



NSROC Submission

to

NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan

**Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
representing:**

**Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove,
North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby Councils.**

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REFERENCES

Missing Link and Missing Out – Prioritising the F3-M2 Connector, NSROC, April 2012

NSROC Regional Priorities-Key actions for Northern Sydney’s future, NSROC, March 2012

NSROC Submission to the NSW Planning Review, NSROC November 2011

OVERVIEW

Councils : Integral players in Masterplanning for Transport

This NSROC submission focuses on issues for transport in the NSROC member councils' area and the surrounding northern Sydney region. The transport priorities identified in this submission will not only benefit the northern Sydney region, they are requirements for all of Sydney to function effectively and sustainably.

Councils are critical players in effective transport planning and management and as such, the knowledge and commitment embedded in local government is a major asset to master planning for transport.

Firstly, councils play a key role in the strategic land use planning and transport planning. As land use planners, Councils designate employment, residential, service and commercial land interdependently with transport needs and future transport options.

Second, councils manage and maintain public roads and related transport infrastructure. NSROC councils manage roads valued at over \$2 billion and spend over \$30 million each year on road maintenance. On a daily basis Councils are responsible for local traffic management and have an 'on the ground' knowledge of local transport problems and needs from their residents.

Councils also directly contribute to transport planning by supporting local transport infrastructure and interchange management, developing alternative transport options such as bike and pedestrian routes, and directly providing and subsidising local community transport. Our Councils directly provide over \$1 million of community transport services to the region.

The NSROC region's community faces the challenge of inadequate transport every day, our Councils have been advocating for many years for long term solutions that connect the city, and bring real benefits to its residents, to its economy, and to its environment. The NSROC region has almost half of the most congested traffic thoroughfares in Sydney. While our residents and adjacent areas are expanding patronage of alternative public transport options, they are also enduring longer travel times and an increase in car usage.

NSROC welcomes the creation of a NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and has recently articulated its transport issues and actions within the NSROC Regional Priorities document. This has been prepared to complement the development of the NSW Government's Regional Action plan for the region. Of the seven Regional Priorities identified by NSROC, Priority 1 and Priority 2 relate to transport (overleaf).

This submission also addresses the issues raised in Master Plan Discussion Paper and cross references these with additional issues identified by NSROC.

NSROC Regional Transport Priorities

Priority 1: Make transport infrastructure work for businesses and communities, by:

Prioritising new major transport infrastructure in the region, including the:

- completion of the North-West Rail link, Parramatta-Chatswood rail link;
- second Harbour rail crossing and fast North Shore line;
- bus or light rail link from Chatswood to the Northern Beaches;
- transport strategies for Military-Spit Road Corridor, Victoria Rd, Pennant Hills Rd and the Pacific Hwy;
- bus/train interchanges for Macquarie Park (Herring Road) and St Leonards;
- completion of the M2-F3 link into the Sydney Orbital; and,
- improved regional rail services to the Central Coast and Newcastle

Requiring transport agencies to genuinely engage with local government and incorporate its expertise into the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure from the earliest stages to develop strong partnerships and streamline that engagement.

Reconcile, integrate and combine the Metropolitan Strategy and Transport Plan to clearly link land use strategies, densities, centres policy, staging and funding of infrastructure.

Adopting a consistent sustainable carparking policy for commercial centres, business parks and higher density residential development across Sydney where there is access to public transport.

Priority 2: Provide a complete transport service for communities, by:

Reforming transport regulations to decouple State bus contestability requirements for community transport.

Including active transport and community transport as part of the Metropolitan Transport Plan.

Establishing regional level planning for walking and cycling networks in proximity to employment centres as part of a complete Metropolitan Transport Plan including credible funding.

Providing new cycling, personal mobility devices and pedestrian infrastructure in all new transport projects and ensuring that this new infrastructure properly links to existing networks.

BACKGROUND

WHAT IS NSROC?

