

2 April 2024

Portfolio Committee No 6 -Transport & the Arts

Submission from The Glebe Society on the Impact of the Rozelle Interchange

Introduction

These Submissions are limited in the scope to the effect the Rozelle Interchange Project (RIP) has on surface roads in the suburbs of Glebe and Forest Lodge. They are based on publicly available information and the personal experience and observations of residents of those suburbs.

Effect on Local Surface Roads

The effect on local surface roads since RIP opened has been considerable and is ongoing. Little attention has been paid to this aspect of RIP and it has been difficult to access information in this regard since the inception of the RIP.

Although there is a good deal of information available about the tunnels that form part of the work for RIP information on the effect of the RIP on local surface roads has never been accessible to the public and this remains the case.

A map, which was part of the 2019 variation to the RIP, which is (see Figure 1.1) provides no information in this regard.

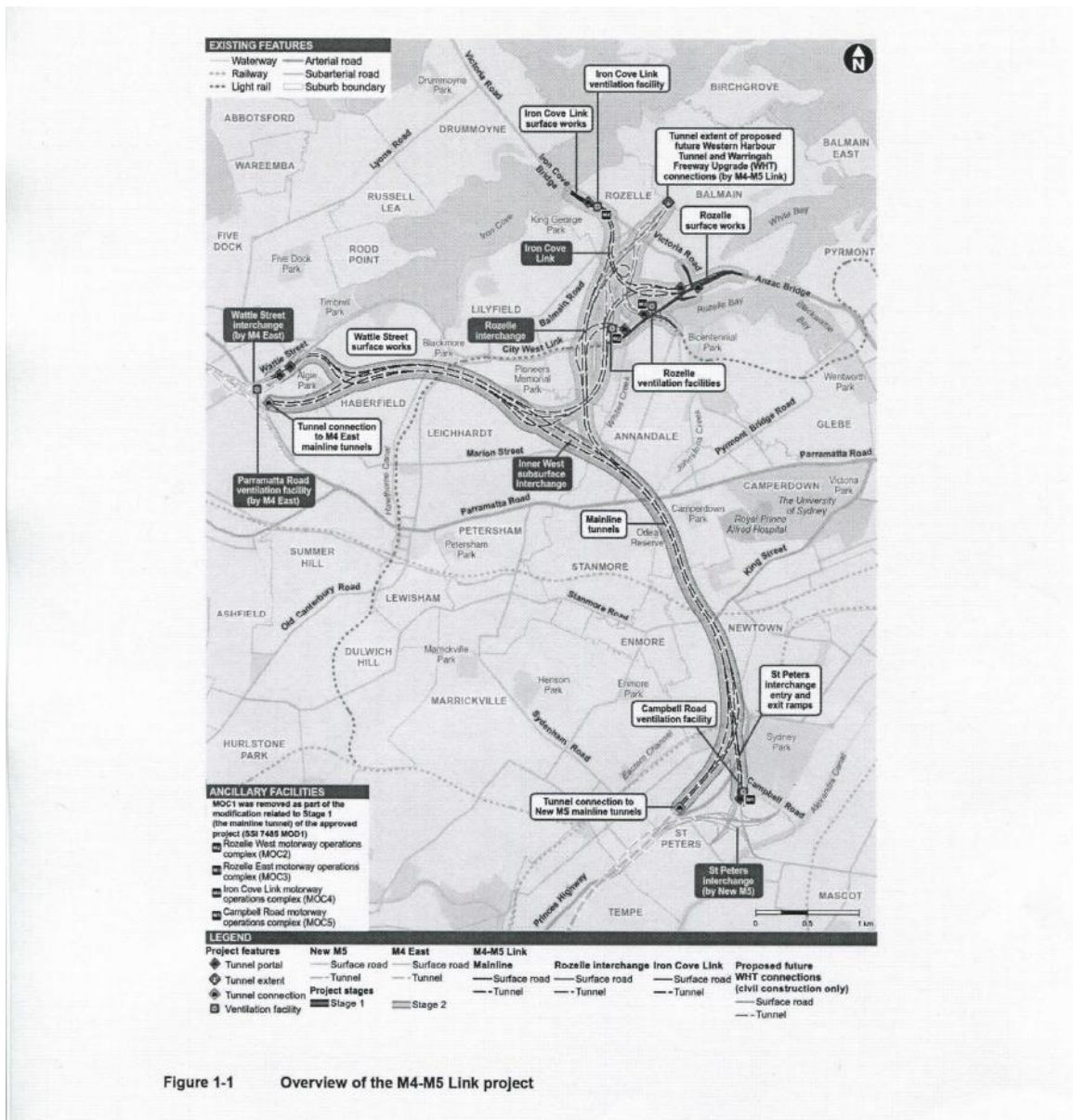


Figure 1-1 Overview of the M4-M5 Link project

A recent Management Plan gives no details of the effect of the RIP on local roads (see Figure 1.2)



Figure 1.2: Overview of the Rozelle Interchange Project

(*West-Connex M4-M5 Link Residual Management Plan*, Transport for New South Wales, Feb 2023 Version 2.0)

There is no such information available on the Rozelle Interchange Interactive Construction Portal (<https://caportal.com.au/tfns/wcxri/wa-surface#>) either.

