

**Item No:** L0717 Item 1  
**Subject:** WESTCONNEX UPDATE REPORT: ASSESSMENT OF STAGE 3 (M4-M5 LINK) CONCEPT DESIGN  
**File Ref:** 16/6107/74161.17  
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### **SUMMARY**

This report discusses two WestConnex-related items – the first is progress of the development of Council’s submission on the WestConnex Stage 3 (M4-M5 Link) Concept Design, while the second is a proposed one-month extension of funding for the WestConnex Community Organiser position. Regarding the first item, planning/engineering firm Beca has been engaged by Council to assist with the drafting of the submission, and a summary of the main issues discussed in Beca’s early draft submission is within this report. Beca and Council staff will give a brief presentation to LRAC as a prompt for discussion, and issues raised from the discussion will be noted for inclusion in the submission. Key issues for discussion are Council’s strategic position on WestConnex Stage 3 and local impacts such as mid-tunnel construction dive sites. It is planned that a final draft submission be presented to the 25 July 2017 Council meeting and the final submission be lodged before the 4 August 2017 closing date. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for WestConnex Stage 3 is expected to be placed on public exhibition in late August or early September 2017. At that time, Council will undertake a Request for Quote to engage a consultant to assist with its assessment of the EIS. Regarding the second item, this report recommends that funding for the Community Organiser position be extended by four weeks. This is to ensure there is no gap between the end of the current round of 12-month funding and the first meeting of the newly-elected Council on 26 September 2017.

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT LRAC:**

- 1. receives and notes this report and provides any feedback; and**
  - 2. recommends to Council that the current round of 12-month funding for the WestConnex Community organiser position be extended by four weeks.**
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### **DISCUSSION**

#### *Item 1: Assessment of Stage 3 (M4-M5 Link) Concept Design*

Progress on Council’s assessment of the Concept Design for WestConnex Stage 3 (M4-M5 Link) was reported to LRAC and Council meetings in June 2017. Council has engaged planning/engineering firm Beca to assist with the drafting of its submission on the Concept Design. Beca’s assessment (now underway) has integrated comments from Council staff, along with issues that have been raised with Council by the community.

The main purpose of this report is to brief LRAC members on the main issues within early drafts of the Council submission. Beca and Council staff will give a presentation at the meeting on these issues as a prompt for discussion by LRAC members, and comments from meeting will be noted for inclusion in Council’s submission. It is planned that a draft submission be reported to the Council’s ordinary meeting on 25 July 2017 meeting and the final submission lodged with Sydney Motorway Corporation (SMC) before the 4 August 2017 close date.

Although Council's brief for the Concept Design assessment includes the following elements, the submission will focus on Elements 1, 2 and 8 – not only because of the relative importance of these three elements, but because the limited amount of detail in the Concept Design does not allow for a full assessment of the remaining five elements.

1. Strategic issues;
2. Traffic and transport (construction and operation);
3. Visual impact and urban design;
4. Social, economic, heritage and property (construction and operation);
5. Air quality (construction and operation);
6. Contamination, flooding & water management;
7. Noise and vibration (construction and operation); and
8. Consultation process.

Key documents guiding Beca's assessment are:

- WestConnex M4-M5 Link State significant infrastructure application report (SSIAR) – January 2016;
- The Department of Planning & Environment (DP&E) Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
- Feedback from Inner West Council staff members and submissions by the community on the Concept Plan;
- WestConnex M4 – M5 Link Concept Design Plan – May 2017, the document to be reviewed; and
- City of Sydney – *The WestConnex Challenge, Public Summary Report* – June 2017 draft, and *WestConnex - Alternative Proposal* – 5 June 2017.

As has been previously reported, the Stage 3 Concept Design has not only raised 'content' issues for Council, but also 'process' issues, such as lack of detail in the Concept Design document (refer to Point 8 above). As a result, Council's submission on the Concept Design will by necessity include a number of questions and requests for further information. Council has written to the Minister for WestConnex and SMC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to raise these process issues.

It is expected the Stage 3 EIS will be placed on public exhibition for two to three months at the end of August or early September 2017, and it is hoped the EIS will provide further information of sufficient detail to enable Council to undertake a thorough assessment. Council will seek to engage a consultant via a Request for Quote (RFQ) process to assist with preparation of its submission on the EIS when that document is placed on exhibition.

Council's strategic position on Stage 3 will be an important element in its submission on the Concept Design. As development of the strategic position is a work-in-progress at this stage, details have not been included in this report – however, some ideas for discussion by LRAC are listed below and will be included in the presentation at the meeting. Whilst the City of Sydney and Inner West Council are united in their opposition to WestConnex and the City's *WestConnex - Alternative Proposal* has presented a number of ideas that are relevant to Inner West Council's strategic position, it is appropriate that differences also be identified to account for differing local contexts.

