



Review of
WESTCONNEX Concept Design
Stage 1 M4 East

Summary

The City of Canada Bay has a long history of supporting improvements to the Concord to CBD corridor. This support is based on both local and regional requirements.

This submission is kept at a high level and does not respond to details of individual traffic volumes or actual levels of air pollution and the like. This is in response only to the current concept design and community consultation which by its nature is at a high level and does not in itself address detailed issues.

Council has also been receiving comments from members of our community. These are attached at the end of this submission. The comments of our community members are exactly that and do not reflect Council policy.

The construction of a link from the current termination of the M4 at Concord will provide significant national benefits in the reduction of delays caused by the significant congestion at the current termination point at Parramatta Road. If the extension is carried out in a proper manner then it will also locally improve the amenity of our residents in terms of noise, traffic and potentially pollution.

Despite this general support Council has a number of concerns relating in particular to:-

- Community Impact and Connectivity;
- Portal Location and Local Traffic Congestion;
- Improvements to Public Transport;
- Air Pollution and Air Quality from portals and Stacks;
- Protection of Concord Oval; and,
- Impacts on local properties and residents.

1 History

The construction of the M4 link from the Mountains to the Sydney CBD has had a long and potted history. The link was first proposed in the 1947 County of Cumberland Planning Scheme, and has seen many variations since that time. The major points of history in this link, from the point of view of The City of Canada Bay, include:-

- 1977 – Abandonment of the corridor from Concord to the City.
- 1982 – Opening of the Auburn to Concord Road Segment.
- 2003-2005 – Various M4 east tunnel options linking M4 and City West link. (Copy of Councils most recent submission attached as many of the comments are still relevant)

The opening of the Auburn to Concord Road section of the M4 Motorway in December 1982 resulted in the largest single disruption to traffic flow in the Canada Bay Area. As a result of this road construction The City of Canada Bay now has in excess of **120,00vpd traversing the western end our area**. This includes Parramatta Road, and the Patterson St/Queens Road links. These links provide access to the eastern parts of Parramatta Road and the City West Link. A quick analysis of the traffic counts indicate that some **15,000 vpd are lost in the transfer through Canada Bay and are using our local roads as rat runs**.

2 Benefits

The extension of the M4 through The City of Canada Bay will provide the opportunity to reduce the on surface traffic on Parramatta Rd to a more manageable volume of 40-50,000vpd. While this is still a high volume it will allow space for public transport and urban design improvement to Parramatta Road and also allow a significant reduction in traffic in the Queens Road link to improve the important east west cycle link from the Sydney CBD to the Mountains.

The reduction in traffic on Parramatta Road will also provide a better access from the peninsula developments to the regional centre of Burwood.

3 City of Canada Bay Issues

3.1 Traffic and Transport

3.1.1 Existing Traffic

The 120,000 vpd east/west means that the Parramatta Road link and to a certain extent the Queens Road link have been sterilized from any road facing development and have created a traffic sewer through this area. Over the past 20 years in excess of \$1M has been spent on traffic calming and community enhancement to ameliorate the effects of this. Over the past 3 years alone some \$400,000 has been spent on traffic calming in this area alone.

The delays caused by the interchange between the Motorway and Parramatta Road cause significant costs to the NSW economy. Significantly, the delays also result in noise problems and localised air quality problems in the areas immediately adjacent to Parramatta Road.

The 120,000 vpd east/west also means that drivers from the various peninsula developments in Canada Bay, which are medium to high density as a result of Department of Planning decisions, cannot access the major trunk routes such as Parramatta Road. This consequently means that delays on roads such as Burwood Road and Broughton St are overwhelming the local community, preventing them from communication with their neighbours across the street. It also means that the limited bus services are unreliable due to these delays.

Council expects that the provision of WestConnex will provide access from our residential areas to Parramatta Rd on an even basis, thus eliminating the unacceptable delays at Burwood Rd, Burton St and around Crane St.

The current portal locations at City West link in the east and Concord Road in the West appear to provide a reasonable mix between access and traffic congestion. Council does have some concern relating to the design of the Concord Rd portals and these are covered further in Section 3 and 4.

