

4.0 OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

4.1 Vision

The vision for the M2 Motorway is that the vegetated landscape and the uniqueness of the topography in this part of Sydney should inspire the design of the future upgrade and development of the motorway. In keeping with the original design, a key objective would be that the:

".... landscape design would include the desire to preserve existing visual linkages or establish new linkages across the expressway."¹

The Vision is therefore that:

The M2 Motorway upgrade should reflect the corridor's role as an important north-west route linking Ryde, Blacktown and the M7. Its design should be simple, well considered, elegant, refined, robust, reflect the natural and cultural qualities of the region through which it passes and establish a clear and recognisable identity for the motorway.

This vision can be applied to all future developments of the motorway and implemented gradually. The limited upgrade provides the opportunity to commence the process of improving the presentation of the Motorway but it is not within the scope of this upgrade to improve the whole of the Motorway. Only areas that are to be impacted by the upgrade are to be addressed as part of this process.

It is envisaged that as the road is developed and maintained, as part of the concession period, this design vision and its objectives and principles will be progressively implemented by Hills Motorway.

4.2 Design Objectives and Principles

The key urban design objectives for the upgrade of the M2 Motorway will be considered throughout all phases of the project, will inform all design decisions and will be used to evaluate the success of design proposals.

Objective 1

Upgrade works are to improve the visual appearance and character of the road corridor and create a recognisable identity for the M2 Motorway.

Principles

- Motorway elements are to enhance the visual quality of the corridor.
- Motorway elements are to be constructed of appropriate materials that are contextually responsive.
- Motorway elements are to provide/establish a consistent and identifiable architectural language.
- Provide a consistent set of built elements along the length of the corridor to strengthen the identity of the road.
- Conserve, enhance and interpret any historically significant items along the corridor.

Objective 2

Motorway elements are to complement the surrounding setting.

Principles

- The use of colour and form needs to relate to the landscape setting.
- Motorway elements should capture/complement the strength of the sandstone geology of the ridge lines.
- Motorway elements are to make a positive and appropriate contribution to the defined character and essential qualities of the motorway corridor.

Objective 3

Maintain a safe and accessible corridor.

Principles

- The new works should maintain a safe and accessible corridor which reinforces safe driver behaviour and provides a pleasant and interesting travel experience.
- Hard and soft landscape should be used to emphasise road geometry, yet retain views for driver safety.

Objective 4

Improve connectivity

Principle

- Maintain, improve and strengthen the connectivity of the community across the Motorway corridor, linking footpaths, cycleways, public transport, recreation areas and major precincts.

Objective 5

Revegetation strategies need to relate to scale, composition and colour of the adjacent built form.

Principles

- Landscape plantings need to be simple, bold, robust, long-lasting, accessible and manageable.
- Any new landscape or built works need to balance capital cost against long-term maintenance.
- Implement a management strategy for the long term control of weeds within the corridor.

Objective 6

Protect and enhance the natural systems and ecology of the corridor.

Principles

- Natural vegetation communities should be enhanced.
- Weed infestations should be managed and controlled.
- The drainage design needs to respond to the landscape context and not just be another hard engineering element. Soft engineering solutions can provide a drainage system which is both attractive and robust providing improved sustainability and flood control.
- The existing landscape character is to be strengthened so that a continuous and prominent backdrop of landscape is created and maintained.

Objective 7

Maintenance of hard and soft landscape elements must be accessible and maintainable with minimal resources.

Principles

- Achieve a simple and unified design which minimises maintenance and associated long term costs.
- Development of access tracks in areas associated with construction disturbances should be adopted.
- Built elements should be designed to have minimal maintenance.
- The utilisation of maintenance tracks for drainage can be an integral element of the overall landscape maintenance.

¹ North West Transport Links East: Environmental Impact Statement Working Paper - Landscape and Visual Assessment, Bruce Mackenzie and Associates, 1992

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