

WESTCONNEX PROJECT CONCERNS FOR RESIDENTS AROUND CONCORD RD

FORMAL WRITTEN SUBMISSION FOR THE WESTCONNEX M4 EAST ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) CLOSES 2 NOVEMBER 2015. GO TO THE WEBSITE http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6307 FOR DETAILS AND ONLINE SUBMISSION. ALL SUBMISSIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT WHO ARE CONSENT AUTHORITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT.

The design has been rushed which is the reason for the many design changes to the WestConnex project prior to the EIS. This is a general symptom of many government projects where when the project is approved to proceed, design is madly rushed to complete to seek return as soon as possible later to find out that the project isn't cost beneficial or has problems. This has been proven with many of the large infrastructure projects delivered by the government. In addition, a business case was not completed for the WestConnex Project hence will likely to run into financial problems and/or infrastructure deemed unsuccessful to the purpose of the project intent.

ITEM 1: REQUEST FOR ABOLITION OF CONCORD INTERCHANGE

The overall project objectives of the WestConnex Tunnel (vol. 1, section 3.3) including the goals of NSW 2021 (vol. 1, section 3.1) will be met if Concord Rd Interchange is abolished. Without the interchange, there will be significant cost savings and have no impact on local community.

Volume 1, section 4.4.3 of the EIS do not provide any substantial reason in having Concord Rd Interchange. The EIS indicates that the interchange would provide access from key centres of Strathfield and Rhodes to the M4 East tunnels and would therefore provide adequate transport connectivity to these centres. This can be disputed as Strathfield is not a key centre for growth and Rhodes will be catered for by Homebush Bay Drive Interchange (vol. 1, page 4-18).

The proposed option in the design for Concord Rd Interchange will result in the highest number of heritage items/dwellings acquisition, tunnel access, used as main construction tunnelling site, removal of existing westbound on-ramp from Concord Rd northbound and introducing a new westbound on-ramp in a form of an overpass bridge over Concord Rd of maximum height 8m above Concord Rd to provide access for Concord Rd southbound travelling M4 westbound (refer to item 2 below).

It is noted in the EIS that an interchange was considered on Parramatta Rd near Shattlesbury Rd at Burwood as an option instead of Concord Rd Interchange (vol. 1, page 4-21) but was not selected because of the close proximity of the on-ramp connections to Wattle St and Parramatta Rd Ashfield requiring vehicles to perform unsafe weave movements.

What does it mean without Concord Rd Interchange?

- Maintain existing entry for M4 westbound travel and exit point for M4 eastbound travel
- No access to tunnel for eastbound travel. Local residents near the interchange will continue to travel local roads for eastbound direction which will be less congested and un-tolled given the tunnel finishes at Ashfield until the two next stages are approved.
- Less traffic congestion around Concord Rd
- The existing will continue to provide access to key/growth centres such as Sydney Olympic Park, Rhodes and Sydney Markets by Homebush Bay Drive Interchange and Burwood as motorists would not travel west to the interchange for eastbound travel.
- Nearest interchange at Homebush Bay Drive is less than 2.3 km away or nearest tunnel portal is about 1.4km.
- Reduced from 51 residential properties (some heritage listed) to 0 property acquisition
- No landscape changes nor landscape irrigation otherwise there will be major landscape changes due to size of land/property acquisition and landscape irrigation
- Alexandra, Edward, Sydney, Young Streets and Concord, Taylor Lanes will not be acquired nor shortened.

- Pedestrian access on the western side of Concord Rd will be maintained, and the proposed overpass pedestrian bridge on eastern side of Concord Rd will not be required.
- Reduction in sub-surface property acquisition due to no on and off ramps to main tunnel.
- No 22kV high voltage substation located on north western side of corner of Concord Rd and Sydney St to power tunnel
- Reduction in power usage due to ventilation fans and lighting not required on ramps.
- No dust, noise, visual, parking and traffic impact as it will not be a construction site
- No unsightly three level interchange

ITEM 2: UNNECESSARY THREE LEVEL "LIGHTHORSE INTERCHANGE" TYPE BRIDGE AT CONCORD RD INTERCHANGE

WestConnex is proposing an overpass bridge for M4 westbound travel (refer to volume 1 section 4.4.3 last paragraph and section 5.8.1 page 5-42 M4 westbound on-ramp bridge over Concord Rd).

