

**Item No:** C0717 Item 5  
**Subject:** WESTCONNEX UPDATE REPORT: DRAFT SUBMISSION ON M4-M5 LINK CONCEPT DESIGN, LOCAL AREA TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY & EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISER POSITION  
**File Ref:** 16/6107/81638.17  
**Prepared By:** Kendall Banfield - Manager WestConnex Unit  
**Authorised By:** Simon Manoski - Group Manager Strategic Planning

### **SUMMARY**

This report considers three WestConnex items – the first is development of a draft Council submission on the *M4-M5 Link Concept Design*, the second is progress of Council's *Local Area Traffic Improvement Strategy* and the third is a proposed one-month extension of funding for the WestConnex Community Organiser position. Regarding the first item, Council has developed a draft submission, assisted by planning/engineering consultants Beca, which is summarised in this report. Key issues within the submission are Council's strategic position on WestConnex Stage 3 and local impacts such as mid-tunnel construction dive-sites and air quality impacts from ventilation facilities. A final version of the submission will be lodged on or before the 4 August 2017 close date. Regarding the second item, Council's consultants are currently undertaking traffic modelling with a view to identifying local streets that may be affected by WestConnex-related traffic impacts. Regarding the third item, this report recommends that the current round of 12-month 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 Council:**

- 1. receives and notes this report;**
- 2. makes a submission on the *M4-M5 Link Concept Design*; and**
- 3. extends the current 12-month round of funding for the WestConnex Community Organiser position by four weeks.**

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### **BACKGROUND**

#### *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) has been reported to prior meetings of the Local Representation Advisory Committee (LRAC) and Council. The last report on this item was to the July 2017 LRAC meeting, supported by a presentation by staff from Council and Council's consultant Beca. The submission is being prepared by Council staff, but informed by expert analysis from Beca. Issues raised by LRAC members at the July meeting have been noted for inclusion in the submission, as have issues raised by specialist Council staff and members of the community. Beca has developed a draft submission, which is summarised below. A final submission will be lodged with Sydney Motorway Corporation (SMC) on or before the 4 August 2017 close date.

Although Council's brief for the Concept Design assessment includes the following eight 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 other five elements.

There elements are:

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 and other information sources 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) for the M4-M5 Link;
- feedback from Inner West Council staff members and submissions by the community on the M4-M5 Link Concept Design;
- *WestConnex M4–M5 Link Concept Design Plan* – May 2017; 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 by necessity includes questions and requests for further information. Council has already written to the Minister for WestConnex and SMC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to raise 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 information of sufficient detail to enable Council to undertake a more comprehensive assessment. When the EIS is released, Council will engage a consultant to assist with preparation of its submission on that document.

Council is currently developing a flyer for distribution to residents which highlights the main issues raised by the Stage 3 Concept Design and encourages residents to make a submission. Council also plans to hold a public meeting as part of the Stage 3 EIS exhibition to hear residents' concerns and further formulate Council's position.

In the draft submission, Council's position on Stage 3 is expressed at three levels. The 'first tier response' is that Council continues to oppose WestConnex, preferring public transport and other demand-management (traffic reduction) solutions to Sydney's traffic problems. The 'second tier response' is that whilst Council reluctantly accepts that Stages 1 and 2 are approved and under construction, Stage 3 should be redesigned to reduce traffic impacts, reduce costs and improve transport outcomes across the board. Council's 'third tier response' is that should the project proceed generally according to Concept Plan, a number of modifications and conditions are required to protect the Inner West community from what may otherwise be unacceptable construction and operational impacts.

The first and second tier responses described above form the basis of Council's strategic position on Stage 3. This important element of Council's submission on the Concept Design will be refined further before the submission is finalised and lodged. In developing this strategic position, Beca has acknowledged that the City of Sydney and Inner West Council are united in their opposition to WestConnex. Beca has also considered the City's *WestConnex - Alternative Proposal*, publicly available on the City's website. Notwithstanding, there are important differences between the strategic positions of the two councils – an appropriate situation given the two councils' unique communities and environmental characteristics.

