

City of Ryde Submission

Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 Environmental Impact Statement

Date: 5 December 2022

1.0 Introduction

City of Ryde reiterates its' views, previously submitted through formal processes, on the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project, emphasising the need to minimise the impact on the residents of Melrose Park (route alignment) and the importance of an extension of the route to include direct interchanging with existing heavy rail facilities at either Meadowbank or West Ryde, which is a priority transport project contained in the *City of Ryde Integrated Transport Strategy 2041*, an award-winning transport strategy released earlier this year. Achieving a greater mode shift in favour of public transport and active forms of transport remains a central theme of the Strategy.

2.0 Project justification

City of Ryde acknowledges that the project has the potential to provide improved public transport capacity and contribute to desirable urban renewal, particularly when combined with improvements to regional active transport networks. Planned refurbishment of open space around Parramatta River will increase opportunities for recreational activities, further supporting urban amenity.

Parramatta River has long acted as a barrier to north – south interaction within the Greater Sydney region. The addition of two new river crossings, including Camellia – Rydalmere and Melrose Park – Wentworth Point, will significantly improve access and increase interaction between various urban areas. Integration with other public transport facilities, including existing bus and ferry services, will allow more seamless public transport journeys that will be more competitive with private vehicle use.

In terms of city shaping objectives, the project has the potential to attract new investment and enhance economic development for the wider region. The heavy rail connection to the Olympic precinct perhaps should have been provided as a loop, greatly increasing the capacity and efficiency of getting to and from the site. Limited rail transport and other public transport services have encouraged additional private vehicle use, particularly during major events.

Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 will increase public transport capacity, particularly to areas to the north and west of the Olympic precinct. The project has the capacity to create and develop local hubs, increasing the 'place' aspects of former industrial areas. Again, the importance of an extension of the route to include direct interchanging with existing heavy rail facilities at either Meadowbank or West Ryde, would have further enhanced the benefits derived from the project, which would have been further amplified if a direct light rail connection to Macquarie Park was provided.

3.0 Project construction phase

It is noted that most of the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project would be constructed on or adjacent to existing roads, with modifications to accommodate light rail track infrastructure and stops. Loss of parking along the route should be minimised to limit impact on existing land uses, particularly commercial activities.

The EIS indicates that the proposed bridge construction method has been refined to minimise potential impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, with works conducted outside of peak traffic periods. This approach is supported as a way of limiting impacts on the local community, including reducing the number of nights worked and associated noise. Alternative arrangements for the

existing shared user path along the foreshore of Melrose Park will be needed during the construction phase of the project.

In order to minimise the impact of construction activity, consideration should be given to providing temporary off-street parking facilities for workers and contractors. Providing opportunities for the workforce to park off-street each day will reduce impacts on the local road network, leaving the streets available for residents and visitors. In this regard, arrangements should be made to lease nearby Council sites such as the Melrose Park sports facilities during working hours. A shuttle bus system could be used to transport workers to and from construction sites.

Any damage to adjacent areas to the route will need to be restored in accordance with City of Ryde's standard drawings, or as detailed within the local Development Control Plan. A detailed pre-construction dilapidation report detailing the condition of all Council Infrastructure within the vicinity of the works (100 metres) will be required. Detailed design plans for works impacting City of Ryde land should be submitted to Council for review to enable endorsement and the provision of any necessary Council requirements or conditions.

4.0 Alternatives and options

The EIS indicates that nineteen possible corridor options between Camellia and Strathfield via Olympic Park were developed and evaluated. It is evident that corridor options have been evaluated in considerable detail, with options removed that involved unacceptable community and environmental impacts or significant engineering challenges / costs. The use of multi-criteria analysis against the objectives and project-specific criteria is noted.