Considerations for the development of Council's strategic position include:

- Council's continued opposition to WestConnex and preference for public transport and other 'demand-side' (traffic reduction) solutions to Sydney's traffic problems;

- the fact that Stages 1 and 2 being approved and under construction;
- the City of Sydney's *WestConnex - Alternative Proposal* – which proposes public transport improvement and demand management measures with reconfiguration of WestConnex to create an inner-metropolitan ring-road comprising tunnel sections and existing surface roads;
- local construction, operational traffic and other impacts from the proposed Rozelle Interchange;
- the potential that not constructing the Stage 3 subterranean link between Stages 1 and 2 could exacerbate traffic impacts in the area around the Haberfield and St Peters interchanges and remove opportunities for improvements at some surface locations, e.g. Parramatta Road and Victoria Road;
- the potential to improve road connections to Sydney Airport and Port Botany;
- benefits that would flow from a significant portion of the Rozelle Rail Yards (RRY) site being redeveloped as a recreation area;
- opportunities to reduce the number of heavy vehicles on Victoria Road and Parramatta Road;
- the need to reserve corridors in and around the RRY site for future light rail extensions and to seize opportunities to improve bus services and implement bus rapid transit, e.g. extension of Anzac Bridge bus lanes and guided electric transit on Parramatta Road;
- the potential for traffic access to be denied to the subterranean Rozelle Interchange to reduce local traffic impacts, whilst recognising that local access would also be reduced;
- the results of Council's Local Area Traffic Improvement project and potential for traffic calming of streets affected by WestConnex traffic;
- the potential for local and regional active transport network improvements resulting from WestConnex Stage 3; and
- the impact of the proposed Western Harbour Tunnel, Sydney Gateway and Southern Connector motorways.

After engagement with Beca, Council is of the view at this stage that the current M4-M5 Link Concept Design Plan does not provide the transport solution that will best serve the movement of vehicles and people in Sydney's Inner West and therefore request that, in view of the limitation of the current Plan, WestConnex and the State agree to take Inner West Council's and other stakeholder comments and requests on board to develop a better plan.

The early draft submission also includes discussion of more specific local issues raised by the Concept Design. A summary is as follows:

- Concern is expressed over increased traffic (both construction and operational) in the area around the Rozelle Interchange. This traffic will impact on local amenity, accessibility and pedestrian/cyclist safety. Additionally, it is highly likely that the construction phases of the M4-M5 Link will extend the duration of the already highly disrupted environment that the Inner West community has been attempting to deal with for the past 3+ years;
- The proposal also has significant impacts for residents and business along Victoria Road, Rozelle, many of which are in the process of having their properties acquired; consequently impacting on both those directly affected and the broader community;
- The proposed location of portals and ramps has the potential to encourage increased traffic on Johnston Street and The Crescent - particularly as these streets would provide direct access from the Inner West to a future Western Harbour Tunnel. Additionally, it could result in increased traffic on connecting streets such as Booth Street, Mallet Street and Northumberland Avenue;

- The development of mid-tunnel construction sites at Darley Road, Leichhardt and Pyrmont Bridge Road, Camperdown is likely to result in truck traffic, noise and dust in the vicinity of these sites. These will impact on local residents, businesses, pedestrians, cyclists and bus operations. (Noting that the document briefly states that Rozelle Rail Yards (western end) will be considered as a possible alternative to Darley Road, Council has proposed that containing the mid-tunnel construction operations within the Rozelle railyards would be preferable, however given the site is likely to result in issues for residents on Lilyfield Road and will have potential consequences for traffic congestion on the City West Link);
- Mid-tunnel construction sites are also likely to result in reduced safety (vehicle, cycle and pedestrian), increased traffic congestion and noise associated with the stabling and queuing of heavy vehicles;
- The proposal creates and provides open space, within the Rozelle Railyards site, however it provides only very limited pedestrian access from the south (Annandale and Leichhardt) via two small pedestrian bridges. In order to best serve the community significant land bridges should be provided to physically link the open space to adjacent suburbs;
- No consideration appears to have been given to the heritage aspects of the Rozelle Rail Yards site;
- Concern is expressed over the proximity of the Iron Cove Link ventilation facilities to adjacent residential areas (particularly noting existing medium-density residential developments at and around Balmain Shores and Terry Street) and the potential air quality impacts of the proposed ventilation towers on Rozelle Railyards Park; the bulk and scale of the proposed ventilation facilities will result in a significant visual impact on the park;
- There is no definitive statement regarding the future of Victoria Road, post construction of the Iron Cove Link. This may present an opportunity for environmental and safety enhancements, however it has the potential to simply increase road capacity in Sydney's Inner West.

*Item 2: Extension of funding of Community Organiser position*

- A request by No WestConnex Public Transport (NoW PT) to extend the current 12-month round of funding of the WestConnex Community Organiser position by a further 12 months was considered by Council at its 23 May 2017 meeting. Council resolved to write to the City of Sydney seeking a contribution of half of the funding (i.e. \$50,000) but did not resolve to extend the funding. It was intended that the 12-month extension of funding be a matter for consideration by the newly-elected Council at its first meeting on 26 September 2017. As there may be a gap between the end of the current round of 12-month funding and the first meeting of the newly-elected Council, it is recommended the current funding be extended by four weeks to cover this gap. Note that the City of Sydney has recently accepted Inner West Council's request for a 50% contribution to the next 12-months of funding of this position.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed four-week extension of the Community Organiser position would cost Council approximately \$8,000. Though this has not been allocated in Council's 2017/18 draft budget, it can be funded by existing budgets. This may be offset by a 50% contribution from the City of Sydney.

## **OTHER STAFF COMMENTS**

Comments from relevant Council staff have been incorporated in the early submission.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Nil – there is no requirement or necessity for Council to undertake community consultation on the matters dealt with in this report at this stage. Notwithstanding, Council has been encouraging community members to make a submission and to forward Council their submissions (draft or final).

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.