In the draft submission, the second tier of Council's strategic position - i.e. Council's 'alternative proposal' - is described as follows:

- construct the main Stage 3 tunnel between Haberfield and the realigned M5 to the south-east – Council is concerned that without this tunnel link, residents around the Haberfield and St Peters interchange sites will suffer unacceptable operational traffic impacts;
- consider downgrading the St Peters Interchange and realigning the main Stage 3 tunnel to provide a more direct underground connection to Sydney Airport and Port Botany - if an alternative workable site closer to the Airport and Port can be found;
- connecting the main Stage 3 tunnel to Victoria Road and Western Harbour Tunnel (if built) - but not to City West Link / Anzac Bridge or to Johnstone Street / The Crescent, converting the Rozelle interchange to a junction below the surface - whilst this will reduce local vehicular access to WestConnex, it will substantially reduce local traffic impacts and construction costs;
- connect the main Stage 3 tunnel to Victoria Road via the Iron Cove Link tunnel, with amenity, active transport and public transport improvements implemented on the surface along that section of Victoria Road;
- minimise traffic impacts on local roads through processes such as Council's Local Area Traffic Improvement Strategy (LATIS), funded by the NSW Government;
- capitalise on opportunities for amenity and public transport improvements on all roads where traffic has been reduced, e.g. light rail or guided electric transit along Parramatta Road and Victoria Road;
- extend dedicated bus lanes across the Anzac Bridge – made possible by ensuring WestConnex does not add extra traffic to the Anzac Bridge; and
- convert the Rozelle Rail Yards (RRY) site to parkland designed in conjunction with Council and the community, to assist with offsetting currently low levels of open space in the Rozelle area.

In the submission, the third tier of Council's position is as follows. These are the more detailed, local issues that would be raised if the project was to proceed generally in accordance with the Concept Design:

- concerns about the full range of construction impacts – including traffic, parking, noise and dust – around all Stage 3 construction sites;
- particular concerns about noise, dust and traffic impacts from the mid-tunnel construction dive sites proposed for Darley Road, Leichhardt and Bridge Road / Parramatta, Annandale;
- opposition to the Darley Road and Bridge Road dive sites, with a preference for no dive sites, or a potentially lower-impact dive site option at the western end of the Rozelle Rail Yards (RRY) site;
- concerns about noise, safety and amenity impacts from truck stabling on streets, and consequently a requirement that off-street stabling areas be provided;

- concerns about continued use of existing Stage 1 works compounds at Haberfield for Stage 3, resulting in an extension of construction impacts – a particularly important issue as Haberfield residents have already endured significant impacts from the construction of Stage 1;
- impacts from property acquisitions on residents and businesses along a section of Victoria Road at Rozelle – required for construction of the Stage 3 traffic portal onto Victoria Road;
- lack of commitment to traffic capacity reductions and public transport improvements wherever traffic is reduced by WestConnex – in particular, along Victoria Road and Parramatta Road;
- concerns about increased construction and operational traffic in the area around the proposed Rozelle Interchange, with consequences for residential amenity, pedestrian and cyclist safety and parking demand;
- particular concerns about the Rozelle Interchange feeding additional traffic onto the already congested Anzac Bridge and onto Johnstone Street and The Crescent at Annandale – these latter two streets being within densely developed residential areas;
- for the RRY site, lack of consideration of retention of rail heritage features in situ and staging of site clearing to minimise biodiversity impacts;
- air quality and visual amenity concerns from unfiltered ventilation facilities proposed for the RRY site and Victoria Road near Terry Street – the latter facility raises particular concerns due to its proximity to densely developed residential areas;
- a greater number of north-south walk/cycle connections needed across City West Link and the RRY site to link the Rozelle, Lilyfield and Annandale communities and to ensure the RRY site recreation area is readily accessible to the community;
- concerns that construction of WestConnex Stage 3 and the Western Harbour Tunnel (if built) may hamper implementation of Western Metro (rail) and sever future light rail links, such as the White Bay / Balmain link; and
- a range of less-critical (but nonetheless important) local issues, some raised by community groups and members of the community, e.g. impact of Iron Cove Link designs on local traffic access to King George Park at Rozelle.