NSROC is comprised of seven councils (Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby) in the northern part of Sydney which have voluntarily come together to address regional issues, work co-operatively for the benefit of the region, and advocate on agreed regional positions and priorities. Some key information about the region includes:

Development¹

- Development across region is \$1.2 billion (excluding State and Federal government projects) or approximately 8% of the value of development approved across the State.
- NSROC processes around 2% of the DAs in NSW
- DA processing times (gross and net) are shorter than the state average

Community

- Population at 560,000 (estimated to be 680,000 by 2036)
- Aged populations are increasing while youth populations are decreasing.
- Highest growing ethnic community is Chinese

Economy²

- Gross Regional Product in 2011 - \$43 billion, or about 11% of NSW Gross State Product.
- There are 67,700 registered businesses and 3.6% unemployment compared to 5.2% NSW average.

Transport

- The region is a key corridor for transport for people and products throughout Sydney and the region is a key through route for intra and interstate freight transport.
- Over 250,000 people work in the region. Around 30 per cent of the region's workers travel by public transport while around 70% travel by car. Half of those employed in the region travel daily from adjacent areas including the North West, the Central Coast and Parramatta.
- Car ownership is rising twice as fast as the population growth rate. Over 80 per cent of the region's households own a car and almost a third of households have two.
- The region has some of the most congested roads in Sydney including : the Pacific Highway, Pennant Hills Road, Military Road and Victoria Road.

¹ Local Development Performance Monitoring 2009-2010, NSW Department of Planning

² NSROC Economic Profile www.nsroc.com.au

RESPONSES TO DISCUSSION PAPER QUESTIONS

Objectives

Are the objectives appropriate and comprehensive?

- Putting the customer first — to design the transport system around the needs and expectations of the customer
- Economic development — to enable the transport system to support the economic development of the State, with a focus on freight systems
- Planning and investment — to ensure that good planning informs investment strategies
- Coherence and integration — to promote coherence and integration across all modes and all stages of decision-making
- Performance and delivery
- Efficiency
- Environmental sustainability
- Social benefits — to promote greater inclusiveness, accessibility and quality of life
- Safety — in accordance with the safety and regulatory framework.

Any other objectives for both public transport and roads?

Should additional or different objectives be considered for the LT Masterplan?

The objectives outlined in the NSW Transport Master Plan Discussion Paper captures only some elements of the transport system and should be broadened.

The “**putting the customer first**” objective is important but the concept must recognize not only the individual public transport passenger or individual road user. In effect the whole community and economy is the customer of the transport system. Because of its impact on everyone’s way of life and activities, the transport system should be an asset to the community and economy rather than frustration to the community and impediment to the economy. Putting the customer first in public transport means planning and operations must focus on “trip management” rather than transport management.

The objectives of “**planning and investment**” and “**coherence and integration**” are better captured by the concept of “**strategic land use planning and transport oriented design**”. Land use planning underpins transport planning and an objective of the Transport Master Plan must be to successfully integrate land use and transport infrastructure planning.

Transport infrastructure planning must capture both local needs and wider integrated network requirements. There is no single answer to the best use of sites adjacent to transport infrastructure. Effective master planning and funding processes are required for each site to reflect specific attributes of the surrounding community. Consideration must be given to business needs, improving local productivity, topography, commuter parking and connectivity to adjacent services. (For further details of planning and transport issues see NSROC submission to the NSW Planning Review November 2011).

The historic failure to coordinate land use planning and transport infrastructure has been a particular concern to NSROC councils. The new State Government is introducing an integrated planning and transport governance system through departmental restructuring and the creation of new agency “Transport for NSW”, holds the promise of being a substantial improvement on former structures.

However the current arrangement does not link the Department of Planning. NSROC sees that strategic planning must be a priority function from which transport and infrastructure decisions follow. The current arrangement leaves the Department of Planning as a derivative agency and strategic planning is split between bureaucracies.

The objective of **coherence and integration** notes linking **all modes and all stages** of decision making. It does not mention integration **between decision makers**. The Transport Master Plan must recognise that local government is a critical decision maker in the transport area and has a significant contribution to make to the creation of an effective transport system.