3.1.2 Public Transport

The current level of congestion on Parramatta Road between Concord Road and the east hinders any prospect of an integrated public transport system within the inner west. Due to the difficulty accessing and/or crossing Parramatta Rd, most bus routes avoid this area. This leaves no routes along Parramatta Rd between Concord Road and Burwood Road and then 2 minor local routes (415 and 461) accessing Parramatta Rd east of Burwood Rd. It also means that only 5 routes actually cross Parramatta Road, 459 along Concord Rd and 4 routes at Burwood Rd. Most other routes run parallel to Parramatta Rd to provide local services between the various peninsulas and the Sydney CBD. This creates a **very poorly integrated ribbon type bus route system** that provides relatively **low frequencies and difficult interchanges**.

Council believes that with the reduction of traffic volumes along Parramatta Rd, that there is significant opportunity to improve the frequency and connectedness of the Public Transport System.

Council believes that the most appropriate solution is **to construct Light Rail along Parramatta Rd** from Concord to link with the existing Inner West Light Rail. This can be achieved with a route either straight down Parramatta Road to Summer Hill or via linking near the proposed Hawthorne Station and travelling via Waratah St and Five Dock. Both these routes provide a good modal interchange to get commuters to the city.

It is also recognised that this may not be achievable until the Stage 3 WestConnex tunnel is completed from Ashfield to the east. In the interim it is expected that significant improvements to the current bus systems would be available. As a minimum **Council believes the following improvements should be made:-**

- **Improvements to the routes from Abbotsford and Mortlake to the City.**
- **Extend the M50 route from the Current Drummoyne terminus to Concord Hospital to Link with the M41 service.**
- **Improve the services from Burwood Station to the north across Parramatta Road and to better link with Rhodes and Macquarie Park.**

3.1.3 Footpath and Bikeway Enhancements

Observations of the areas around Concord Rd/Parramatta Road indicate that despite the significant traffic densities in this area, a large number of people walk to Strathfield Station. The current proposals appear to block some of the paths. In addition to this there is a current large development area between Parramatta Rd, Leicester St and the Main North Railway. The two areas need to have significant pedestrian and community communication links to be maintained to allow access backwards and forwards for local services. Improved pedestrian links are therefore required.

In addition Council currently has a significant network of on and off-road bicycle paths. This network is constrained in the area from Harris St Five Dock to Concord Oval. The constraint is a result of the very heavy traffic densities on Parramatta Rd, Queens Rd and Lyons Rd West. **The provision of West Connex should reduce these traffic densities and Council would expect assistance with the immediate improvement to this vital east west bicycle link**, to connect other existing North/South links throughout the area.

3.2 Open Space

The current proposal is quiet on the location of construction compounds and access shafts for construction of the tunnels. **Council is absolutely opposed to the use of Concord Oval for any purpose related to the WestConnex or related development.** This is an important regional facility supporting National, State, Regional and Sub Regional teams. In addition this area is one of the cradles of NSW historical development, being the location of the camp at the midpoint of the colonial trip from Sydney to Parramatta.

One of the major tenets of the proposed tunnel and related Parramatta Rd redevelopment is the opportunity to improve the urban design and amenity along Parramatta Road. This will obviously result in significantly increased demand on Council's open space and recreational facilities. The planning concepts often refer to the Rail to River link. **The greenspace links through Council's, current, recreational areas are obviously important to our community and should not be overwhelmed.**

One obvious area that could be included in the consideration for replacement open space would be the Yaralla Estate. Council believes the retention of the public access and equine uses should be retained. However, the opening of this area to community recreational use could be done in conjunction with the existing uses to provide more open space for the new residents and this would also ensure retention of this area in Public Ownership and control. This would be a better result than the current options being proposed by Health NSW.

3.3 Environment

The proposal can be broken into 2 main periods of construction and post construction.

