



**Submission from
EcoTransit Sydney
to
NSW Roads and Maritime Services on the
Motorway Design at Rozelle Bay**

Matthew Doherty
EcoTransit Sydney
0424 093 940
dohmatt@hotmail.com

25-Sept-2019



INTRODUCTION

The current RMS proposal for the Crescent modification to the Rozelle Interchange has a number of road flyovers proposed in clear breach of what proponents of the Interchange component of Westconnex promised to local communities (namely that the entire Interchange would be underground and allow for direct community access to Rozelle Bay).

While EcoTransit Sydney objects to this betrayal of locals and supports their dream of connected parklands, as a broad community group EcoTransit has a focus on sustainability and Sydney's potential for being a 'transit-oriented' city.

Central to Ecotransit's vision for the Rozelle railyards and parklands is an extension to the Inner West Light Rail (IWLRL) through the railyards, along the existing rail easement, to White Bay [and potentially beyond].

Indeed the Population Summit recently addressed by the NSW Planning Minister, Robert Stokes, revealed broad consensus on the need to prioritise public transport over enormous road projects.

The linkages facilitated by EcoTransit's proposal represent a fantastic opportunity to achieve this and other positive outcomes, whether the motorway proposal proceeds in its current form or not.



Fig. 1 What is at stake – a remarkable opportunity for Sydney. Aerial view of Rozelle rail yards from the north



Key opportunities

With these considerations in mind, EcoTransit here has its focus on the Rozelle railyards and **the critical opportunity** which must not, that cannot, be missed for extending the IWLR to the Bays precinct through the railyards-parklands. It needs to be remembered that – *at present* - there still exist railway easements running through the proposed parkland out to White Bay. In adopting this proposal the NSW government could be seen to re-use existing infrastructure at the same time as it creates new infrastructure. And by reinforcing the public transport infrastructure of Sydney it is helping to future-proof the city.

The key to achieving this outcome for this key area of the inner west is for a green active transport bridge to be built at the same time as the flyovers, one which includes capacity for carrying IWLR trams over the Citywest link and into the railyards. For further discussion see below.

The IWLR has seen remarkable growth in patronage since the extension from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill was opened. It is a much-loved community resource. Giving more people the ability to go to more places, including the forthcoming Bays precinct and the edge of the Balmain peninsula, would be a winning move for all concerned.

The planned economic opportunities of a newly-developed Bays Precinct, with or without a Metro rail stop (that could seamlessly interchange with the IWLR extension) are outstanding and provide more argument for public transport links and interchanges. An IWLR link to White Bay could also link to the heavily patronised bus-stop on Victoria Rd (adjacent to where the White Bay Hotel once stood). This proposal could thus provide for many more linkages to the Bays Precinct, from Victoria Rd buses, the inner west and its light rail, and from the city and the west through the proposed Metro West.

These linkages are central to improving the connectivity of Sydney.



The green active transport bridge

The EcoTransit proposal for the intersection of the Citywest Link and the Crescent is that a separate structure be developed that supports a green active transport bridge for the community from the westbound IWLW after Rozelle Bay tram stop into the Rozelle railyards-parklands.

EcoTransit has produced some images, limited in scope, that show the possibilities in this area; we are committed to the transit bridge and light rail to White Bay, precise details of where different aspects are to be located is for others to examine.

There are alternatives for where the line could run within the park - close by the residences, the centre-line of the park (EcoTransit's preference) or closer to the eastern edge. Within the park, a spur line could run directly between White Bay and Lilyfield to provide the IWLW with operational and capacity benefits; but the active transit bridge is the game-changing opportunity that must not be missed. It could allow tram-users direct access to the Bays Precinct and even parts of the Balmain peninsula (including the Cruise Ship Terminal). There are alternatives for the number of stops within the railyards/parklands, although EcoTransit would propose at least one stop near Gordon St, Rozelle, and one at Victoria Rd (northern side).

The EcoTransit proposal would be far less intrusive than the proposed RMS road flyovers; it would be approximately 10 metres wide, with 4 metres given to the shared user path and 6 metres for the dual tram carriageway.



Fig.2 Visualisation of the proposed green, active transport bridge

The EcoTransit proposal of a green active transport bridge could be co-located with the road flyovers (*if they are to be built*) or it could sit perhaps to the south-west of the



road intersection; EcoTransit has also produced diagrams of how this might work (see appendix).

