Councillors,

In accordance with section 367 of the Local Government Act, 1993 notice is hereby given that a Briefing Committee Meeting will be held on:

DATE: Tuesday 21 February 2017

TIME: Following the Public Voice Session

VENUE: Council Chambers
2nd Floor
City Hall
290 King Street
Newcastle NSW 2300

Frank Cordingley
Acting Interim Chief Executive Officer

City Administration Centre
282 King Street
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

Monday 13 February 2017

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BRIEFING COMMITTEE REPORTS

ITEM-1 BR 21/02/17 - EXHIBITION OF NEWCASTLE INNER CITY BYPASS - RANKIN PARK TO JESMOND

REPORT BY: PLANNING AND REGULATORY AND INFRASTRUCTURE
CONTACT: ACTING DIRECTOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY / DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE

PURPOSE

To provide a briefing on the proposed Rankin Park to Jesmond section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass.

BACKGROUND

On 27 April 2015 and 16 June 2016 Council provided comprehensive submissions to Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) for consideration in the development of a refined strategic design for the proposed Rankin Park to Jesmond section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass. Various issues were addressed in the submissions, including road design, pedestrian and cycle facilities, land use, biodiversity, flood risk and water quality.

At the Council meeting of 28 June 2016 it was resolved:

'That Council:

i) Endorses the submission from Officers dated 16 June to RMS regarding the Revised Strategic Design of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass Rankin Park to Jesmond.

ii) Supports the public statement from Hunter New England Health and calls on RMS to deliver a full interchange to the John Hunter Hospital.

iii) Supports residents' concerns and calls on RMS to deliver a full interchange at McCaffrey Drive to prevent a 'rat run' through local streets and John Hunter's internal road network.

iv) Supports cyclists concerns and calls on RMS to implement design changes to mitigate the need for cyclists to traverse three additional sets of traffic lights when travelling east/west to/from Wallsend on the off road cycle path.

On 11 November 2016 Council received notification from the Department of Planning and Environment that the RMS had submitted for public exhibition an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass. Council was invited to provide comment by 16 December 2016.
The project involves the construction of 3.4 kilometres of a new four-lane divided road between Lookout Road at New Lambton Heights and Newcastle Road at Jesmond. It includes three interchanges:

i) The Northern interchange provides access to Newcastle Road and the existing Jesmond to Shortland section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass.

ii) The Hospital interchange provides access to/from the north to the John Hunter Hospital precinct; and

iii) The Southern interchange provides access to Lookout Road and the existing Kotara to Rankin Park section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass;

Key features of the project are detailed in Figure 1-2-Project Overview of the EIS (refer to Attachment A).

Planning approval for the project is being sought under Part 5.1 (State significant infrastructure) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. The Minister for Planning is the consent authority. The Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy has determined that the project is a 'controlled action' under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). Therefore, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will need to make a decision under the EPBC Act whether to approve the action.

At the Council meeting of 13 December 2016 it was resolved:

That Newcastle City Council-

i) Reiterates its motion of 28 June 2016, supporting residents and cyclists' calls for RMS to deliver a full interchange at McCaffrey Drive, and for RMS to implement design changes to mitigate the need for cyclists to traverse three additional sets of traffic lights when travelling east/west to/from Wallsend on the off road cycle path through Jesmond Park.

ii) Endorses Council making a submission to RMS’ EIS by Friday 16 December which highlights these concerns and requests design changes.

iii) Invites a representative from RMS, a McCaffrey Drive resident, and a representative from Newcastle Cycleways to present at a Public Voice session in February 2017 on the project.

iv) Receives a briefing from Council officers on the proposal in February 2017.

Council’s submission regarding the project was forwarded to the Department of Planning and Environment on 16 December 2016 (refer to Attachment B).

On 22 December 2016 the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment provided copies of all submissions received to the RMS and requested
a written response to the issues raised in the submissions. The Response to Submissions report prepared by the RMS will be made publicly available on the Department's website.

A Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR) may be required if the RMS decides that the application should be amended to deal with issues raised in the submissions. Where the RMS has submitted a PIR and the Department determines that significant amendments have been made to the application, the Department may choose to publicly exhibit the PIR.

RECOMMENDATION

The briefing be received.

REFERENCES

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Figure 1-2 Project overview of the Environmental Impact Statement of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass-Rankin Park to Jesmond, dated November 2016:

Attachment B: Council's submission dated 16 December 2016 to the Department of Planning and Environment.
Newcastle Inner City Bypass – Rankin Park to Jesmond
Environmental impact statement overview – November 2016
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Rankin Park to Jesmond overview

Environmental impact statement

An environmental impact statement (EIS) has been developed for the Newcastle Inner City Bypass between Rankin Park and Jesmond. The EIS outlines the key features of the project and assesses its potential environmental, social and economic impact during construction and operation.

The Department of Planning and Environment has placed the EIS on display for comment.

