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Director, Transport Assessments  
Planning Services, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Via: NSW Planning Portal

To whom it may concern,

**WestConnex M4-M5 Link (SSI 7485) Modification 2 Design Amendment – Stage 3B  
Rozelle Interchange**

Thank you for your invitation to the City of Sydney (“the City”) to comment on the request for Modification 2 Design Amendment of the WestConnex Stage 3 M4-M5 Link project (the project) approval.

The key points that the City of Sydney wishes to raise are provided in the following pages.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Elise Webster, Manager Transport Major Projects on 9265 9333 or at [ewebster@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ewebster@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely



**Graham Jahn AM**  
**Director**  
City Planning | Development | Transport

## Introduction

The Council continues to oppose WestConnex. Within the context that the project is continuing, the City's focus is on mitigating the negative impacts of WestConnex and ensuring the best outcomes for residents of, and visitors to, the city.

The City notes that the extent of works covered under the Modification 2 Design Amendment (which includes The Crescent overpass) affects the City's LGA at the northeast corner of the intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street. Although it does not take up a large area within the City's LGA, the Modification 2 Design Amendment will bring tangible negative impacts on the function and amenity of the City. It will:

- induce additional vehicle traffic between Johnson Street and The Crescent, adding to the vehicle traffic accessing the city
- reduce the amenity and hence the level of active transport connectivity in this area and will significantly impact the residents and visitors of Sydney, particularly in the Glebe and Forest Lodge communities and those walking and cycling between the city and the west

Reducing vehicle incursion into densely populated inner urban and city centre locations, and improving access to green space, the harbour foreshore and recreational areas by crossing major road barriers, should be a priority for all levels of Government. It should not be traded away for minor improvements for motorists accessing motorways.

The City continues to question the validity of Modification 2 and the Design Amendment as it gives a high priority to vehicle movements between Johnston Street and Victoria Road via The Crescent, at a significant cost to people walking and cycling. This goes against NSW Government policies in relation to movement and place as set out in the NSW Government's *Future Transport Strategy 2056*.

Modification 2 Design Amendment will have significant impacts on the 'place' quality of surrounding streets, where the modification will induce significant increases in traffic 'movements' and will impact on the visual amenity of the area. Due to the increase in the project's footprint towards the east, more residences and facilities will be impacted by the construction noise and vibration.

The City is concerned about the resulting separation of people from the parkland and recreational facilities in the area. We note this is completely at odds with the planning objectives of the Greater Sydney Commission's *Eastern City District Plan* and the Government Architect's *Better Placed* which seeks to improve access for people to green and recreational space.

## Key changes between *Modification 2* and *Modification 2 Design Amendment*

*Modification 2* included the following changes to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

- A new elevated overpass (The Crescent overpass) allowing motorists from The Crescent (northbound) to head onto The Crescent (eastbound towards Victoria Road and Anzac Bridge), bypassing the signalised intersection at The Crescent/City West Link junction
- Realignment of the pedestrian and cycling Green Link (bridge) to the west of The Crescent (northbound), providing a connection between the Rozelle Rail Yards and the Rozelle Bay light rail stop

- A new shared user path bridge spanning The Crescent (eastbound) to the east of The Crescent/City West Link intersection, providing a connection between the Rozelle Rail Yards and Rozelle Bay
- Upgrades to the intersection of The Crescent/Johnston Street/Chapman Road
- Minor changes to the layout of the approach roads leading to the Anzac Bridge from Victoria Road, The Crescent (eastbound) and the Rozelle Interchange, to improve traffic merging arrangements.

The *Modification 2 Design Amendment* includes the following key changes to *Modification 2*:

- Lowering the height of the proposed overpass by around two metres at its apex so it is a similar height to the green link
- Changing the design of the southern section of the green link to improve its amenity and interface with the Rozelle Bay light rail stop
- Increasing the width of the proposed pedestrian ramp between the Rozelle Bay light rail stop and the west side of The Crescent to 4.5 metres to allow for shared use by pedestrian and cyclists
- Retaining, widening and upgrading the existing at-grade signalised pedestrian crossing of The Crescent at its intersection with Johnston Street, including the introduction of paving treatments and bicycle lanterns. The other multiple crossings of The Crescent and Chapman Road detailed in the modification report are no longer proposed
- Retaining the right-hand turn movement from Johnston Street to The Crescent (southbound)
- Removing the proposed shared user path bridge between the proposed Rozelle Rail Yards open space and the eastern side of The Crescent.

## **Design considerations behind the amendment**

The City notes that the *Modification 2 Design Amendment* has resulted in better urban design and visual outcomes compared to the original *Modification 2*. However, from a first principles perspective, the City questions the validity of the overall design of the project and the imposition of a pedestrian overpass which perpetuates the status quo of prioritising vehicle movement over people and places.

It is evident that the WestConnex project team developed the *Modification 2 Design Amendment* from the basis that solving the vehicular traffic concerns was the primary concern, with the safety and convenience of residents and active transport users treated as a secondary issue.

As a consequence, many underlying issues with the previous design (resulting from the introduction of the vehicle overpass) are still prevalent in the latest version. The City's concerns raised in its submission on the original *Modification 2* remain valid for the *Modification 2 Design Amendment*. It will:

- give high priority to vehicle movements between Johnston Street and Victoria Road via The Crescent, at a significant cost to people walking and cycling, which goes against NSW Government policies
- have significant impacts on the 'place' quality of surrounding streets, where the amended modification will induce significant increases in traffic 'movements' and will impact on the visual amenity of the area

- increase the project's footprint towards the east, with more residences and facilities being impacted by the construction noise and vibration

In its submission on the original *Modification 2* the City also noted that the Green Link should:

- be separated for users walking and riding
- have at least three metres for the cycleway
- have at least three metres for the footpath
- have some separation between the cycleway and footpath
- have good visual connection to the water
- not be visually isolated from surrounding area
- not be exposed to very high levels of noise from vehicles

Set out below are more detailed responses to the specific items in Modification 2 Design Amendment that are of particular concern to the City.

