

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

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'Preserving the residential amenity of Pennant Hills and its environs'

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The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
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Transport Needs of Sydney's North-West Sector (Inquiry).

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the subject inquiry. The Trust and the community generally along Pennant Hills Road (from Beecroft to Wahroonga) have been active concerning the transport needs of the area ever since the National Highway Link Study was announced in January 2001.

The **North-West Sector** has been variously defined but for the purposes of this submission we have considered it to be the land wedge centred on Parramatta, bordered by Pennant Hills Road on the east and the rail line to Richmond on the west.

Pennant Hills may be on the fringe of the NW Sector but we also suffer from its public transport inadequacies.

Submission Summary

From our perspective the essential issue is not one of a new rail line here or road there but rather one of greater Sydney's sustainability into the future. Unless a fresh approach is taken to urban development and transport Sydney will choke on its own congestion and pollution. A framework exists in the NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy and transport planning for the NW Sector should lead the way in its implementation.

Our submission addresses the following:

North-West Sector	Rail Options
City of Cities	Buses and Parking
M7/M2 Sydney Orbital	F3/Sydney Orbital Link
Western Corridor Benefits	

Yours faithfully

Marcia Horvai
President

Transport Needs of Sydney's North-West Sector (Inquiry).

A Submission from the Pennant Hills District Civic Trust Inc.

North-West Sector

The NW Sector has seen enormous residential development over the past 30 years (eg. Cherrybrook and Kellyville) and more recently major commercial developments along the M7 corridor such as Norwest. There has been no parallel transport infrastructure development other than the M7/M2 Sydney Orbital.

There is a long outstanding need for a rail transport facility.

Rail Options

The debate in recent times has been over the longstanding heavy rail option connecting with the Main Northern Line and the more recent proposal for a Metro rail option. Both options are based on the need for direct travel to the Sydney CBD but both have serious weaknesses, ie. the heavy rail option will further expose the fragile City Rail network and the Metro option is not suitable over the length of track proposed (38 km).

Are there other alternatives?

The Metropolitan Strategy with its City of Cities concept presents an excellent vision of greater Sydney's future. For further input on this concept you are referred to the Warren Centre's project "*Towards a City of Cities – sustainable transport in sustainable cities*".

With this concept accepted by Government in principle transport planning for the NW Sector's transport needs should consider the option of Parramatta as the focal point not the Sydney CBD.

City of Cities

Parramatta is clearly one the 'cities' and as such it can be seen as the transport centre for the NW Sector. With rail transport radiating out from Parramatta through established NW residential suburbs the Metro model would seem most appropriate. In conceptual terms the extent of residential development in the sector would seem to call for two lines (one in a north west direction to Rouse Hill and the other in a northerly direction to Dural) with these lines continuing to areas south of Parramatta.

But - the City of Cities concept also requires high-speed inter-city shuttle type public transport connections, and such a Parramatta to Sydney CBD link would be an essential prerequisite for an effective NW Sector solution. Such a link would help address many of Sydney's existing transport issues.

The completion of the Parramatta/Epping/Chatswood line, to service the major employment area from Macquarie Park to North Sydney, can be seen as an integral network element..

The future for greater Sydney transport is one of interchange – involving buses, feeder Train services and high-speed inter-city links. NW Sector transport planning should lead the way.

Buses and Parking

Ease of access to rail stations is fundamental to public transport viability. The development of large parking facilities in established residential areas problematic and

(Buses and Parking continued)

therefore integrated bus services are an essential element of public transport solutions.

Buses in the suburbs are seen to have low usage and complaints about lack of integration with train schedules are common. At a time when more people should be using buses we have recent experience of the State Transit Authority cancelling local routes.

There needs to be one only Transport Authority for the greater Sydney area, and if this means the reduction of RTA's powers so be it.

Transport Planning Consultant's have done a lot of detailed work on the bus component which should be considered in NW Sector transport planning.

M7/M2 Sydney Orbital

From the NW Sector point of view the Orbital is in fact a radial route to and from the Sydney CBD. On top of expensive, discriminatory tolls NW Sector traffic has to compete with National Highway traffic and, with the concentration of industrial and distribution centres along the western M7 segment, voluminous inter-regional and interstate freight traffic. A media release in May 2008 from Mr Albanese, Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport told us that the freight task is set to double by 2020 with greatest impact likely to be on our urban roads.