This overview outlines some of the key issues identified in the EIS.

For detailed information please refer to the EIS in full which is available to view electronically at majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au or in hard copy at locations listed on page 19.

All submissions must be received by the Department of Planning and Environment by Friday 16 December 2016.

More information on how to make a submission is outlined on page 18.
Overview

The Newcastle Inner City Bypass is part of Roads and Maritime Services' long-term strategy to provide an orbital road within Newcastle's road network to connect the Pacific Highway at Bennetts Green with the Pacific Highway at Sandgate.

The bypass provides improved traffic flows across the western suburbs of Newcastle and connects key regional destinations such as Bennetts Green, Charlestown and Jesmond shopping centres, John Hunter Hospital precinct, the University of Newcastle and the Pacific Highway.

Construction of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass began in the early 1980s. Completed bypass sections are:

- Kotara to Rankin Park (completed in 1983)
- Jesmond to Shortland (completed in 1993)
- West Charlestown Bypass (completed in 2003)
- Shortland to Sandgate (completed in 2014).

The proposed Rankin Park to Jesmond section of the bypass would provide traffic relief to the existing route of Lookout Road, Croudace Street and Newcastle Road, which is currently used by about 40,000 to 60,000 vehicles each day.

When completed, motorists travelling north-south on the proposed section of bypass would avoid up to 11 sets of traffic lights along the existing route, which is expected to reduce travel times by up to 80 per cent during the morning and afternoon peaks.

In June 2014, the NSW Government announced it would provide $280 million to complete the Rankin Park to Jesmond section of the bypass, including $150 million from Restart NSW. A concept design has been developed for the project which forms the basis of the EIS assessment.

Scope

The Rankin Park to Jesmond section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass is a proposed new 3.4 kilometre bypass between Lookout Road at New Lambton Heights and Newcastle Road at Jesmond, to the west of the John Hunter Hospital.

The proposed bypass would provide two lanes in each direction separated by a median, as well as three interchanges designed to improve traffic flow and increase connectivity:

- Northern interchange providing access to Newcastle Road and the existing Jesmond to Shortland section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass. The full interchange provides all movements to/from the bypass and Newcastle Road.
- Hospital interchange providing access between the John Hunter Hospital precinct and the bypass. The half interchange provides access to/from the north.
- Southern interchange providing access to Lookout Road and the existing Kotara to Rankin Park section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass. The bypass would travel under McGaffrey Drive. The half interchange provides connection in both directions on Lookout Road.

The project would include upgrades to connecting roads, pedestrian and cycling facilities, noise barriers as required and permanent operational water quality treatment measures.

The project would also include structures along the road for drainage, animal and bushwalker access.

The surrounding road network experiences high levels of traffic congestion and delays at key intersections. These issues are likely to worsen in the future as traffic volumes increase.

The project would deliver significant benefits to the local community and road users by reducing congestion in the area.
Key benefits

- **Increase road capacity**
- **Provide traffic relief**
- **5th section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass**
- **Improved connectivity for the John Hunter Hospital precinct**
- **Up to 11 sets of traffic lights bypassed**
- **80% travel time saving on the bypass by 2030**
- **Reduce flood impacts**
- **Additional connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists**
- **32 per cent reduction in crashes**
- **Improve the efficient movement of freight**
Key features

This map provides an overview of the proposed bypass route. You can see more of the design detail in the following three maps, including detail on the proposed interchanges. The maps provide a graphical representation of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass between Rankin Park and Jesmond.

**Features**

- 3.4 kilometres of four lane divided road
- A northern interchange at Newcastle Road
- A southern interchange at Lookout Road
- An interchange providing access to John Hunter Hospital precinct to/from the north
- Three structures provided along the bypass to improve connectivity in the bushland for people and animals
- Off-road provisions for pedestrians and cyclists including a shared path bridge over Newcastle Road at Jesmond Park.
Map 1 – Southern interchange

- Bridge takes northbound traffic on Lockout Road over the bypass
- Extension of right and left turn lanes
- Bridge over the bypass
- Traffic lights to control southbound traffic
- Proposed off-road shared path
- Two right turn lanes to and from McCaffrey Drive

An artist's 3D impression looking south across the southern interchange
Map 2 – Hospital interchange (John Hunter Hospital)

Bridge over bypass

Shared path on bridge connects to existing track

On-ramp to the bypass (northbound)

Off-ramp to hospital (southbound)

Bypass ramp would connect to John Hunter Hospital’s internal road system

An artist’s 3D impression looking south across the hospital interchange
Map 3 – Northern interchange

- Bridge to allow off-ramp to pass under bypass
- Three lanes in each direction on Newcastle Road
- Bridge over Newcastle Road with two lanes in each direction
- Turn lanes provided to enter and exit the bypass in all directions
- Two right and left turn lanes
- Cycleway modified to connect to new intersection
- Traffic lights replace roundabout
- Connection from Robert Street retained

An artist’s 3D impression looking west across the northern interchange
Construction

The Rankin Park to Jesmond project would take around two and a half years to build.

