

Submission
No 157

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

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ROUND CORNER VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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10th October 2008

The Director,
Beverly Duffy,
General Purpose Standing Committee No 4
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

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**Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into
Transport Infrastructure in Sydney's Northwest Sector**

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About this Submission

The information contained in this submission was compiled from the discussion, opinions and suggestions made by residents of Round Corner at the October meeting of the Round Corner Village Residents' Association. It was prepared by Sandra Carter, President of the Round Corner Village Residents' Association and Pat Clay, Secretary of the Round Corner Village Residents' Association

About Round Corner

Round Corner Dural is a Village of approximately 400 homes surrounded by five acre lots in Sydney's Northwest. We have a mixture of medium density and free standing homes including two seniors living complexes. We are the town centre for smaller communities along Old Northern Rd heading towards Wiseman's Ferry, and for Kenthurst and Annangrove. We are 26 kilometres from the CBD, 4.3 kilometres from Castle Hill-our closest major shopping centre, and 10.8 kilometres from our closest railway station, Pennant Hills. At present we have a regular weekday bus service to the CBD and Castle Hill, and a limited weekend service to Castle Hill and Pennant Hills Station.

Statistics show that northwest Sydney has a high level of car ownership and residents are often criticised for their reliance on private vehicles. We believe that this criticism is unfounded and habits in the area would change if a viable integrated transport system was designed to meet the needs of this area.

Residents of Round Corner are well placed to comment on the lack of an integrated transport system in Sydney's Northwest as it impacts greatly on our lives,

both in our immediate vicinity and when we need to commute. The following facts are examples of the difficulties we face:

- We have very limited weekend public transport. To visit galleries, exhibitions, museums or matinee performances in the city usually requires driving to Castle Hill to catch the bus as connections are unreliable. Parking can be limited, there are too few buses and timetables are not adhered to. The only alternative is to drive.
- The lack of park and ride facilities for city bus users forces those commuting from further out to park in our residential streets and we only have seven of them. On many occasions one of the school buses which services our suburb is unable to continue on its set route because parked cars prevent this.
- Many parents in our area have no alternative but to drive their children to school because basic infrastructure such as pedestrian crossings and footpaths, which would enable children to catch school buses, have not been provided.
- According to the information provided by the Transport Info Line the trip to Westmead Hospital by public transport takes well over an hour (up to 1hr 46minutes) and requires up to 3 changes of transport. It is easier and quicker for residents of Round Corner to use public transport to attend the rugby when special events transport is provided, than it is to get to our closest public hospital where parking is limited and expensive.

The requirements and plans for an integrated transport system in the North-West Sector including road, rail and bus links.

There are a number of fundamental considerations required for the planning and implementation of an integrated transport system for the North-West Sector:

1. Public transport use must be encouraged. This will only occur if the necessary infrastructure is provided. This should include:

- Crossings, footpaths and covered bus shelters. A one metre yellow pole marked "Bus Stop" on the grass verge is not sufficient.
- More buses are required.
- Bus timetables must be achievable, and allow for connections so commuters can effectively use public transport that cuts across traditional routes.

- All bus stops should clearly display the routes available at that stop and an up to date timetable. It would also be advantageous if major stops could also display the time to the next bus. This is available on the CAT service in Perth.
- Swipe cards are essential for fast, efficient movement of the large volume of regular commuters using the buses each day. There are many overseas models of card usage proving just now successful this method has been.
- The provision of a rail link to Castle Hill and later Rouse Hill is essential. Ideally this should be a heavy rail link which can be integrated into the present system. A metro system is not appropriate for the distance and numbers to be catered for because most commuters will be travelling to the city or another major centre. For example, in the morning peak period there will be large numbers boarding the train at each station and only a small percentage alighting. A metro system is not designed for this.
- Plans must be for a rail links from Rouse Hill to Richmond, Penrith, Hornsby, and Liverpool. This would encourage more people to use the train system to travel to work which would, in turn, mean less cars on the road. It would also be useful for moving freight. Ideally this should occur while open space can be purchased for transport corridors.
- Bus links to railway stations must be regular and frequent.