EcoTransit calls upon the State government to give active consideration as to how it can provide a more direct link between the railyards/parklands and Rozelle Bay for walkers and cyclists. EcoTransit believes that a modest active transport bridge (mirroring that at the western entrance to the Anzac Bridge approaches) near where the CityWest Link meets James Craig Rd is appropriate.

Open space and an active community

The critical opportunity of providing open space, community recreation and public health benefits from this amazing space is also one not that must not be missed - *the visual on p3 almost seems to speak for itself*. Despite residents missing out on what they legitimately believed would be unimpeded open space, this aspect of the project should be revisited and the negative impacts of the flyovers ameliorated. The proposed active transport bridge featuring scope for light rail vehicles is central to all that EcoTransit envisages for this great swathe of open space in Sydney's inner west; *without it the NSW government is selling the community short on what it can retain and what it can become*.

The recreational benefits of turning the railyards into parklands needs little by way of elaboration; but through this aspect of our plan, we would give walkers/runners/commuters a beautiful opportunity to move within our environment.

Most local residents are aware of the fantastic community resource that is the [heavily-used] Bay Run around the Iron Cove, across the peninsula from the railyards. They are also conscious that the green strip continues down the Hawthorne Canal.

The opportunity exists to link the Bays Precinct through these railyards to the Bay Run and Hawthorne Canal with a modest tunnel as envisaged by the Inner West Council. Allowing for cycling and walking links through this great ribbon of land would promote active living and all the attendant health benefits. The public health benefits from a more active community are clear and include a reduction in morbidity and thus mortality.

The Planning Minister, the Hon. Robert Stokes MP, when talking about the looming renovations to the nearby Fish Markets in Blackwattle Bay, stated that "[a]s a result of this development people will be able to walk all the way from Glebe to Woolloomooloo along Sydney's foreshore."¹ EcoTransit invites the Minister to broaden his horizon and imagine that the opportunity exists for a community recreational path from

¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/sydney-fish-market-redevelopment-costs-blow-out-by-500->



Woolloomooloo to the Bays Precinct (or even Balmain East), and also diverting to the Hawthorne Canal greenway and Drummoyne.

The possibility of reuniting the suburbs of Annandale to Lilyfield and Rozelle across the railyards-parklands (and across the significant barrier represented by today's Citywest Link) is possible under this proposal and would be a massive benefit for the local community. Green links into the railyards/parklands across the CityWest link is an opportunity not to be missed.

Giving the surrounding communities the best chance to access this wonderful community resource, this green space for walking and reflection, represents a substantial opportunity that this government needs to grasp if it is to demonstrate a **place-making and place-building commitment** as strong as its **infrastructure commitment**. EcoTransit calls on the government to closely examine ways of facilitating these linkages over and above the Citywest Link .

EcoTransit believes that through the infrastructure commitment of the NSW government it can do its best to maximise the natural and historic blessings of our harbour city. The railyards/parklands represents a wide swathe of inner-city land that should be fully available for community use.

This is a colossal opportunity to promote sustainability and a healthy community that the NSW government must seize if it is to claim a positive legacy for the communities of the inner west and Sydney more widely.

Among the other benefits from the EcoTransit proposal include its potential to revitalise the area in a similar way to what was done with New York City's High Line. The High Line is a public park built on a historic freight rail line elevated above the streets on Manhattan's West Side. Saved from demolition by neighbourhood residents and the City of New York, the High Line opened in 2009 as a hybrid public space where visitors experience nature, art, and design. Of course there are differences with the Rozelle railyards. But a smaller replication in Ultimo on the former freight line has been a success. EcoTransit suggests that creating a hybrid public space where visitors can experience nature, art, and design, consistent with the green active transport bridge that we have proposed, could be fruitfully investigated by the NSW government.



Economic benefits

With limited planning EcoTransit believes that the green active transport bridge could be a 'shovel-ready project' that the government should pursue for its intrinsic value as well as for public financial purposes.

