

Objections to Proposed Modifications to Rozelle Interchange (Crescent Overpass)

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M4-M5 Link Rozelle Interchange



Figure 1 - From the Westconnex website. Emphasis is mine.

Eastern pedestrian overpass intimidates the most vulnerable

The scale of the new pedestrian overpass is vastly out of proportion with the landscape, but the main problem is not with aesthetics, but access.

Even though we are assured the gradient is manageable, the absolute length of the incline, as well as the circuitous path make the overpass a nightmare for the disabled, elderly, children and mothers with prams. These groups are all those who will not have a credible alternate access route between the Rail Yards and Bicentennial Park, as these are all groups who cannot afford to risk the additional five street crossings they would be forced into by taking the “GreenLink” bridge.



Figure 2 - Scale of new pedestrian bridge above road

The height of the overpass is extremely intimidating, especially given it stands above one of the busiest roads in Sydney. In high winds the current overpasses at Victoria Road and across the City West Link exhibit considerable movement underfoot – this overpass is almost double the height meaning it will be unusable in the wind.

The original design has the advantage that it is direct, considerably shorter in both length and height, is more sheltered due to tree plantings, and does not require vulnerable people to choose between scaling an enormous bridge or taking five pedestrian crossings.

Calling the western pedestrian bridge a “GreenLink” is disingenuous

The original approved pedestrian and cycling was both a “planted-out” bridge (a Green bridge), that directly linked two green spaces (Rail Yard and Bicentennial Parks) – hence a Green Link. The current proposed modification does not achieve those same objectives in that it only links a single Green Space with a concrete footpath. In fact it does the opposite, linking the Rail Yard park with where Buruwan Park used to be before it was cut down for the project – a real slap in the face for the communities that lost treasured parkland.

The project has failed to understand the use case for the bridges

In public consultation meetings, the project team has justified the proposed design by arguing that the GreenLink bridge will be heavily used as it links people to the public transport of the light rail. While the inner west light rail route is certainly popular (usage figures attest to this) it is not a heavily used public transport mode in this part of Sydney. In fact, if you are standing at the light rail, it is considerably faster to walk to Victoria Rd and catch any one of the express buses to the city. These buses also take you to the heart of the CBD and major employment centres, making this the far more utilized route.