During construction there would be some disruption to traffic on the road network surrounding the Newcastle Inner City Bypass between Rankin Park and Jesmond. In particular, sections of Lookout Road, McCaffrey Drive and Newcastle Road.

Construction activities are expected to be completed while maintaining through traffic on existing roads.

The successful contractor would develop construction and traffic management plans to deliver the project with impacts minimised on local residents, motorists using the existing road network and the environment.

Construction hours

Standard construction hours in NSW are:
- 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday
- 8am to 1pm Saturday.

We are seeking approval for extended construction hours to allow the project to be completed as quickly as possible to reduce impacts on local residents, motorists and the community.

The proposed extended hours would be:
- 6am to 7pm Monday to Friday
- 7am to 5pm Saturday.

Out of hours work

Out of hours work, such as night work, would be required where construction activities would otherwise severely impact traffic flow, stakeholders or worker safety.

Information for local residents

The majority of construction would occur along the bushland area. This would minimise impacts on the existing route and surrounding road network.

Temporary detours and construction traffic management measures would be used to ensure the safety of motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and workers. Road closures are not expected, however temporary short-term diversions may be required.

We would work closely with directly impacted residents and nearby neighbours. A 24 hour information line would be staffed throughout construction. Residents would be regularly consulted and informed through emails, letters and the project website.

Information for motorists

The contractor would work with the Transport Management Centre to manage all planned and unplanned incidents during construction. Traffic changes would be communicated to motorists through electronic message signs and livetraffic.com.

Motorists would be advised of temporary changed traffic conditions via construction signage.

Construction compounds

Secured construction compounds would be located close to the project corridor. Compounds would potentially be used for:
- Offices and parking
- Materials handling and storage
- Crushing and batching equipment
- Deliveries.

For more information go to Chapter 5 in the EIS.
Assessment of key issues

Traffic and transport

The project is predicted to provide major benefits for motorists using the Newcastle Inner City Bypass with substantial improvements in traffic flow and travel time for northbound and southbound journeys.

The road network surrounding the Rankin Park to Jesmond project area has high levels of traffic congestion and delays for motorists at key intersections. Around 40,000 to 60,000 vehicles use the existing route of Lookout Road, Croudace Street and Newcastle Road every day.

Extensive traffic modelling has been carried out to primarily assess the predicted traffic performance of the project and the forecast redistribution of traffic on the road network in the study area.

The project is expected to carry up to 34,500 vehicles per day in 2030, reducing traffic volumes on the existing route of Lookout Road, Croudace Street and Newcastle Road by about 25 to 45 per cent depending on location.

The project is predicted to provide major benefits for motorists using the bypass with substantial improvements in travel time for both northbound and southbound journeys. The project is also predicted to improve travel times for north-south trips on the existing route and for east-west trips on Newcastle Road.

The project is expected to improve road safety on the existing route due to the reduction in traffic volumes and improved traffic flows, with a predicted 32 per cent reduction in crashes each year.

Traffic relief on key parts of the surrounding road network is expected when the project opens to traffic, including nearby key intersections. The project would include upgrades on McCaffrey Drive where it joins Lookout Road to improve traffic flow.

The project would provide additional connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists via on-road cycleways and off-road shared paths, including a shared path bridge over Newcastle Road.

For more information go to Chapter 8 in the EIS.
Biodiversity

The environment around the proposed bypass has been assessed to minimise environmental impacts where possible.

Extensive surveys were carried out as part of the EIS to understand the existing environment and evaluate the potential impact of the Rankin Park to Jesmond bypass.

The assessment included:

- Field surveys
- Research and analysis of relevant databases, literature and reports
- Identification and likelihood of impacts to threatened species, communities and high value ecosystems
- Assessment of impacts under the Office of Environment and Heritage’s Framework for Biodiversity Assessment
- Identification of mitigation and management measures.

The bypass would impact:

- About 39 hectares of native vegetation, including about four hectares of Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest endangered ecological community
- Black-eyed Susan (Tetraphica juncea)
- Habitat for the Grey-headed Flying-fox (Pteropus poliocephalus).

To compensate for impacts to threatened ecological communities and species, biodiversity offsets would be provided in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan, including a Flora and Fauna Management Plan, would be developed to manage potential environmental impacts during construction. After construction, the site would be rehabilitated and landscaped.

For more information go to Chapter 7 in the EIS.
Noise and vibration

Vehicle engines, exhausts, tyres and brakes can create traffic noise for people working and living near roads. The impact of long term traffic noise and short term construction noise has been assessed to inform how we can:

1. Reduce factors that can contribute to traffic noise levels
2. Mitigate the extent of unavoidable noise
3. Schedule unavoidable construction noise at the best possible time
4. Resolve any unreasonable long term change in noise levels

How we assessed noise
A detailed noise assessment was carried out to evaluate and predict the potential impact of construction and operation. Noise monitoring and traffic counts were carried out to measure traffic noise from the existing road network.

