



**SUBMISSION FROM INNER WEST COUNCIL  
TO TRANSPORT FOR NSW**

**ON THE DRAFT PLAN FOR  
WESTCONNEX-RELATED ROAD NETWORK CHANGES  
AT HABERFIELD, ASHFIELD & LEICHHARDT**

**22 MAY 2020**

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**Introduction**

Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Transport for NSW (TfNSW) plan for WestConnex-related road network changes at Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt. The public exhibition period has not been sufficient to allow for presentation of a draft submission to a Council meeting. Council has written to the NSW Government seeking an extension of the exhibition period, but this has not been granted.

A draft submission was circulated in advance of the due date to councillors by e-mail and posted on Council’s website with a request for comments prior to the submission deadline. All councillor and community comments received have been considered in drafting the final submission. Any comments received after the deadline will be forwarded to TfNSW as a late addendum to this submission.

**Summary**

Assessment of the draft TfNSW plan raises the following issues for Council:

- Council continues to oppose WestConnex for a number of reasons, including negative operational traffic impacts

- This draft road network plan highlights the significance and pervasive nature of these impacts
- Council prefers alternative transport options (public/active transport, demand management etc.) that can *reduce* traffic and improve liveability
- The draft network plan appears to focus on facilitating the ‘free flow’ of motor vehicles to serve WestConnex at the expense of local connectivity and amenity
- Council would prefer the draft plan to focus on protecting local streets from WestConnex-related rat-running, heavy vehicle through-traffic, speeding and dangerous driver behaviour
- Whilst there are some improvements in the draft plan, most of the changes are not supported as they would reduce local connectivity and lead to unacceptable safety and amenity issues for residential areas
- The proposed changes would also reduce opportunities for active transport and compromise existing and planned cycle routes, such as William Street, Leichhardt
- The proposed redesign of the Norton Street / James Street / City West Link (CWL) intersection would lead to an overall negative impact on connectivity/safety for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists and reduced residential amenity
- The redesigned intersection would not improve vehicle travel times between Leichhardt and Lilyfield through the intersection, as only one of the four traffic phases accommodates north-south travel
- Council is particularly concerned about the proposed ‘no right turn’ restriction from Norton Street onto CWL northbound creating a traffic thoroughfare along William and Hubert Streets and adding traffic to other local streets
- Also of concern is removing direct vehicular access to Darley Road from streets north of CWL, as this would funnel additional traffic onto Norton Street, then William Street and other local roads, resulting in further negative impacts on those streets
- The increase in vehicular traffic (including heavy vehicles) on William Street and removal of parking would create safety issues for people using the William Street bicycle route and those accessing the childcare centre and St Columba’s Primary School
- Retaining existing traffic movements through the intersection would negate the need for removal of the roundabout and parking on William Street and the traffic signals at the Hubert Street / Darley Road intersection, noting that removal of the roundabout would increase vehicle speeds at that intersection.
- Council usually prefers walk/cycle crossings to be *at grade*, but recognises the proposed two walk/cycle bridges at Haberfield-Ashfield may be justified provided the existing signalised surface crossings are retained as an alternative option
- An alternative location should be investigated for the southern landing of the walk/cycle bridge across Parramatta Road as the proposed location would have an unacceptable visual impact on historic Ashfield Park
- Detailed design of the bridge across Dobroyd Parade will need to consider existing park facilities and proposals for adjoining cycleways and the naturalisation of Iron Cove Creek
- A fourth signalised crossing leg is sought at the Timbrell Drive / Mortley Avenue / CWL intersection to improve walk/cycle connectivity

- The proposed 'no right turn' restriction from Timbrell Drive onto CWL northbound raises concerns as it would likely lead to addition traffic on Mortley Avenue, Boomerang Street and Waratah Streets, and possibly other local streets
- By augmenting the left turn movement from Timbrell Drive onto CWL east bound, more traffic would be loaded onto the James/Norton/CWL intersection, adding to the congestion that the TfNSW is attempting to resolve at this location
- Changes proposed for the Dalhousie Street / Paramatta Road intersection would likely divert traffic onto other local streets in the area, including Bland and Chandos Streets
- The proposed Parramatta Road U-turn arrangement could be hazardous and confusing (particularly for new users), may lead to excessive queuing and would sever the route of the 406 bus service and special school buses
- The draft plan would exacerbate a long-standing rat-running issues affecting Sloane and Lord Streets and Hawthorne Parade south, Haberfield, which needs to be addressed
- Extension of the right-turn lane from Parramatta Road into Liverpool Road would likely encourage additional traffic onto Liverpool Road, with consequent congestion and amenity impacts on Ashfield shopping centre

Accordingly Council seeks:

- An extension of the exhibition period and public release of all TfNSW traffic count and forecast data to enable Council and the community to fully understand the rationale and impacts of the changes proposed
- Deferral of action pending a further review (with public exhibition) of the draft plan that comprehensively assesses the impact of WestConnex Stage 3, all issues raised by this exhibition and Council's LAIS
- Introduction of speed limit reductions and truck access restrictions in the short-term to protect local residential streets from existing WestConnex-related rat-running, with permanent changes to follow after the review of the draft plan
- Reconsideration of designs proposed in the draft plan – in particular, retention of the right turn from Norton Street onto CWL city-bound at the Norton/James/CWL intersection and retention of direct vehicular access from north of CWL to Darley Road
- Funding and other assistance for implementation of the LAIS and other works designed to protect local streets from rat runs, improve local access and improve conditions for walking and cycling across the board

### **Strategic WestConnex operational traffic issues**

Council has a long-standing opposition to inner-Sydney tolled motorways (tollroads), including WestConnex and Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT). Construction impacts are a significant immediate issue. Council is also concerned about longer-term operational impacts as increased (induced) traffic from tollroads leads to rat-running and speeding on local streets and consequently erosion of neighbourhood amenity/safety, air pollution and negative impacts on active transport. By attempting to resolve traffic problems created by WestConnex, this draft plan highlights the negative operational impacts of tollroads.