In relation to the alignment of the route in Melrose Park (as described in Chapter 5 - Design development and alternatives), City of Ryde strongly supports further investigations / options analysis aimed at relocating Ausgrid's existing transmission tower and associated high voltage power lines, with a preference for relocation below ground or integration with the bridge. Relocation of this infrastructure would allow an alternative route that would significantly reduce property impacts, as well as limiting the loss of existing mangroves and tree cover. It is important however, that the alternative route be designed in such a way as to minimise the impact on available open space in Archer Park and boat ramp / car parking facilities.



Figure 5.25 Example of potential alternate alignment at Melrose Park

Chapter 5 of the EIS explores various design options for the project. The following comments are provided:

Melrose Park Bridge

Various bridge options for the project to cross the Parramatta River at Melrose Park are considered in the EIS. The rationale for the proposed box girder bridge option being preferred appears to be based on cost efficiencies and 'a good design outcome'. City of Ryde encourages Transport for New South Wales to reconsider the preferred bridge option (as suggested by the Transport for New South Wales Design Review Panel) so it more closely aligns to the previous project announcements made in 2018, as per the conceptual diagram overpage. Without reconsidering the preferred option, the project risks failing to achieve the bridge design objectives outlined in Section 13.6.2 of Technical Paper 1 (Design Place and Movement Outcomes) and playing a critical role interpreting the connection of two significant urban renewal areas, being Melrose Park and Wentworth Point. Further, the proposed inclusion of active transport links on either side of the bridge are firmly supported.

City of Ryde notes the importance of the bridge design aligning to the future land use surrounding the project and the EIS's Urban Design Vision Objective 3 '... creation of attractive and memorable public spaces...'. It is not considered that a box girder bridge design would meet this vision. The design and construction of the new bridge should aim to minimise the loss of mangroves along Parramatta River. Koonadan Reserve is an area of protected ecologically endangered saltmarsh, requiring consideration during the design, construction and operational phases of the project.



Wire-free operations

Wire-free operations is imperative to minimise visual clutter within the landscape of the overall project. City of Ryde strongly encourages Transport for New South Wales to consider the long-term impacts of overhead wires and the quickly advancing technologies that may make overhead wires between stations redundant in the future. Specifically, Transport for New South Wales should ensure wire-free operations over the Melrose Park bridge to reduce as much as possible elements that detract from the potential aesthetic qualities of the bridge and surrounding foreshore areas. This position would be consistent with the previously released bridge imagery (see above).

Melrose Park bridge abutment

Bridge abutments have historically been accepted as 'left over' and uninspiring places, with little to no activation potential or purpose. This project has the potential to demonstrate best practice, with the Caulfield - Dandenong Railway & Linear Park in Victoria being a key example. These spaces can 'come alive' with activity through the inclusion of elements such as multisport courts, fitness equipment and hit-up walls.

Permeable tracks

The project should embrace permeable tracks, wherever possible, to improve the aesthetic qualities of the project, while reducing the heat island effects of expanding areas of hard stand.

Cycleways

As discussed in Section 6.4 of the EIS, the project proposes the inclusion of a shared pathway crossing Parramatta Park at Melrose Park. Due to expected population growth on either side of the bridge that will occur over the short to medium term, a shared pathway is not considered appropriate. Cyclist and pedestrians should be separated, as this bridge will form a critical north - south crossing point for commuters, recreational cyclists and pedestrians. Ideally, the project would include segregated cycleways and pedestrian pathways along its entire route.

5.0 Environmental assessment / mitigation measures

The EIS indicates that the project has been designed to avoid and / or minimise environmental and community impacts, while acknowledging that there would be some temporary impacts during construction and operation. City of Ryde notes that the Ermington Boat Ramp (and associated car parking areas) located at the end of Wharf Road, Melrose Park would be used exclusively as a bridge construction compound for a period of three years. Plans to promote the availability of nearby boat ramp facilities, as well as to prepare a detailed traffic and access management plan, are considered appropriate.