It is important that communities get the most from their transport infrastructure and that expenditure on long term facilities is made wisely. Councils and communities are expert in the dynamics of their local areas. Local government’s land planning and local traffic expertise must be used to inform transport infrastructure provision, to ensure the widest possible public benefit from government investment and, to achieve sustainable urban design outcomes.

A truly collaborative approach is required, where local government’s roles and activities in relation to transport management, urban design and community engagement are integrated into transport planning at the first instance rather than as a subsequent “tack on” process. With this strategic approach, project outcomes can be significantly improved for local communities, and local government can be proactive project advocates instead of, as has been too often the case in the past, reactive detractors.

Where innovative partnerships are matched to significant investment into public transport tangible benefits of integration can be realised. This is the case at the Optus development at Macquarie Park, where a 50/50 modal split was delivered, predicated on the new Macquarie Park train stations, careful planning, corporate contribution and active engagement by local government, State agencies and the business community. This collaborative approach must become the norm.

NSROC suggests that the Transport Master Plan also articulate the structural and organizational components for the delivery of outcomes. NSROC has argued that a successful transport Master Plan:

- must be **visionary** and create a transport system that is an asset to the community and economy rather than a frustration to the community and impediment to the economy. In Sydney there is an expectation that the transport system match that of other “international cities”;
- must have a **governance** process that is transparent and allows for a bipartisan approach to long term strategic planning;

- must recognize the **role of local government** in identifying the transport needs of the local community and in managing complementary infrastructure and programs, which ensure the transport network is responsive and improving;
- must have a **funding framework** for long term provision that is fair and innovative, tapping into different levels of government and revenue sources, and applying appropriate incentives and penalties to maximize adherence to the Plan.

Sydney Transport

In solving the transport problems in Sydney, what transport mode should be the first priority for new investment, bearing in mind the need for a socially equitable and environmentally sustainable transport sector?

NSROC believes that the core objective for the Sydney transport system should be to shift from private to public transport dominance. With the projected population growth across the region, NSROC views mass transport systems such as rail, metro and light rail as the most cost effective way to reduce congestion, lower carbon emissions, and improve commuting times.

However it is not appropriate to nominate a single public transport mode as the “first priority” in the Sydney area. The focus should be on what mode maximizes trip efficiency, that is, the mode or modes that minimise commuting distances and/or times. This may include smarter innovations on existing modes through operational reconfiguration and better coordination between modes. Commuter analysis has commonly revealed that the single most important issue is travel time. Generally commuters will accept multiple trip segments or mode changes provided the interchanges between modes are swift and efficient.

Interchange efficiencies include:

- a single ticketing system;
- adequate private to public mode changeover facilities ie park and ride, bike storages, and adequate capacity for people to carry bikes or personal mobility devices onto other modes of transport; and
- appropriate configuration and access to public transport through good land use planning and within an acceptable walking catchment radius or supported personal mobility access options.

What do you consider to be the main priorities for investment in Sydney's transport infrastructure?

NSROC has repeatedly advocated for improvements to the region's transport network that are:

- based on genuine need for the region;
- connected and beneficial to the broader Sydney region; and
- supported by independent and transparent economic and social assessment.

As noted above NSROC believes that the core objective for the Sydney transport system should be to shift from private to public transport dominance. However NSROC also recognises that business and freight transport must be factored into an integrated transport strategy. Both road and rail operate as shared modes for passenger and freight and this cannot be isolated from public transport planning. This is why transport strategies for the key arterial roads and the M2-F3 link and regional rail infrastructure must be re-examined.

NSROC project priorities for the region and adjacent areas are:

North-West Rail Link

NSROC has long argued that the North West Rail Link is the number one priority for the NSROC region despite, being outside the NSROC area. The negative economic, social and environmental ramifications for the NSROC region over the last two decades from the congestion generated from the North West have been substantial. The consequence of the establishment of a North-West growth sector by the previous State Government without a mass transport link has been counterproductive to economic development. The completion of this link in a timely and effective way is essential to the efficient functioning of our region and Sydney as a whole.

