



23 October 2017

Major Projects
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Our Reference HC-23-02-13/03
Contact KAREN HUGHES
Telephone 8745-9774

online lodgement

Dear Sir/Madam

PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL (STAGE 1) WESTMEAD TO CARLINGFORD VIA PARRAMATTA CBD AND CAMELLIA – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Parramatta Light Rail (Stage 1) Westmead to Carlingford via Parramatta CBD and Camelia Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated August 2017.

This submission has been prepared by Cumberland Council officers and provides a broad analysis of the Parramatta Light Rail stage 1 with a particular focus on the impacts and implications to Westmead and the portion of Westmead within the Cumberland LGA.

The key issues regarding the Parramatta Light Rail are identified below.

Study area boundary

This includes those implications to the portion of the suburb of Westmead located within the Cumberland LGA being south of the railway line. It is noted that this portion of Westmead is outside of the Parramatta Light Rail Study area, however there will be direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to this area due to the light rail construction works and its operation.

This study area sees the majority of the light rail project retained within the Parramatta LGA. This approach is restricted and ignores the opportunities and benefits that would be attained by extending the light rail to the south into the Cumberland LGA and to address a study area that extends beyond the immediate terminus / built infrastructure corridor.

Westmead Terminus Location and opportunity to integrate the Westmead suburb
Cumberland Council does not support the current Westmead terminus for a number of reasons.

Physical separation of north and south Westmead.

- The current terminus location to the north of the railway line (and away from Westmead station) reinforces the physical and perceived separation of the suburb of Westmead into two distinct areas, being the north and the south, as divided by the

railway corridor. These two areas are currently connected only by two roads being Hawkesbury road (adjacent to the Westmead railway station) and Bridge Road to the west.

- The light rail infrastructure and access it provides, presents an opportunity to enhance the physical and visual connection of the north and south areas of Westmead and would promote Hawkesbury road as an important corridor for the area, to support existing land use activities and future redevelopment, as well as encouraging the movement of people between these two areas in an efficient and safe manner.
- Shifting the proposed terminus to the south (over the bridge) would strengthen Hawkesbury road and connect the north and south areas of Westmead. This may then also allow the light rail to service the Westmead Public School.

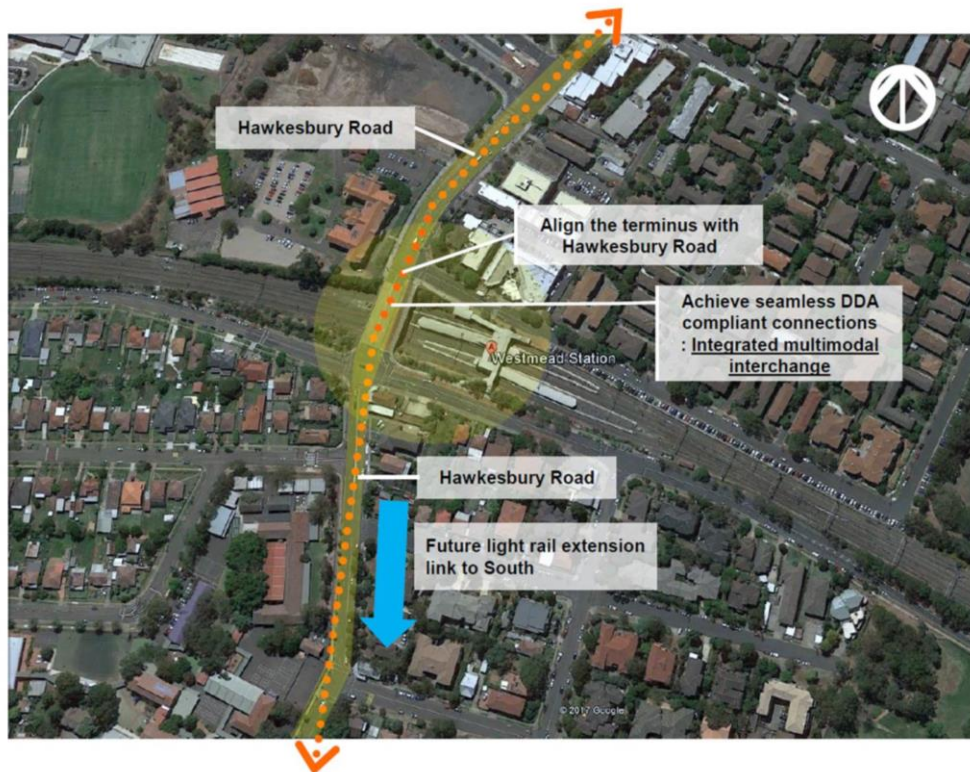
Seamless and convenient interchange

- Westmead station (heavy rail) is one of the most important access points within the precinct. In addition, it is critical that Westmead Station act as an effective and convenient (seamless) interchange point.
- Placement of the light rail terminus as proposed (top of a hill) is at odds with the key objective of better integrating transport modes, capitalising on significant infrastructure investment, and improving access for the high volume of people likely to interchange between modes and/or seek to access key facilities at Westmead (hospitals and Westmead centre).
- Access between the rail station, bus t-way (stops of Alexandra Ave) and Hawkesbury Road is far from ideal for people with impaired mobility, prams, wheelchairs etc. It is important that the new light rail infrastructure seek to significantly improve access, convenience, safety and general amenity for all potential users, including these groups. This may also require works related to improve the existing pedestrian access to and within Westmead station.
- The above points of concern may be redressed by shifting the terminus to the south for more direct access from Westmead station and t-way stops, and providing an additional stop north of railway parade (near the currently proposed terminus). Improved access from the railway station, such as wider pedestrian routes/paths, covered walkways and clear visual connection from the railway station to the light rail stop may also assist in integrating and transitioning the different modes.
- Real time information on the next service (s) for all modes at all stops/stations would also assist in passenger transitions between the different transport modes and would likely raise perception of efficiency of using and moving between the modes.

