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Your Ref: SSI 663 MOD 6

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## **FAIRFIELD COUNCIL SUBMISSION - M7 MOTORWAY (SSI663) – PROJECT MODIFICATION 6**

The submission sets out Fairfield Council's issues and recommendations relating to public exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the M7 road-widening proposal. On 23 August 2022, the EIS was publicly exhibited and subsequently reported to a full Council meeting. The Council unanimously resolved to endorse the following recommendations:

- 1. Council endorse the issues and concerns highlighted in the report as the basis for making a submission to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) regarding the West link M7 Motorway road widening project comprising additional lanes in each direction along the motorway.*
- 2. Council advise Transport for NSW, given the removal of land previously identified for a major public transport route within the M7 Motorway corridor, as a matter of urgency, the business case for the Parramatta to western Sydney Airport Passenger Rail Project should be brought forward.*
- 3. A copy of Council's submission be forwarded to relevant State and Federal Members of Parliament requesting support for the concerns raised by Council in relation to the proposal.*

The major concern raised of Council's proposal does not adequately consider previous commitments made by TfNSW to reserve the existing M7 center median for a rapid bus transit corridor. This commitment is in line with the EIS approved in 2002 and with the original conditions of the consent. Given the potential of the proposal to restrict options for a rapid transit corridor within the M7 corridor, Council believes that further planning for the Parramatta to Western Sydney Airport passenger rail must be brought forward to ensure delivery of a higher order public transport connection from various centres in Western Sydney to the Western Sydney airport.

Other concerns detailed in this submission include, acoustic impacts on future sensitive residential receivers in Horsley Park and Cecil Park, impacts on Council's local road network as a result of construction and operation of the proposal, impacts to critical state road intersections, lack of public awareness of the project.

## **KEY ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

### **1. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSAL AND LOSS OF RAPID TRANSIT CORRIDOR**

The modification application suggests that the widening proposal "*would not preclude the use of the median or lanes of the motorway for dedicated public transport*" Council considers that insufficient analyses and information has been provided to clearly demonstrate this outcome can be achieved, particularly in light of the design parameters that were applied to construction of the M7 corridor for provision of a future rapid transit corridor and following conditions applying to its ongoing operation:

**“Condition 36** – The proponent shall, in consultation with the DoT, design the Project to accommodate the future provision of public transport facilities. Consideration shall include but not be limited to, the requirements for bus and light rail stops/stations, bridge crossings, vertical and horizontal clearances and alignments, and pedestrians and bicycle access such that retrofitting for dedicated public transport use is not precluded in the future”.

**“Condition 42** – Five (5) years after the opening of the project to traffic and every ten (10) years subsequently up to 25 years, the proponent shall review the potential demand for dedicated public transport services on the project to the satisfaction of the Department of Transport and shall implement any such measures as agreed between the proponent and the Department of Transport”.

In addition, it is noted that following commitments were included in the EIS document approved in 2002 that relate to a future rapid transit corridor down the reserved center median

*“Provision has been made between the two carriageways of the orbital proposal for a similar transit facility either bus, heavy or light rail. Airport express bus services may take advantage of the Western Sydney Orbital route to provide high quality services to and from the airport, each of these regional centres (Blacktown, Liverpool and Parramatta) serves as a major interchange point on the public transport network and provide a logical focus point for potential airport express bus services”.*

As a result of the above, when the EIS was subsequently approved, local councils and community of Western Sydney understood this to be an important commitment to public transport options within the region. It is noted that TfNSW has recently identified the need for rapid bus connections to the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) and this is not addressed in the modification application. As highlighted further in this submission, the loss or undermining of rapid transit options within the M7 heightens the need for bringing forward planning for the East West Passenger Rail from Parramatta to the Western Sydney Airport.

The EIS does not consider the benefits of mode change such as provision of public transport, including how this may reduce congestion on the M7 and reduce reliance on private vehicles. Given the above, further consideration of the proposed modification should include a cost benefit analysis (or similar) to determine whether there is sufficient justification for additional lanes at the expense of losing a range of public transport options within the M7 corridor.

**Recommendation 1** - The proponent to provide further analysis and demonstrate clearer justification for the road widening proposal, including the costs and benefit of additional vehicle lanes against the potential for future rapid transit options within the medium strip.