Instead of tollroads Council prefers alternative options that include public transport, active transport, travel demand management and transit-oriented development. In some instances modest/targeted road network improvements may be justified. With this mix of options traffic

congestion can be addressed through traffic *reduction* rather than increasing road capacity and conditions for sustainable development can be created.

This draft plan reinforces Council's view that WestConnex lacks strategic justification. It has always appeared the NSW Government made an early decision to proceed with a tollroad and other options were not seriously considered. Council has noted in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for all stages of WestConnex that the NSW Government's own traffic forecasts show that the project won't solve congestion in the long-term.

Council is concerned that congestion created by WestConnex will be used by the NSW Government to justify its flawed strategy of continually increasing road capacity to address congestion. This means more tollroads, more clearways, additional traffic lanes and wider intersections - all at the expense of liveability. This draft plan is part of such a strategy.

A more detailed discussion of Council's strategic arguments against inner-Sydney tollroads is included in its August 2018 submission to the NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into WestConnex, available from the inquiry's website (Submission No. 379). Appended to Council's inquiry submission is a review of the project's business case by SGS Economics and Planning concluding that the WestConnex business case is poor and the project is not justified.

In October 2017 Council resolved that *"Inner West Council formally adopts a position of continued opposition in the strongest terms to the WestConnex project, both approved and future stages including Stage 3, consistent with the opposition of the former councils of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville."* Later in 2017 Council resolved to formally oppose other tollroad projects such as the WHT. Notwithstanding this opposition, Council continues to work with NSW Government agencies, project contractors and the community to ensure that impacts are minimised, and benefits are gained wherever possible.

### **Council's WestConnex Local Area Improvement Strategy**

The basis of the draft TfNSW road network review plan for Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt is the Stage 1 Condition of Approval (CoA) E36. It requires TfNSW to prepare a *Road Network Performance Review Plan* one and five years after each stage of WestConnex is open to traffic. The plan is to include traffic modelling and is to identify rat-running on local roads, performance deficiencies of the road network, pre- and post-performance issues for all transport modes and measures to address these.

Whilst the M4 East EIS included traffic modelling for main roads, there was little information on WestConnex-related traffic on local roads. Council was concerned that because the network review plan would not be completed until a year after opening, some local streets would be affected by extra traffic during that time and an intrusive traffic pattern would be established. This has proven to be the case for some local streets since the M4 East opened in July 2019. Council maintains the view that local streets should be protected *before* opening, not after.

Council has also been concerned that in addressing performance deficiencies of the road network, TfNSW would prioritise the movement of vehicles into and out of WestConnex tunnels at the expense of road safety, local vehicle movements, walk/cycle connectivity and residential amenity. Council seeks to minimise through-traffic and improve local access, amenity and safety. Council is concerned that the proposed road and intersection widenings, removal of kerbside parking and the diversion of traffic onto local roads would have the opposite effect.

In December 2016 Council resolved to undertake its own a study to assess the operational traffic impacts WestConnex may have on local streets. In 2017 Council commissioned consultants to undertake traffic modelling, interpret the modelling and prepare a LAIS. TfNSW assisted the process by granting Council's consultants access to relevant traffic data and by giving feedback on strategy drafts. The LAIS was adopted by Council in May 2018 and is available on Council's website (see weblink in References).

The LAIS was intended to guide the design and implementation of a set of local area traffic management (LATM) schemes. The LAIS identified streets likely to carry increased traffic and proposed treatments to protect them from rat-runs and improve their amenity. The treatments are based on three 'typologies': integrated traffic calming; intersection modifications and traffic diversions. The treatments are indicative but would (subject to funding) undergo further stages of planning in the same manner as all of Council's LATM schemes. This would include further community consultation, detailed design and Council approval.

The LAIS study includes LATM scheme maximum cost estimates for the following five precincts: Precinct 1: Ashfield \$4.0M; Precinct 2: Haberfield \$9.3M; Precinct 3: Leichhardt West \$6.0M; Precinct 4: Johnston Street \$7.2M; Precinct 5: St Peters \$2.2M; and TOTAL all five precincts \$28.7M. Further refinement of these costings by Council staff brought the final TOTAL figure to just under \$30M.

As is evident from these figures, Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt West were shown to be the most affected areas requiring the most protection. This is relevant to the draft TfNSW road network review plan, which proposes road network changes in these areas. Council forwarded the LAIS to TfNSW seeking funding for the LAIS works, but this has not been forthcoming.

