

**The Chair,
Review of the F3 to M7 Corridor Selection
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**Submission to the review of the F3 to M7 Corridor Selection
for and on behalf of the Chatswood West Ward Progress Association.**
FINAL SUBMISSION.

General considerations.

The position taken by West Ward Progress Association is primarily concerned with lessening the traffic that currently occurs in the area defined in both studies as Pacific Highway South and it is from knowledge of that area the following comments are presented.

The Metropolitan Strategy released last Christmas requires higher density population along the North Shore Line, and will result in massive added local traffic generation. The Strategy also envisages many tens of thousands of jobs created within the "Crescent" including North Sydney, St. Leonards, Chatswood & North Ryde.

Link roads of the Type B and Type C are based on the assumption that the majority of traffic wish to go west of south west. Both studies show that this is not correct. The evidence is stronger in the Interim Report – F3 to Sydney Orbital Corridor Review March 2006. The Association agrees with the assertion in the summary or the interim report "that sources of demand are primarily further to the East of the type C options." The Metropolitan Strategy supports this assumption. The Association agrees with the initial study with a preference for the type A corridor as offering better transport, social, environmental and economic grounds.

However the Association does not agree that the efficiency of Type A options would depend on the ability of traffic from Sydney's north and west to access such an option. It is also dependant on the ability of the traffic to move freely between their access points from the North blending with the traffic from the West and Northwest and desired eastbound exits such as Chatswood, North Sydney or the Sydney CBD. Consequently both Yellow and Red Options in Type A which feed into the M2 Sydney end should be considered due to the lesser impact on the eastbound traffic from the west. The Purple Option which feeds into the M2 further west at Pennant Hills Road would only increase congestion at a point that is already saturated at peak times.

Drivers need an incentive to pay tolls associated with each of the major infrastructure routes which were constructed to get traffic and heavy vehicles out of built up areas: therefore all possible strategies should be examined to encourage free traffic movements away from the major arterial roads such as Pennant Hills Road and Pacific Highway. The benefit/cost table indicates tolls will substantially reduce tunnel usage.

Economic analysis by the federal Bureau of Transport Economics is quoted by SKM, and there are published reports by the Bureau over many years indicating the maximum tolls that drivers will be prepared to pay. Consideration should be given to:

- differential tolls (similar to the differential tolling in London and the current differential between Peak and Off-peak train tickets in Sydney) to encourage greater spread of travelling times.
- introduction of a Toll Rebate Scheme similar to that which is currently available to residents in South-western Sydney.

The following changes to State policy regarding rail transport would lessen the total traffic movements in the F3 to M7 corridor:

- changing current State Government policies as regards land use in the new Metropolitan Strategy and increasing the release of land to be developed for transit car parking facilities supporting rail stations and bus terminals.
- ensuring funding for rail rolling stock allowing lead time to meet projected demand and alleviate current crowding of peak hour trains once the Clearways project is completed.
- limiting current curfew and noise restrictions and allowing more access time for the movement of Freight on the Northern Line to increase rail freight and lessen the number of heavy truck movements within the corridor.
- Implementing the Port Botany Master Plan which relied on building a dedicated freight railway from Port Botany to the Liverpool area to transport about 40% of containers from the Port to a massive goods train marshalling yard and associated container filling & unloading warehouses

As cost will be a determining factor and as it is also vital to get the arterial traffic into a totally new route, comparison should be made with previous studies. For example consideration of the proposed "B3" route of the 1988 RTA **"North West Sector Road Needs Study** -Analysis of the area bounded by the Pacific Highway, Pennant Hills Road, Becroft Road, and Epping Road".

The "B3" route had an estimated cost of \$117.8 million, a benefit/cost ratio of 4.1, and used a RTA reserved corridor reserved several decades ago, before nearby houses were built.

None of the tunnel routes has a benefit/cost ratio above 1.0, after the discount rate is increased to current values (post the failures of the Airport Railway and the Cross City Tunnel, and the exodus of low interest Hong Kong billionaire money, junk bond discount rates well above 10% will be needed.)