Signage

Signage on surface roads leading to and from the RIP is sparse and often misleading. There is usually only 1 sign board before a driver decision is necessary and it is installed where

the decision needs to be made instead of giving plenty of warning beforehand. For instance, immediately before the traffic lights at Victoria Road & City West Link there is a large overhead sign indicating that 3 lanes turn left & 3 lanes turn right. That would indicate that if a vehicle was in the middle lane it could turn right without changing lanes. In fact, that is not correct. The only way to turn right without changing lanes is to be in the right lane. This sign is misleading and dangerous.

Another example of poor signage is the merger of east bound traffic into one lane under the Light Rail overpass on The Crescent where 2 lanes suddenly become one without prior warning.

Driver animation videos are available but they are all directed to toll road users.

Accurate signage is clearly essential. Even accurate signs need to give motorists plenty of warning that a decision needs to be made and what the options are. Signs have been painted on the road at the southern end of the Iron Cove Bridge and are probably clearer than overhead signs.

At present the signs are mainly directed to tunnel users or to the City as the destination. There are very few signs helpful to those headed south or west. Where there are any such signs, they appear too late to enable safe decisions, are often confusing and in some instances inaccurate. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

North South Traffic

The intersection at White Bay for south bound traffic is very confusing both as to lanes and signage. The effect is to channel all south bound traffic down suburban streets – The Crescent (which becomes Ross Street) and Johnson Streets. Neither of those streets were designed for the amount of traffic and size of vehicles that they now carry. Neither has ever been an arterial road.

Traffic banks up along The Crescent and Ross Street at peak periods, particularly because of changes made at the intersection of Ross Street and Paramatta Road. There is also a perceptible increase in very heavy vehicles along these streets.



Heavy vehicles in The Crescent/Ross Street
(Janet Oakley photo)

Congestion along The Crescent and Ross Street is made worse by the introduction of a new pedestrian crossing on the western side of the intersection of Ross Street with Paramatta Road. Because of the red arrows for both left and right turning traffic very few vehicles can turn into Parramatta Road on one green light. The cycle privileges Paramatta Road traffic in any event.

Vehicles heading north from The Crescent to Victoria Road face a long wait at peak periods because priority is given to east west traffic on the light phase. This also leads to a build up of traffic at peak periods.

Ramp signals are apparently in place but only control signals approaching Anzac Bridge. There is little if any evidence that RIP scheme addressed the impact of north south surface traffic. While this is a design flaw there are measures that can be taken to address some of the worst affects.

East West Avoidance Rat Runs

There has been a noticeable increase in traffic on east west local roads through Glebe and Forest Lodge since RIP opened - in particular, Wigram Road, Bridge Road and Paramatta

Road. No doubt motorists are seeking to avoid the bottlenecks on the RIP surface roads when driving to and from the City, particularly at peak periods. In fact, Transport for NSW encourages drivers to use Paramatta Road as an un-tolled route to the City (<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/rozelle-interchange>).

Foot and Cycle Traffic

It is almost impossible to get between Balmain and Glebe on foot and difficult by bicycle. Although the closure new parkland because of asbestos contamination has added to these difficulties, they will not be resolved when the park reopens.

For instance, a person who takes the 433 bus from Glebe to the White Bay Exhibition venue at present can only legally cross the road by walking south, then following the cycle route under Victoria Road or by walking north to the nearest pedestrian crossing at Darling Street. Both alternatives involve roughly a kilometre detour. Once the park reopens pedestrians will need to climb down about a staircase of about 4 storeys and climb up a similar flight on the other side. This is not a viable option for anyone who has difficulty with stairs. At night the underpass would be extremely uninviting.



Sign disclosing the route to be taken by pedestrians to cross Victoria Road (Janet Oakley photo)

Discussions with visitors to the Biennale who were faced with this problem recently revealed that most had chosen to dash across Victoria Road – hardly a safe alternative. The pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Robert Street and Victoria Road should be reinstated.

Air Quality

It is of concern that the Secretary has been granted discretion to apply flexibility with regards to ambient air quality monitoring framework (*Modification of Infrastructure Approval 23/8/2023*).

Prepared by our Transport & Traffic Convenor Janet Oakley

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Leys', on a light green background.

Duncan Leys
President
The Glebe Society