Parramatta to Chatswood Rail link

The decision to truncate the Epping to Parramatta heavy rail line has already put significant demands on the regional network and left unresolved the need for effective transport between major centres. The completion of the Epping to Parramatta rail line is essential - providing full access between Parramatta/ Castle Hill/ Hornsby/ the City/ Chatswood and Macquarie University/Business Park and catering for the continued growth of the North-West.

Second Harbour Bridge rail crossing and fast North Shore line

The usage of the existing train network in the northern region exceeds its capacity. Commuters in northern Sydney experience poor travelling conditions such as “standing room only” trips for long commutes in peak times. Importantly these proposed improvements will allow new lines such as the Parramatta to Chatswood and North-West rail links to operate at their full potential.

Bus priority or light rail link from Chatswood to the Northern Beaches (Warringah Road)

NSROC sees a clear need for transport improvements into the Northern Beaches region to allow those residents to access jobs in the NSROC region and beyond. The Government’s current investigation for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) between the Northern Beaches and the Sydney CBD does not address the growing demand for efficient public transport between the Northern Beaches and employment areas on the North Shore and North West. Bus priority measures along Warringah Road to the Chatswood Transport Interchange, along with an increase in services, will increase the attractiveness of public transport and help control the growth in peak hour traffic congestion along this corridor in the medium term. Investigation should commence now to seek a long term transport solution for this corridor, including the consideration of light rail.

Transport strategies for Military Road – Spit Corridor, Victoria Road, Pennant Hills Road and the Pacific Highway

These four corridors are identified as some of the most congested roads in the Sydney area. It is vital that long term strategic transport plans are developed to accommodate their use and alleviate their traffic impacts.

An additional cross corridor which has been identified is Lane Cove Road . Lane Cove Road is a critical north-south transport corridor, moving people to the employment centres at Macquarie Park, Rhodes, Olympic Park and beyond. The corridor is experiencing significant gridlock during the am/pm peaks; strategies to address the pinch point at Macquarie Park (bounded by Lane Cove and Epping Roads) need to be developed.

While NSROC recognizes that the traffic issues Military – Spit Corridor must be addressed. NSROC does not support the current SHOROC (Shore Regional Organisation of Council's) proposal for Rapid Bus Transit System (RBT) for three key reasons:

- the proposal is not a long term solution and will not address long term demand on this corridor;
- the negative economic impacts on the revitalised retail strip of Cremorne and Neutral Bay will be substantial without any significant gain to bus travel times or efficiencies; and
- the proposal does not deal with the most critical impediment to Northern Sydney bus transport – the congestion at terminating Wynyard Bus Interchange.

Bus/Train interchanges for Macquarie Park (Herring Road) and St Leonards Station

Macquarie Park is set to double in size over the next 25 years; the upgrade to the M2 Motorway will add further pressure on transport infrastructure. The upgraded Herring Road Interchange can provide not only an efficient transport interchange for train and bus commuters, but also a vibrant destination that encourages pedestrian activity - transport and planning decisions need to be considered holistically to ensure this potential is realised.

A redevelopment of the southern side of the St Leonards Station precinct is set to commence with the proposal for a substantial and much needed public plaza and bus train interchange. This will enhance this specialist health precinct and bring an economic uplift to this area.

Completion of M2- F3 link into the Sydney Orbital

The productivity, environmental and amenity impacts of the current disconnect between the F3 at Hornsby and the M2 have been repeatedly assessed in feasibility studies. It is simply not sustainable or efficient for the major national North -South road route in Australia's largest city to be interrupted with over 20 traffic lights along Pennant Hills Road. (see attached separate *Missing Link and Missing Out - NSROC paper on this issue*).

A consequential initiative of this project is the need to commence planning for a second Hawkesbury River road crossing, which should be targeted as a regional priority for the Central Coast and North Western Sydney concurrently with the construction of the F3 M2 link.