A computer-based noise model was used to simulate the existing noise environment, predict future road traffic noise levels and assess the need for noise mitigation measures.

Managing construction noise
Practical steps would be used to minimise noise on construction sites including diesel exhaust dampeners, switching engines off when not in use, keeping machinery well maintained and smart scheduling of work. Additionally:

- Construction scheduling would consider school holidays, public holidays and weekday options
- Work that must be done at night to avoid heavier traffic conditions would be carefully managed and residents would be advised
- Simultaneous use of loud machines or construction methods would be avoided where possible.

A Noise and Vibration Management Plan would be prepared for the construction period. This would include:

- Noise and vibration monitoring and reporting requirements
- Specific mitigation and management measures to be implemented during construction
- Construction timetabling to minimise noise impacts
- Procedures for notifying residents and business owners likely to be affected by noise and vibration
- Contingency measures to be implemented in the event of non-compliance and / or noise complaints.

Managing operational noise
Ongoing noise reduction measures for traffic noise when the project has opened would include:

- Providing low noise pavement for sections of the project, where feasible
- Noise barriers at two potential locations
- Consideration of property noise treatments for some sensitive receivers.

The need for noise barriers, and their design, would be confirmed in detailed design. Affected property owners would be consulted.

Mitigation measures
The noise assessment and preliminary noise reduction measures will be re-evaluated at the detailed design stage and are subject to change. This may result in more or less properties qualifying for consideration of noise mitigation. It will take into account any changes to the design and, where required, feedback from consultation with affected residents.

The effectiveness of noise mitigation measures would be assessed to check actual noise after the bypass is opened to traffic. Additional mitigation measures may be required.

For more information go to Chapter 9 in the EIS.
Landscape character and visual impact

A landscape character and visual impact assessment was prepared to inform the concept design for the project and to assess the potential landscape character and visual impacts of the project.

The project is situated in a bushland setting in an otherwise urban environment. The rugged topography and dense bushland limits the visual and landscape character impacts to the surrounding areas.

During the development of the concept design, urban design objectives and principles have been considered with the aim of integrating the project into the existing landscape. As a result, a number of potential adverse visual and landscape impacts have been avoided or minimised.

Elevated residential areas in the southern parts of the project area have panoramic views to the north, east or west.

In the northern parts of the project area distant views are typically limited to views across Newcastle Road to the south or north.

Views from most residential and recreational areas in the project area are into nearby areas of bushland.

The concept design aims to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the study area.

Public vantage points that have potential views of the project are generally limited to the John Hunter Hospital precinct and existing roads.

Based on the visual catchment of the project area, direct views of the project would be limited to areas generally around Lookout Road and Newcastle Road. Parts of the John Hunter Hospital precinct would also have views to the project.

Urban design and landscape plans would be finalised during detailed design, including consideration of vegetation screening for affected residents.

For more information go to Chapter 10 in the EIS.

Additional connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists

Artist's impression of shared path bridge over Newcastle Road looking west
Community involvement

Environmental assessment and approval process

**Preparation and assessment**

Roads and Maritime decides that the project will require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be obtained under Part 5.1 of the EP&A Act.

Roads and Maritime prepares and submits a State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) application to the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment accompanied by an SSI application report. Roads and Maritime prepares and submits a referral to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment. The Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy determines the project as a controlled action.

Secretary prepares environmental assessment requirements in consultation with relevant public authorities. Supplementary environmental assessment requirements issued as part of the NSW Commonwealth bilateral agreement.

Secretary provides the environmental assessment requirements to Roads and Maritime. Issues raised in the Secretary’s environmental assessment requirements are addressed through the preparation of an EIS.

Roads and Maritime prepares EIS.

Roads and Maritime submits the EIS to the Secretary for approval by the Minister for Planning in consultation with the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy.

**Exhibition and consultation**

Secretary considers EIS and may require revisions to fully address environmental assessment requirements.

EIS placed on public exhibition (minimum 30 days).

At completion of exhibition period, the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment provides a copy of the submissions received during the exhibition period to Roads and Maritime.

Roads and Maritime prepares a submission report (and preferred infrastructure report if required by the Secretary).

**Assessment and decision**

Secretary prepares assessment report. Preferred infrastructure report (if required) may be available to the public if the Secretary considers that significant changes to the nature of the infrastructure are proposed.

Minister for Planning and Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy decide whether or not to approve the Project, any modifications that must be made for the infrastructure and conditions to be attached to any approval.
Project progress chart

The Rankin Park to Jesmond project is a state significant infrastructure project and an environmental impact statement has been prepared under part 5.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
Have your say

The submissions process plays a vital role in the development of the project and provides an opportunity for you to have your say. At the close of the exhibition period a submissions report will document all issues raised during the formal consultation process and provide responses.