Modelling undertaken for the LAIS shows that in the year 2021, absence of a link between Stages 1 and 2 would generate increased traffic across the LGA between the Haberfield and St Peters interchanges, and most increased traffic would be adjacent to the Haberfield interchange. These predictions have become a reality to a certain extent for Haberfield-Ashfield and parts of Leichhardt and Lilyfield some nine months after the opening of the M4 East. It is not possible to assess impacts on St Peters streets as Stage 2 has yet to open.

Importantly, the modelling also predicts that when Stage 3 is operational, traffic levels would decline on many Inner West streets, including some of the streets now affected by additional traffic from WestConnex. This decrease would not however be universal – certain streets would experience an increase. In the longer term (more than a decade), there would be general traffic growth that would cancel the benefits of some of these shorter-term decreases.

TfNSW has not included any of its traffic count data or modelling forecasts in this public exhibition. Without this data it is not possible to assess how the TfNSW proposals address current and future traffic issues or how they interact with Council's LAIS. Accordingly Council has requested that this data be available to Council and the community.

In the absence of TfNSW traffic data it is only possible to undertake a broad assessment of how the draft road network plan interacts with the LAIS, as follows:

- *Darley Road, Leichhardt (at City West Link (CWL))* – the LAIS model predicted a substantial decrease in traffic after the opening of Stage 1, with a slight increase again when Stage 3 opens. The LAIS proposed traffic calming works in the Leichhardt West precinct, including streets affected by the TfNSW draft plan. Traffic congestion has been an issue at this location for some time, and it is apparent that the opening of Stage

1 has made the issue worse. The draft TfNSW plan would ease congestion at that location by improving the 'traffic efficiency' of the intersection. This would however be at the expense of extra traffic at higher speed on some local streets (particularly William and Hubert Streets), removal of kerbside parking and creation of a large, complex intersection that is not friendly for pedestrians and cyclists. Numerous pedestrians and cyclists traverse the streets of this generally quiet residential neighbourhood, many on route to the Leichhardt North light rail stop, Bay Run and local parks. Also within the neighbourhood is St Columba's Primary School, a childcare centre, two parks and a café.

- *Waratah Street, Haberfield* – the LAIS model predicted a moderate increase in traffic after the opening of Stage 1, decreasing again to pre-Stage 1 levels when Stage 3 opens. Although Waratah Street fell within the LAIS Haberfield Precinct, it was not identified for traffic calming works by the LAIS. It is anticipated that the draft TfNSW plan would reduce traffic by limiting movements to/from this street onto Dobroyd Parade. This would however be offset by an increase in traffic as a result of the no right turn restriction from Timbrell Drive onto CLW proposed in the draft TfNSW plan.
- *Dalhousie Street, Haberfield* – the LAIS model predicted traffic would slightly decrease after opening of Stage 1 but increase again over time. Dalhousie Street is within the LAIS Haberfield Precinct and is identified for traffic calming works. It is anticipated the draft TfNSW road network plan would reduce traffic by limiting turning movements to/from this street onto Parramatta Road and from Waratah Street onto Dobroyd Parade. This would however divert traffic to other Haberfield Streets.
- *Hawthorne Parade north, Haberfield* – related to the above, the LAIS model predicted a slight increase in traffic after the opening of Stage 1, with a decrease to pre-Stage 1 levels when Stage 3 opens. Hawthorne Parade north is within the LAIS Haberfield Precinct and is identified in the LAIS for traffic calming works. It is anticipated the draft TfNSW road networks plan would reduce traffic on Hawthorne Parade north by limiting movements to/from Waratah Street onto Dobroyd Parade. Although the LAIS did not include Hawthorne Parade south, Council is advocating elsewhere in this submission that a long-standing rat-run on this street be addressed as part of the draft TfNSW plan.

Council continues to argue for implementation of LAIS traffic calming works fully funded by the NSW Government. Council's view is that if WestConnex has created a problem (rat-running on local roads), then it should fund the solution (traffic calming). Consistent with this view, Council considered an Urgency Motion on the draft road network plan on 28 April 2020 and resolved (among other things):

*THAT Council:*

1. *Writes to the Premier of NSW and relevant ministers expressing Council's total opposition to the proposed road network changes to key intersections in Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt located at: City West Link, Norton Street and James Street; Dobroyd Parade and Waratah Street; City West Link, Mortley Avenue and Timbrell Drive and; Parramatta Road and Dalhousie Street.*
  - a) *Seeks the cancellation of the proposed road network changes and the immediate implementation of local traffic calming measures as outlined in the 2018 independent study entitled WestConnex Local Area Improvement Strategy (LAIS)*
  - b) *Insisting that the safety and traffic calming measures in Council's WestConnex Local Area Improvement Strategy be prioritised over the proposed network changes and be funded by the NSW Government immediately*
  - c) *Requests an extension of the exhibition period until 15 June 2020*

Accordingly letters have been sent to the Premier and Ministers for Transport and Planning, and Council is awaiting a response.

As LAIS works would need to be subject to detailed design, community consultation and approval, they could not be implemented immediately. Council therefore requests that TfNSW supports a process for reducing posted speed limits on all streets within the five precincts identified in the LAIS as potentially affected by WestConnex traffic. This would help address current road safety issues that have emerged from increased traffic on local streets since the M4 East became operational.