In relation to noise, the EIS indicates that the largest number of 'exceedances' are predicted in noise catchment areas north of Parramatta River. These areas are located close to residences in both Ermington and Melrose Park. Although the EIS indicates that mitigation measures have been developed with the aim of minimising or mitigating construction noise and vibration impact 'where practicable', there is little detail available to indicate what measures will be undertaken. Seeking community preferences during the EIS exhibition period in relation to primary project working hours is appropriate.

Efforts to minimise impacts on aboriginal, non-aboriginal and heritage items are acknowledged, with most potential impacts described as being relatively minor. Design and construction planning is expected to minimise potential impacts as far as possible. The inclusion of standard erosion and sediment management measures are noted, as well as a contamination investigation being already underway across the project footprint.

Although the direct impacts on properties during construction are relatively minor, the majority being government-owned lands, plans to conduct on-going consultation with affected property owners and occupiers are encouraged. Identification of the main potential impacts on people and communities during construction, property acquisition (15 properties), changes to access arrangements and changes to amenity are considered appropriate.

6.0 Operational impacts

The availability of the light rail service between 5am and 1am seven days a week will maximise utilisation of the facility, catering for a broad range of commuting, business, commercial and recreational trips.

The EIS notes that 'most on-street parking along the alignment would be removed to provide space for light rail and active transport infrastructure', while further noting that 'there is sufficient parking to accommodate displaced vehicles' and that there would be 'increased competition for parking' at key sites along the route. These claims will need to be tested and monitored using regular surveying to ensure that vehicles are being accommodated in alternative, convenient locations, minimising the impact on local residential areas.

While a review of operational traffic performance is planned at 12 months and again at five years after commencement, more frequent monitoring is recommended. Conducting traffic and parking surveys after two years of operation will provide a clearer picture of 'new normal' conditions. While 'additional feasible and reasonable mitigation measures' designed to 'manage traffic performance impacts' are highlighted, the types of measures are not specified. Incorporation of a parking management strategy to provide an 'overarching framework' is considered appropriate.

It is noted that the main potential impacts for non-aboriginal heritage items during operation would be visual impacts. These impacts should be addressed by planned improvements to open space and parkland adjacent to Parramatta River. Area-wide wayfinding signage will be important to assist users locate the stations along the route, including electronic real-time signage indicating when the next service is due to arrive.

It is important to ensure that the installation of the two bridges across the Parramatta River do not impede the operation of existing and future ferry operations, particularly access under each bridge at high tide.

7.0 Specific Feedback

7.1 Community

Opportunities for community members to comment on potential construction impacts, timing of construction, and suitability of station locations are welcome, including through the innovative and state-of-the-art interactive website information about the project.

City of Ryde does not find it surprising that traffic and parking issues have been raised as the most important areas of concern for the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project. City of Ryde recommends ongoing consultation with the Melrose Park Action Group, particularly in relation to the final location of the bridge across Parramatta Road, future traffic growth, demand for parking and loss of tree cover associated with the present route alignment. City of Ryde also recommends the reinstatement of the Community and Stakeholders Reference Group, as advised in our letter to Transport for New South Wales (Council Reference: D22/101308) dated 5 August 2022.

7.2 Traffic, Transport and Parking

The Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project will introduce additional vehicle trips on the local road network (e.g. Constitution Road, Andrew Street, Wharf Road) servicing West Ryde and Meadowbank, associated with people travelling to the planned light rail stations. Traffic studies (Chapter 9, Technical Paper 2) informing the EIS indicates that the operational performance of the intersection of Victoria Road and Wharf Road will be exacerbated by the project. Further, the project will impact on the intersection of Wharf Road / Andrew Street during and post-construction. It is therefore strongly recommended that the EIS consider appropriate mitigation measures at these locations such as adopting the improvements at the intersection of Victoria Road / Wharf Road specified in Jacobs' Transport Management and Accessibility Plan (December 2019), part of Parramatta City Council's Planning Proposal for the Melrose Park North Precinct.

The Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project will have significant parking implications for City of Ryde residents to the west of Wharf Road during and post-construction. The following works will reduce parking opportunities for City of Ryde residents:

- Construction works in Melrose Park are expected to generate a peak workforce of up to 140 staff. EIS traffic studies recommend an off-street, car-parking provision of between 53 – 70 car parking spaces to support workers in Melrose Park during construction. While traffic studies indicate that specific measures will be documented in site specific construction traffic management plans to minimise parking impacts, recent construction of State Significant Projects in the area (e.g. Payce development in Melrose Park, Meadowbank schools), demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of workers will travel to the site by private vehicle, despite parking management measures being implemented.

- The new light rail station on Waratah Street is not supported by any off-street, car-parking. GHD's Transport and Traffic report (Technical Paper 2) estimates that the new light rail facility will generate the following short term parking demands:
 - up to 15 'Kiss and Ride' parking spaces
 - up to 90 'Park and Ride' parking spaces

It is anticipated that the abovementioned short term parking demand is to be accommodated within the surrounding public road network, which will impact on the parking needs of existing and future land uses within Melrose Park.

In order to address parking concerns, it is strongly recommended that the project scope be expanded to incorporate supplementary public and active transport infrastructure to minimise traffic and parking demand during construction and operation. These supplementary infrastructure works should aim to improve connectivity between light rail stations and existing major transport hubs such as Meadowbank Railway Station and the West Ryde Bus Interchange. Consideration should also be given to the provision of an appropriate level of off-street, car-parking in the immediate vicinity of light rail stations in order to minimise parking impacts on surrounding areas.

As the Waratah Street stop will be adjacent to the boat ramp, the need for parking in the area is likely to effect usage of the boat ramp and boating facilities. This will need to be looked at closely during the design stage. The nearby light rail hub will put greater utility on surrounding streets within City of Ryde. Additional pedestrian and traffic infrastructure should be considered and implemented if required. This determination should be based on detailed pedestrian management and traffic management plans, considering both pedestrian and vehicular movements generated by the new public transport hub.

Accessible pathways should be provided between bus stops within City of Ryde, including surrounding streets and the new light rail hub on Waratah Street. This may include works such as the inclusion of pedestrian refuges, wider footways, pedestrian crossings, kerb ramps, regrading of paths, additional signage and traffic calming measures. The provision of both share car spaces and electric charging facilities, further encouraging additional use of public transport in passenger journeys, should be considered.

7.3 Property

Based on Appendix E of the EIS, approximately six private properties (151 – 161 Wharf Road, Melrose Park) and Koonadan Reserve abutting the eastern side of Wharf Road are expected to be impacted by the proposed bridge connection across Parramatta River. City of Ryde has previously made formal representations to Transport for New South Wales in both August and September 2022 expressing concerns about the impact of the proposed bridge location on our residents.

It is recommended that the alternative route identified in Figure 5.25 of Chapter 5 of the EIS (refer to Section 4) be given additional consideration to minimise property acquisition requirements. Another location that could be considered, which would achieve the same objective is provided in City of Ryde's letter to Transport for New South Wales (Council Reference: D22/109245) dated 22 August 2022.

All transport hubs and their surrounds located within the City of Ryde are generally upgraded to meet 'town centre' requirements, including the installation of new granite paving. As the Waratah Street light rail hub is within close proximity to the City of Ryde LGA boundary, this hub area should be upgraded to town centre standards.

To help offset the loss of public open space acquired for this project, the acquisition and embellishment of the 'regional open space' identified within Ryde LEP 2014 should be undertaken, as shown below. Embellishments should include a foreshore boardwalk between Archer Park and Meadowbank Park, incorporating interpretation elements, environmental protections and enhancements.



Regardless of the final route selected for the new bridge crossing, the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project will impact the existing stormwater network around Wharf Road. All required modifications to the stormwater network need to be factored into the overall planning and budget for the project.