The NSW Minister for Planning and Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy will determine whether to approve the project and any conditions of approval to be applied.

How to make a formal submission

Before making your submission, please read the Department of Planning and Environment’s Privacy Statement at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/privacy or call 1300 305 695 for a copy.

Your submission must reach the Department of Planning and Environment by Friday 16 December 2016.

The Department of Planning and Environment will publish your submission on its website in accordance with the privacy statement.

Online

Any person wishing to make a submission should use the online form if possible. To find the online form go to www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/page/on-exhibition.

In writing

If you want the Department of Planning and Environment to delete your personal information before publication, please make this clear at the top of your letter. You need to include:

- Your name and address, at the top of the letter only
- The name of the application and the application number (SSI-6888)
- A statement on whether you support or object to the proposal
- The reasons why you support or object to the proposal
- A declaration of any reportable political donations made in the previous two years. To find out what is reportable, and for a disclosure form, go to www.planning.nsw.gov.au/donations or call 1300 305 695 for a copy.

Send your written submission to:

Attention: Director, Transport Assessments Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

All submissions must be received by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment by Friday 16 December 2016.
Drop-in sessions

Drop in anytime to view the project information and speak with the project team at one of the following community drop-in sessions:

**Saturday 26 November**
Silver Ridge Community Cottage
13 Iranda Grove, Wallsend
9am to 2pm

**Thursday 1 December**
Silver Ridge Community Cottage
13 Iranda Grove, Wallsend
3pm to 6pm

Environmental impact statement

Will be on public display until Friday 16 December 2016 at these locations:

Roads and Maritime Services
59 Darby Street, Newcastle

Department of Planning and Environment
Level 22, 320 Pitt Street, Sydney

Department of Planning and Environment
Level 2, 26 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle

Nature Conservation Council of NSW
Level 14, 338 Pitt Street, Sydney

Newcastle City Council
282 King Street, Newcastle

Newcastle City Library
15 Laman Street, Newcastle

New Lambton Library
93 Regent Street (corner Alma Lane), New Lambton

Wallsend District Library
30 Burn Street, Wallsend

Lambton Library
Morehead Street (corner Elder Street), Lambton
Attachment B

Planning and Regulatory, G.Mansfield
Reference: PB2016/11140
Phone: 02 4974 2787

16 December 2016

Mr Michael Young
A/Team Leader
Transport Assessments
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

By email: amar.gaini@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Young

NOTIFICATION OF EXHIBITION NEWCASTLE INNER CITY BYPASS RANKIN PARK TO JESMOND (SSI 6888)

I refer to your letter of 10 November, 2016 advising Council that Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has submitted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above proposal and inviting Council to comment on the proposal.

Council officers have reviewed the EIS and the following comments are offered for your consideration:

1. **Land Use**

   The EIS has not satisfactorily addressed the land use issues detailed in Council’s previous submissions to the RMS. (Copies of the submissions are attached for your information)

2. **Traffic and Parking**

   The impacts of the proposal on some local roads due to traffic redistribution remain a matter of concern.

   2.1. **Western Hospital Access (John Hunter Hospital)**

      - It is acknowledged that the half-interchange with north facing ramps was assessed as providing the best value for money. It is noted that this option does not preclude south facing ramps being added at a future stage. However, as indicated in earlier submissions to the RMS, it is preferred that a full interchange be constructed from the outset. Existing roadways circulating John Hunter Hospital (which also constitute cycle routes) are generally narrow, one-way and constrained by parking and other traffic management devices. Construction of a full interchange would reduce unnecessary circulation and would also provide additional access for emergency vehicles.
It is considered that, at minimum, the design process should address the full interchange (north and south facing ramps). Future changes to parking areas, access and road configurations may provide sufficient nexus and justification for construction of the south facing ramps, which would be facilitated by a previously approved design and documented nexus.

As part of the project scope, or in parallel by others, appropriate on-site traffic management measures/improvements to ensure connectivity whilst avoiding added congestion should be investigated.

As per previous submissions, it is requested that measures be incorporated to discourage parking on the shoulders of the bypass ramp and the bypass, in the vicinity of the bypass ramp.

2.2. Southern Interchange

It is noted that monitoring of Douglas Street was not included in the origin-destination surveys undertaken. Due to the heavy use and numerous stops on Lookout Road, alternative routes from Rankin Park, Elmerene Vale and areas west of Lookout Road to the Newcastle Inner City Bypass (Jesmond to Sandgate section) are sought by drivers. Council officers are aware of heavy use of Douglas Street, Wallsend and a strong right-turn movement onto Newcastle Road. These movements would likely be substantially reduced by the provision of north facing ramps at McCaffrey Drive.