## **Overall assessment of draft TfNSW road network plan**

Contrary to TfNSW communications, Council does not view the proposed changes as *“improvements”* overall and is not convinced they will *“make travel to and around the area easier and safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians”*. It does not appear these changes are *“in the early stages of development”* but appear to be advanced. In any event more work is needed to develop a road network plan that has broad support from Council and the community.

One of the points Council has made in all its submissions is that WestConnex conflicts with several the NSW Government’s own strategic planning policies. This draft road network plan is an example, with several of the proposed changes conflicting with walkability objectives of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). One of the goals of GSC’s *Greater Sydney Region Plan* is *“more convenient walking and cycling access to schools, shops, public transport and open space”*, and one of the three measurements for this goal is access to open space. This is relevant to this draft plan.

Without TfNSW traffic count and forecast data, the draft plan lacks an evidence base. Absence of this data has made it impossible for Council and the community to undertake an accurate assessment of the impacts of the proposed changes and to answer some important questions related to the TfNSW plan, such as:

- How will WestConnex Stages 3A & 3B affect traffic levels?
- If traffic reduces on some streets when Stages 3A & 3B opens, will that negate the need for some of the changes proposed?
- Will traffic levels be reduced in the medium-term after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions as a proportion of the population continues to work from home or commutes outside peak periods, negating the need for some of the changes?
- Could these short to medium term traffic reductions be negated by commuters avoiding public transport in the short-term due to COVID-19 and by general traffic growth in the long-term?
- To what degree are the proposed changes addressing issues related to WestConnex, or general traffic issues?
- To what degree are the proposed changes addressing congestion related to local traffic versus regional traffic?
- Has the draft TfNSW plan considered future traffic reductions possible by implementing bus priority measures along Parramatta Road, as is required by M4 East CoA E36?
- Has the draft TfNSW plan considered longer-term traffic changes resulting from the *Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Strategy*, as is required by M4 East CoA E37?
- How do the TfNSW proposals interact with Council’s LAIS?
- What proportion of current and future traffic will be heavy vehicles?

- How effective will the proposed changes be, and to what degree will there be opportunities to take no action, defer action and/or make adjustments or improve the plan?
- What will be the impact on *all* local streets in the vicinity of the proposed changes?

Council does not want to see local streets altered, only classified roads. By affecting local roads, it is apparent this draft plan is sacrificing local access, amenity and safety to provide traffic 'storage' to provide a 'free flow' of traffic into and out of WestConnex. This is not acceptable to Council as it would create flow-on traffic and safety issues which would directly affect the community and require ongoing management and financial outlays by Council.

### **Assessment of draft plan for City West Link, Norton Street & James Street intersections**

This intersection is traversed many times a day by pedestrians, including by children attending Orange Grove Primary School, Lilyfield and Sydney Secondary College, Leichhardt, and pedestrians accessing Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre (LPAC) and Leichhardt Oval.

Council acknowledges that preventing vehicular traffic crossing the path of pedestrians at the CWL signalised pedestrian crossings would improve safety. However, this benefit would be achieved at the expense of an overall increase in the number of roadways to cross and creation of a larger, more complex intersection that is confusing and intimidating for pedestrians.

The complexity of movements across the intersection would also make the intersection intimidating and potentially unsafe for cyclists and motorists. All signalised crossings at this intersection should include bicycle lanterns in addition to pedestrian lanterns. TfNSW should implement a shared walk/cycle path arrangement on all appropriate footpaths to ensure less confident cyclists can safely negotiate the intersection.

Because of the changes, pedestrians accessing Leichhardt North light rail stop to and from the east would have three signalised crossings to negotiate. This is instead of the existing two crossings - one signalised and one zebra crossing. The extra crossings could frustrate pedestrians (including school students), tempting them to cross against the lights. The sweeping paths of vehicular travel to and from CWL at that point would enable vehicles to travel at high speed, creating a further hazard.

The one-way configuration at James Street north of CWL will likely increase vehicle speeds in James Street and the sweeping entry from CWL into Darley Road has potential to increase vehicle speeds along Darley Road westbound. The latter change raises safety issues for pedestrians accessing the Leichhardt North light rail stop as they are crossing Darley Road, both at the signalised crossing and mid-block. The one-way configuration would also make vehicle access less direct for James Street residents accessing their homes from the north.

Removing the right turn from Norton Street onto Lilyfield Road would make it more difficult for vehicles to access Lilyfield and would necessitate re-routing of the 447 bus service. TfNSW would need to demonstrate that this bus service could be re-routed in a way that it still provides a viable transport service for the community.

Vehicles travelling along CWL westbound wanting to turn into Norton Street southbound could confuse this left turn with the turn into James Street / Darley Road southbound. This



could add to the pedestrian safety hazard at the signalised crossing legs across James/Darley Streets at CWL.

The zebra crossing across the left-turn slip-lane from CWL eastbound into James Street northbound would not be safe for pedestrians as it is wide and has a sweeping exit, allowing vehicles to exit at speed. Safety would be improved by narrowing the slip lane and making its angle of exit more acute. Consideration should be given to installing a signalised crossing.

At the south-eastern side of the Norton Street / CWL intersection, a pedestrian crossing leg is needed across the left-turn slip lane. Without this crossing, pedestrians at the south-eastern side of Norton Street would have no option but to cross unassisted, putting them at risk from westbound vehicles exiting CWL onto Norton Street.