**Recommendation 2** - Evidence of the 5 and 10 year public transport demand reviews to be provided to Council.

## **2. EAST WEST PASSENGER RAIL LINK**

The state governments Future Transport 2056, Fairfield Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and UIA draft Structure Plan all acknowledge the potential of an East-West passenger rail line from Parramatta to the Western Sydney Airport that includes the potential for rail stations at Prariewood Town Centre and Cecil Park (UIA).

Although TfNSW has undertaken preliminary investigations for the route of the rail line, at this stage there is not a commitment by the current State Government to the project with the preparation of a business case and timing for delivery of the passenger rail line remaining outstanding.

The loss of a potential rapid transit corridor (above) within the M7 heightens the need for the state government to bring forward further investigations and preparation of the business case for the east-west passenger rail. Failing this, major uncertainty will remain around public transport infrastructure that is required to service the new airport, existing centers and future urban release areas in Western Sydney that reduces dependence on private vehicle use.

**Recommendation 3** - Given the removal of land previously identified for a major public transport route within the M7 Motorway corridor, as a matter of urgency, the business case for the Parramatta to Western Sydney Airport Passenger Rail Project should be brought forward.

### **3. FAIRFIELD URBAN INVESTIGATION AREA (UIA)**

Following the designation of the Fairfield rural lands as an Urban Investigation Area under the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the Western City District Plan in 2018. A UIA steering committee was developed (comprising representatives from the Greater Sydney Commission and State agencies), Council developed a number of options for future development of the UIA comprising Horsley Park and Cecil Park. After consideration of submissions from the community in April 2019, Council resolved to endorse the draft Structure Plan included in Councils report (**Attachment A**)

Since this time, feedback from the Greater Sydney Commission (now Greater Cities Commission (GCC)) and other State agencies has highlighted the need for further detailed investigations into a range of infrastructure, environmental and transport planning issues.

The analysis of future planned uses undertaken for the M7 road widening proposal does not acknowledge the Fairfield UIA. Council considers that omission of the UIA from the strategic analysis for the proposal a major concern. Specifically, traffic modelling/management issues as well as acoustic impacts on the UIA have not been considered and need to be factored into further assessment of the project.

It is noted that the proposal includes the upgrade of the existing sound walls along the M7 at various locations to mitigate the impact of noise to sensitive residential receivers. However, this does not include any locations in Horsley Park and Cecil Park. Council consider that the issue of mitigating potential acoustic impacts of the proposal on the UIA needs to be addressed under the current widening proposal.

**Recommendation 4** - The EIS must be revised to include closer analysis of the UIA's relationship with the proposal, including review of the Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) and Noise and vibration impact assessment. This analysis must consider the potential of the proposal to exacerbate the negative impacts on residential amenity levels in Horsley Park and Cecil Park. This should include traffic impacts at the 5 key intersections negatively impacted within the project scope. Suitability of existing mitigation measures such as provision of sound walls must also be considered, having regard to the potential for medium/high density residential development in the Horsley Park and Cecil Park UIA in the future.

### **4. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PROJECTS**

Council considers the project EIS does not demonstrate clear alignment with the strategic transport planning framework for Western Sydney including, Future Transport 2056, Greater Sydney Service and Infrastructure Plan, NSW Freights and Port Plan and the Road Safety Plan 2021.

The EIS does not demonstrate the implications of the M7 widening on the following projects in the region:

- **Western Sydney Intermodal Terminal at Mamre Road** – A 24/7 container loading and unloading facility which will be used to distribute freight cargo from the proposed Western Sydney freight line as well as state arterial roads and M7;
- **Southern Link Road** – A proposed 4 lane arterial road from Mamre Road to Old Wallgrove Road to create a link between Mamre Road intermodal to the Westlink M7;
- **Horsley Drive Upgrade** – A planned and committed upgrade of the Horsley Drive from Cowpasture Road North intersection to the Westlink M7 Intersection of the Horsley Drive;
- **Upgrade of Wallgrove Road** – Medium term unfunded commitment to upgrade Wallgrove Road from Elizabeth Drive to the Horsley Drive. The road runs parallel to the M7 and important feeder road for the motorway;
- **Elizabeth Drive East of the M7** – A proposal to widen Elizabeth Drive in both directions to facilitate additional traffic predicted to be generated by the western Sydney Aerotropolis and the Western Sydney airport, as well as the M7; and
- **Western Sydney Freight Line** – A proposed freight line connecting Port Botany with the Mamre Road Intermodal Terminal. The corridor west of the M7 has been confirmed.

