

Alternative Solutions

Imagine a revitalised Parramatta Road with retail shopping, a café strip and busy customers and residents interacting. Imagine stimulating streetscapes, a friendly and safe environment with fewer cars. This is not what the M4 East will bring. - it will bring *more* congestion and *more* pollution to Parramatta Road. But there are alternatives...

Light Rail

Light rail (trams) can carry many more passengers than buses or cars - for the same road space. It has quicker set-down and pick-up times than buses, and improves property prices in a way that a bus route does not. It is also much cheaper to construct than heavy rail. Commercial operators want to extend the current light rail loop from Central Station to Circular Quay and out to Leichhardt via Parramatta Road. The operators say this is a viable route that will add more value to properties and businesses than turning the eastern end of Parramatta Road into a used car lot! It could be extended through surrounding suburbs out to Parramatta, and provide thousands of commuters with an alternative to the private motor car. But the M4 East would strangle any such commercial venture, competing for customers and investors.

Better Use of Heavy Rail

There is yet another transport alternative to the M4 East that the NSW government is strangely unwilling to promote. By 2008, the Chatswood-Epping section of the Parramatta-Chatswood rail line will be completed, but the Government will not commit to building the "missing link" from Epping to Parramatta. This would provide the transport network with additional capacity equivalent to a six-lane motorway on a route that parallels the proposed M4 East.

Better Management of Freight

The M4 East is proposed as one means of moving 40 percent more container freight from Port Botany by road. Rail is a more efficient and cost effective way to move containers over long distances, using "intermodal transfer facilities" that accommodate both trucks and rail. It is also far safer for road-users and local communities. The technology also exists right now to convert rail to green energy, making it an ideal candidate for large scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

What Can You Do?

The next step in the process is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Residents tend to leave this up to the RTA, assuming it will safeguard the community, and provide a rigorous assessment of the proposal.

Unfortunately this is not the case. It is simply the RTA's justification of the motorway. Instead, residents must tell the both the RTA and their MPs that this motorway is a real concern. Now is the time to write letters to the media and write to and/or make an appointment to see:

The Hon Ms Sandra Nori MP
Member for Port Jackson
225 Parramatta Road
Broadway 2007
Ph (02) 96607586

Ms Angela D'Amore MP
Member for Drummoyne
128 Great North Road
Five Dock 2046
Ph (02) 97132999

The Hon Dr Andrew Refshauge MP
Member for Marrickville
PO Box 170
Marrickville 1475
Ph (02) 92284499

Ms Virginia Judge MP
Member for Strathfield
176 Burwood Road
Burwood 2134
Ph (02) 97471711

You should also write to express your opposition when the EIS is released. Contact EcoTransit Sydney on 98507471 or mary-jane.Gleeson@mq.edu.au if you can help with street stalls, distributing information, media, legal advice and technical advice.

RTA MYTHS

(and the realities they ignore)

Traffic will increase anyway

Traffic is kept in check by road capacity. For six years Sydney Harbour road crossings stayed at 180,000 vehicles per day - until the Harbour Tunnel was built. Now 230,000 vehicles cross daily and the number is still climbing.

The M4 East will take cars off streets

Government studies show the traffic will increase by up to 40 percent in peak-hour due to expanded capacity.

Increases are just "normal" growth

The RTA's M4 East traffic predictions are up to 40 percent *above* normal growth.

Emission stacks reduce health impacts

There is no evidence that stacks reduce the impact of emissions.

The M4 East is "the missing link".

Every new road is the "missing link". This road is just the next stage of a much bigger project.

People won't use public transport

People *do* use public transport when it is clean, reliable and frequent. Most people would prefer we invest money in public transport rather than roads.

More roads reduce congestion

Average speeds on main roads have worsened in Sydney as more roads are built.

The RTA meets appropriate air quality standards

There is very little monitoring of RTA compliance with *any* air quality standards.

The motorway has to go ahead

No contracts have been signed, and the government has cancelled other motorway projects because of community pressure.

The M4 East is a "free road"

NSW Treasury pays \$70 million per annum for the M4 and M5. Over the life of the M4 East this would add up to over \$1 billion in public money.

Did You Know?

Motorways Can Be Stopped

The RTA says the M4 East is going ahead, but they know that it is not a done deal. Minister Scully cancelled the F6 in the seat of Miranda to keep the local Labor member in power. He would do something similar to save the seat of Port Jackson, where Labor is under pressure. The situation has just been made worse by recent boundary changes. Haberfield residents will soon be grouped with Leichhardt, Annandale, Rozelle and Glebe residents in the new state seat of Balmain. Together, the voters most affected by the M4 East can exert real political influence.