A pedestrian crossing should be provided on the western side of the Norton Street / CWL intersection. This leg would serve an established pedestrian desire line between Lilyfield and Leichardt which includes access to the light rail stop. CWL has been a major barrier to north-south walk/cycle movements since it was constructed, and this draft plan provides an opportunity to *improve* walk/cycle connectivity.

The proposed redesigned intersections raise a number of specific issues for cyclists, including:

- A need to define all bicycle movements through these heavily-trafficked and complex intersections and include bicycle lanes, waiting bays and lanterns
- The angle of all vehicle turning movements should be tightened to slow vehicles and improve safety for cyclists (and pedestrians)
- Denying access to James Street from Mary Street southbound lengthens the journey to Darley Road for cyclists
- The left turn angle from Norton Street into Lilyfield road should be tightened to reduce vehicle speeds, preventing conflicts with westbound cyclists on Lilyfield Road
- Denying the right turn from Norton Street into Lilyfield Road would make it difficult for cyclists to access Lilyfield Road – consider allowing a right turn for cyclists only
- Making James Street one-way would mean more traffic turning right from Lilyfield Road onto Norton Street southbound, exacerbating the existing issue where traffic turns in front of westbound cyclists on Lilyfield Road
- Making James Street one-way will mean more traffic using the left-turn slip lane from Mary Street onto Lilyfield Road to access Norton Street southbound – exacerbating the potential for conflicts with cyclists on Lilyfield road eastbound
- Widening of the left-turn slip lane from CWL into James Street east bound would create a barrier for cyclists using the pathway on the north side of CWL - traffic signals with bike lanterns may be needed for safety, and to avoid the need for cyclists to dismount
- Examine opportunities for including a northbound bicycle lane on Norton Street (south) between William Street and CWL
- Examine opportunities to provide a bicycle lane on the south side of Darley Road from Norton Street toward Francis and Hubert Streets
- As mentioned elsewhere, removing the right-turn onto CWL from Norton Street northbound will increase traffic on William Street (a designated cycle route)
- A need for traffic calming and speed limit reductions to address the issue of vehicles speeding through the roundabout at the Charles Street / Darley Road intersection
- A need to reduce the steepness of the footpath on the north side of Darley Road approaching CWL to make it safer for children on bicycles

- As mentioned elsewhere, removing the right turn from Norton Street onto CWL northbound would result in more traffic accessing CWL at Balmain Road, exacerbating existing safety issues for cyclists at that intersection

Council does not support the removal of kerbside parking on William Street as this would reinforce its proposed status as a traffic thoroughfare. This would result in safety and amenity impacts on residents and all road users - drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, noting that William street is a designated bicycle route. Parents crossing William Street to access the childcare centre and St Columba's Primary School would also be negatively affected.

With parking removed, the amenity of dwellings, shops and the footway environment would be reduced by increased traffic travelling at faster speed. With less parking available, parking pressures would increase and there would be no cars to buffer dwellings and pedestrians on the footpath against traffic movement. Council does not believe that removal of parking is necessary to address congestion as is suggested by TfNSW. The removal of street trees on Norton Street north of CWL is also not supported, as this would further reduce streetscape amenity.

The proposed removal of the right-turn option from Norton Street (northbound) onto CLW may increase the 'traffic efficiency' of the intersection but would come at the expense of increased traffic at higher speed and subsequently reduced amenity on William, Hubert and other local streets. Charles and Francis Streets may also suffer increased traffic, but the greatest impact would likely be felt on Hubert Street as this street would have access to Darley Road through the proposed traffic signals.

The increased traffic would result from these streets becoming the main alternative means of accessing CWL from Norton Street. This increased traffic may include a proportion of heavy vehicles defying the existing three-tonne truck limitations that now apply to local streets bound by Darley Road, William Street and Norton Street. This increased through-traffic would be added to a possible future increase in traffic from boarding house and apartment developments that would be constructed in this neighbourhood if approved.

Rat-running down the four laneways adjacent to these streets would create amenity, property access and road deterioration issues - the latter resulting in cost outlays for Council. The draft plan includes no measures to address this likely occurrence.

The proposed removal of the right-turn option from Norton Street (northbound) onto CLW would also divert traffic along Marion Street and Balmain Road, as this is an alternative means of gaining access to CWL city-bound. This would result in additional traffic passing Leichhardt Primary School and Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt Campus and exacerbate queuing at the Balmain Road / CWL intersection.

The draft plan denies access to Darley Road from James and Norton Streets north of CWL. Traffic seeking to access Darley Road would then likely use Norton, William, Hubert and other local streets to access Darley Road. This would add further traffic, worsening amenity impacts on these local streets. Removal of the roundabout on William Street would reduce amenity by allowing traffic speeds to increase. This roundabout serves an important traffic-calming function.

Converting James Street north of CWL to one-way traffic would not only have amenity impacts but would increase traffic that previously travelled from Mary Street to Lilyfield Road onto Norton Street. This would have a negative impact on Council's proposals for a cycleway along Lilyfield Road. Further assessment is needed to accurately determine this impact. Removal of parking on James and Norton Streets north of CWL would not only have

amenity and traffic safety impacts, but would severely disadvantage those residents that did not have off-street parking.