Improved regional rail services to the Central Coast and Newcastle

Population growth in the Central Coast and Newcastle is driving demand for improvements to the existing regional rail line. In the short term, improvements to signaling and sequencing must be undertaken to existing rail infrastructure. In the long term, NSROC urges genuine consideration of high speed trains to these major cities. As noted previously an integrated transport system must cater for the movement of freight as well as passengers. Freight movement growth in both rail and road across this region and into the areas of the Central Coast and Newcastle is inevitable, and can be supported by improved regional rail services

Continuation of ferry services

NSROC supports the continued utilization of ferries as a public transport service which provides relief benefits to other transport modes. Key issues remaining to be addressed are the interchanges and linkages between ferries and other public and private transport modes, and foreshore erosion and sea wall management. NSROC supports further examination of strategic utilization of ferries and work to develop the most appropriate configurations with regard to trip demand and passenger access.

How can the road network be better utilised and enhanced?

NSROC views the arterial and major road network as a principal tool for business, freight and public transport (bus). The value of improved public transport is the diversion of commuters from individual cars leaving major roads for business and freight users, in circumstances where these users cannot utilize public transport.

In Sydney there is a discriminatory road tolling system which serves to encourage some road users through free access to motorway grade roads, and punish others using similar motorways with tolls. The current tolling arrangements in Sydney have evolved perversely, so that users in regions with fewer alternative public transport choices having the highest tolls (M2 to the North West) compared to those with multiple transport options (M4 with parallel rail routes from Parramatta to Penrith). This arrangement has effects on trip decisions and route choices and is likely to discourage people away from public transport even where it is available.

NSROC agrees with the Discussion Paper's suggestion that tolling arrangements in Sydney need to be reviewed. The principle for a toll is that user is willing to pay for transport facility that is faster than the alternative routes. The secondary benefit is the diversion of through traffic from local roads. In Sydney, motorways should provide this service on an equitable basis and equalization of tolling should be considered to provide the right signals and incentives to road users.

Councils are assisting the reduction of individual road users through the support of initiatives such as car sharing. Councils have supported car sharing programs through the funding of public car spaces for depots and through DA and conditions of consent requirements imposed on residential and commercial developments. Car sharing is highly utilized in some areas of the NSROC region, particularly the lower North Shore. However take up in medium and low density areas is not as high and this is an option that the State Government may be better placed to promote.

What are your priorities for public transport services in terms of frequency, reliability, cleanliness and safety?

Reliability and frequency are the two key factors in improving public transport. When public transport services are reliable, with functional interconnections and frequent and predictable services, then patronage should increase. With increased patronage, passive surveillance is also increased and cleanliness and safety are generally improved. When excessive waiting times occur between services then safety concerns increase.

A further improvement to the Sydney public transport system should be the ease of systems understanding for customers. In particular the Sydney bus system has a highly complex route arrangement with an opaque numbering system that is particularly confusing for irregular users and tourists. Moreover, the signage and assistance provide at interchanges is not of a comparable standard common to similar sized cities around the world, or in other States.

What criteria should determine whether light rail or bus transport should be preferred?

The determination between light rail or bus transport services in a particular location should take into consideration a variety of factors such as:

- the extent of existing congestion and alternative transport options;
- land and corridor availability, geography, stabling and stop configuration options;
- user demand profiles and loading capacity of each mode;
- local population density and consequential noise, pollution and amenity impacts from either mode;
- the operational cost benefits of the particular mode, such as its energy usage.

How can walking and cycling best be encouraged?

A key area for local government is providing for active transport – walking and cycling. As well as its obvious health and environmental benefits, active transport can also play an important part in metropolitan transport provision. Sydney's rates for cycling and walking are low compared to other Australian capitals and to similar international sites. Despite comparatively lower costs for providing infrastructure for active transport, often within existing road space, and demonstrably high benefit to cost ratios, cultural biases within State transport agencies that treat cycling and walking as purely recreational have seen an unwillingness by the NSW Government to seriously commit to the support of active transport.