Other recommendations/considerations

On certain of the maps produced by the RMS it appears that the current proposal has the Crescent being expanded to as many as 8 lanes. EcoTransit strongly asserts that this is gargantuan and out of character with the surrounds, including a much-loved mural. EcoTransit proposes, by contrast, a modest expansion of 6 lanes, and *only if traffic forecasting supports such an expansion.*

Consideration should be given to further ameliorating the impact of this proposal by having 4 of these lanes sunken with one lane either side for local traffic, in a similar way to what had been done with South Dowling St (which has brought the community of Surry Hills closer to the open spaces at Moore Park) and greatly calmed local traffic.

EcoTransit calls on the State government to investigate this possibility; at present the footpath and high wall on the southern side of the Crescent are little-used by pedestrians as they are hardly a welcoming environment for a local to wander along to and from the bus-stop.

Giving North Annandale residents a better option for accessing the Rozelle Bay foreshore, across a sunken Crescent, would be a significant local advantage.



CONCLUSIONS

EcoTransit would like to see the NSW government genuinely explore the possibilities that this modification presents.

Repurposing the Rozelle railyards into an effective link from the Bays Precinct to the broader inner west through light rail is a winner for everyone in the community. And the green active transport bridge that we have outlined above, with the opportunities for access that it holds, is central to the vision of a sustainable community with sustainable transport infrastructure.

Matthew Doherty
[on behalf of] EcoTransit Sydney
0424 093 940
dohmatt@hotmail.com

APPENDICES

Indicative maps for -

- 1(a). Proposed RMS modification to the Crescent at the Rozelle Interchange;
- (b). EcoTransit proposal to facilitate a green active transport bridge;
2. EcoTransit proposal for extending the IWLR to White Bay.

Appendix 1(a) & (b)

Modifications to the Crescent at the Rozelle Interchange (and EcoTransit's 'green' transit bridge)

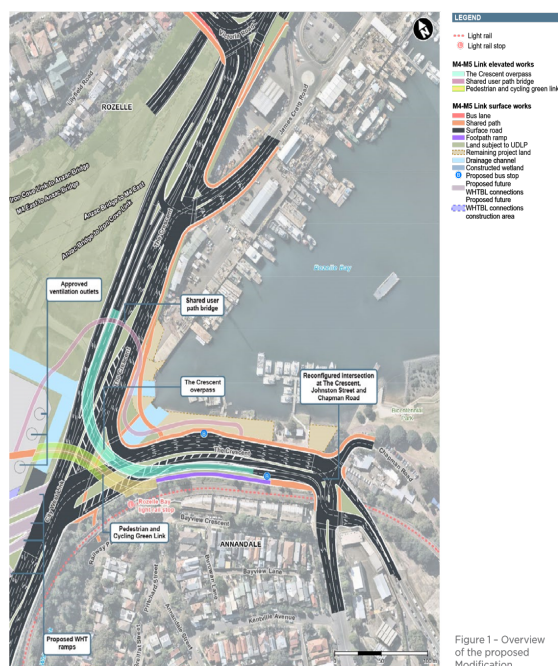


Figure 1 - Overview of the proposed Modification

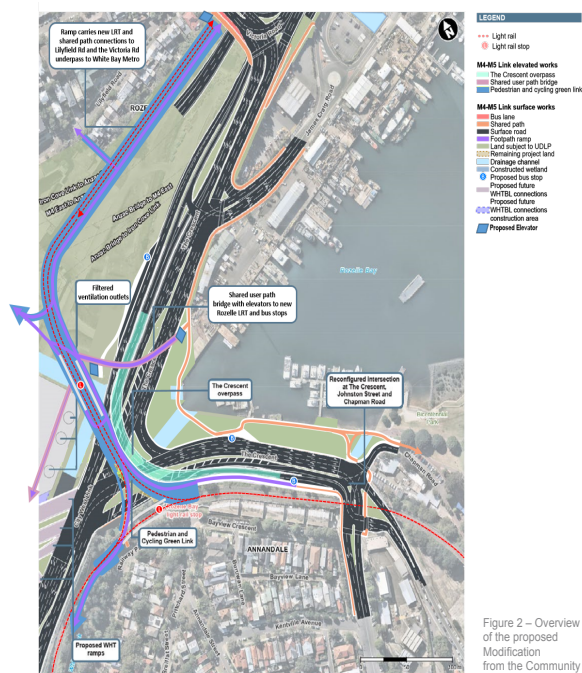


Figure 2 – Overview of the proposed Modification from the Community



Appendix 2

Proposed extension to the Inner West Light Rail to White Bay

