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First Minister Alex Salmond

Office of the First Minister
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
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Dear Mr Salmond

Damaging a unique aspect of Scotland's competitiveness

As an academic that has been working on linking the knowledge economies of Scotland, Australia and China across global networks (Appendix 1) I have been struck by the unique environment that Edinburgh provides for creative communities that can live, work and bring up their families in the centre of a vibrant international city.

Unfortunately during the few years I have spent travelling across a region that defines the largest single time zone market in the world, with 2 billion people and the majority of recent global economic growth, I have returned to an Edinburgh that is in thrall to a planning process apparently set to damage this unique environment.

I am writing to you after a largely fruitless year of following the prescribed political representation process of discussions with relevant parties at a national and local level; and because I know that you have spoken out against the same planning process and its conclusions.

Though the Tram project in Edinburgh has received Parliamentary assent, I would like to draw your attention to its part in a much longer process of diverting business traffic away from long-established commercial traffic routes and into residential areas, resulting in such a distortion of traffic flow that night-time traffic noise in residential areas are now greater than average noise levels over the whole day in the middle of Prince Street (Appendix II(a)).

This analysis is based on the Scottish Government's own figures, extrapolated from a traffic count in the centre of Edinburgh taken in 2005. As you will be aware from your own observations, the pattern of traffic flow through Edinburgh has become even more distorted since 2005, with all general East-West traffic flowing through Great Stuart Street, including HGVs delivering heavy loads across cobbled streets throughout the night in close proximity to residences that were not built to cope with the impact of such traffic, and may not be modified to account for it.

Traffic levels measured on Great Stuart Street now exceed the peak flows anticipated by the in 2011, and explain why the network is often at a stand-still. This may explain why, on the 23 January 2009, a 'contingency diversion' through Moray Place and Heriot Row, was notified to residents and work has already started on removing traffic calming measures on this route (Appendix III).

Concerned residents are being told that this is a temporary measure while Princes Street is closed to traffic, however since traffic flows already exceed the capacity of the Charlotte Square – Queen Street junction I am confident, based on a measure of professional expertise in discrete-event modeling and discussions with tie on alternative traffic routes, that this route will become established as a legitimate route in much the same way that the 'experiment' of routing traffic through Randolph Crescent is considered a success by tie, and appears in their traffic models as carrying a higher frequency of vehicles in 2011 than Princes Street.

I know of no Member of Scottish Parliament, nor Councillor for this part of Edinburgh, who remembers the impact of the tram on traffic flow being discussed in these terms. I would not be surprised therefore if these changes were outside the 'lines of deviation' for which parliamentary assent was given. If true, this oversight may prevent the legal imposition of diversions that would give any chance of the tram providing an efficient service, as well as expose the City of Edinburgh Council to litigation resulting from changes in the status of roads from minor to major routes without the prescribed consultation.

The Tram is acknowledged to offer nothing to those who live, work and raise their families in the centre of Edinburgh. At this stage it appears probable that execution of the Tram project will have a negative impact on such communities that far outweighs any potential benefit to those whose interests lie outside Edinburgh.

I appeal to you as First Minister to make the following enquiries:

- (i) what impacts outside the 'lines of deviation' for the tram project were considered by and given Parliamentary assent?
- (ii) what process led to decisions about the closure of Shandwick Place and restrictions on access to Charlotte Square, that were apparently taken before any modeling of traffic diversions through Edinburgh were commissioned by tie?
- (iii) what data on traffic flows are available to explore whether the progression shown from Appendix II(a) to II(b) was a planned migration of traffic from commercial to residential areas by CEC
- (iv) what the anticipated benefits for Edinburgh and Scotland were predicted to be as a result

I would be happy to discuss any of these exhibits in more detail and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Ashley D. Lloyd