

Objection to NWRL EIS2 Cherrybrook Station proposals

Application No. SSI - 5414



Resident Submission
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EIS 2 Argument:

Discussion

I have concerns about a number of aspects of the North West Rail Link, particularly the demolition of the Hills Centre for the construction of the planned Showground Station and the visual impact of the Kellyville Station on the heritage values of the Old Windsor Road precinct. However I wish to concentrate my remarks to a discussion of the proposals which directly threaten the community around the planned Cherrybrook Station and my quality of life.

I strongly object to the design of the Cherrybrook Railway Station and the transport planning around it. This station plan has grown considerably from its original iteration as the 'Franklin Road Station'. During EIS1 it grew in size to cover the whole area between Franklin Road to Robert Road and was described as 'the station in the bush'. Now it's an open cut station with large chunks of area noted for future use with the notation '*Future Use to be determined by Master Plan*'. This future use, while not articulated, is widely believed to be mixed use commercial and residential and will probably include multi-storey blocks. This has not been denied by NWRL and representatives have suggested that it is the most logical form of development for a transport hub. Rather than the underground station originally envisaged the station will now have a huge impact on the local environment. This is unacceptable and contradictory to previous advice about the future of the 'construction zone'.

EIS2 also describes in detail why using Robert and Franklin Roads for vehicular access and egress is the '*best*' solution. This whole argument (Section 9.5.2 of the EIS and the Technical Paper 2 - Operational Traffic & Transport Management Plan) is based on spurious information and a complete misreading of the existing load on County Drive and Castle Hill Road (between County Drive and Robert Road). All information about the existing traffic load at the County Drive/ Castle Hill Road intersection in Technical Paper is based on the right-hand turn lanes and does not address the left (which is the direction of the station).

The residents of Robert Road have commissioned an independent transport analysis from an RTA/ RMS Authorised Traffic Controller, Inco Pty Ltd, which provides more detail. In summary it shows that the relevant section of County Drive to Castle Hill Road (and in reverse) is free from queues even with the reduction of County Drive to one lane. The opening of the second available lane would reinforce this. The study has also shown that the number of people using the bus currently in John Road is small and little, if any, inconvenience would be caused by taking buses up County Drive and omitting the John Road leg of the journey. A complete copy of this report can be found at www.saverobertroad.com.

The technical details supplied about both Robert and Franklin Roads are also incorrect. Robert Road is not 8.5m wide. It is 7m at its maximum. Franklin Road is not 7.5m wide. It is 9m wide at its maximum. The national body for road standards, Ausroad (the National Association of Roads and Traffic Australia), classifies a 'Local Road' as a two way lane with 2 parking lanes allowed and a carriageway width of 9m. Franklin Road fits into this category of local road but Robert Road does not. Robert Road (based on 7m carriageway width) is suitable under the standards for a cul-de-sac or access road only.

The EIS states that one of the objectives of the NWRL is to stop '*rat runs*' through the suburbs and yet at Cherrybrook one is being planned, and promoted. Robert Road was partially closed to Castle Hill Road in 1998 because it was characterised by Hornsby Shire Council at that time as '**having a high incidence of accidents**'. Why is it okay now to create a rat run to the station and remove on-street parking for residents and visitors? Bus and commuter traffic on this road is dangerous and a serious safety concern for both residents and commuters. Robert Road should be closed to Castle Hill Road and the station which would be consistent with its classification as a cul-de-sac.

