

Submission
No 177

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

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The Hon. Jenny Gardiner MLC
Chair
Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No.4
NSW State Parliament

The following is in response to the request by Cr Sonya Phillips, previous Mayor of Baulkham Hills Shire Council, to participate in the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry established to address transport and infrastructure needs in the north-west sector of Sydney.

Documentation by various government agencies over the past 15 years has specified the essential need for public transport to be an integral part of urban development. The State Government has failed both itself and the residents of north western Sydney by abrogating its responsibilities in respect to public transport, such that this area now has the highest percentage of car dependency and usage in Sydney.

I live in the West Pennant Hills Valley and have watched in horror as development has spawned without the supporting infrastructure of public transport. Requests have fallen on deaf ears, and then the residents of the north west in general are accused of being car lovers. Its not by choice, I can assure you!

**Build the rail link between Rouse Hill and Epping.
Build the rail link between Epping and Parramatta.**

In the morning peak period, commuters from the north west have saturated the Northern Rail link, all M2 bus services and every road leading into the CBD. The demand is there. The infrastructure isn't.

Build the rail link between Rouse Hill and Epping

Commuters struggle to reach destinations not on a radial spoke from the CBD. The NWRL would bring commuters to Epping. From Epping, with the Epping - Parramatta, Epping - Chatswood link, functional, cross regional movements become an option for business, educational and social choices. There is also the distinct probability that patrons would travel to Castle Hill, the Norwest Business Park and Rouse Hill Town Centre, boosting employment and social choices, business opportunities and reducing traffic congestion.

A metro system is not appropriate for this route, especially as there is the potential to link the rail line to Richmond, and thus provide an outer city circle.

Build the rail link from Epping to Parramatta

It appears that due to capacity problems at Hornsby, there will not be enough trains on the northern line to service both the Northern line and the Epping Chatswood line. Apart from providing a cross regional link, the Epping Parramatta line was to add carriages into the system for the Epping Chatswood link. Without carriages to service the commuters, this line becomes a farce.

Increase bus services:

The patronage of the "M2" buses has demonstrated that if there is a reasonable service, it will be used. Since the inception of the service, the number of buses has been inadequate to meet the demand.

Even with the buses packed to capacity, the M2 is saturated with cars in the morning peak. The opportunity is there to reduce this congestion by using the buses to provide greater choice of destinations, reducing the number of changes required, extending the operating hours and providing an improved weekend service.

Provide the routes, provide the buses, the patrons are there

Link the M7 to the F3:

Link the M7 at Deans Park to Kariong on the F3, providing an alternative route north from Sydney and a second crossing of the Hawkesbury River. This will provide a direct route north for the freight traffic generated by the Western Sydney Employment Hub at the Lighthorse Interchange. Within the next 10 years it will become essential that this route be built. With limited funds available, invest in the future and not an outdated concept that has operational flaws.

Currently we have B-doubles, and, in the not too distant future, B-Triples, along with an assortment of interstate commercial vehicles that are part of the suburban mix, all subject to the variances of Sydney traffic. Commercial vehicles should be on a Sydney bypass, as could be provided by the M7 – F3 link over the Hawkesbury River, not having their only route north through the demographic center of Sydney.

The "tunnel" under Pennant Hills Road does not address the needs of the Greater Sydney region into the future.

The traffic flow studies for traffic southbound from the "tunnel" were predicated on there being 3 lanes southbound from the M2 to James Ruse Drive. This concept was discarded. However, the traffic flow predictions were not adjusted. Should the tunnel be constructed, there is a very real possibility that both it and the surrounding roads will be in total grid lock

A transport corridor between the M7 and the F3 could accommodate an efficient road and rail link north/south through a mainly greenfields development.

Retro expanding transport corridors is an inefficient use of funds, traditionally done at night to reduce the associated congestion, which also increases the risk to the construction crew, adds traveling time to the movement of freight and ultimately increases costs.

The M2:

The west facing ramps onto the M2 at Windsor Road, although approved as part of the M2 West, were not built. That was short sighted. That these ramps were not built when the M7 was integrated into the M2 is another example of the State Government not fulfilling its obligations to the residents of the north west.

Transurban wants to add another lane eastbound on the M2 between Windsor Road and

Pennant Hills Road. The eastbound lanes on the M2 are regularly congested past Windsor Road. Having another lane will create more "holding" space on the M2 and not facilitate the movement of vehicles.

Is this lane to be a "truck only" lane, to facilitate the movement of commercial vehicles along the M2 and onto Pennant Hills Road?

Final Comments:

Whilst there are many other infrastructure issues within the north west, if the major problems are resolved, the benefits will be reflected in reduced productivity costs, reduced living costs and a reduced impact on the environment. Using public transport brings local residents together with a subsequent sense of community.

Make the right choices:

- 1. Build the North West Rail Link**
- 2. Build the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link**
- 3. Form a transport corridor from Deans Park at the M7 to Kariong at the F3**
- 4. Improve the bus network and services**

Thank you.
Margaret Whalen