

12th September, 2014

Department of Planning and the Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Re: Project No. SSI 6148

As the largest lease holder and one of the largest developers in Sydney Olympic Park, we wish to make a formal submission with regards the *WestConnex M4 Widening Environmental Impact Statement* recently released.

Whilst we support the construction of the WestConnex and specifically the Hill Road on-ramp which will improve egress from the Park to the East for the growing number of employees, residents and event patrons travelling from Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point, Carter Street and Newington, we have three key issues with the project.

1. The WestConnex project does not offer a fully integrated solution which addresses the commuter needs of the expanding business, resident, student and event populations in the Sydney Olympic Park and surrounding precincts.

Since 2011 the employee/student population in Sydney Olympic Park has grown from 14,691 to 17,449, a 19% increase over the past four years and a 48% increase since 2006.

The Park has its own growing residential community, as well as servicing both Wentworth Point and Newington on its doorstep. It is also proposed for Sydney Olympic Park to be a transport and recreation hub for both the Carter Street (5,500 dwellings and 11,000 residents) and Wentworth Point Urban Activation Precincts (7,700 dwellings and 20,000 residents.) Within the Park itself the residential population will increase from 600 to 5,000 in the next few years with the completion of a further four residential towers.

There are around 6,000 events annually, including an increasing number of business events. ANZ Stadium alone attracts 1.5 million spectators annually to around 50 major events. The Sydney Showground is the home of Australia's largest annual event, the Royal Easter Show which brings 900,000 visitors to the Park and Allphones Arena ranks 11th for Worldwide Venue Ticket Sales. With the closure of Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre and the pending closure of Qantas Credit Card Union Arena for refurbishment, both Sydney Showground and Allphones Arena are seeing increased bookings for local and international events.

Recommendation

Construction of an off-ramp from the M4 onto Hill Road to provide a much needed, direct way to access the Wentworth Point and Carter Street precincts as well as Sydney Olympic Park when travelling from east to west – the same “sport fans and concert goers” who will benefit from the on-ramp proposed from Hill Road onto the M4, also need to get to the Park and avoid the traffic jams at the Australia Avenue Roundabout

Hill Road be reclassified and upgraded from a local road to a major road to reflect its status as a strategic thoroughfare to and from Sydney Olympic Park and as part of an interchange connecting it to an urban motorway.

2. Inadequate public transport increases pressure on roads in Sydney Olympic precinct and nearby arterial roads.

The lack of adequate public transport to and from Sydney Olympic Park during the week is forcing increased use of private vehicles and onto an already congested road system around the Park, namely Silverwater Road, Parramatta Road, Hill Road, Homebush Bay Drive, and the M4. These roads are already beyond capacity during peak periods.

Whilst the construction of the Wentworth Point-Rhodes bridge should assist with event day buses from 2016, the Business Association also believes consideration should be given to the provision of bus priority lanes on the WestConnex for buses to and from Sydney Olympic Park to encourage further take up of public transport during the week.

Recommendation

That consideration is given to a bus priority lane between Sydney Olympic Park and Strathfield, to efficiently transport large numbers of people during morning and afternoon peak periods, and during major events in Sydney Olympic Park.

3. Inability to handle high and increasing traffic demands at the Australia Avenue roundabout.

The Australia Avenue roundabout is currently the main gateway for traffic in and out of Sydney Olympic Park.

Due to the volumes and makeup of the main feeder roads of M4 - Hill Road, Homebush Bay Drive, Silverwater Road and Parramatta Road, we believe that up to 80% of the daily car movements enter and leave via Australia Avenue. It is a major traffic bottleneck during am and pm peak hours during the week and at weekends when the recently expanded DFO in Homebush is also busy. The roundabout does not have the capacity to carry the increased population over the next 5-10 years. It is a constant source of negative feedback from our employees, contractors, supplier and visitors alike traveling to and from Sydney Olympic Park during weekdays at peak times and during major events, and for our staff who also live locally.

Recommendation

Strongly recommends the Australia Avenue roundabout be upgraded to accommodate current high volumes of traffic and increased traffic demands that will be brought by the WestConnex.

We believe funding for an off-ramp could be sourced through a number of sources including:

- Stamp duty from the sale of new units in Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point and Carter Street with ongoing revenue as units are resold
- Sale of Roads and Maritime Services land
- Council rates
- Tolls from 'sports fans and event goers' coming to Sydney Olympic Park who currently enter the Park via the Australia Avenue roundabout.

In conclusion, we look forward to your feedback on these specific issues. Sydney Olympic Park is long overdue for infrastructure improvements given its proven track record in contributing to the economic benefits to the state and the significant growth in employee, resident and student number in the past few years.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Quade – Development Manager – The GPT Group