At its meeting of 13 December 2016, it was resolved that Council:

'Reiterates its motion of 28 June 2016, supporting residents and cyclists' calls for RMS to deliver a full interchange at McCaffrey Drive, and for RMS to implement design changes to mitigate the need for cyclists to traverse three additional sets of traffic lights when travelling east/west to/from Wallsend on the off road cycle path through Jesmond Park.'

Concern is raised about the safety of the intersection at McCaffrey Drive and Elbrook Drive. After the construction of the bypass, it is likely that there will be increased right turn movements from McCaffrey Drive to Elbrook Drive. The intersection does not have an overtaking lane for through traffic. The Cambridge Hills preschool is located at the intersection. Increased turn movements will exacerbate existing concerns.

2.3. Parking

The likely impacts on parking are noted. Generally, parking areas affected are informal spaces. The EIS (Volume 1 p. 137) indicates that removal of 16 parking spaces is required on Newcastle Road adjacent to Jesmond Park, east of the northern interchange, to allow for road widening. These parking spaces are highly utilised on weekends and three disabled parking spaces are included in the total. Parking spaces for persons with a disability are located in this area due the suitability of grades. Further consultation with Council will be required to determine how this shortfall will be addressed.
3. Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities

It is noted that Transport for NSW is currently preparing the *Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy* to address aims to increase mode share to active transport and improve community wellbeing. The provision of physically separated cycle facilities along the length of the bypass is preferred, to encourage access to both John Hunter Hospital and the University of Newcastle via active transport. Research has shown that a major barrier to increased participation in cycling is the perception of safety. The use of breakdown lanes for cycling on the bypass is unlikely to result in an increase in new cyclists and significant contribution towards meeting local, state and national cycling mode share targets.

The *Newcastle Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2012*, adopted by Council in March 2012, show the route between the John Hunter Hospital and University of Newcastle as an on-road route. The argument has been made in the EIS that in providing a wide shoulder along the bypass, the project addresses the above Plan. The key objective of the Newcastle Cycling Strategy is to make cycling a safe and attractive option, so that more people cycle for more of their trips. Links are indicative, with the actual treatments determined on a case-by-case basis following further investigation and having regard for the community’s strong preference for physically separated facilities.

The *Newcastle Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2012* and the *Newcastle Transport Strategy*, adopted by Council in December 2014, endorse the separation of motorised vehicles and bikes according to volume and speed, as shown in Fig.3.2 *NSW Bicycle Guidelines* (RTA, 2008, p. 13). Council has therefore supported the provision of on-road (that is, within the road carriageway), physically separated lanes, in conjunction with the project.

3.1. Northern Interchange

- The proposed northern interchange sever the east-west route from Hunter Stadium through Jesmond Park to Wallsend. Cyclists travelling from Jesmond Park and to areas further west and south of Newcastle Road will need to negotiate three sets of traffic signals. These will present significant delays to cyclists and pedestrians, which will likely encourage risk-taking behaviour. In previous submissions, Council has previously urged RMS to consider grade separated alternatives. The EIS notes consideration of an underpass and an overpass, but dismisses these options due to cost and safety concerns. In a meeting held 7 December 2016, RMS officers outlined additional options, including one which involved overpass of the southbound on ramp and underpass of the bypass, providing a direct, safe east-west connection to the existing cycling network south of Newcastle Road. It is strongly recommended that further investigation and implementation of this overpass-underpass option is undertaken.

- The proposal to construct a footbridge over Newcastle Road at Jesmond Park for cyclists and pedestrians is commended; it being noted the commitment in the EIS (p. 264) to construct this as early as possible. Officers would prefer it be located further west than is shown, to avoid conflicts with high activity areas of the park and to facilitate more direct connections. It is requested that
consultation occurs regarding coordination of this part of the project with Council's work program as soon as practicable.

- It is also requested further consideration be given to provision for on road cyclists negotiating the interchange, such as provision for hook turns, bike storage and bike lanes across turning lanes.

- Further clarification is sought regarding what provisions will be made for users of the east-west shared path through Jesmond Park during the construction period.

3.2. Western Hospital Access (John Hunter Hospital)

- The proposal for provision for pedestrians and cyclists on the bridge over the bypass, and connection to tracks is supported. However, the EIS indicates that users of the shared path will be required to cross the off ramp to the hospital (southbound). The crossing point is not controlled. It essential that further consideration is given to the design of this crossing, to improve safety for users.

- The EIS (Volume 5 p.73) states that RMS has carried out extensive consultation with NSW Health Infrastructure and Hunter New England Local Health District regarding the project, and that NSW Health Infrastructure would carry out road works within the hospital internal road system and car parking areas to accommodate traffic movements to and from the new western access. It is recommended that safe connections are also provided to the proposed shared paths.

3.3. Southern Interchange

- Cyclists on the bypass travelling south will be required to cross multiple traffic lanes to access the shoulder on Lookout Road, to continue southbound travel. It is understood that the speed environment at the crossing point will be 70km/h. It is requested that clear, safe provision be made for southbound cyclists.