**Recommendation 5** – TfNSW must review the current strategic framework and impact of the M7 widening project to clearly identify the implications for existing road infrastructure, traffic modelling, feasibility, capacity and impact on the timing for projects identified above.

## 5. OPERATIONAL TRAFFIC IMPACTS

The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) states that the proposal will result in the following intersections in the Fairfield Council area experiencing a fall in the level of service to 2036 including increased back of queue length, resulting in the need for upgrades:

- Old Wallgrove Road/Wallgrove Road/M7 entry ramp/M7 exit ramp;
- Cowpasture Road/M7 exit ramp/M7 entry ramp and;
- The Horsley Drive/Wallgrove Road/M7 entry ramp/M7 exit ramp

TfNSW acknowledges that the proposal will result in the following intersections performing at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS). The EIS does not make any commitments regarding upgrade of the intersections affected.

**Recommendation 6** – TfNSW must commit to the required upgrades prior to the new M7 lanes opening. Alternatively, the M7 operator must undertake the work as part of the overall project proposal to minimize impacts on road users and Councils local road network, noting that, when the M7 was constructed and integrated with the existing road network, the capacity of a number of intersections needed to be improved. In addition, the report must consider Wetherill Park and Smithfield industrial areas adjacent to the M7 it is ignored in the modification report and is the largest key industrial estate within proximity to the project. It is also a key destination node for freight movements. Improving accessibility for freight movements from Wetherill Park onto/off the M7 and link onto Wallgrove Road (non-toll option) to access Erskine Park should be considered noting the southern link road connection.

## 6. CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC IMPACTS

Construction for the new lanes will take approximately 2 years and is proposed between early 2023 finishing in late 2025. During this period, local and regional roads will be utilised to facilitate construction activity. In the Fairfield LGA, the following local and state roads have been identified as routes for construction vehicles:

- Redmayne Road
- Elizabeth Drive
- Cowpasture Road and

- Horsley Drive

TfNSW indicates that approximately 50 vehicles per hour will travel on local roads utilized for construction vehicle routes. Analysis undertaken by TfNSW indicates that peak hour traffic will increase by 18% on Cowpasture Road and 7% on Elizabeth Drive because of construction traffic, the average in other council areas impacted being 6%.

Council does not support the proposed extent of use of the local road network for construction vehicle routes, due to the disproportionate impact on local infrastructure and road users within the Fairfield City Council area.

**Recommendation 7** – TfNSW consult with Councils traffic branch prior to and during the preparation of the construction traffic management plan to ensure that the impact on council's local roads are minimized for the construction period. TfNSW clarify the segment of Redmayne Road proposed to be used for construction vehicle routing.

## 7. IMPACT TO SHARED CYCLEWAY PATH

The EIS states that the shared path will temporarily close at multiple locations to facilitate construction, resulting in detours for users approximately 600m to 1.3km in length. Council do not support the use of Wallgrove Road as a diversionary route for cyclists as it is not considered safe based on the expected increase in heavy vehicle use of the roadway during construction.

The construction will permanently close the on road cycleway between the M5 interchange located in Liverpool Council and the Richmond Road located in Blacktown Council. Cyclists currently using the on road cycle way will be diverted to use the existing shared path that is separated from traffic. It is unclear what impact this will have on the users of the existing shared path network.

**Recommendation 8** - Council requests the applicant provide further information as to the locations and period of closures along the shared pathway. Council's open space team will need to be involved in the establishment of any diversionary routes to ensure minimal impact to users. In addition, it is requested that TfNSW provide cycling counts for the on road cycling way to determine the number of diverted cyclists to the shared pathway.

Assessment of cycleway alternate routes needs to consider the road environment prior to being considered acceptable – Wallgrove road is not a safer alternative due to the road shoulder/speed environment arrangements, particularly crossing the road for northbound movements. This is a very limited assessment and needs much more detail prior to being considered acceptable (or able to be assessed). As increased truck traffic is expected on Wallgrove road, this reduces the safety of cyclists significantly.