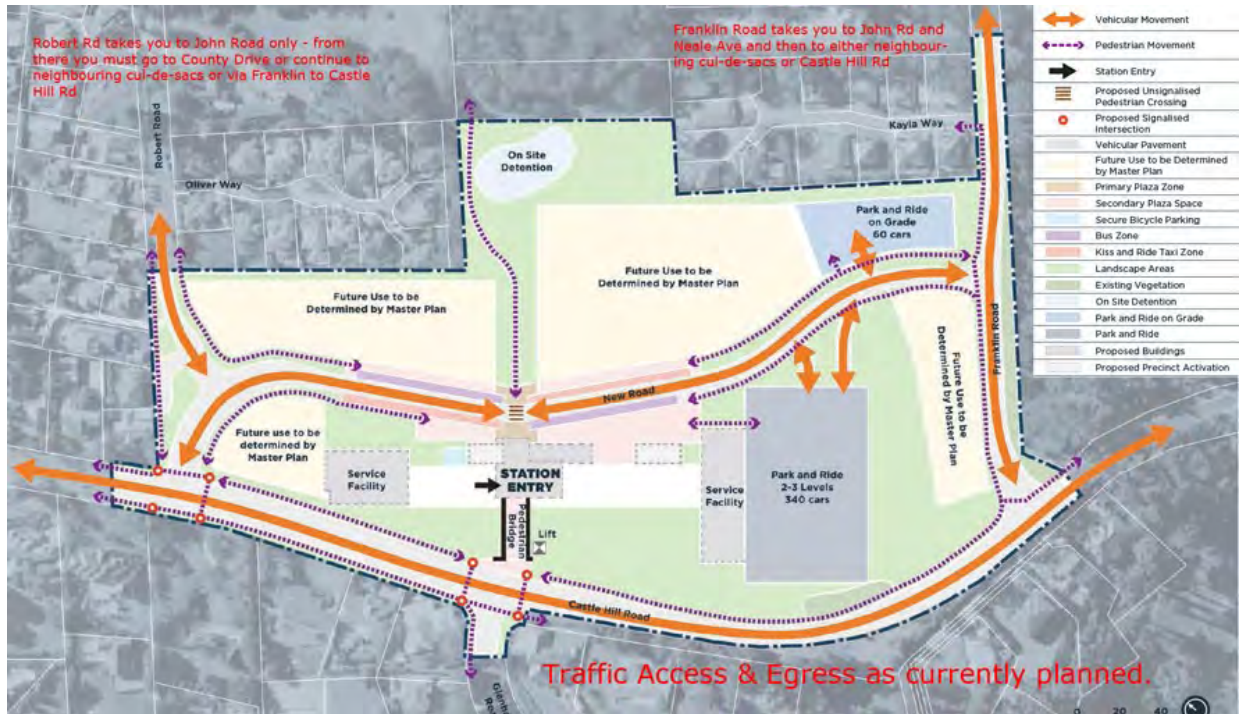
The argument put forward in EIS2 that buses must follow the same route in both directions does not in any way preclude using the main roads with only minor changes to Castle Hill Road access points required as shown on page 2.

Unfortunately the traffic representative of the NWRL, who spoke to residents at a Community Information Session at the Cherrybrook Uniting Church, was dismissive of concerns and refused to even consider alternatives. He made it clear that no alternative solutions would ever be considered and that the EIS comment process was merely a formality. I sincerely hope that that is not so, that logic and reality will prevail and this aspect of the proposal will be reconsidered with Robert Road closed to through traffic, even if the location of the station cannot be reconsidered.

