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Director, Transport Assessments
Planning Services, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
GPO Box 39
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To whom it may concern,

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

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

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 Modification 2 (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, Modification 2 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 of Sydney
- reduce the level of active transport connectivity proposed within 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 questions the validity of Modification 2 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.

Modification 2 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, particularly for Annandale residents. 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*, both by the NSW Government, which seeks to improve access for people to green and recreational space.

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

Traffic induction affecting the surrounding area (including City of Sydney)

The Crescent overpass will enable the removal of a signal phase at the intersection of City West Link and The Crescent. This will increase the traffic capacity between City West Link and The Crescent (North), and between The Crescent (East) and The Crescent (North). This will induce traffic onto the ANZAC Bridge (and the City Centre) and along Johnston Street and to the areas beyond.

The City remains unclear why additional capacity between City West Link and The Crescent (North) is needed, given WestConnex will free up significant capacity along this link through the provision of the new WestConnex tunnels between Haberfield and St Peters Interchange.

The City is of the view that the WestConnex traffic modelling outputs relied on by the proponent are invalid. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has largely dismissed the "predict and provide" approach to traffic projections as being unreliable for inner city locations, especially in view of major changes to the road network (such as WestConnex). For this reason, the City disputes the traffic impacts outlined in Modification 2 - Appendix B: Traffic and Transport Assessment. We are of the view that based on regional road capacity increases, the traffic induction on local streets such as Johnston Street could potentially be significantly higher.

Visual impacts

The magnitude of the vehicle flyover means that (contrary to the visual impact assessment in the Modification), it will significantly change the quality and visual amenity of the surrounding area. Of note are the cumulative visual impact of the flyover, green link and shared user path. These structures will obstruct the sightlines between the residential areas, the public 'places' and the foreshore. In particular, the modification will adversely impact the Annandale Heritage Conservation Area, Rozelle Bay and surrounding parks, while also significantly reducing the visual amenity of the surrounding residential area.

Intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street

The City is concerned that the reconfiguration of the intersection of The Crescent and Johnston Street reduces the quality of pedestrian connectivity between Bicentennial Park and the surrounding area, including the Rozelle Bay light rail stop.

Whereas the current configuration allows pedestrians to cross from Bicentennial Park towards Annandale via a single signalised crossing on The Crescent, the proposal would route these pedestrians via three signalised crossings (two staged crossings across The Crescent and one across Johnston Street) significantly increasing delays. This convoluted and time consuming path will disadvantage people walking to and from Annandale and the park, and will encourage non-compliant behaviour and reduce safety. The current single stage crossing should be retained.

The City is also concerned that the significant negative impact of these changes on people who walk and bike, including journey times and delays, is not reflected in the updated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The reconfiguration of the intersection to provide a greater funnelling of vehicle movements, including from local roads, is very likely to encourage greater throughput of traffic along The Crescent. This will result in potential accessibility issues for local residents in close proximity to these proposed improvement works. The updated EIS does not provide any local street improvement strategy to protect residential amenity along, and access to, The Crescent and Johnston Street, further south of this intersection.

It is also expected that the right-turn ban for vehicles from Johnston Street onto The Crescent (southbound) will result in drivers using the Bicentennial Park car park off Chapman Road to make U-turns, thereby reducing the amenity of the park users.

The proposed changes to Chapman Road are unnecessary. They will lead to a decrease in parking for those accessing the park and encourage higher speeds in a low speed environment. These changes should be deleted.

This modification also results in an increase of the projects footprint towards the east of this intersection. The construction works in the expanded area will increase the noise and vibration impacts to the residences and facilities, such as the TAFE NSW – Annandale.

Should the modification proceed, the City recommends that bicycle lanterns be included on all pedestrian crossings at this intersection.

Recommendations

- Retain the current single stage crossing on The Crescent
- Develop and implement local area traffic management plans to protect residential amenity along, and access to, The Crescent and Johnston Street (South)
- Delete the proposed changes to Chapman Road
- Include bicycle lanterns on all signalised pedestrian crossings

Pedestrian and Cycling Green Link

Despite the proposed pedestrian and cycling green link over The Crescent being 15 metres wide, there is only provision for a shared path for active transport users. The City strongly recommends that to be consistent with current government policy and best practice as per other Roads & Maritime Services Motorway projects (see for example the EIS for the F6 Project), and to ensure it is future proofed, 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

The green link is an important commuter route for people riding. A separated cycleway is the only way to provide a quality safe cycling connection that would provide a more efficient and attractive alternative to vehicular means of transport. TfNSW's strategic framework identified that short trips (less than 5km) are best suited to people riding. This project should provide the right infrastructure to support this activity.

The City is also concerned that there is no direct bicycle route between the bus stop and green link (near the light rail stop). The shared path at the south east corner of The Crescent and Johnston Street becomes a footpath only for approximately 120 metres

along The Crescent before joining the green link shared path. This means that people riding are required to dismount for this section of the path. This arrangement is unacceptable and not best practice.

Recommendations

- 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
- Provide a direct bike route between the bus stop and green link

Shared User Path Bridge

The proposed pedestrian and cycling bridge over The Crescent overpass is a shared path and will be a considerable detour for active transport users. The long stretches of inclines and declines will make it an unattractive route, particularly for people with prams, in wheelchairs and on bikes travelling north. This long route in a relatively isolated location also constitute a significant risk to personal security and feelings of vulnerability. The asserted “passive surveillance” of the shared user path bridge is highly questionable and goes against the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. The needs of local people using this infrastructure should be adequately considered and appropriate safe, separated infrastructure provided. In the City’s view, the bridge will significantly reduce accessibility levels for active transport users of Bicentennial Park.

In addition to the shared user path bridge, providing lifts and stairs at either end of the park that crosses the roadway will provide a shorter detour for people coming from the north by reducing the distance and time travelled.

The shared user path bridge is also too narrow, with the width expected to be 4.5 metres. This will provide a poor and potentially unsafe experience for customers. The City recommends that this be increased to at least seven metres to allow for a three metre cycleway divided from a three metre pedestrian path.

Recommendations

- Provide appropriate safe, separated infrastructure
- Provide lifts and stairs at either end of the park that crosses the roadway
- Increase the width of the shared user path bridge to at least seven metres

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the City’s submission, please contact Elise Webster, Manager Transport Major Projects, on 9288 5967 or at ewebster@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Kim Woodbury
Acting Chief Executive Officer