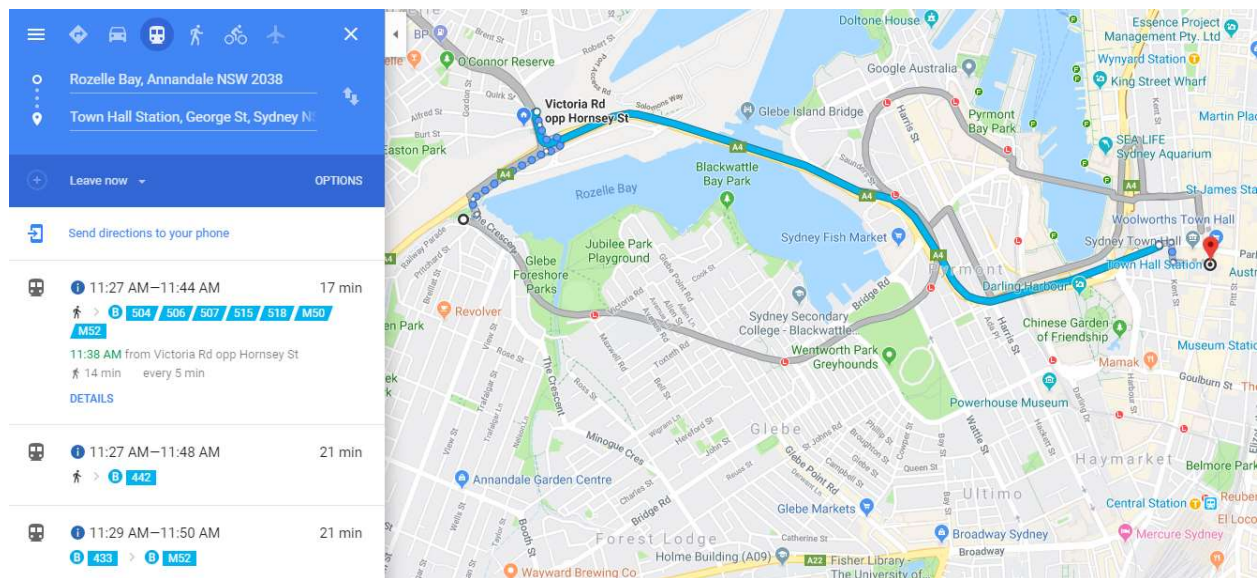


Figure 3 - Fastest route to the city

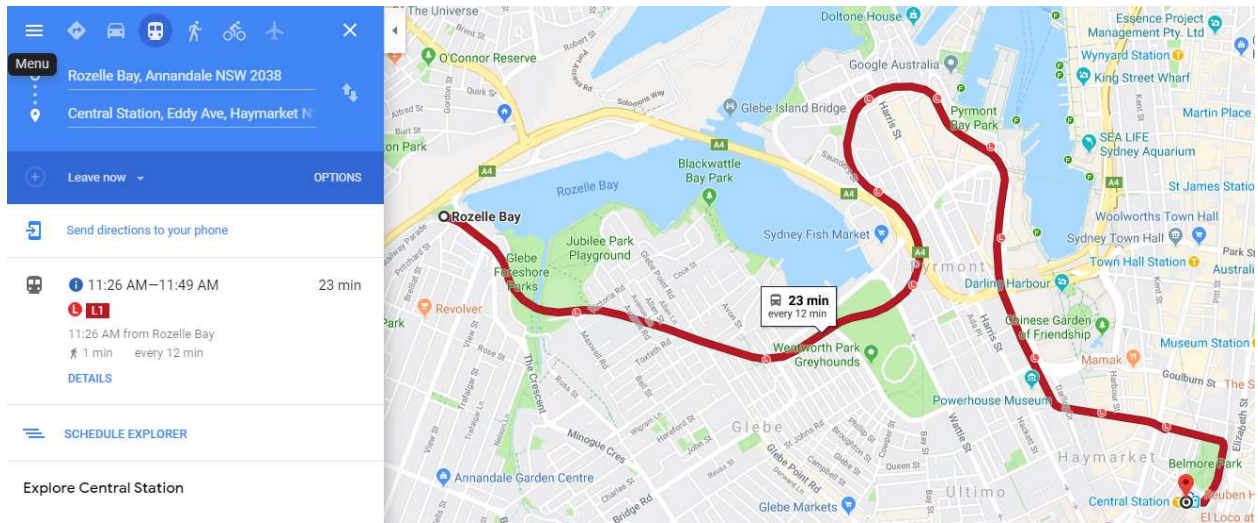


Figure 4 - Slower light rail route to central

The project also appears to be unaware of the local school system, and how this affects pedestrian flows. The catchments for Sydney Secondary High School's Balmain (7-10) and Blackwattle (11-12) campuses both cross the City West Link and contribute to a large volume of current and future pedestrian activity.



Figure 5 - Catchments for Balmain (left) and Blackwattle (rights) campuses

Because Blackwattle campus is situated on the foreshore of Blackwattle Bay, the proposed design forces all students from Lilyfield, Drummoyne, Rozelle, Balmain, Birchgrove and Balmain East onto the tall, circuitous and narrow eastern walkway on the school commute.

Similarly, all students from Glebe attending the Balmain campus will do the same.

These are just a few of the reasons that the proposed design does not work as a pedestrian and cycling solution. There are innumerable other reasons that the vehicle overpass is a terrible idea, but I will defer to the submission by **WestProtects Rozelle** to detail these.