Removal of James St north as an option to access or cross the City West Link from the Lilyfield side concentrates traffic in the Mary Street, Lilyfield Rd, Norton St north 'dog leg', exacerbating rather than alleviating the current afternoon peak traffic queues. It is not clear how this concentration will improve travel times between Lilyfield and Leichhardt, especially for buses - noting that only one of the four light sequences at the intersection allows for movements from north to south.

Council is not certain that the proposed 'no right turn' from Francis Street into Darley Road will be obeyed by all drivers in practice. Experience shows that similar existing restrictions are not obeyed in this area, particularly during congested peak periods. It is acknowledged that the proposed changes may ease traffic congestion on Darley Road and therefore improve driver behaviour, but removing congestion will ultimately encourage more traffic on that route and the 'benefits' would be lost in the longer-term.

Beyond the traffic impacts mentioned above, there could be several other local residential streets affected by increased traffic and reduced local access from the proposed changes, e.g. Balmain Road. Without TfNSW traffic count and forecast data it is not possible to identify which streets may be affected and to what degree.

### **Assessment of draft plan for Dobroyd Parade & Waratah Street, and Mortley Avenue & Timbrell Drive intersections**

*At grade* walk/cycle crossings are usually preferred by Council to grade separation by walk/cycle bridges (or underpasses). There may however be instances where grade separation is justified due to the particular conditions. The proposed pedestrian bridges over Dobroyd Parade at Haberfield and over Parramatta Road at Haberfield-Ashfield may in this instance be justified because of heavy traffic, long crossing distances and use by school students (often in groups). Both bridges would also provide access to well-patronised and highly-valued recreation areas.

Issues associated with walk/cycle bridges include longer travel times/distances and access/safety issues involved with lifts, stairs and bridges. Financial costs and visual impacts are also considerations. There may be instances where access is denied altogether for some users when lifts are not working. Where surface crossings have been removed, some pedestrians/cyclists may be tempted to cross unassisted rather than use the bridge. To avoid these issues, it would be appropriate in both instances to construct the bridge whilst also retaining the existing signalised crossing.

Should the bridges proceed, Inner West Council should be involved in the detailed design of both bridges and Canada Bay Council also involved in the detailed design of the bridge from Waratah Street to Timbrell Park. Lifts and bridges should be sufficiently large and wide to cater for peak-use periods (such school travel periods) and to allow for wheeled devices such as bicycles, prams and wheelchairs. Designs should comply with Australian Standards in relation to accessibility. A wayfinding strategy should be included which includes directional signage. In the interests of minimising visual impacts, advertising should not be permitted on bridges.

Retention of the existing wooden pedestrian bridge over the Iron Cove Canal (as proposed) is necessary to provide walk/cycle access back across the canal from Timbrell Park to Reg Coady Reserve. A stairway could be included from the bridge directly into Reg Coady Reserve to provide the option of a direct connection into the reserve. Detailed design of the

circular ramp would need to be undertaken with Canada Bay Council to ensure impacts on trees and play areas was minimised.

Council has been examining opportunities to provide a shared path along Iron Cove Creek corridor through Reg Coady and Wadim (Bill) Jegorow Reserves. When completed, this path would link the Bay Run with Ashfield Pool. Council has also been working with Sydney Water on plans for naturalising Iron Cove Creek. These plans would need to be considered when the bridge is subject to detailed design. Planting along Iron Cove Creek should provide habitat for small birds and invertebrate species.

A walk/cycle link along the eastern side of Wattle Street and Dobroyd Parade from Parramatta Road to near Waratah Street has been provided by WestConnex, but this does not readily link to the existing signalised crossing at Waratah Street as it is often blocked by parked vehicles. There is a need to ensure this link is unimpeded and ensure bicycle lanterns are included on at the signalised crossing. Opportunities for continuing this walk/cycle path from Waratah Street through to Mortley Avenue should be investigated as part of this draft plan.

As only three signalised pedestrians crossing legs have been provided at the Timbrell Drive / CWL intersection, pedestrians and cyclists wanting to access the Bay Run from the Robson Park side of Haberfield would need to cross three times. Although this is currently the situation, this draft plan should provide the fourth crossing leg in the interests of improving pedestrian connectivity and to honour the NSW Government's commitment to provide pedestrian crossings on all legs of signalised intersections. Any opportunity to widen the narrow footpaths at this intersection should be taken.

A walk/cycle path of at least 5m width should be provided in Timbrell Park between Dobroyd Parade and Henley Marine Drive, connecting with the existing path in the park which runs parallel with Henley Marine Drive. The path surface could separate walkers and cyclists through application of different surface treatments, e.g. with 2m of brick paving and 3m of concrete.

The proposed widening of Timbrell Drive should recognise the need to create a safe bicycle commuter route from Heath and Arthur Streets in Five Dock to the Bay Run. Currently the refuge crossing near the intersection of Timbrell and Henley Marine Drives is problematic for pedestrians and cyclists as it is often blocked by queued motor vehicles. It is a popular crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists to access the Bay Run, playground and park, and there are usually parents pushing prams with their children on bikes and scooters. The widening of Timbrell Drive could exacerbate this issue. There is a need to examine how this crossing could be improved, perhaps by incorporating a zebra crossing and raised platform.