Southern Extension

Council has proposed to shift the proposed terminus of the Stage 1 light rail to the south over the railway bridge (near Westmead station) on Hawkesbury Road to improve the passenger interchange between modes to better connect and integrate the suburb of Westmead and the role of Hawkesbury Road generally as outlined above. Council recognises that shifting the terminus of the light rail to the south, over the railway corridor bridge of Hawkesbury Road, to between Alexandra Avenue and Priddle Street for

example with a stop near Alexandra Avenue, would involve testing and design works of the bridge in terms of its width and strength to support the light rail infrastructure and for the management of vehicle movements on the road network.



Future Network Expansion

It is important that the design for the current light rail services, and in particular the proposed terminus at Westmead or a shifted terminus (south) such as toward Priddle Street, does not preclude or prevent the potential future expansion the light rail infrastructure further to the south into the wider Westmead suburb as part of a larger regional light rail network (stage 3 and beyond).

With the Westmead Health Precinct undergoing major transformation with the potential for 30,000 to 50,000 additional jobs, as well as the education sector growth, a future extension of the light rail to the south of Westmead train station could assist in connecting these employment nodes to where those workers live.

An extension of the light rail to the south via Hawkesbury road can also potentially provide improved transport options for commuters working in Parramatta who reside in the southern parts of Westmead and Wentworthville, and so which would reduce the number of car trips being made into Parramatta CBD.

Construction and operational phases – access and movement beyond the study area boundary – prioritise pedestrian movement

The expected disruption to traffic utilising Hawkesbury Road and the traffic redirection or otherwise onto the surrounding road network during the construction phase activities, including of the area outside of the Light Rail Study Area, will need to be carefully managed and negative impacts mitigated.

The safe and clear access routes for pedestrians and cyclists, within the changed vehicle traffic conditions and areas of construction activities, with minimal time delays will also need to be carefully managed and addressed. The potential benefits of a light rail service may be mitigated if active transport users started using private vehicles as an alternative mode due to construction related impediments to pedestrian or cycle paths and access to the train station.

There are a number of bus routes which travel through the southern portion of Westmead and hence are outside of the study area, but which will be affected by the vehicular traffic / road diversions, slowing of traffic and associated congestion of the construction phase in particular. This could deter passengers from this mode in the short to longer term and cause inconvenience and inefficient operations. The prioritisation of bus services though any such traffic/route changes and the easy and safe access to bus stops, including at /with Westmead train station and local schools (such as Westmead Public School) should be protected.

The prioritisation of pedestrian movements, as identified in the draft EIS, is an important approach to encourage the use of the light rail services as part of an integrated transport and land use system.

Westmead Priority Precinct and future development

Westmead, including that area within the Cumberland LGA, has been designated as a Priority Precinct by the NSW Government. Priority Precincts have potential to deliver a significant amount of growth with a focus on housing and employment in proximity to public transport services and commercial premises.

The cumulative challenges and benefits, and potential for improved outcomes, from the light rail and the priority precinct based activities will need to be taken into account and addressed though each respective project.

If the light rail terminus was shifted to the southern side of the railway bridge, with potential for further extension southwards in future, this could facilitate and support the housing and employment based growth anticipated though Westmead Priority Precinct initiatives and the area within which to provide the provide high quality open space, community facilities, walking/cycling/road infrastructure and other elements to enhance liveability outcomes required to support that growth.



Wentworthville

The suburb of Wentworthville is located about 1.5km west of Westmead and connected by road and heavy rail (suburban passenger services). Similar to Westmead, the portion of Wentworthville south of the railway line is within the Cumberland LGA.

Wentworthville has also been identified by the NSW government as a Priority Precinct.

Cumberland Council is supporting the growth and redevelopment of the Wentworthville Centre (within Cumberland LGA) through the Wentworthville Centre Revitalisation Project. A key element of this Revitalisation Project is the Wentworthville Planning and Placemaking Strategy which evolved from detailed studies in traffic and transport modelling, built form modelling, economic feasibility and community input. The Strategy will be implanted through changes to planning controls and development controls.

The Wentworthville centre and its immediate surrounds are also undergoing considerable redevelopment and intensification, particularly with residential flat buildings and mixed use developments, and this is likely to continue based on the current and potential planning proposals and development applications that Council is aware of.

Given the proximity and access between the Wentworthville and Westmead centres, and the growth of each centre as currently occurring and being planned, there is anticipated to be increased movement between these two centres. The future light rail would also directly and directly influence this relationship and so will have a regional and cumulative impact on and from Wentworthville.

Other Cumberland Council Actions and Priorities

Cumberland Council has a number of actions and priorities that it will be focussing on which can complement the Parramatta Light Rail project. This includes undertaking a transport and access plan for the Cumberland LGA as well as a bike plan and pedestrian access plans.

Council will continue to advocate for and seek to provide sufficient infrastructure for the increasing resident and working population particularly in terms of public transport as well as open space and community facilities to achieve improved amenity outcomes. Council will also actively seek to ensure measures are taken to improve traffic and parking arrangements so that the burden on existing infrastructure does not disadvantage the existing or future community.

All stakeholders should be involved in planning for these areas. Cumberland Council is a key stakeholder in this and in any other project that involves development in and around the Greater Parramatta area. We will welcome further opportunities to provide input into the planning for the future of this important area.



CUMBERLAND
COUNCIL

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please contact the officer indicated above.

Yours faithfully

Monica Cologna
Manager Strategic Planning