

Director, Transport Assessments Planning Services
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney, NSW 2001

24th September 2019

RE: Application: SSI 7485

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing regarding the proposed modification to the M4-M5 Link, Mod 2, The Crescent overpass, and changes to pedestrian infrastructure in North Annandale, Rozelle, and the Rozelle Bay Foreshore area.

I call for RMS to work with the community to explore alternate design options to the proposed new vehicular overpass and the changed pedestrian and cyclist links. I am seeking the reinstatement of the safe, direct access, as detailed in the approved EIS GreenLink, to create a continuous green open space connection from the Rozelle Rail yards and Annandale to the foreshore. The GreenLink was more than just a walk way - it put people central to the design, maximising safety, and providing much needed accessible open space for the community now and into the future Bays Precinct design. That this part of the plan has been so drastically altered without consultation with the community is unconscionable. Governments and those working on their behalf have no right to make such ill-informed and life-altering decisions without taking into consideration those whose lives will be affected. I consider these changes to be dereliction of duty by those responsible.

The community urges RMS to put a stop to this ill-conceived and aberrational deviation from the original approved plan – the vision laid out in 'Transport for NSW Future Strategy 2056' needs to be adhered to. We seek the cooperation of the RMS to collaborate with the community to design a feasible option that brings the best elements from the approved EIS design into the modification.

My key concerns with the M4-M5 Modification are:

- The significantly reduced safety and consequent increased risk for pedestrians and cyclists with access over The Crescent to Bicentennial Park, and the increased traffic along Johnston Street and the Crescent. Motorists are already illegally using the shoulder on Johnston St, as it approaches The Crescent, to overtake on the left and cut back in as they near the lights, creating dangerous and potential road-rage-inducing conditions for other motorists.
- Being required to cross five sets of pedestrian lights at The Crescent as the only option to reach the foreshore from Annandale or from Rozelle Bay light rail stop.
- Removal of direct active links to the foreshore, cutting the community off from the area and the proposed revitalisation of the entire Bays Precinct, including linking the Light Rail and Bus stops to a Ferry wharf and Metro station.
- Urban and landscape design that is being built before a finalised Masterplan for the area.
- Traffic changes that limit movements around the suburb and create further congestion in the local streets of Annandale, Forest Lodge, Glebe, Lilyfield, and Rozelle with no planning to deal with these.
- The short-sighted and environmentally catastrophic removal of old tree growth from huge swathes of the affected area. This was done without notification to community groups and at huge expense to the

taxpayer - the trees could at least have been transplanted but instead they were completely destroyed. There have been studies done all over the world that prove the heat-reducing capacity of a mature tree canopy in asphalt islands - which we now have to live without - and any high school science student can tell you of the air purifying benefits of green areas. Even if *some* trees are re-planted they would come nowhere near providing the benefits afforded by the ones that have been removed for at least 50 years, by which time the entire Inner West will have become a Los Angeles-type polluted slum, with its multi-lane flyovers, even heavier traffic, unsafe and unsightly high-rise dwellings, and lack of green space.

My other concerns include:

LACK OF CONSULTATION

I am very concerned about the lack of community consultation around this modification, which is a complete redesign of this intersection and the surrounding area. It would seem that the vast majority of residents and community groups knew nothing of this change until the trees started disappearing during the night.

This type of behaviour makes it appear as if RMS is trying to circumvent due process, making ill-conceived decisions about major changes to the local area without consultation with those whom such changes will affect. Naturally such apparent deception paints the department in a very bad light.

DENYING RESIDENTS THE ABILITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A UNIQUE AND VALUABLE ASSET

As a grandparent of two children who live locally and as a local resident of 25 years myself, my family and friends are all frequent users of local green spaces. All residents greatly appreciate being able to easily access the water on the Glebe Foreshore to exercise, participate in sport, or simply enjoy nature in the midst of a busy, polluted, and what is fast becoming an over-populated city, and my son takes his daughters on bike rides throughout these spaces every weekend. This open space is of huge importance to the community and the health and wellbeing, both physical and mental, of the people who live in the area. Given Sydney's unique and fortuitous geography, governments and their agencies **must** take responsibility for providing sensitive and sensible design infrastructure around this asset, rather than compromising access, the environment, and the extant fragile ecosystems in the area, by virtue of careless 'planning'. The overpass has been deposited unceremoniously in the middle of the plan and other aspects have been altered to accommodate it. The priorities must be re-examined - people must be the preeminent stakeholders in this plan, not vehicles.

LACK OF ADHERENCE TO GOOD DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Whilst it is recognized that there are constraints in every design process, it would appear that within the MOD2 reports, optimisation for motorized vehicles and roads is paramount, resulting in a huge number of disadvantages for pedestrians, cyclists, and the internationally recognised asset that is Sydney Harbour.

HONOURING THE TENETS OF THE EIS

Page 8 of the approved Environmental Impact Statement details several principles which have been completely abandoned by this modification:

- **Connect and provide for communities** The concept offers a parkland destination that works to stitch together previously separated communities by providing a range of social infrastructure at a central, easily accessible location. **MOD 2 fails this principle**
- **Enhance green links** The concept reactivates closed-off land through new green spaces and links. These links strategically establish a new green “interaction” connecting a series of significant yet fragmented [future and existing] green spaces in and around White Bay, Rozelle Bay, Rozelle, Balmain, Glebe and Annandale. **MOD 2 removes direct access**
- **Respond to the local character** Respecting and maintaining the unique heritage, industrial character and topography of the Rozelle Rail Yards through interpretation. **A massive concrete overpass obstructing a historically significant local mural, together with a concrete plaza, contravene this vision.**
- **Revitalise streets for equality of mobility** New public spaces and much-needed universally accessible links establish entirely new “public streets” and enhance the surrounding neighbourhood. **MOD 2 does exactly the opposite.**

My submission, therefore, calls for RMS and the Project Team to:

- Reinststate the GreenLink connecting communities with open green space from Rozelle to Bicentennial Park
- Design the modification infrastructure and active links giving due consideration to the character of the suburbs, the location of the foreshore, and its potential future development.
- Provide pedestrian and cyclist paths that maximise people safety and do not force them onto busier streets, unsafe concrete plazas, and caged walkways.
- Integrate direct connections to all active transport – including the future Metro West and Foreshore Ferry Wharf.
- Most importantly, consult with community groups and others who use these spaces before proceeding.

Yours faithfully,



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