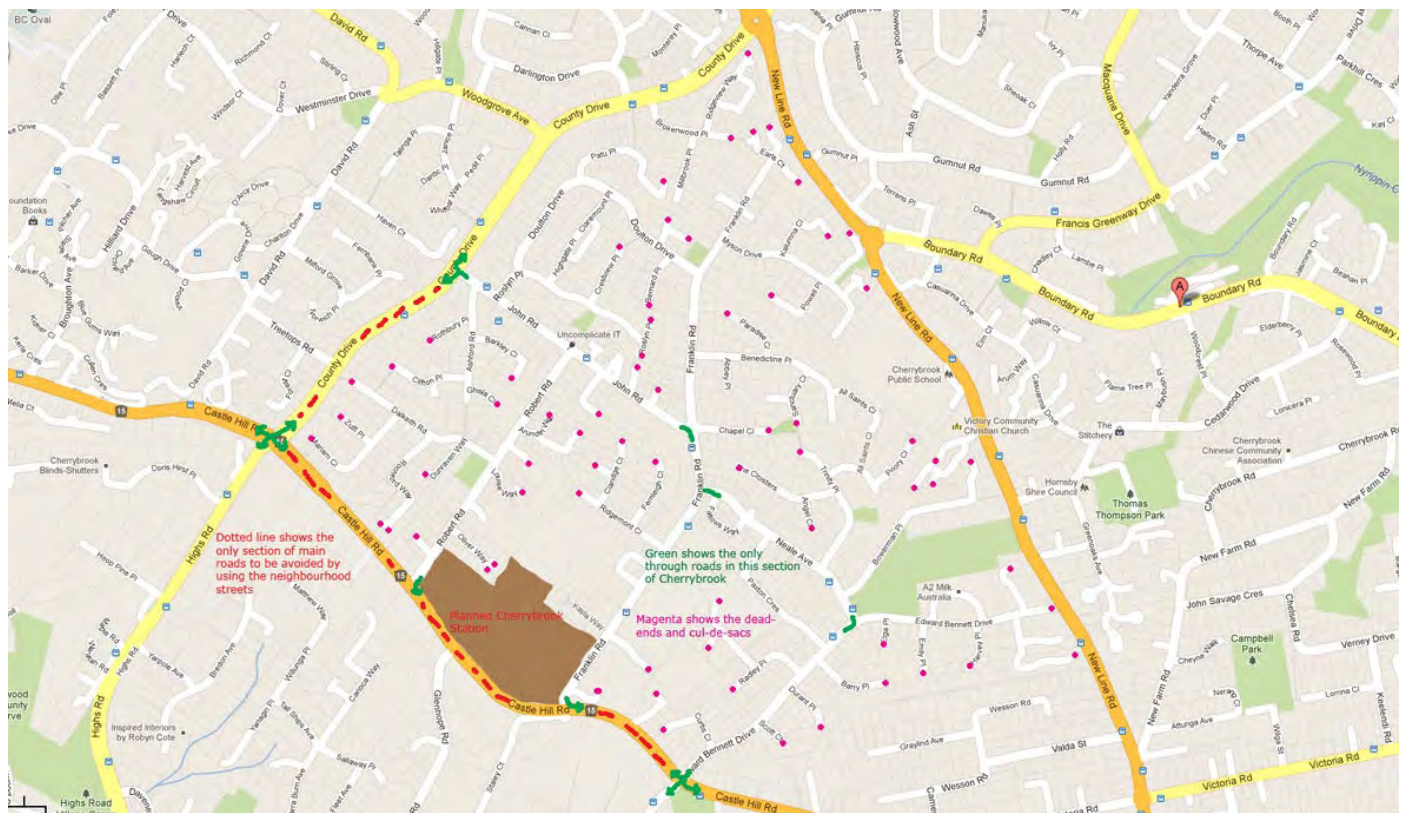
The Wider Context of Station Traffic Flow

A stated aim (in Technical Paper 2) is: *The effect of the NWRL project, with respect to the strategic road network during the AM peak period, is to reduce traffic flows on main roads in the corridor, as a result of transfers from car to train for commuter journeys.*

With respect to Cherrybrook station, although the EIS indicates that traffic is to avoid the main roads, it is only possible to do that in the immediate area and in fact creates greater gridlock on main arteries in other locations.



The NWRL proposed access & egress diagram (Fig 6.12 page 6-26) which appears to show traffic being diverted away from the main roads is misleading. When you look at the neighbouring streets it becomes clear that traffic is simply being channelled to other sections of the existing main roads as there are virtually no through roads in this neighbourhood. Technical Paper 2 suggests a traffic increase of 150% in local access streets which is in effect an increase in main road traffic making the other statistics quoted unreliable.



Photos showing that there is no current congestion turning left onto Castle Hill Road from County Drive



Photos taken at 5 minute intervals from 6:55-8:00am on 21 November 2012
Courtesy of Ray Doyle

Photos showing current traffic conditions as well as the condition of the road surface in Robert Rd

