

In July 2016 the issues were acknowledged in Network Rail's Scotland Route Study which investigated likely capacity problems to 2043, referring to:

- *Improvements in the platform arrangements and track layout at Inverness station may also be required to create the capacity for more frequent train services to and from the Dingwall direction.*

And key constraints on Inverness-Perth include:

- *Capability and capacity of Inverness Station.*

HITRANS undertook research into the owners of land that could be required for the interchange. The notice from the Royal Mail that the sorting office would be moved to the Longman was a turning point.

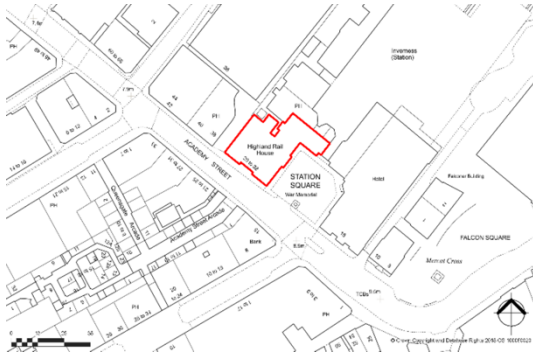
In May 2018 Alex Hynes ScotRail and Network Rail MD attended the HITRANS Board meeting in Dunoon at which a presentation was made on the potential of the site.

Further discussions took place with Transport Scotland and Network Rail officials as HITRANS became aware of underspent funds in the Network Rail Control Period 5 (2014-19) settlement. While that avenue was exhausted, the land acquisition was funded by Transport Scotland through the CP6 funding to Network Rail.

Latest developments

The following have been acquired by Network Rail:
Royal Mail sorting office and Car Park
TX Maxx/Sports Direct
TK Maxx Car Park
Highland Rail House (the north side of Station Square)





This investment by Transport Scotland will enable long held aspirations to improve facilities to be realised.

Next Steps

Following the example of the Waverley masterplanning exercise, it is envisaged that a Steering Group comprising Network Rail, Transport Scotland, HITRANS and Highland Council be set up to ensure a balance of interests and to consider the formation of a working group and an associated stakeholder consultation exercise.

What might the Interchange include?

The area to be studied should encompass the lands bounded by Rose St, Academy St, Station Lane, and the railway estate bounded by Millburn Rd, Harbour Rd, Longman Rd.

The emphasis will be on lo/no carbon transport, and should aim to include electric/non-diesel trains, electric and hydrogen buses, electric taxis with induction charging, pedestrian and cycling including e-bike facilities, fuelling for hydrogen vehicles, freight interchange, last mile electric cart delivery, rail maintenance facilities etc. Personal car parking should be limited.

Retail and commercial development will be required to ensure adequate funding streams.



Station Upgrade

The £6m project to enhance the station entrances has been moving slowly pending budgetary difficulties and franchise discussions etc. HITRANS will be meeting ScotRail to consider non-abortive works at the Station Square and Falcon Square entrances. Following the cessation of ScotRail's arrangement with Highland Taxis and THC's Traffic Order banning buses and coaches from the Square, the creation of a parklet could be the first sign of intent to improve the public realm, and the deployment of an e-bike station would point to a low/no carbon future.



RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Integration

Policy

Impact –Efficiency of transport operations, mode shift, emissions reduction

Financial

Impact – Will require partnership funding

Equality

Impact – Access to network

Recommendation

1. Members and Advisors are recommended to note the report.

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