The western corner of the intersection of Timbrell Drive and CWL currently does not have adequate room for pedestrians and cyclists, impeding what would otherwise be a continuous walk/cycle link along the canal side of Dobroyd Parade to/from the southwest. There is an opportunity to address this issue in the draft TfNSW plan.

Removal of vegetation in Timbrell Park is regretted. TfNSW should work closely with Canada Bay Council to ensure the environmental impact of this action is minimised. One of Council's issues with all stages of WestConnex to date has been removal of trees and impacts on open space.

Council supports the proposed upgrading of the Timbrell Park pedestrian and cycle shared pathway next to the proposed road widening. TfNSW should work closely with Canada Bay Council on the detailed design of this upgrade.

Preventing right-turns in/out of Waratah Street to/from Dobroyd Parade would contribute to some traffic reduction in Waratah Street. The right turn from Dobroyd Parade into Waratah Street in particular has been a concern for Council and the community for some time, and the experience of increased traffic making this turn since the opening of the M4 East has validated the concern.

However preventing the right turn from Waratah Street into Dobroyd Parade would divert traffic to alternative ways to access Dobroyd Parade / CWL city-bound. All are problematic as they are residential streets already enduring high levels of traffic, with congestion at intersections. The extent and location of these traffic increases cannot be known with certainty without TfNSW traffic count and forecast data.

These alternative routes would be:

- Travel to Ramsay Street, carry-out a U-turn and then turn left into Wattle Street
- Travel to Ramsay Street and take a right turn into Henley Marine Drive, then access CWL via the Timbrell Drive
- Travel to Mortley Avenue, cross CWL onto Timbrell Drive and go around the roundabout at Arthur Street to return to CWL
- Travel to Leichhardt along Ramsay and Marion Streets and access CWL via Darley Road
- Travel to Leichhardt along Ramsay and Marion Streets and access CWL at Balmain Road

Council does not support the proposed removal of kerbside parking at Mortley Avenue, along with relocation of the bus stop. The added traffic capacity would come at the expense of loss of streetscape and residential amenity.

It is acknowledged that the proposal to remove the right turn out of Timbrell Drive onto CWL would help address Timbrell Drive traffic congestion issues. This would however increase through traffic on Mortley Avenue, Boomerang Street and Waratah Streets, which is not supported. Traffic passing Dobroyd Point Primary School would be increased and other streets further afield could suffer increased traffic, e.g. Ramsay Street, Henley Marine Drive and Great North Road.

Council is also concerned that by augmenting the left turn movement from Timbrell Drive onto CWL city-bound, more traffic would be loaded onto the James/Norton/CWL intersection. This would add to the congestion that the TfNSW is attempting to resolve at this location.

### **Assessment of draft plan for Dalhousie Street and Parramatta Road intersection**

As explained above, Council prefers walk/cycle access to be *at grade* but recognises there are instances where grade separation may be justified. The proposed bridge linking Haberfield and Ashfield at Ashfield may be justified because of the width of Parramatta Road and high volumes of traffic at that location. It is acknowledged that due to space constraints, this bridge would include a lift and stairs rather than ramp(s) even though ramps are usually preferred because of inherent problems with lifts, as described above. If the bridge proceeds, the existing surface signalised pedestrian crossing should be retained.

On the northern side, it is not known if land would need to be acquired to accommodate the landing. On the southern side, the landing would be within Ashfield Park. Council does not support the landing within heritage-listed Ashfield Park because of the direct physical and

visual impacts on the park. If the bridge proceeds, alternate locations should be investigated.

Council is aware through its dealings with M4 East that the community has been justifiably concerned about the project having *any* visual impact on Ashfield Park. M4 East CoA B26 requires that the project to minimise impacts on Ashfield Park. Whilst this condition does not apply to these road network changes, it indicates the importance of maintaining the integrity of this park.

The changes proposed for this intersection appear to be the result of the M4 East tunnel ramps and merge lanes being inadequate. Haberfield residents and businesses are being made to suffer reduced local connectivity as a result of poor design by TfNSW. It is further evidence that this draft plan's intention is to keep traffic flowing in and out of WestConnex tunnels rather than improve connectivity and amenity the local community.

The proposed changes to the Dalhousie Street / Parramatta Road intersection would reduce congestion along Parramatta Road at that location and would likely reduce traffic levels on Dalhousie Street. The changes would also allow for removal of infrastructure (cabinets, signage, over height vehicle detectors etc.) from Dalhousie Street, providing some amenity benefits. This infrastructure would not be needed as Dalhousie Street would no longer provide direct access to M4 East tunnels. The changes would however reduce local connectivity for drivers and cyclists and would likely increase traffic on other local streets.

The redesign of the intersection would make the Route 406 bus service between Five Dock and Hurlstone Park less direct, reducing its viability. This bus service currently uses Dalhousie and Orpington Streets across Parramatta Road to provide Haberfield residents with direct access to the closest station (Ashfield), and provides access to local schools. It would also sever local vehicular access along that route, increasing use of Bland Street to connect Haberfield to Ashfield. The impact on special school buses using this route should also be considered.

Assessing the precise nature of vehicular traffic increases on other Haberfield streets is difficult due to absence of TfNSW traffic data and the interconnected nature of streets, where multiple route options are available. Notwithstanding, Council is concerned about traffic being diverted to Bland Street to access Haberfield. This would be exacerbated in the future with the opening of Woolworths on the corner of Parramatta Road and Bland Street, Ashfield.