- Cyclists travelling north on Lookout Road wishing to access the bypass for continued northbound travel will be required to cross two lanes of traffic to access the shoulder on the bypass. It is understood that Roads and Maritime Services is investigating provision of a connection from northbound should to shoulder under Bridge 1 (bridge over main project alignment at Lookout Road) and strongly supports inclusion of this enhancement in the final design.

- The EIS does not indicate a connection from the existing off-road path from Jesmond Park to the proposed shared path on Lookout Road, nor to the proposed shared path at the hospital interchange. The EIS notes that this is beyond the scope of the project. It is understood that master planning of the John Hunter Hospital site is in progress. It recommended that clear, coherent cycle connections are addressed in master planning of the site.
- The EIS includes a section of footpath on the northern side of McCaffrey Drive, to the intersection with Lookout Road. It is requested consideration be given to widening of the footpath to shared path standard.

4. Public Transport

It is acknowledged that some relocation of bus stops is necessitated by the proposal. It is noted that Keolis Downer has recently been appointed as the operator of Newcastle Transport and that a review of bus services and routes will likely be undertaken in the near future. Measures to increase public transport usage, such as bus priority lanes are supported. The EIS (Volume 1 p. 137) indicates that the existing westbound bus lane and bus traffic light on Newcastle Road at the Blue Gum Road intersection would be removed to allow for three lanes of through traffic. This measure is counter-productive to making public transport a more convenient option than private vehicle use.

5. Soils and Water Quality

It is noted there are no water quality and quantity management targets outlined in the EIS for flows generated from the development that would be discharged to natural waterways. It is recommended the requirements of Section 7.06 - Stormwater of the Newcastle Development Control Plan (NDCP) 2012 be observed to manage stormwater.

Significant amounts of cut and fill are proposed throughout natural bushland that shall change the operation of the water cycle. Detention of the stormwater runoff from cut and fill slopes requires management prior to discharge to natural waterways. It is noted that some operational water control structures are proposed, however there are some locations where no operational controls are proposed, such as immediately upstream of WC3 (Watercourse 3). The EIS does not demonstrate that there shall be no adverse impact to all watercourses in accordance with the stream erosion index of the NDCP 2012.

6. Flooding

It is noted there are flood level impacts to private properties on Robert Street. It is recommended mitigation of these impacts is required during the detailed design phase.

The construction of a 0.8m bund to alleviate flooding at the Northern Interchange is noted as a feasible approach to improve the flood immunity of Newcastle Road. Council is interested in what additional benefit could be afforded by increasing the volume of detention in Jesmond Park to alleviate the high risk floodway down Blue Gum Road in the 1% AEP. Council would work together with RMS to achieve reduced flood risk in this location immediately downstream of the Northern Interchange.

7. Jesmond Park

The proposed use of Jesmond Park for the purposes detailed in the EIS is not supported for the following reasons:

- unnecessary disturbance to park access and amenity
• creation of significant disturbance within very close proximity / (too close) to Council's recreational facilities

• reduces the community's access to recreational facilities

• reduces the vegetation cover present which includes habitat trees that Council has invested significant money in maintaining over recent years.

Those works proposed in Jesmond Park are to be contained within the road corridor footprint.

8. Hydraulic Footprint

As a consequence of the proposed disturbance to the instream flows within the affected catchments (where there are natural watercourses) there will be impacts that Council will be required to rectify, particularly where the changes create instability in bed and banks adjacent to public and private property infrastructure. The proposal impacts on present hydraulic processes will accelerate the rate and extent of instability resulting in changes to the behaviour and condition of the existing natural watercourses.

Council's recent geomorphic investigations of the natural watercourses that will be affected by the development indicate that their geomorphic condition is often at a threshold of stability. Any changes to the hydraulic processes occurring within the catchment need to be adequately addressed and controls put in place to ensure those thresholds are not exceeded and channels respond by way of erosion.

The potential for increases in peak runoff, a decrease in a broader distribution of flows and higher return interval of damaging bankfull events needs to be identified as they will likely result in a combination of bed lowering and channel widening in stable reaches.

A further consequence of accelerated channel erosion is the impact of the deposition of these created sediments on the performance and function of downstream habitats with the expected result of ponding/ bank overtopping with potential associated infrastructure and property damages, habitat destruction and floodplain striping.

These issues have not been adequately addressed by the EIS and represent an unsustainable legacy of impacts on the City's natural and potentially built infrastructure assets.

9. Proposed Offsets

The opportunity to discuss the potential for proposed offsets on council land is welcomed. Local offsets are preferable.

10. Fragmentation of fauna habitat

The EIS does not satisfactorily address the permeability for fauna movement east/ west across the bypass.
In previous project documentation provided to Council there has been at least two fauna underpasses proposed. It is now proposed to provide a northern overpass and a dedicated fauna culvert south of the John Hunter Hospital. There is no explanation in the EIS for the southern underpass being removed from the proposal.