3.3.1 During Construction

As is the case with every development Council is particularly concerned with the construction effects on the environment. In particular the issues of:-

- Air Pollution;
- Noise Pollution; and,
- Vibration

It is expected that the Construction management plan will cover the effects of these in detail and protect our community.

3.3.2 Post Construction

The Strategic Environmental Review, September 2013 (SER) contains a number of areas of concern for the long term impacts of the WestConnex Tunnel.

3.3.2.1 Ventilation

Council demands the use of “world’s best practice” in the treatment of any emissions from the tunnel. The SER appears to lower the bar in terms of air filtration and treatment. It indicates that the ventilation will be “..designed and operated to meet stringent in-tunnel; local and regional air quality criteria.....These criteria will be developed in conjunction with the EPA and NSW Health.”

Council sees this as a reduction in the air quality outcomes and is extremely concerned that these requirements will result in something less than world class. These world class standards have already been well documented by the various world environment bodies.

3.3.2.2 Noise

The issue of noise and access ramps at the portals is the biggest concern. The balance between the grade of the ramp and the amount of land taken up by the ramp is causing great community concern. However, steeper ramps such as those on the M5 east are not acceptable as the noise of trucks in low gear ascending these ramps is unacceptable in a residential area.

Further, the use of cut and cover techniques in this area, while the most efficient causes significant noise effects. Once again **Council demands “world’s best practice” noise abatement measures** to protect our community.

3.4 Property Values

The provision of the M4 east extension has been on and off the State agenda since 1947. However, in 1977 the extension of the M4 between Concord and the City was officially abandoned. Many residents bought into the area between Concord Oval, Patterson, Gipps St, Concord Road and

Parramatta Road with the understanding that this area would not be included again in future Motorway Proposals.

These residents are now facing the cumulative issues of the loss of some of their long term neighbours together with the new impacts of a motorway in their immediate neighbourhood. This has a potentially destructive impact on any community. While it is acknowledged that the residents whose houses are required will receive fair compensation. There is a larger number that would not receive compensation. The current documents do not provide adequate detail for the assessment of whether the design is optimal nor the impact on adjoining residents. Council demands WestConnex be fair in their dealings and provide the detail of the design as soon as possible so a fair assessment of these impacts. **Council also demands the assistance of WestConnex in rebuilding the services and communications of this community. i.e provide assistance in remaking this place.**

4 Summary

Council acknowledges the many advantages of the WestConnex Proposal and in general supports the plan to contain Regional and State Traffic on State Roads and Motorways.

However, Council has a number of major concerns that at this time have not been addressed. These include:-

- 4.1 Council expects that the provision of WestConnex will provide access from our residential areas to Parramatta Rd on an even basis, thus eliminating the unacceptable delays at Burwood Rd, Burton St and around Crane St.
- 4.2 Council believes that with the reduction of traffic volumes along Parramatta Rd, that there is significant opportunity to improve the frequency and connectedness of the Public Transport System.
- 4.3 Construct Light Rail along Parramatta Rd from Concord to link with the existing Inner West Light Rail
- 4.4 Council believes the following bus route improvements should be made:-
 - *Improvements to the routes from Abbotsford and Mortlake to the City.*
 - *Extend the M50 route from the Current Drummoyne terminus to Concord Hospital to Link with the M41 service.*
 - *Improve the services from Burwood Station to the north across Parramatta Road and to better link with Rhodes and Macquarie Park.*
- 4.5 Council would expect assistance with the immediate improvement to this vital east west bicycle link along Queens Road and Patterson St
- 4.6 Council is absolutely opposed to the use of Concord Oval for any purpose related to the WestConnex or related development
- 4.7 The greenspace links through Council's, current, recreational areas are obviously important to our community and should not be overwhelmed.
- 4.8 Council demands the use of "world's best practice" in the treatment of any emissions from the tunnel.
- 4.9 Council demands "world's best practice" noise abatement measures
- 4.10 Council also demands the assistance of WestConnex in rebuilding the services and communications of this community. i.e provide assistance in remaking this place.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Mayors letter M4 East response dated Jan 2005
2. Council Response to M4 East proposal of 2004
3. Community responses to WestConnex