

Douglas Promenade Highway Improvement – FAQs

What will it look like?

It will be quite different from the current layout. The horse tram tracks will no longer be in the centre of the road; they will be replaced with a single track located on the walkway and alongside the footway. The roadway itself will have narrower traffic lanes in each direction, with greater emphasis on pedestrian areas and crossing points. The junctions at Greensill's Corner, Broadway and Summerhill will be completely redesigned to assist with both traffic and pedestrian movements. The wider area around the Gaiety Theatre will become a meeting place with architectural planting, seating, mood lighting and ergonomic street sculptures.

Why does it need to be refurbished?

The existing highway surface and construction layers below the surface have deteriorated over their lifetime and now need to be replaced with new construction materials. The failure in the existing construction makes the highway both uncomfortable for motorists to drive along and in constant need for costly temporary repairs.

The reconstructed highway will:

- Provide a road that will not require further reconstruction for a minimum of 40 years;
- Provide a smooth running surface to make journeys far more comfortable and enjoyable for road users.
- Improve the appearance of the Promenade for residents and visitors
- Contribute to the lower Douglas regeneration programme

Will the road need to be dug up again once the work is complete?

It is a common criticism that not long after road works are complete, the statutory authorities have to dig-up the road to undertake service work. To prevent this from happening along the Promenade, the Department has worked closely with the Manx Utility Authority, Manx Gas, Manx Telecom and Douglas Borough Council to ensure that any old or unsatisfactory equipment is replaced as each section of the promenade is reconstructed.

Where will the Horse Tram lines be located?

The existing dual horse tram lines that run along the centre of the highway are going to be taken up. They will be replaced with a new single tram line that will run along the Promenade walkway at the southern end of the Promenade and alongside the footway at the northern end.

The new location of the tram line will have several advantages over their current location:-

- It will be safer for passengers accessing and exiting the tram
- The tram will have its own dedicated corridor
- Traffic flow on the highway will not be restricted by the slow moving tram
- The tram journey will be a much more pleasurable experience for passengers

Why can't the horse tram lines stay in the highway?

Throughout its life, the horse tram has operated in the centre of the Promenade highway. Over recent and past years, new and more onerous health and safety regulations have been introduced regarding the operation of heritage railways and tramways. Due to its age and continued operation, the horse tram has been able to claim 'grandfather rights' in respect of some regulations which may have required the tram to be operated differently. However as the tram lines need to be taken up and replaced (in their current location or elsewhere), the current health and safety guidance will need to be adhered to. This would make locating the lines in the centre of a busy highway very onerous and difficult to achieve.

In addition, as the highway is due to be reconstructed over a number of years, this will mean the new horse tram line would be out of operation until all the works were complete, which is a situation neither the Department nor Douglas Borough Council wants.

Will cyclists still be able to use the walkway once the trams are relocated?

Yes. The Promenade walkway will be a space that is shared between pedestrians, cyclists and the horse tram. The corridor the horse tram will travel along will be clearly defined by the tram lines themselves as well as a different coloured surface. When the horse tram is not running, pedestrians and cyclist alike will be encouraged to utilise the whole width of the walkway, including the tram corridor.

Will the Promenade highway and walkway look better after the work is complete?

Yes. The Department are taking this opportunity to use more natural stone paving material (similar to that used on Phase 1 of the work, near the Jubilee clock) to enhance the appearance of the footways and re-establish the Promenade as the gateway to the Island's capital.

Are the sea defences being improved as part of the work?

No. The Department is currently investigating how to improve sea defences, not only in Douglas but around other key coastal areas. Whilst there are no plans to include any

proposed sea defence work as part of this scheme, a dedicated strip of land between the War Memorial and the Queens Gardens has been kept available for a new sea defence wall to be built at a future date if required.

Will car parking spaces be lost once the scheme is complete?

The Department has endeavoured to maintain as many car parking spaces as possible. Overall, there will be a small reduction in parking numbers; however in the areas where parking is more sought after (such as Loch Promenade), echelon parking has been included on both sides of the road to help maintain or increase parking numbers.

How long will the work take to finish?

The Department intends to start construction work in November 2015 (this is subject to both planning approval and Tynwald approval). The work will be done in a number of managed phases in order to minimise disruption to the public and reduce the need for lengthy and complicated traffic management. The whole scheme should be complete within five years, including the installation of the new tram line.

Will there be any disruption during the construction of the work?

Yes. As with any major highway improvement scheme, traffic flow will be disrupted both on approach and through any areas of work. The Department will try to ensure the disruption to the public is kept to an absolute minimum. However safety for both construction workers and the travelling public is paramount to the Department. Therefore, as and when required, traffic flow on the promenade will be controlled using speed reduction measures including narrow lanes, temporary traffic signals and/or one-way flow.

After the works are complete, will my journey time along the promenade increase or decrease?

Journey times along the promenade are expected to be similar once the scheme is complete. Vehicle speeds are expected to be lower due to the new road layout and modern design techniques.

This will be achieved by:

- Removing traffic signals and reducing the 'stop-start' effect these have on journeys
- Introducing an environment that encourages vehicle drivers to adopt slower speeds throughout the length of the promenade.

How much will the scheme cost, including the new tram line?

The cost of the project is estimated at approximately £21 million.

Who will be carrying out the construction work?

The Department of Infrastructure will be in overall control of the work and take on the role of Principal Contractor. However the majority of the work will be undertaken by contractors from the private sector.

Where can I find out more information?

Further information will be available on the Government website at <http://www.gov.im/doi>

There will also be a public display at the Sea Terminal in Douglas from midday on Friday 8 May 2015.