## 8. NOISE AND VIBRATION

The Noise and Vibration Impact assessment (NVIA) indicates that residences and other sensitive receivers including schools and places of public worship are impacted by the proposal. The NVIA also indicates multiple sensitive receivers that are eligible for reasonable and feasible mitigation measures because of the proposal. It is unclear from the report if these locations are already exceeding the critical noise limits due to existing noise generated by the M7 or if they exceed them due to proposal. At this stage, no details have been provided regarding the location and number of residential properties affected in the Fairfield LGA. In recent meetings with WSO, Council requested the applicant provide this information to assist Council officers in their assessment of the EIS. This request was declined.



**Recommendation 9** – Council requests TfNSW provide property details of sensitive residential receivers' eligible for feasible and reasonable noise mitigation measures because of the proposal, as demonstrated in the relevant NVIA appendices. The applicant is to also clarify if the noise levels exceed critical limits due to the proposal. The NVIA and associated modelling must be independently peer reviewed to ensure the reports are validated.

Further to this, analysis must be undertaken to determine that those properties effected including those where development consent may have been recently granted and construction commenced for sensitive uses such as places of public worship and educational buildings located in the project scope.

Construction activity and night time sleep disturbance must be kept to a minimum with standard hours for construction activities being acceptable.

## 9. ECONOMIC IMPACTS & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The M7 is a main corridor for trucks and traffic coming out of the Smithfield Wetherill Park Estate and construction works will have significant impacts on traffic movements through the area that already has issues. In this respect, the proposed construction works will have significant implications for the operations of businesses in the Estate.

Council requests further information on the level of consultation undertaken to date and which stakeholders/sections of the community were consulted. The idea of random consultation would likely miss some of the key businesses and residents that will be affected by the works. It is noted that in recent meetings with the applicants it was stated Council had not been contacted to obtain the rateable addresses for those properties identified as impacted in the NVIA.

**Recommendation 10** – Impact on business operations, truck movements and staging of the works needs serious consideration given the impact the project will have on traffic merging into the M7. A strong marketing plan needs to be implemented to ensure all businesses in the Wetherill Park Industrial estate are provided with ongoing updates and significant notice of commencement of works and areas of maximum impact so that businesses can plan alternate routes where possible.

**Recommendation 11** – Details of property owners to be confirmed with Council in relation to properties identified in the NVIA as requiring reasonable and feasible mitigation measures due to the proposal. This will ensure that these properties are appropriately notified. It is also recommended a contact service be established by TfNSW and Transurban during construction and operation of the proposal to assist affected members of the community, interpreting services must be provided including Auslan for those who are hearing impaired.

## 10. CATCHMENT PLANNING

The Surface Water and Flooding Impact Assessment by Lyall and Associates dated July 2022 has been reviewed. The flood modelling is deemed suitable and all 1% Annual Exceedance Probability floodplains crossing the M7 have been modelled. The report has concluded that existing basins can accommodate the upgrades within the existing freeboard.

**Recommendation 12** – All basins should retain a minimum of 0.3m freeboard for the 1% AEP and modifications should be made to the basins that do not meet this requirement due to modification. TfNSW have reviewed risk associated with the project, but have not addressed the role the roads plays as a major evacuation route during natural disasters. Recent works undertaken as part of the Georges River Regional Flood Evacuation Study (DPE & Liverpool Council) highlights how important the road is to ensuring people are able to evacuate during regional floods, and this needs to be addressed as part of the modification to ensure the capacity required can be achieved.

## 11. TOLL REVENUE-

The project will increase the toll revenue of the M7 authority and the toll collection period by 5 years. Despite this the proposal has not demonstrated how the increased revenue will be used to the future benefit of the broader community of Western Sydney including the Fairfield Council area.

**Recommendation 13** – The toll collection authority must demonstrate how increased toll revenue will be used to upgrade regional active transport links effected by the proposal, contribute to the upgrade of Council infrastructure degraded by the construction period of the project, including Redmayne Road and contribute to upgrades at key intersections impacted by the proposal.

## 12. ELIZABETH DRIVE EAST OF THE M7 INTERCHANGE AND WALLGROVE ROAD

Council has long advocated for an upgrade to Elizabeth Drive east of the M7 interchange to facilitate east/west connection to the future WSA airport. The modelling undertaken is severely limited in this regard. This is important as the rapid bus routes are expected to use Elizabeth Drive and the capacity of Elizabeth Drive through the M7 interchange is then an important determinant for this service (not just access to/from the M7 as is implied by the modelling approach). Lanes in Elizabeth Drive are currently limited to the width between the existing bridge abutments and further widening must be determined now.