This overpass bridge is to carry traffic from Concord Rd southbound to M4 westbound. The bridge is about 9 metres wide, 250 metres long and has a maximum height of 8 metres above Concord Rd. The construction of the overpass bridge will generate a three level interchange similar to the "Light Horse" Interchange at Eastern Creek (Motorways M4 and M7 intersection), uncommon in Sydney metropolitan interchange and unsuitable on non-artillery road such as Concord Rd.

This bridge will have an adverse impact in terms of visual and noise. The bridge has no noise barrier due to its structure but only noise reducing feature (vol. 1, page 7-43) whatever this is. The bridge is elevated quite high and local residents will be affected by the increased level of noise. Due to its height, the on-ramp will be located above the second floor of an apartment block in Young St of distance around 10 metres. This overpass bridge is totally unwarranted and costly as existing roads can provide improved traffic movements through un-signalised left turns. This improvement can be achieved by having dedicated lanes using un-signalised left turn at Concord Rd onto Parramatta Rd and maintaining the existing un-signalised left turn at Parramatta Rd onto existing M4. These dedicated lanes via use of road islands are to prevent left turns at Parramatta Rd onto M4 for all other road users where other existing road configurations are available to provide the same access. For example, Parramatta Rd travelling eastbound can turn left at Concord Rd for M4 westbound, and Leicester Ave northbound can proceed to Concord Rd for M4 westbound travel. In addition, prevent right turn for Leicester Ave onto Parramatta Rd as there are insignificant number of users on Leicester Ave travelling eastbound on Parramatta Rd where this is provided for at Wentworth Ave.

ITEM 3 REQUEST FOR CONCORD RD NOT TO BE A MAIN CONSTRUCTION SITE FOR TUNNELING

Concord Rd construction site will be one of the main construction site for the main tunnel works i.e. road header will be launched at this site and would excavate the tunnels in easterly and westerly direction (refer to vol. 1, figure 6.13 for site layout). The location for the other nearest construction sites for launching road header are Cintra Park and Underwood Rd construction sites.

Concord Rd construction site is proposed to have the most plant/equipment types used (refer to Table 6.23). Heavy vehicles and vehicle constructions will operate 24/7 with continuous concrete delivery and disposal of tunnel spoil (18 heavy vehicles per hour outside standard hours totalling 260 heavy vehicles and 80 light vehicle per day, p 6-49) over a 2 ½ year period. A temporary large acoustic shed will also be built for spoil handling. Concord Rd will not be able to cope with the number of heavy vehicle traffic resulting from the construction and will have an adverse impact on the local residents. Due to available large space at this interchange being constructed, the Contractors are using this site as a main construction site. Request for the construction of the tunnel around Concord to be from the other two selected tunnel construction sites as they will have

a lesser impact. EIS indicated that Cintra Park has less impact due to heavy vehicles having direct access onto Parramatta Rd.

ITEM 4: REQUEST FOR TUNNEL ROUTE TO FOLLOW PARRAMATTA RD

In the concept design that was publicly displayed between 2013 and 2014, the tunnel was generally following alignment of Parramatta Rd. The proposed design in the EIS is not along Parramatta Rd but rather travels north from Homebush to Concord Rd Interchange and then direct route to Watlie St which is generally south of Parramatta Rd.

Volume 1, section 4.3.2 of EIS indicates the advantages and disadvantages of the tunnel corridor options which are unjustified and bias. The disadvantages listed for "Follow Parramatta Rd" are:

- tunnels below Parramatta Rd would restrict the depths to which buildings could be constructed, in particular basements or footings for taller buildings; and
- restrict opportunities for urban vitalisation and improved liveability along and around Parramatta Rd.

The above statements are invalid given the tunnel can be designed at a lower depth if necessary such as the under construction NorthConnex (which generally have much lower depths, up to 90m compared to WestConnex up to 50m), and the Cross City Tunnel was able to be constructed with existing tall buildings and underground rail network in the Sydney CBD. Another reason for its invalidity is that the "follow Parramatta Rd" route was proposed in the concept design with Parramatta Rd Urban revitalisation considered. The new proposed route was only elected by the preferred Tenderer to minimise their project construction cost without other considerations.

Request for the tunnel to follow Parramatta Rd as the advantages will have less construction impact and structural damage to many residential properties, most of which are over 80 years old constructed on poor foundations, reduction in the number of sub-surface acquisitions, and would be a closer fresh air intake distance for the tunnel from Cintra Park.

Furthermore, "Follow Parramatta Rd" option could be extended on the western side of Concord Rd, as the long length ramps required on the proposed Concord Rd Interchange can meet up with the main tunnel under Parramatta Rd.