NSROC does not suggest that cycling or walking is a practical option for all people or for all trips. Though cycling and walking as means of travelling to work have increased slightly in Northern Sydney, many people who could cycle choose not to. If those people could be encouraged to cycle at levels being achieved in comparable cities, there would be direct reductions in traffic congestion and peak loading for public transport. They would also free up road space and seats on buses and trains for those people who are not able to cycle. The need for pedestrian facility upgrades is also emerging to accommodate increased use of pedestrian mobility devices (PMDs) by the ageing and disabled populations in our region.

Work by the City of Sydney suggests that a primary reason for lack of cycling take up is a lack of safety on Sydney roads, and a lack of a properly connected regional cycle system. Anecdotally, the same is true for pedestrians, who are sensitive to the quality of walking routes, and sometimes face significant challenges crossing major roads. The lack of a comprehensive safe regional cycling network that connects local streets to employment centres, and targets commuter routes, means that more Northern Sydney residents and workers that could cycle are instead driving their cars and using public transport that is already stretched to capacity at peak times.

Transport planners do not expect car drivers to stop, get out and push their vehicles across boundaries or major obstacles before restarting their journeys. Historically, however, this is exactly what they expect pedestrians and cyclists to do. Delivery needs to be coordinated regionally, because there is no benefit from a cycleway that arbitrarily stops at a local government area boundary or the next major obstacle. There are, however, financial, ownership and topographic constraints in key areas across Northern Sydney that limit the ability of local governments acting alone to provide appropriate facilities.

Ideally cycling and pedestrian paths should be separated. And there needs to be connectivity across the entire network before significant uptake will occur. The genuine commitment of the NSW and the Australian Governments to active transport is urgently required. Further initiatives for integrating pedestrian and cycling as part of an overall transport plan include:

- cycling friendly facilities on public transport;
- secure bicycle storage at intermodal transfers;
- incentives for end of trip cycling facilities in new developments;
- encouragement of green star work travel plans; and
- better use of freeway and rail corridors to incorporate regional cycle routes.

What are the current barriers to using multiple transport modes to complete a journey? How can the barriers be addressed?

As noted previously, while mode changes are not ideal, commuters are primarily looking to minimize trip time. Uniform ticketing and synchronised timetables to ease transfers are key improvements to intermodal changes needed in Sydney.

It is understood that commuters reach a ceiling with their travel time whereby after a certain period they will tip from public back to private transport options. Configuration of key routes should aim to fall below this travel time constraint.

How can the transport requirements of Sydney Airport and Port Botany be best addressed?

According to multiple studies, Sydney Airport and Port Botany will reach capacity in the next few decades. As such the issue is not so much how to address transport for these facilities, but to begin to plan for new capacity through a second airport, and expansion of other freight ports such as Newcastle and Wollongong. Major road and rail links to the north and south of Sydney should be planned now to accompany these new facilities.

If there are to be more greenfield land release areas in Sydney, should there be a focus on developing public transport options as part of strategic land use planning for Metropolitan Sydney? How should this policy be given effect?

It is essential that public transport be planned and operational in greenfield developments as they are established. This can and does occur in many other regions in Australia to great benefit. For example, in Mandurah south of Perth, rail and road connections were developed (along a common route) so that new residents were able to establish commuting habits as they settled in the region. The added benefit of this development was the concurrent layout of energy and other cabling for the development along the common transport corridor.

The value of concurrent housing and public transport provision in new sites is that it ameliorates from day one the need for a second vehicle and embeds commuting behaviour and public transport usage for the community.

In terms of planning, with the provision of public transport in a new development, consideration should be given to cluster density and complementary access (bike paths, park and ride facilities) around such a transport mode to maximise usage.

Freight Transport

What investments are needed across NSW to improve efficiency of freight movements?

NSROC recognizes that there are a variety of investments required to improve freight efficiency across NSW. While it is recognized that rail freight can be enhanced, the reality is that “end point” freight distribution is by road within cities and suburbs.

NSROC argues that the key freight infrastructure missing in Sydney is the construction of the F3-M2 Link , which when built, will complete the National Freight route.