Wallgrove Road will be utilised as a toll free freight route as a result of the future SLR connection and connection to the M4 and Mamre Road Precinct. As there is no additional lane across the M4, the number 1 lane (or left lane) will become an exit only lane into the relevant off ramp and allow the on ramp to join the M7 without a merge at the M4, to ensure benefits are maintained an upgrade at the old Wallgrove road is required.

**Recommendation 14** – The traffic modelling must be revised to include assessment of the impact of the increased capacity on Elizabeth drive east of the M7 and resulting upgrades requirements, due to the modification.

The capacity of the interchange at Old Wallgrove Road needs upgrading or the removal of the merge/diverge at the M4 benefits will be dissipated very quickly.

## 13. CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC ROUTE AND VEHICLE DAMAGE

TfNSW is required to obtain an approval route for haulage of construction materials, if selected routes include Council's owned roads. In addition to the accidental or unexpected damage to Council's assets, TfNSW has to come to an agreement to pay the cost to Council prior to commencement of works, as functional life of road pavement will be consumed by the number of trips made for material haulage to the project.

**Recommendation 15** – A dilapidation survey is to be carried out for all Council roads that will be used as construction routes prior to construction in accordance with Section 69 of the NSW Government condition of consent. In order to work on Council road reserve, applicant will need to apply for a driveway applications and road works permit if required. The dilapidation survey should include information in regard to each defect on the road surface, and other associated assets and is to be prepared by a suitably qualified person. This process will establish the extent of any existing damage and enable any deterioration during and after construction to be observed. Council's assets management team is to be contacted to provide the damage calculation methodology due to construction vehicles.

## 14. ASSET HANDOVER

It is unclear that any assets will be handed out to Council or not. Council note that the modification report states solutions should be investigated to cater for forecast traffic volumes associated with population and employment growth and to some degree the proposed, modification, at the following locations within FCC.

**Recommendation 16** - If any assets are required to be handed over to Council the proponent must:

- Prepare and provide list of assets which are proposed to be handed over to Council;
- Provide prepare list of Council assets are proposed to be demolished or impacted by the proposed design;
- Life cycle cost analysis to be performed for the life of assets and provided to Council. Whole of life cycle cost (capital and maintenance costs) to be provided to Council for the operation of the proposed new assets. Council is happy to provide the useful life of the proposed new assets for life cycle analysis;
- How the life cycle cost funded? How Fairfield community be compensated?
- What land is proposed to be resumed by TfNSW from Council?
- What new land is proposed to be handed over to Council by TfNSW?, and;
- List of proposed green assets, for example: trees.

## 15. CONTAMINATION

The preliminary desktop contamination review along the project area has identified some areas where potential contamination may exist, based on historical review of land uses and aerial building footprint analysis.

**Recommendation 17** – Any contamination register developed must be provided to Council as part of a condition of consent. Detailed Site Investigation report and any further sampling and analysis must be provided to Council.

## 16. CONSTRUCTION PHASE DUST EMISSIONS

It is noted that populations within the Horsley Park area were identified to be more vulnerable to air pollution and potential air quality impacts, based on an Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD).

Despite the above, construction zones located with the Fairfield LGA were found to pose only a moderate risk of exposure to dust (in the absence of mitigation measures) due to the “*proximity of highly sensitive receptors to the construction areas*”.

Mitigation measures as outlined in Table 7.34 will be included within a construction environmental management plan.

**Recommendation 18** - The agency and individual accountable for air quality and dust issues shall be clearly identified and responsibilities outlined for the whole duration of the project.

It is expected that a clear communications plan will be developed and residents notified of a simple pathway to address any air quality issues that may be happening at the time and the person/s responsible. Particular attention should be given to those areas such as Horsley Park with a quintile factor of 1 and the best means of communication and interaction with those community groups, in ensuring that mitigation measures are sufficient, effective and being properly maintained



## CONCLUSION

This submission includes a number of detailed recommendations endorsed by the Fairfield City Council that need to be addressed under DPE's further assessment of the proposed widening of the M7 corridor for additional vehicle lanes

Council officers would be available should the DPE require any further clarification on the above. Should you have further questions please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on 9725 0215.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick Warren".

Patrick Warren  
**Senior Strategic Land Use Planner**