Refer to www.dotars.nsw.gov.au **SKM F3-M2 Working Paper No 7, page 16, Table 3-1**, which shows for a 10% discount rate that a dual three lane no-toll tunnel on either the yellow or purple routes will have a benefit/cost ratio of only 0.8, which is unacceptably low by State Government criteria.

Placing a \$3.50 toll on the tunnel would reduce the ratio to 0.5 ! In contrast, the 1988 RTA "B3" benefit/cost ratio of 4.1 was calculated at a time when long term bond rates were much higher than at present, so an updated ratio for the "B3" would now be even greater than 4.1.

Although consideration was given to part surface roads in the blue & purple options and the red option with bridge the costings need review in 2007 terms. The tunnelling cost difference between the red options with & without bridge appeared to be far too low - not proportional to the length of tunnel - resulting in a higher cost for the bridge option. This reduced the benefit of incremental cash flow in **Working Paper 7 Page 18 Table 3.2**

1. Whether the assumptions and data used in the F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study 2004 were valid and reasonable at the time of the study;

❖ Assumptions not valid and reasonable since:

- the assumptions as regards the increased use of rail was based on an unfunded study that had not been accepted by the government as reasonable for further examination.
- The change in land use as announced in 2003 was not considered.
- There are limitations on type of loads that can utilise tunnels but alternatives to tunnels were not examined in detail.

- ❖ There was little attempt in the analysis to examine the end destinations of the traffic split between Pennant Hills Road and the Pacific Highway and also the use of the M2 between Pennant Hills Road and Sydney CBD, the airport & Port Botany and other eastern destinations. The traffic flow to the east on Beecroft Road/ Epping Road was similarly ignored.
- ❖ The consultation process was flawed. In the introductory stage of consultation displays of information were placed in major shopping centres. A representative of our Association visited the most easterly display, which was in the Macquarie Centre, Herring Road Marsfield. There was no display in the Pacific Highway area. Later, the same person attended a Focus Group meeting in Pennant Hills where he was the sole representative of the Pacific Highway area. Attempts to have the needs of this community considered were virtually ignored.

2. Whether changes since the report's publication affecting land use and transport flows in Western Sydney would support any significant changes to these projections.

- The major changes to Land use and consequent employment processes announced by the Government in 2003 had the consequence of potentially increasing road traffic generation and need for better public transport. [Tables 10 & 18 in the Interim Report – F3 to Sydney Orbital Corridor Review March 2006 show increases of 17% in traffic generation and employment in the area designated as Pacific Highway South].
- The fact as reported by SKM working papers that Pacific Highway traffic peak volumes are already at 1.20 times RTA capacity estimate and the volume is still increasing at about 1% per year based on 24 hour samples. This 1% increase mostly occurs from added traffic extending the peak saturation through less desirable times of day.

3. Whether any significant changes to those projections would alter conclusions reached in the F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study of April 2004

- Changes to the projections that have not been considered are:
 - differing toll arrangements
 - designated land use for transit car parking in outer suburban areas
 - transport mix and flows and economic consequences when there is a failure to meet expected demand such as occurred with the Cross-City Tunnel
 - impact of the Business Park development and changes in land use surrounding the M7 away from industrial usage
 - percentage of freight that for safety reasons cannot use tunnels and hence will remain on arterial roads
- Costings are now 3 years out of date and need revision in light of experience gained with the development of the Lane Cove Tunnel and the M7.
- The demographic changes that will occur as a result of implementation of the Metropolitan Strategy released in 2006.
- The principal prejudicial assumption in the initial study was that a surface freeway on the "B3" route should not be included in the options, because of local community objections. The experience of the M2 was similar: It was finally approved and built over active local protests, and community response as a whole has been highly approving. Such a change in public response should be considered when assessing possible conclusions to the F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Studies.