

19 September 2014

Glenn Snow
Team Leader – Roads Infrastructure Projects
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Snow,

RE: STRATHFIELD COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO WESTCONNEX M4 WIDENING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC EXHIBITION

I refer to your letter dated 12 August 2014 inviting Council's comments in relation to the Public Exhibition of the *WestConnex – M4 Widening Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS) prepared by the Road and Maritime Services regarding the above project.

Council at its meeting on 2 September 2014 resolved (215/14): *"That Council prepare a submission in response to the WestConnex M4 Widening Environmental Impact Statement Public Exhibition, based on the draft issues presented and any further issues raised by Council"*.

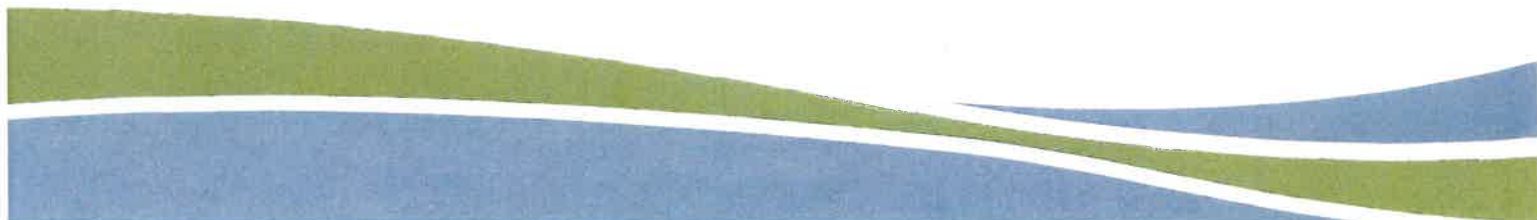
The enclosed submission was prepared in response to the above resolution.

Council has undertaken a review of the EIS and is supportive of the overall intent of the M4 Widening Project. Notwithstanding, Council has some concerns including, but are not limited to:

- That there will be minimal to no improvement on the Parramatta Road traffic volumes and congestion issues in the Homebush/Strathfield precinct
- That the WestConnex project does not appear to provide improvements to the existing traffic congestion issues to north-south connections into and out Strathfield i.e. Arthur Street, Underwood Road, Bridge Road, Subway Lane and Leicester Avenue
- The reintroduction of the toll system appears to serve as a disincentive and have the effect of limiting the patronage of the M4 and thus increasing congestion on Parramatta Road and local streets, used as alternate routes
- Traffic congestion and volume issues in the Parramatta Road Corridor, particularly during the two year period between 2017 and 2019 after the M4 Widening completion and prior to the M4 East Tunnel completion

Council's concerns are outlined in more detail in the enclosed Strathfield Council submission.

If you have any question regarding this letter, please contact Council's Strategic Planner, Frankie Liang on 9748 9995.



Yours sincerely



DAVID BACKHOUSE
GENERAL MANAGER

Cc: Paul Goldsmith
Director – Stage 1
WestConnex Delivery Authority
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STRATHFIELD COUNCIL SUBMISSION

WESTCONNEX STAGE 1(A) M4 WIDENING (SSI-6148)

This submission has been prepared by Strathfield Council in response to the invitation for comment on the WestConnex Stage 1(a) M4 Widening Environmental Impact Statement Public Exhibition.

Whilst Council is supportive of the overall intent of the WestConnex Project and any local and regional traffic and transport benefits, Council is concerned about the specific impacts of the M4 Widening directly affecting the Homebush/Strathfield precinct.

Traffic Modelling

The WRTM traffic modelling primarily focused on the east to west and west to east traffic movement. Council suggests that a similar analysis be undertaken on the movement of vehicles travelling from north to south and south to north across the corridor including the Strathfield/Homebush precinct in order to adequately assess the full operational traffic and transport impacts of the project on the whole Parramatta Road Corridor.

Council also suggests that the State Government conduct an alternative traffic modelling under the "no-toll" scenario in order to assess the impact of the toll on the traffic volumes on Parramatta Road and other local streets.

Traffic Impacts

Council raises its concern on the projected impact of the M4 Widening to the Parramatta Road traffic volumes in the Homebush/ Strathfield precinct. As indicated in the assessment of Transport and Traffic Issues on Part 8.1 of the EIS, the traffic modelling generally shows minimal to no improvement on the Parramatta Road traffic volumes in the Homebush/Strathfield precinct, particularly in the Parramatta Road/Concord Road/Leicester Avenue and Parramatta Road/Wentworth Road intersections even after the full WestConnex project is completed.

This is of particular concern to Council given the increased densities and residential capacity along the Parramatta Road Corridor as per the Strathfield Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP 2012), which responded to the State Government's Inner West Subregion Draft Subregional Strategy (2008).

Another primary concern for Council relates to how the existing traffic congestion issues on the north-south connections into and out of the Strathfield LGA (i.e. Arthur Street, Underwood Road, Bridge Road, Subway Lane and Leicester Avenue) do not appear to be improved by the M4 Widening.

As the north to south road congestion is influenced by regional traffic generation, Council would expect a regional traffic initiative such as WestConnex to address these issues, particularly as the State Government continues to increase regional housing targets across Sydney. This particularly includes the traffic congestion issues at the critical Arthur Street/ Centenary Drive intersection, and how the WestConnex project impacts this. The information provided in the EIS does not include the modelling and technical explanation of how or if the G-ramp at Homebush Bay Drive to M4 Motorway will improve the Arthur Street intersection.

Council requests that further analysis and consideration be given to addressing the traffic congestion and volume issues along the Parramatta Road Corridor during the two year period between 2017 and 2019 after the completion of Stage 1(A) and prior to the M4 East Tunnel completion.

Tolling system

The *WestConnex Business Case Executive Summary* indicates that a toll will be re-introduced on the widened M4 Motorway on its opening in 2017 to help fund the remaining WestConnex projects.

The reintroduction of the toll system appears to serve as a disincentive and have the effect of limiting the patronage of the M4. According to the *WestConnex M4 Widening Traffic and Transport Working Paper 4* (2014) prepared by the WestConnex Delivery Authority, it is estimated that volumes on the M4 would drop and Parramatta Road volumes would increase despite the increased capacity on the M4 Motorway. The report also highlights that the total traffic volumes increased by 23 per cent after the removal of the tolls in 2010.

Council suggests that further analysis and consideration be given on the implications of the tolling system on Parramatta Road and local streets. Mitigation measures should also be modelled and considered in order to potentially manage the potential impacts of road users using alternate routes and rat running local streets.

Other consideration/s

Council would like to emphasise its concern for the property owners subject to any acquisition process and particularly the impacts on adjacent property owners (not currently being acquired) of the expanded WestConnex infrastructure.