This issue is of such concern to our region that we have developed a separate paper and commissioned research to articulate the benefits of this project in the NSROC report “*Missing Link and Missing Out- Prioritising Sydney’s F3-M2 Motorway Connector*”, attached separately.

In short, the F3-M2 Connector is the only section of the National Road Network through Sydney that is not of motorway standard. All levels of Government have recognised the need to provide this infrastructure from national, state and local perspectives to ensure basic freight, business and individual transport functionality.

Today, without the link, all vehicles travelling north-south along this major freight and general traffic route are interrupted by over 20 sets of traffic lights to the M2 interchange or are forced to travel north-south along the congested Pacific Highway to the Warringah Freeway.

A Price Waterhouse Coopers research report provides background on historic studies and outlines the mounting costs and multiple negative impacts of continued deferral of this project. The report underpins the call for this vital project to be re-analysed, costed and prioritised.

How can the NSW Government best support an efficient freight system as well as meeting community expectations for safety and amenity in residential areas?

Providing a national road freight route streamlined through Sydney via the F3-M2 link will divert vehicles from local roads, reducing local congestion, and providing the community with relief from noise, pollution and safety risks of heavy vehicles.

What are the impediments to greater use of high productivity vehicles and how can these be overcome?

The key impediments for greater use of high productivity vehicles in urban areas is the lack of appropriate road infrastructure. In the absence of appropriate motorway and regional road networks in the city (including the F3-M2 Connector), vehicles use local roads not designed to cope with the wear of heavy or larger vehicles.

Local roads are not engineered appropriately for heavy vehicles. Local routes are designed for local purposes and destinations, that is, residences to schools, public facilities and retail centres. The use of local roads by major freight vehicles therefore creates significant traffic conflicts and safety issues for local road users and pedestrians. Councils are unable to fund and maintain local roads that have been misused in this way.

Transport funding

How much would people be prepared to pay for further investment in the transport system and what would be the expectation flowing from these investments?

Given the limitations on funds available for future transport investment, what mechanisms should be employed to manage demand?

Should new revenues or charges be explored to deliver the transport infrastructures within a realistic timeframe?

In further road user pricing were to be introduced, how should this operate? For example, by distance travelled ? by vehicle type? Or should it be area based?

As noted previously, NSROC has called for the equalization of tolling across Sydney's motorway system.

NSROC councils recognize that some level of tolling is required to fund motorway systems and to provide an incentive for users to shift into other forms of transport. However charges must also reflect the provision of a genuine service, such as a shorter travel time. Generally people will accept the need to pay for transport investment where the benefit is tangible and consistently available.

Transport user pricing should not be so prohibitive that it skews people away from preferred public transport and disadvantages those with low incomes or special requirements.

NSROC also recognizes that a user pay system cannot fully fund the core infrastructure and major new infrastructure that a growing city requires. As there are national, state and

local economic benefits from a functioning transport system, a funding mechanism is required that draws from the whole population.

The State Government must commence discussions about future funding sources for long term provision and maintenance of public transport.

New funding approaches for the substantial upgrades are required on the Sydney transport network and NSROC believes that innovative mechanisms should be examined.

For example:

- federal funding conditional on achievement of economic, social or environmental outcomes similar to efficiency dividends or competition policy payments which tie State Government funding to the delivery of reforms or meeting of targets;
- accessing national superannuation contributions eg Future Funds;
- an equitable distribution of tolls across Sydney, and charges, taxes or transport levies that reflect the real costs (including emissions costs) of private modes of transport; and
- direct linking charges and payments to public transport funding - similar to the original petrol excise “3 by 3” model.

More direct incentives and penalties should also be explored to encourage individual and business behavioural change in favour of sustainable transport. This includes:

- congestion charging in terms of peak times, multiple passengers and freight vehicle movements;
- vehicle ownership requirements which provide incentives for low pollution, low impact vehicles -eg lower registration costs and parking permits, minimum travel distances (currently the Fringe Benefits Tax incentives are skewed to encourage greater driving distances) and support for share transport initiatives such as car share and community bus transport.