8.0 Summary

While the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project only impacts a small portion of land within the City of Ryde, the project has the potential to significantly impact City of Ryde residents. Careful consideration and management of these impacts during construction and operation, while providing the associated infrastructure outlined in this submission, will result in a valuable city-shaping community asset.

There are a range of positive transport and place benefits to be realised from the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project, part of a suite of major infrastructure projects needed to support the future movement and lifestyle needs of Sydney's residents. It is imperative that remaining funding needed for the Parramatta Light Rail – Stage 2 project be formally allocated, ensuring that this integral transport project will be built sooner than may otherwise be the case.

The addition of a well-connected and integrated public transport service between two important urban precincts has the potential to significantly change travel behaviour and improve place and economic development outcomes, and this would be further amplified and enhanced with the provision of direct links to heavy rail connections within the City of Ryde, with potential significant benefits to the wider region and the State if a future direct light rail link to Macquarie Park was provided.

Transport for NSW
Level 11, 130 George Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Attn: Rhys Haynes – Director Engagement and Communication

5 August 2022

Our Ref: D22/101308

Dear Mr Haynes

STAGE 2 PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Thank you for meeting with the City of Ryde (Council) on 1 August 2022 to discuss the current status of Stage 2 of the Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) project. The key highlights from this meeting that Council noted are detailed below:

- The State Government recently announced a commitment to provide \$602.4 million to Stage 2 of the PLR project. These funds will be primarily dedicated towards undertaking the route design and the delivery of the active transport bridge across Parramatta River.
- Transport for NSW (TfNSW) are currently working on preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in support of the bridge and route design works associated with Stage 2 of the PLR project. Whilst no exact date was specified to Council at the meeting on 1 August 2022, it is anticipated that the EIS submission could occur by late 2022 or early 2023.
- Residents affected by potential land acquisition associated with Stage 2 of the PLR project will be consulted prior to the EIS being placed on exhibition. It is understood that TfNSW will assign a Relationship Manager to work with affected residents.

As you are aware, Council wants to ensure that the concerns of our residents are being considered as part of this project. In this regard, moving forward, Council would like to see the reinstatement of the Community and Stakeholders Reference Group to ensure that the project delivers on outcomes that best serve the interests of our community.

I would be happy to have a further meeting with yourself, including Council's Acting Director City Works to further discuss the structure and operation of this proposed Working Group.

Kind regards



Wayne Rylands
Acting General Manager

Transport for NSW
Level 11
130 George Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Attn: Rhys Haynes – Director Engagement and Communication
Rhys.Haynes@transport.nsw.gov.au

22 August 2022

Our Ref: D22/109245

Dear Mr Haynes

Stage 2 Parramatta Light Rail – Community Representations

Further to my letter dated 5 August 2022 (Council Reference No: D22/101308), Council has received further representations from the Melrose Park Residents Action Group ('MPRAG' or 'Group') regarding the bridgeworks across Parramatta River, associated with Stage 2 of the Parramatta Light Rail project.