#### **Recommendation**

That the proponent:

- Revisit the design process to ensure that residents and active transport users of the area are given a higher priority, with regards to safety and convenience, over vehicular traffic users

### **Intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street**

The City notes that retaining the northern pedestrian crossing on The Crescent and widening the crossing to six metres is an improvement on the EIS and *Modification 2*.

It is noted, however, that there is a significant safety issue at the western end of this crossing due to insufficient pedestrian and cyclist storage area along the west side of The Crescent, north of Johnston Street. This issue is exacerbated by the proximity of the bus stop waiting area and the grade of the ramp from the light rail station towards the intersection. The steep downhill grade will result in many cyclists travelling with considerable speed towards the waiting area at the intersection.

The pedestrian crossing on Chapman Road, which was proposed as part of the EIS and Modification 2, has been removed as part of the *Modification 2 Design Amendment*. The City considers the crossing on Chapman Road to be essential in providing a safe crossing to pedestrians along the east side of The Crescent and sees no reason why this crossing should not be provided.

The City notes that bicycle lanterns will be included on the northern pedestrian crossing at the intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street. However, the City stresses that bicycle lanterns need to be provided on pedestrian crossings at all intersections impacted by the project.

The City requested that TfNSW provide the CAD drawings for the intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street so that we could comment in detail on this part of the design. TfNSW did not provide the CAD drawings, subsequently the City has not been able to comment in detail about the changes to the intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street as proposed in the *Modification 2 Design Amendment*.

### Recommendations

That the proponent:

- Remove the vehicle overpass, as proposed in Modification 2, and revert back to the EIS design where the Green Link is located along the waterfront. Alternately, the following options should be investigated:
  - remove one vehicle lane along The Crescent (southbound) to provide wider footpaths and waiting areas along the west side of The Crescent, north of Johnston Street
  - provide better median treatments (such as Elsholz redirective kerbs) along The Crescent
  - acquire properties on the west side of The Crescent to provide space to widen footpaths
- Provide the pedestrian crossing on Chapman Road, as proposed in the EIS and Modification 2
- Provide bicycle lanterns on pedestrian crossings at all intersections impacted by the project
- Provide a crossing to a new footpath on the east side of The Crescent under the light rail viaduct
- Provide detailed plans to the City to review at the detailed design stage, should the project be approved to proceed

### Active Transport Network

The active transport experience proposed is very poor. The *Modification 2 Design Amendment* represents a small improvement from *Modification 2* but viewed on its merits represents an unacceptably low amenity experience for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly when compared to the EIS design.

Pedestrians moving between the new parkland west of the City West Link and Federal Park will have to walk along a path which, in part, is sandwiched between the shear retaining wall of the light rail and the free right turn overpass viaduct carrying fast moving vehicles, with no views to the bay and poor surveillance. In addition, towards the crest of the Green Link, the vehicle overpass is at a similar grade but at a perpendicular direction. This will result in vehicle exhaust directed towards the pedestrians and cyclists on the green link. This is in contrast to the potential for pedestrians to have a direct link between the parkland areas beside the bay.

The City notes that the shared path along the west side of The Crescent, from the Green Link to Johnston Street, has been widened from 3 metres to 4.5 metres. However, this width is still considered insufficient due to the high volume of pedestrians and cyclists anticipated to use the shared path. In addition, the presence of a bus waiting area alongside this path will further constrict the available space on the shared path, resulting in conflicts between pedestrians and fast-moving cyclists – specifically the people cycling downhill. The City also notes that the storage area for pedestrians and cyclists at the southern end of the shared path from the Green Link is insufficient and will result in significant safety issues for active transport users.

There is insufficient detail in the Modification 2 Design Amendment about whether bus shelters will be provided at the bus stops along both sides of The Crescent, and if so, how much of the shared zones it will occupy. It is important that any new active transport corridors are unencumbered with road related infrastructure that causes obstructions and safety hazards.

It is also unclear what:

- safety measures will be put in place to separate motorists and the shared pathway, noting that there are no safety barriers indicated before the ramping begins
- the width of the shared path will be along the eastern (waterfront) side of The Crescent
- safety measures will be put in place to prevent conflict between active transport users and vehicles, noting this side of The Crescent will still likely be frequently used by pedestrians and cyclists heading east towards James Craig Road and the Anzac bridge/CBD
- connection will be provided between the Green Link bridge down to the pedestrian refuge area near the former Buruwan Park
  - if no connection is proposed, the City requests that a connection be put in place to shorten the path of pedestrians travelling from Victoria Road towards the Rozelle light rail station

The amenity of the active transport network will also be affected by the noise and reduction in air quality from the high volume of traffic expected along the adjacent arterial roads.

The amended design does not provide the best solution for the residents and active transport users of the area, instead focussing heavily on improvements for vehicular traffic.

### **Recommendations**

That the proponent:

- Relocate the Green Link adjacent to the waterfront to provide a better experience for the active transport users
- Widen all shared user paths to allow for the increased active user demands in the area
- Provide a separated cycleway and footpath on the Green Link with:
  - at least three metres for the cycleway
  - at least three metres for the footpath
  - some separation between the cycleway and footpath, using medians or different pavement treatments
- Provide details on whether bus shelters will be provided at the bus stops along both sides of The Crescent
- Clarify what safety measures are to be in place to separate motorists and the shared paths on both sides of The Crescent
- Provide a connection between the Green Link bridge down to the pedestrian refuge area near the former Buruwan Park