NSROC additional issues

Interchange management, traffic flows and local planning

More emphasis must be given to transport interchange planning. Interchange planning must capture both local needs and wider integrated network requirements. There is no single answer to the best use of sites adjacent to transport infrastructure. Effective master planning and funding processes are required for each site to reflect specific attributes of the surrounding community. Consideration must be given to business needs, improving local productivity, topography, commuter parking and connectivity to adjacent services.

Transport for NSW is being set up to contain a unit specifically dedicated to transport interchange management. NSROC supports this unit having consistently argued that special attention is required for sites adjacent to transport infrastructure. It remains of concern, however, that the NSW Government’s new governance model for transport does not currently link to or have relationships with local government and their communities. NSROC councils have found that transport agencies have traditionally failed to work cooperatively with local government on major infrastructure. This is

highlighted by the poor design and operational failings of the Chatswood Bus Interchange project. The interchange has now been found to be unable to cater for current and future bus services. It is indicative of the inability of government infrastructure providers to understand local and regional issues and co-operatively plan for transport services to function within a diverse urban environment but most disappointingly their reluctance to seek out and incorporate local expertise.

Because of these issues NSROC councils seek reconsideration of the former State Government's policy to delineate arbitrary distances from centres or transport nodes and mandate density within the proscribed area. Such one-size-fits-all approaches do not provide for considered outcomes nor do they recognise the heterogeneity of built form, existing infrastructure and topography in Sydney.

Traffic flows must also be very carefully managed in Northern Sydney. Whilst there is a clear need to focus on corridors to provide connectivity to employment centres, great care must be taken to ensure that local amenity is maintained. In particular, the extensions of clearways, bus lanes and other mechanisms to maximise traffic volumes must not be permitted to sterilise local centres and shopping streets. This is a problem across Sydney, but highlighted in northern Sydney in areas such as along Military Road and the Pacific Highway. Government must bring a holistic approach: traffic engineering solutions are not solutions at all if they give rise to significant economic, social and urban design problems at the local and regional scale.

Community buses, State Bus monopolies and contestability

Councils directly contribute to public transport through the provision of community transport. Transport for the aged, people with a disability and others who cannot access mainstream public transport services should be included as part of an overall transport plan for Sydney.

The reform of the Sydney bus network in recent years has focussed services on cross regional routes and on providing fast reliable services for commuters. These reforms were greatly needed. Unfortunately they have been at the expense of local networks. The recommendation of these reforms under the Unsworth Review of Bus Services 2003 also included actions to support local networks. These have not taken place.

There are 25 community transport services across Northern Sydney, with most designed for non-health related transport. Councils in the Northern Sydney region currently provide over a million dollars for community transport including free bus services and direct demand taxis and shuttles for people with access issues. While some of these services are specifically provided at a local government level in concert with NSW Government programs, other services have been developed because of the failure of state public transport to adequately meet local community needs and changing residency patterns. This is despite the evidence and advocacy from local councils to State transport authorities to modify and revise routes.

Under the current regulatory framework in NSW, Council-provided community bus services are unable to charge passengers to recover costs because of the NSW Government's competition restrictions tied to their statutory responsibility for public bus transport. This is despite the reality that:

- a) many community transport users cannot access public buses due to old age, disability or other health issues, and,
- b) the community transport routes operating do not compete with the State bus network.

NSROC is seeking for the State Government to review the state bus competition restrictions to free up provision of community transport and allow some form of cost recovery to make services sustainable. With appropriate funding and regulatory support, together with reform of current competition restrictions, community transport could effectively complement and help to achieve a comprehensive transport system which meets the needs of all in the community.

Carparking policy

NSROC questions the use of parking levies as a source of transport funding. Parking levies place an extremely inequitable burden on commercial operations in the specific areas where they apply, that is, the CBD, Chatswood, St Leonards, North Sydney and Parramatta. If parking levies are to be applied then they should be equitably applied across metropolitan Sydney.