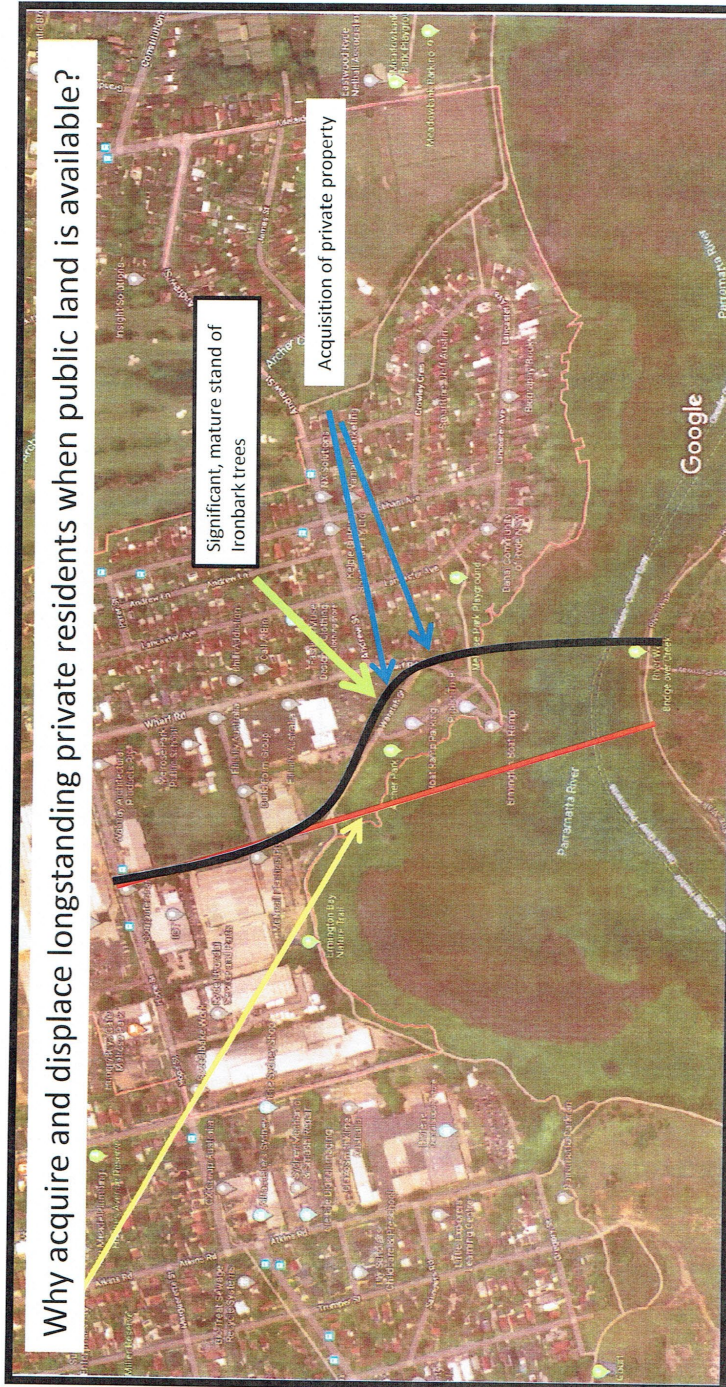
The key concerns expressed by members of the MPRAG are summarised below:

- Compulsory acquisition of properties and subsequent displacement of residents living along Wharf Road and Waratah Street;
- Removal of a significant stand of mature trees along Wharf Road near the existing boat ramp carpark;
- Adverse impacts to the access arrangements and operation of the existing public boat ramp at the southern end of Wharf Road; and
- Adverse impacts to the amenity of Koonadan Reserve ranging from reduced tree cover to disruptions to the existing cycleway.

MPRAG have proposed an alternative route that it considers to be more cost-effective, less environmentally intrusive and less disruptive to the existing infrastructure and residential properties in the area.

Please refer to the diagram on the following page provided by MPRAG showing the preferred route by the Group, which traverses through Archer Park.

Melrose Park bridge Current v Alternative PLRS2 route



Alternate route

- No private property acquisition or displacement required
- Shorter route from Hope St to opposite side of river (748m)
- No removal of significant mature trees
- Longer distance from bridge to existing residential houses (163 m)

Current route

- Up to 12 private properties to be acquired and displaced
- Longer distance from Hope St to opposite of river (849m)
- Removal of up to 12 significant mature Ironbark trees
- Closer distance to existing residential housing (64m)

The benefits of this alternative route proposed by MPRAG should be considered and investigated further as the bridgework component of the project progresses.

I would be happy to have a further meeting with yourself and MPRAG along with Council's Acting Director City Works to discuss this matter further to ensure that the best outcomes for our community are achieved from this project.

Please contact my Executive Officer – Carmelina Loughland on (02) 9952 8052 or carmelinaL@ryde.nsw.gov.au to arrange a meeting time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Wayne Rylands
Acting General Manger