two national newspapers. Specific notification must also be given to particular persons: local authorities in whose area there are persons living, working or studying who are affected by the proposal, the Rail Passengers' Council (i.e. Passenger Focus), every person providing railway services who may be so affected and every person providing station services in relation to the station affected. The closures guidance refers to other organisations that should be considered for consultation and sets out required contents for the preparation of a consultation document.

5 Mosley Street Stop Closure Assessment

5.1 At the meeting of the Capital Projects Committee on 18th September 2009, Members were provided with an update on the Mosley Street stop and its potential closure. It was noted that consultants had been appointed to undertake a formal assessment of the closure process under section 25 of The Railways Act 2005. The assessment must be carried out with regards to the nominated criteria of:

- Environment
- Safety
- Economy
- Accessibility and
- Integration

5.2 The results of this assessment enable a more informed decision to be made regarding the closure or retention of the stop. If retained, the platform would need to be modified (at a cost of approximately £1.2 million) to be full height over its entire length (currently split level platform) to enable level boarding access to the new M5000 trams. The assessment has now been completed and the main points are summarised below.

Summary of Closure Assessment

5.3 The appraisal summary table, appendix 1, shows the results of the assessment in accordance with the nominated criteria. In all respects the impact was nil, slightly adverse or slightly beneficial with the exception of townscape (significantly adverse) and journey ambience (significantly beneficial).

5.4 The issue of journey ambience is mostly concerned with route uncertainty. The appraisal highlighted the potential impact of stop closure on passenger perceptions of frequency disbenefits associated with using Piccadilly Gardens or Market Street stops instead of the Mosley Street stop. This impact will be mitigated by the provision of additional Passenger Information Displays located in the vicinity of the current Mosley Street stop, as well as at the Piccadilly Gardens and Market Street stops, indicating where the next Altrincham and Eccles Line services will depart from – hence enabling passengers to choose to walk to the most appropriate stop to minimise overall travel times.

5.5 The economic appraisal does not support the retention of Mosley Street stop into the future. This conclusion is mainly based on the high capital cost of fitting steps to the fleet (up to £15 million) and the high maintenance cost of the steps over the life of the trams (up to £18 million).

5.6 Whilst there would be some benefits of retaining the stop through improved service frequency for Altrincham line users, ie two 12 minute services offering an effective 6 minute service through Mosley Street, those benefits were outweighed by the adverse impact for through passengers. The Eccles Line service remains a 12 minute service from Piccadilly with limited effect on the passenger experience due to the proximity of the stops. As the Metrolink Phase 3A investment will result in a significant increase in the relative numbers of through passengers, the adverse impact of retaining the stop for through passengers will outweigh the benefits to Altrincham Line users.

5.7 The technical assessment has shown that, for some groups of existing passengers, any adverse impacts of the stop closure are likely to be offset by the increased services and connections that will be offered under phase 3a and phase 3b.

5.8 With regard to the impact of increased patronage at the neighbouring stops, the recent re-modelling at Piccadilly Gardens and St Peters Square has increased capacity considerably and the increased frequency of services (additional 10 trams per hour from North to South of the city centre) will ensure passengers spend less time on stop than previously was the case thus reducing the time for queues to develop.

6. Next Steps

6.1 GMPTE officers, subject to approval being granted, will now follow the closure process and issue a closure notice to the DfT which needs to include a proposal date for the closure of Mosley Street stop. To enable this to happen, the officers will develop a schedule for the closure process taking into account the following:

- DfT requirements/procedures;
- The timescales for the introduction of additional real time passenger information within the city centre;
- The optimum location of passenger displays; and
- The timescales for introduction of phase 3a;

This schedule of dates will help to inform the proposal date for the stop closure.

7. Recommendations

See front sheet of report for recommendations.

Philip Purdy
Metrolink Director

Appendices

Appendix 1. Appraisal Summary Table.

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Description: Retention of Mosley Street Station within Metrolink Phase 3a				
OBJECTIVE	**SUB-OBJECTIVE**	**QUALITATIVE IMPACTS**	**QUANTITATIVE MEASURE (year 2005)**	**ASSESSMENT**
ENVIRONMENT	**Noise**	Slight increase in noise through deceleration and acceleration to stop at Mosley Street but no significant sensitive receptors.	N/A	No Impact
	Local Air Quality	Change in mode split as a result of net change in Metrolink passengers and trip lengths	+0.40 NO_x tonnes/year +0.02 PM_{10}: tonnes/year	Slightly Adverse
	Greenhouse Gasses	Reduced CO_2 emission levels due to Modal Shift	+63.59 CO_2: tonnes/year	Slightly Adverse
	Landscape	No Impact	N/A	No Impact
	Townscape	Removal of pedestrian footway space / café outside facilities, Creation of unattractive narrow / enclosed pedestrian walkway south of platform		Significant Adverse
	Heritage of Historic Resources	No Impact	N/A	No Impact
	Biodiversity	No Impact	N/A	No Impact
	Water Environment	No Impact	N/A	No Impact
	Physical Fitness	Slight decrease due to net loss of Metrolink passengers accessing stations by walking.	N/A	Slightly Adverse
	Journey Ambience	Reduced traveller stress including reduced frustration and route uncertainty for Mosley Street Station users, additional stress associated with stopping and reduced reliability for through passengers	N/A	Significantly Beneficial
SAFETY	**Accidents**	Road accidents increased through modal shift	N/A	Slightly Adverse
	Security	No Impact	N/A	No impact
ECONOMY	**Transport Economic Efficiency**	Return on investment	NPV = £-15.77m	BCR = -1.24
	Reliability	Reduction through additional stop and lack of priority through York Street signals	N/A	Slightly Adverse
	Wider Economics Impacts	Loss of passing trade at Mosley Street may affect local business. Net reduction in Metrolink use indicates overall reduction in public transport quality and negative impacts in wider area.	N/A	Neutral
ACCESSIBILITY	**Option Values**	Other Metrolink Stations within 200m	N/A	No Impact
	Severance	No Impact	N/A	No Impact
	Access to the Transport System	Other stations within 200m. Extra access point to DDA standards provided benefits to mobility impaired.	N/A	Slightly Beneficial
INTEGRATION	**Transport Interchange**	Slight improved access to combined frequency of service southbound	N/A	Slightly Beneficial
	Land-Use Policy	No impact	N/A	No Impact
	Other Government Policies	Slight net contribution to promoting culture, sport and tourism, improving connectivity and access to education.	N/A	Slightly Beneficial