2. A major upgrade of the road system is essential. This should include:

- Provision of more arterial roads. The flow on impact of development appears to have been overlooked and so we have a situation where the present number of arterial roads cannot cater for the volume of traffic. This is still possible on the urban/rural fringe and should occur before further development is allowed.
- Provision for more link roads. The present intersection of Kenthurst Rd and Old Northern Rd at Round Corner causes major traffic delays in peak hour. Upgrading this intersection is not a suitable solution to the problem as all the traffic from Kenthurst and Annangrove is funnelled into the two lanes through Round Corner. More roads linking Kenthurst road with Old Northern Road and Annangrove Road with Glenhaven Rd are the only viable solution. Once again this is possible while the area is semi-rural.
- The upgrade of a number of intersections in the region. In our area this must include

1) Traffic lights to be installed at the intersection of Glenhaven and Old Northern Roads, Glenhaven. These are essential to ensure the free flow of traffic coming from Samantha Riley Drive and the Kellyville Development Area.

2) Lights at the intersection of Hastings Road and Old Northern Road, Glenhaven need to be integrated with the new Castle Hill Fire Station

3) Provision of a roundabout at the intersection of Galston Road and Old Northern Rd at Dural.

- Other major infrastructure projects should include:

1) A second crossing over the Hawkesbury River. This would be of benefit as it would enable trucks to bypass the very busy city roads.

2) A Link between the end of the F3 at Wahroonga and M2 at North Rocks is essential. However, concerns need to be raised about an underground link being used by heavy vehicles. What measures would be needed to deal with the fumes?

3) Creation of underpass at the intersection of Windsor Road, Old Northern Road and Seven Hills Road. This would be of great benefit and assist with traffic flow

4) Widening and upgrade of Showground Rd from Castle Hill to Carrington Rd of Showground Road

5) Connection of west facing M2 ramps at Windsor Road interchange. This would relieve traffic congestion in the area.

3. Plans for an integrated transport system in the North-West Sector must consider and cater for the wide variety of settings found in this region. A “one size fits all” approach will fail, as will any plans which merely import ideas that have been applied to other regions. Plans must cater for residential areas as well as the urban rural fringe. Some considerations are:

- The present bus service to semi rural area needs to be maintained but no bus service can be regular and frequent enough to provide an adequate service over the vast distances of the semi-rural areas of the North-West Sector for commuters who work in the city.

- “Park and ride” is the only viable public transport option for city routes and suitable sites for parking stations on the rural urban fringe need to be identified and purchased.
- Buses need to provide adequate seating and not adopt the new trend of more standing room used on inner city bus routes. It is too far for commuters to stand.
- Suitable parking areas in close proximity to proposed rail stations also need to be identified and purchased so they can be ready for use when and if the rail system begins operation. In the interim they could be used for as parking areas for bus commuters.

The proposed funding of an integrated transport system for the North-West Sector, including the distribution of developer levies and State infrastructure levies.

The poor state of transport infrastructure in the North-West Sector is the result of a combination of factors including the neglect of this area by successive state governments, the rapid development of sections of this sector and the failure to provide infrastructure at the time of development. Funding any transport improvements will be difficult given the present economic climate, however, there are some options available.

- The provision of transport infrastructure is the responsibility of the State Government and projects need to be fully funded by the State government. It may be necessary to borrow some or all of the funds required as governments did in the past to provide infrastructure such as the Harbour Bridge. Such borrowings should be considered an investment in the future viability of Sydney as the economic centre of NSW.
- The cost of providing an efficient public transport system to the region needs to be considered in the context of the efficient use of energy and the need to cut carbon emissions.
- Section 94 contributions to be used by Baulkham Hills Shire Council to provide services within the shire. These services should include the minor aspects associated with transport infrastructure such as footpaths to bus stops and bus shelters.

It is imperative that the funding be found for improvements in the North-West Sector. The problems become greater the longer they remain unsolved and what may seem prohibitively expensive now will be more so in the future.

Sandra Carter

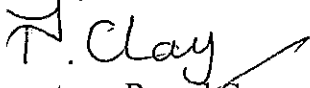


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