



Attention: Director, Transport Assessments
Planning & Assessment, Department of Planning
Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Note: Please delete my personal details before publication

1 March 2021

Objection: Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Upgrade – SSI_8862

I wish to register my objection to the Beaches Link tunnel and Gore Hill Freeway project on multiple grounds, as outlined below.

The environmental impact and affects on local neighbourhoods of this project are unacceptable in both the short- and long-term. In particular:

1. I object to the loss of more than 50 acres of bushland and the removal of thousands of mature trees in my local area. These trees improve air quality and the natural environment, not to mention the benefits they have for human physical and mental health. Replacement of mature trees with immature specimens is not sufficient to offset these losses. Should the development go ahead, mature trees must be protected and where that is not possible, should be replaced with a much greater quantity of replacement trees.
2. I object to the impact on Manly Dam and surrounding areas, including along the Wakehurst Parkway. This area is both a much-needed green space that's home to a wide variety of flora and fauna (including several endangered species) and is a highly valued recreational area. I personally enjoy spending time here bushwalking and being in a peaceful natural environment on a regular basis and have done for many years, and believe that its amenities should continue to be available -unspoiled – for many years to come.
3. I object to the destruction of and impact on these areas, which represent important wildlife corridors and are irreplaceable. There are nearly two dozen threatened species likely to be impacted by the proposed development, and loss of habitat for hundreds of land and marine animals, birds and fish is anticipated to occur. There are few remaining areas of such biodiversity in Sydney and we should be protecting them, not removing them to increase traffic and pollution, which is detrimental to their habitat and wellbeing. The proposed project is against the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development in the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 (NSW), which stipulates that biological diversity and ecological integrity should be primary considerations in the planning of such projects. Please assess and provide public consultation on environmentally friendly alternatives to the proposed tunnel and mitigation measures to protect wildlife in affected areas.

4. I object to the impact on Burnt Bridge Creek and the waterways around Flat Rock Gully, which are projected to experience significantly decreased flow should the project go ahead in its current form. These waterways must be protected, both in terms of their flow and in terms of preventing them from pollution and run-off associated with the development.
5. I object to the use of unfiltered exhaust chimneys, in some cases in close proximity to schools. In addition to the impact of additional air pollution in my local environment, the increased quantity of airborne pollutants represent a health risk to adults, and especially children. The radius of the proposed pollution in my local neighbourhood has the potential to have a significant impact on human health, especially when considered over the long term. At minimum, the chimneys must be filtered to reduce emissions, and regular, real-time air quality monitoring must be mandated.
6. I object to the lack of provision in the current proposal for dedicated bus lanes, which would help to mitigate the air pollution released from the tunnel. Ideally, bus lanes should be incorporated, and the use of electric buses should be mandated to reduce emissions.
7. I object to the likelihood of contamination arising from numerous sites along the proposed route of the development, including at Middle Harbour, the Spit, Wakehurst Parkway, Flat Rock Reserve and additional locations – as well as contamination risk to our beaches associated with transfer of wastes via barges. Contaminants have already been identified in multiple affected locations, and will likely be exacerbated by construction and the ongoing operation of the Beaches Link and the Gore Hill Freeway upgrade. Contamination has been identified as a significant risk and is projected to occur in areas with significant local populations and widespread recreational use. More testing and a complete risk assessment is required, along with alternative options that are not associated with these risks. It is particularly concerning that another proposed development (the Sydney Metro Chatswood to Sydenham tunnel) did not proceed at least in part due to contamination risks to Sydney Harbour, and that Middle Harbour is known to have contaminants that are at risk of dispersment during the proposed construction. As a regular bushwalker in the potentially affected areas, I have significant concerns about the health impacts of such contamination, and in addition, believe that a full assessment of the contamination risks associated with accidents is required. Alternatives must be sought that do not carry such contamination risks.
8. As a local resident, I object to the proposed tunnel's projected increase to local traffic in Balgowlah, Manly Vale and surrounding areas, putting increased pressure on local roads, such as Lauderdale Avenue, White Street, Wanganella Street, West Street, Woodland Street, Condamine Street, Sydney Road and more. The existing significant traffic issues in this area are likely to be exacerbated, not improved by the proposed development, starting from the construction phase, resulting in reduced quality of life for local residents.
9. I object to the fact that the increased amount of traffic that will be drawn to the proposed tunnel is projected to outgrow its capacity over a very short period of time, meaning that any reduced travel time currently anticipated is likely to be restored to its current level within only a few years of the tunnel opening. A far preferable – and more environmentally friendly and less expensive option – would be to develop meaningful large-scale public transport options such as electric trams. The success of the B-line bus system is an example of what can be achieved here.

The community should have the opportunity to fully consider such options – including but not limited to dedicated bus lanes.

10. I object to the tolls associated with the project, with little evidence that it will reduce existing congestion.
11. I object to the fact that the EIS has not been available for sufficient and appropriate community consultation. The volume of paperwork available has not been provided in a format suitable for community access and is highly technical and complex. A plain-English version of all documentation should be made available for an extended period of community consultation – including a complete assessment of all environmental and health risks, including testing that has been conducted and that is proposed.
12. I object to the fact that there has not been a business case made publicly available for this project. The costs published seem to far outweigh the benefits and do not in any way mitigate the environmental, social and health risks.

Sydney has a unique opportunity to solve the traffic congestion on the Northern Beaches with environmentally friendly and sustainable solutions. This project is not going to fulfil that ambition, and alternative solutions should be presented to the community for consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the person.

I hereby state that I have not made any reportable political donations in the past two years.