The area around this intersection is currently congested with traffic that includes Haberfield Primary School pickups/drop-offs, WestConnex workers and general traffic travelling between Ashfield and Haberfield. Currently traffic on Bland Street accessing Parramatta Road is creating lengthy queues that extend past the school.

Modelling for Council's LAIS predicted that traffic would increase on Bland Street at Haberfield after opening of the M4 East, and traffic levels would further increase in the longer-term with or without Stage 3. The LAIS recommended traffic calming works in Bland Street along other streets in the Haberfield Precinct.

There would also likely be an increase in traffic entering Haberfield via Chandos Street and turning left or right at Denman Avenue. This will result in additional traffic passing the childcare centre in Chandos street and a potentially unsafe crossing environment at the Chandos Street / Denman Avenue intersection.

There are also issues associated with the proposed Parramatta Road U-turn arrangement for vehicles. Whilst the U-turn would likely be a suitable compromise for regular users, new

users may find it confusing. There may be excessive queuing in the lane leading to the U-turn, and entry to the westbound traffic stream on Parramatta Road may be hazardous. It would be particularly hazardous should the 406 bus service and special school buses be required to undertake this manoeuvre.

The proposed changes would likely result in a proportion of vehicles turning left onto Chandos Street (Haberfield) instead of Dalhousie Street after passing through the U-turn. Some of this traffic would pass the Haberfield Primary School.

Although not stated in the draft TfNSW plan, Council understands that a section of the footway on the Haberfield side of Parramatta Road (outside Yasmar Estate) would need to be narrowed to allow sufficient sight distances. If this is the case, it is not supported by Council.

Council had previously called for an investigation into the full or partial closure of Chandos Street, Haberfield at Parramatta Road to reduce vehicle movements in the street. This proposal will instead increase those movements. Council is also concerned the changes would also divert additional traffic to other streets such as Sloane, Tebbutt, Brown and Marion Streets. During periods when there is significant traffic undertaking the U-turn at this unsignalised intersection, excessive queuing may result.

Haberfield businesses have already suffered negative impacts from the construction phase of WestConnex. Removal of the right-hand turn option at Dalhousie Street would make vehicular access to Haberfield shopping centre more difficult, with the likelihood there would be a further economic impact on these businesses.

Council does not support the removal of kerbside parking on Bland Street near its intersection with Parramatta Road for the same reasons it does not support removal of parking in most locations elsewhere – additional traffic at faster speed will reduce residential amenity and walk/cycle safety.

Extension of right-turn lane from Parramatta Road to Liverpool Road may encourage additional traffic on Liverpool Road which would add to traffic congestion and amenity impacts on the Ashfield mainstreet shopping centre.

This draft TfNSW plan provides an opportunity to address a long-standing issue of rat-running and speeding between Sloane Street and Marion Street via Lord Street and Hawthorne Parade south. The rat-run is the result of traffic avoiding signals at the Marion/Ramsay Street intersection as they travel to CWL via Foster Street, Darley Road or Norton Street.

The number of vehicles and excessive speeds on these streets erodes neighbourhood amenity and creates safety issues for the numerous children and their parents walking or cycling to Kegworth and Haberfield primary schools. It also creates safety issues for the numerous pedestrians and cyclists accessing the GreenWay corridor.

Council and the community are concerned that removal of right turns into and out of Dalhousie Street will mean that drivers will use the Sloane/Lord Street / Hawthorne Parade south rat-run instead. A further concern is that the proposal to expand Darley Road access to CWL will also encourage even more traffic to use this rat-run. TfNSW could address this issue by funding the required traffic calming works. Residents in this area point to increased queuing of traffic on Sloane Street on both sides of Parramatta Road since the M4 East opened.

## Conclusion

Council's assessment of the draft TfNSW road network plan highlights the pervasive and negative nature of WestConnex operational traffic impacts. It also highlights the perverse local outcomes that result from attempts to address these impacts by increasing road capacity and facilitating the 'free flow' of motor vehicles. Whilst the plan would create a few improvements, most of the changes would have negative local outcomes and are therefore not supported. Council seeks a thorough review of the plan with a view to improving local connectivity and amenity across the board. In undertaking this review TfNSW should seek to integrate and ultimately implement the traffic calming works proposed in Council's LAIS.

## References

- Transport for NSW (2020) *Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt local network improvements*, information available on the TfNSW project [website](#)
- Inner West Council (2020) *Submission on the Western Harbour Tunnel EIS*, available on the Council [website](#)
- Inner West Council (2018) *WestConnex Local Area Improvement Strategy (LAIS)*, available on the Council [website](#)
- Inner West Council (2018) *Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into WestConnex – Inquiry Submission No.379*, available on the Inquiry [website](#)
- GSC (2018) *Greater Sydney Regional Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities*, available on the GSC [website](#)
- Inner West Council (2017) *Submission on WestConnex Stage 3 (M4-M5 Link) EIS*, available on the Council [website](#)
- SGS Economics & Planning (2016) *WestConnex Business Case Review*, for former Leichhardt Council & City of Sydney, appended to the abovementioned Council submission to the WestConnex inquiry
- Sydney Water (2016) *Concept Design for Naturalisation of Iron Cove Creek (Dobroyd Canal)*, available on the Sydney Water [website](#)