Furthermore, it is noted there has been a substantial restriction on the length of the northern underpass with only approximately 30m proposed, with pylons and creek redirection occupying the majority of the transit space. This does not appear adequate for the connectivity of habitat and the sustainability of fauna populations. The environmental assessment does not provide sufficient details of what species the faunal passage ways are intended to cater for and comment on their likely efficacy. The assessment also does not provide adequate details of the other measures to be implemented to address fauna connectivity across the project footprint. Specifically, any proposed measures to support the long term viability of species that may not use the underpass. For example, Squirrel Gliders.

It is considered the dimensions of the dedicated fauna culvert (about three by three metres) are inadequate to accommodate its use by macropods. Concerns are also raised about the effectiveness of the proposed fencing to guide fauna to crossing infrastructure and the potential increased risk from predators.

The EIS does not include adequate measures to minimize potential conflict between vehicles travelling on the bypass and threatened owl species from the local bushland network flying low over the roadway while hunting at night.

11. Existing local biodiversity/hydrology survey data

Council officers have previously provided the consultants engaged in the preparation of the EIS with data on vegetation, watercourse floristics and expected fauna presence that has not been incorporated in the document. For instance, there is a lack of acknowledgement of threatened species such as the Masked Owl and the extent of Squirrel Gliders nesting in Jesmond bushland contained within the EIS documentation.

Riparian, habitat tree and vegetation 'ground-truthed' datasets and lists of other local studies were provided for inclusion in the development of the EIS. Many of these datasets have not been cited nor appear to have been utilized within the EIS. For example, nest boxes containing squirrel gliders east of the road corridor appear not to have been included in the EIS survey effort, whereas nest boxes to the west that did not contain Squirrel Gliders were.

12. Budget

The fact that the project budget is fixed prior to the full scope being determined is a matter of concern as it suggests opportunities for further amendments to the design of the proposal are limited.

13. Council Resolution

For your information, at its meeting on 13 December 2016, Council resolved:
‘That Newcastle City Council -

1. Reiterates its motion of 28 June 2016, supporting residents and cyclists’ calls for RMS to deliver a full interchange at McCaffrey Drive, and for RMS to implement design changes to mitigate the need for cyclists to traverse three additional sets of traffic lights when travelling east/west to/from Wallsend on the off-road cycle path through Jesmond Park.

2. Endorses Council making a submission to RMS’ EIS by Friday 16 December which highlights these concerns and requests design changes.

3. Invites a representative from RMS, a McCaffrey Drive resident, and a representative from Newcastle Cycleways to present at a Public Voice session in February 2017 on the project.

4. Receives a briefing from Council Officers on the proposal in February 2017.’

If you require further clarification of any matter raised in this letter, please contact me on (02) 4974 2767 or gmansfield@ncc.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully

Geof Mansfield
PRINCIPAL PLANNER (DEVELOPMENT)

Attachments: Council’s letters to the RMS dated 27 April, 2015 and 16 June, 2016.
ITEM-2  BR 21/02/17  - PROPOSED CHANGES TO PLANNING LEGISLATION

REPORT BY: PLANNING AND REGULATORY
CONTACT: ACTING DIRECTOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY / MANAGER STRATEGIC PLANNING

PURPOSE

To brief Councillors on the NSW Government's draft changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 and to receive advice on matters Councillors would like included in Council's submission on the draft changes.

BACKGROUND

Exhibition of the exposure draft Bill commenced on 10 January 2017 and concludes on 10 March 2017.

The amendments contained in the exposure draft Bill continue the State Government's planning reforms and include some of the proposals first put forward in the White Paper - a New Planning System for NSW, which was released in 2013.

A number of documents are available on the Department of Planning and Environment's website to assist in explaining the proposed changes,


RECOMMENDATION

The briefing be received.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.
ITEM-3          BR 21/02/17 - NEWCASTLE 500 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT BY:        CORPORATE SERVICES
CONTACT:          DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES / MANAGER
COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the engagement program for the inaugural Newcastle 500 event to be held in the Newcastle Local Government Area from 22-24 November 2017.

BACKGROUND

At the Council Meeting of 22 November 2016, Council resolved:

That Council, in collaboration with Destination NSW and Supercars Australia, Council conducts a series of consultation and information sessions with residents of Newcastle East regarding the Supercars event that is to happen in Newcastle during 2017.

These consultation and information meetings should cover:

1  Council’s role in the event,
2  The proposed route,
3  Vehicle access, including emergency vehicles,
4  Governance of noise control and abatement measures,
5  Agency responsibilities
6  Long term road safety management
7  Benefits to local community and Council from this event,
8  Potential environmental effects on heritage buildings.
9  Potential effects on parkland.

Council Officers to provide an update and briefing to Council at the Briefings meeting in February 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

The briefing be received.

REFERENCES

Nil.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.