There is a desperate need for an outer western by-pass route to the north separating National Highway and heavy freight traffic from Sydney metropolitan traffic.

F3/Sydney Orbital Link Study

This study was jointly announced by Federal and State Transport Ministers in January 2001 with the objective of identifying a high standard transport link that would replace Pennant Hills Road as the National Highway

- as of July 2003 the outcome was reported as dual 8 km two-lane tunnels under Pennant Hills Road at a cost of \$2.2 bn and with an estimated 4 year construction period to commence in 2007 (with the surface road reduced to two lanes each way).
- the 2007 'independent' Pearlman Review confirmed the Link Study's proviso that *the F3 would reach its peak capacity a few years before 2021*, and Pearlman recommended that a Type C (western) corridor be planned now.

So, If completed in 2013 this project would have an effective life of only 5 years, but more than short-term solution this tunnel option is a **No Solutions Proposal** for the following reasons:

- it further concentrates traffic through this single corridor to the north that is already under tremendous stress on a daily basis
- it does nothing for the F3's Central Coast commuter traffic which is predominantly headed to the Sydney CBD and therefore will continue to use the Pacific Highway
- it does nothing for the Pacific Highway user, local or through traffic, with the tunnel option relieving traffic by fewer than 1000 vehicles a day in 2021 (ref. Link Study)
- it continues to direct National Highway through traffic into suburban Sydney to compete with suburban and commuting traffic from the Central Coast

- it continues to direct heavy interstate/interregional freight traffic to compete with suburban and commuting traffic. 80% of freight mass on the F3 is moving to or from the western Sydney region
- it does nothing for local NW Sector and Hornsby Shire motorists with the tunnel and the surface road through the Pennant Hills Road corridor inevitably acting as one, but with the surface road reduced to two lanes each way.
- the Pennant Hills Road communities will be faced with the health impacts of traffic pollution from the surface road plus the concentrated pollution from up to 4 exhaust emission stacks along the tunnel route.
- it represents an adverse economic impact, State or National, considering the waste in funding a short term solution (estimated at \$3.2 bn in the Pearlman Report) and the delay in implementing **a real solution** and reaping the benefits of same.

Western Corridor Benefits

In recommending that **‘a type C (Western) corridor be planned now’** the Pearlman Report acknowledges the short-term nature of the ‘tunnel’ option and that **only a western route will provide a real solution for the missing link in the National Highway.**

The Benefits of a Western Option are:

- it provides a more direct route taking traffic from the M7 at Dean Park near Blacktown to the F3 at Kariong near Gosford. This is where traffic from the newly developing industrial, warehouse and distribution facilities in Western Sydney needs to go. With the closure of Sydney Harbour as a working port, more road freight will be expected from the port of Newcastle.

- it is some 20km shorter than the proposed tunnel route and avoids the impact upon suburban and commuting traffic, a very significant saving over time. The cost of Sydney's urban congestion has been estimated at \$7.8 billion by 2020 (ref. BITRE).
- it is a surface road solution with lower pollution impacts, better road safety and better response to accident and blockage situations.
- it requires a new crossing of the Hawkesbury River which is essential for a growing Sydney, especially when bushfires and accidents frequently block the F3. This strategic need is recognised by all local State parliamentarians
- this new route and new bridge, if planned appropriately, can provide opportunities for such as the handling the planned increases in rail freight which could never be handled via the old Main North Line infrastructure without impacting public transport.
- with the Sydney's westward expansion residents of the NW Sector (and other western Sectors) deserve easy access to and from regions to the north without competing with the rest of Sydney for access via one only corridor, ie. the F3 corridor at Wahroonga.

If the Federal Government will only fund one National Highway link between the Sydney Orbital and the F3, as the previous Coalition Government made very clear, should investment in the Pennant Hills Road tunnel option proceed the real solution or western corridor option will be put off to the never-never. This outcome would be to the long term disadvantage of the NW Sector.