Although most of the above issues have been raised by the community groups and individuals, Council has noted there has been particular concern in the community about air quality impacts from ventilation facilities proposed within the RRY site and on Victoria Road adjacent to Terry Street. As is mentioned above, the latter site raises particular concerns due to its close proximity to densely developed residential areas.

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that residential areas on the eastern side of Victoria Road are elevated, with some dwellings potentially above the level of the ventilation facility outlet. Rozelle Primary School is also within reasonably close proximity to this outlet, and Council has noted that this school's Parents & Citizens' Association has raised concerns about air quality impacts on children. Although raising the height of these facilities increases dispersal of emissions over a wider area, this increases their visual impact.

Council is of the view that unfiltered emissions are not acceptable, even if compliant with regional air quality standards. Council is aware that filtration is costly and has not been applied to other motorway tunnels in Sydney. Notwithstanding, Council will continue to argue that filtration be applied to all WestConnex ventilation facilities, with the added financial costs signaling the true environmental costs of this project.

It is planned that a summary of the final submission (as lodged) will be made publicly available on Council's website.

*Item 2: Local Area Traffic Improvement Strategy (LATIS)*

Progress on development of this strategy has been reported to Council and LRAC meetings in June 2017, and further progress reports will be presented to Council later in 2017. As was reported previously, Veitch Lister Consulting (VLC) has been engaged by Council to undertake the required traffic modelling with assistance from Roads & Maritime Services (RMS). Beca has been engaged to use the modelling to shortlist local roads to be treated with Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) schemes and develop LATM designs.

Consistent with Council's brief, VLC is modelling the following traffic scenarios:

- base case 2011;
- base case 2021;
- project case 2021 – WestConnex Stages 1 & 2;
- project case 2031 – WestConnex Stages 1 & 2; and
- project case 2031 – WestConnex Stages 1, 2 & 3.

Also consistent with Council's brief, key outputs from the modeling will be volume capacity ratios for local roads, levels of service, average travel speeds and delay estimates.

VLC has now scoped the road network to be modelled, and its Zenith model has been refined by coding all relevant local streets within the Council area. VLC has received almost all of the modelling data it requires from RMS and Council, and model validation will be undertaken shortly. In parallel with the validation work, VLC is considering how demographic forecasts and possible future transport infrastructure projects can be factored in to the traffic modelling.

Beca is currently reviewing relevant transport/planning documents and is working with VLC to ensure consistency between VLC's traffic modelling work and LATIS development. Council will shortly provide further relevant information to Beca for review – including local crash data, road hierarchy details and relevant GIS information. Beca will also shortly review Council's existing LATM scheme infrastructure for consideration in the design of future LATM infrastructure related to this project.

A summary of further traffic modelling milestones is as follows:

- model validation – to be completed by the end of July 2017;
- base case – to be completed mid-August 2017;
- future scenarios – to be completed in early September 2017; and
- analysis and reporting – to be completed by the end of September 2017.

A summary of further LATIS LATM scheme milestones is as follows:

- identifying scope of works and background review – to be completed by the end of July 2017;
- site audits and review of existing LATM schemes – to be completed mid-August 2017;
- modelling review – to be completed early September 2017;
- future modelling review – to be completed by the end of September 2017;
- community consultation – to commence in early October 2017;
- draft LATIS – to be completed by the end of October 2017; and
- final LATIS – to be completed by the end of November 2017.

*Item 3: 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 in this report that the current funding be extended by four weeks to ensure this gap is covered. 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. Note also that this item was reported to the 11 July 2017 LRAC meeting, and LRAC has recommended to Council that the extension be granted.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The first two items discussed above do not have financial implications – they relate to Council projects that already have funding for consultants. The third item - 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 draft submission for the Stage 3 concept design.

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

As mentioned above, Council is currently developing a flyer for distribution to residents which highlights the main issues raised by the Stage 3 Concept Design and encourages residents to make a submission. Council also plans to hold a public meeting as part of the Stage 3 EIS exhibition to hear residents' concerns and further formulate Council's position. Through other information outlets, Council has been encouraging community members to make a submission on the Concept Design and to forward to Council their submissions - draft or final.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.