

Westconnex M4-M5 EIS Submission

Introduction

The City of Canada Bay (CCB) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Westconnex M4-M5 Environmental Impact Statement (hereafter referred to as the EIS). Council generally supports the linking of the M4 to the M5 and continues to be involved in the implementation of M4 East to ensure the best outcome for the users of the new transport route and those living, working and playing in the vicinity

To ensure a similar outcome is achieved for the proposed M4-M5 Link and Rozelle Interchange, Council staff have analysed the EIS and prepared the following comments.

Major Concerns

Rozelle Interchange

Whilst the proposed Rozelle Interchange has the potential to bring improvements to some areas, it is apparent that there may be significant negative impacts to the CCB. In particular it is noted that the EIS adopts the approach that without the project, intersections such as Victoria Road at Lyons Road will operate at a Level of Service F and that because of this even with the project it can't get much worse during peak periods. There is however limited information provided on this. With such an expenditure on infrastructure as is proposed, this is not a satisfactory outcome to Council and improvements must be obtained.

The M4 East EIS provided additional details on modelling such as Average Delay at intersections. In the M4-M5 EIS there are many general references to changes in Average Delay however the actual Average Delays are not provided. It is also noted that despite Table 6-18 only containing Level of Service information, the EIS states "Table 6-18 presents the AM and PM peak hour intersection average delays and LoS for the existing situation at St Peters." The exclusion of Average Delay data prevents an informed review of the EIS being undertaken and according it is requested that this information be provided.

6.6.2 Intersection performance

Table 6-18 presents the AM and PM peak hour intersection average delays and LoS for the existing situation at St Peters. The intersection performance results demonstrate several intersections in the vicinity of the new St Peters interchange experience significant congestion during the AM and PM peak hours. The poor LoS indicates the local network is at capacity and vulnerable to small increases in demand without improvements to intersection layouts.

Table 6-18 St Peters interchange: modelled key intersection performance (LoS) – 2015 AM and PM peak hour

Key intersections	AM peak hour	PM peak hour
Princes Highway/Sydney Park Road	C	D
Princes Highway/May Street	D	F
Princes Highway/Canal Road	D	D
Princes Highway/Railway Road	F	D

FIGURE 1 - EXTRACT FROM M4-M5 EIS

These details may well show that the Average Delay at the intersection of Victoria Road and Lyons Road would increase as a result of the proposal. It is also noted that despite there being a number of intersections along Victoria Road in Drummoyne, details of their performance are not provided even for significant intersections such as where Victoria Road meets Westbourne Street.

Due to the identified limited capacity on Victoria Road, by directing traffic onto/off Victoria Road at the southern end of the Iron Cove Bridge it is likely to bring a return of significant 'rat running' issues in Drummoyne that resulted from previous delays in the RMS providing sufficient capacity along this route.

The EIS does acknowledge that volumes outside of peak periods are likely to increase yet modelling information has not been provided regarding how this is accommodated. It is noted that on weekdays outside of peak periods kerbside parking is permitted along Victoria Road. Whilst it is noted that the RMS are currently investigating the introduction of weekend clearways, CCB is not aware of any current proposal to remove parking on weekdays.

In the absence of modelling to demonstrate otherwise, it is apparent that in the future the RMS may well move to remove weekday parking on Victoria Road to accommodate increased traffic flows outside of peak periods. This parking on Victoria Road plays a significant role in the viability and vibrance of businesses in the area and accordingly its removal is likely to be strongly objected to. Council therefore raises strong opposition to any proposals to further reductions in parking remaining along Victoria Road.

In consideration of the above CCB requests that further consideration be given to the management of traffic and parking in the Drummoyne area. An extension of the proposed tunnel through to Huntleys Point would appear to provide significant benefits to both the CCB and through traffic.

Parramatta Road Public Transport

As part of M4 East a commitment was made to provide two lanes on Parramatta Road for public transport. Whilst the EIS introduces the concept that freed up space on surface roads may create opportunities for light rail, outside of the EIS there remains no commitment beyond bus services.

There is significant concern that bus services will not provide the capacity and certainty that is required to bring about the modal shift to public transport required for the success of the Parramatta Road Urban Transformation areas.

Further transparent consideration should be given to light rail and other alternatives such as a Guided Electric Transit System on Parramatta Road. Attention is drawn to the Parramatta Road Public Transport Opportunities Study commissioned by Inner West and Canada Bay Councils and supported by all inner west Councils which endorses a Guided Electric Transit System (GETS) as the best option for public transport on Parramatta Road.



FIGURE 2 - PARRAMATTA ROAD PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPPORTUNITIES STUDY - EXAMPLE OF VEHICLE

Victoria Road Public Transport

It is noted from the EIS that “while the project, specifically the Iron Cove Link, would result in reduced surface traffic on Victoria Road (east of Iron Cove Bridge), this does not imply an improvement in bus travel times inbound”.

To support a growing community in Drummoyne there needs to be access to good public transport services, particularly given that the EIS itself identifies congestion issues on Victoria Road which may encourage people to consider alternate modes of transport. It is requested that further consideration be given as to how public transport along Victoria Road can be made faster and more efficient.

The Bay Run

The Bay Run is an important piece of active transport infrastructure with very high utilisation. At present the majority of the Bay Run is in the form of a separated path with a portion dedicated to pedestrians and a portion dedicated to cyclists. The section of the Bay Run along the Iron Cove Bridge under the care and control of the RMS is however at odds with this arrangement as it is in the form of a shared path. This creates the potential for confusion and resulting conflict between path users. It is requested that consideration be given to changing the Iron Cove Bridge and its approaches to an off-road separated path as part of the Rozelle Interchange project.

Due to the very high utilisation of the path it is critical that should the project proceed, during construction works the impact on path users is minimised.



FIGURE 3 - HENLEY MARINE DRIVE AT VICTORIA ROAD, DRUMMOYNE - EXISTING SHARED/SEPARATED PATH TRANSITION

Conclusion

It is apparent that further consideration is required as to what legacy the M4-M5 link and Rozelle Interchange will leave the CCB. In particular Council is greatly concerned with the potential impacts of additional traffic on Victoria Road between Gladesville Bridge and the Iron Cove Bridge, along with surrounding local residential streets in Drummoyne. Further, Council vehemently opposes any reductions in parking on Victoria Road through the Drummoyne shopping precinct.

Additional consideration is also required into adopting public transport that can have a transformative impact on the areas surrounding both Victoria Road and Parramatta Road as opposed to focusing on a private vehicle dominated future.

Council would welcome the opportunity to continue working with WestConnex to help ensure the project best meets the needs of the growing CCB community.