

SUBMISSION ON THE M5 CORRIDOR EXPANSION

Prepared by: EcoTransit Sydney Incorporated

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Authorised by the Executive Committee of EcoTransit Sydney

Submission consists of
4 pages

Please contact the delegated contact for EcoTransit Sydney
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To Whom It May Concern:,

Please accept this submission from EcoTransit Sydney regarding the proposed expansion of the M5 Corridor.

This submission was prepared and submitted on behalf of the sustainable transport advocacy group, EcoTransit Sydney in response to the RTA request for feedback.

EcoTransit Sydney is a public transport advocacy group operating out of Sydney. We are a not for profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of EcoTransit development.

EcoTransit is transport that supports a sustainable economy and environment. The fewer resources that are used by the transport sector, the more efficient our economy becomes, and less damage is done to the environment.

EcoTransit Sydney's policy can be broadly viewed as attempting to change the expensive and wasteful system of moving *vehicles* to a system that moves *goods* and *people* in the most energy efficient manner possible. Our policy is based on three simple priorities:

- The need to immediately reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
- The long-standing need to improve air quality
- The need to immediately reduce NSW dependence on oil

Public transport, walking and cycling fit these criteria and our response to the proposal for expanding the M5 Corridor reflect our concerns that these modes are given as much support as possible

We trust that you will give consideration to our concerns.

Yrs,

John Bignucolo
Submission Contact
EcoTransit Sydney Incorporated

Summary

EcoTransit Sydney has a number of concerns about the proposal to devote a considerable sum, of both private and public funds, to additional motorways within the inner city of Sydney. We have limited our comments to the following matters on the basis that many of the matters we would need to consider have not, at this stage been provided in this process.

During the period in which public comment has been sought, several aspects of the original *M5 Transport Corridor Study: Preliminary overview report*, have changed. The most pertinent of these is the relationship of the Department of Transport and Infrastructures announcement that all of the options outlined in existing document will be considered equally, with no 'preferred' option. We welcome this decision, however, as we will explain in more detail, the current document contains very little information about other transport options in what is now being referred to as the "expanded" M5 Corridor.

EcoTransit Sydney's assessment of the options provided in the *M5 Transport Corridor Study: Preliminary overview report* is that it is unduly biased towards expanding road capacity for the purpose of addressing congestion caused by single occupant vehicles (SOV). For this reason, EcoTransit Sydney considers the project to be a costly and short-lived solution to congestion. The example provided by almost all of the motorways and tollways built in Sydney over the past 15 years indicate that the 4.2-4.5 billion dollar project would reach capacity again within 5 years. It thus represents very poor value for money at a time when funds are required for transport infrastructure that provides larger benefits over a much longer timeframe.

EcoTransit Sydney also has a number of concerns that take in broader issues of land use planning objectives, and the long-term value of significant investments of public and private sector funds in transport infrastructure. It is our understanding that the M5 corridor expansion is premised upon projections, estimates and objectives, outlined in planning documents that are in the process of being revised. The State Plan 2009 is likely to present quite a different picture to the State Plan introduced in 2006. This is most likely to be seen in the objectives for transport planning in Sydney, particularly with respect to reducing green house gas emissions. For this reason, and in light of current discussions regarding an emissions trading system or carbon tax, MTAG would like to suggest that options that will reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by a significant margin be prioritised.

With respect to the specific terms of the report EcoTransit Sydney advises that it has concerns about the following matters:

Section 4 of the *M5 Transport Corridor Study: Preliminary overview report* claims that the options prepared will address both state and federal goals for a range of important indicators. However, it is our view that, far from harmonising national or state goals outlined in this section, the options which

expand road capacity are more likely to have a negative impact on both sets of the indicators, particularly those concerned with air quality, climate change mitigation and improved urban amenity. Indeed, while it is claimed that the original preferred options best meet the goals identified in the study, no attempt to provide a rigorous comparison of detailed options has been provided.

Further concern arises from the use of justifications based on potential developments of either employment centres or residential areas. The developments nominated appear to be quite speculative, and the lack of clarity about what form such developments take, provides little assurance that the transport options being considered will be appropriate. Therefore it is difficult to see how such developments can be used to justify the costs of the RTA preferred option.

Finally, the *M5 Transport Corridor Study: Preliminary overview report* states clearly that the main reason for pursuing the road expansion option over other means of reducing congestion, specifically improvements to public transport options in this corridor and improvements to rail freight capacity, is that significant funds will be required. At between 4 and 5 billion dollars, it is clear that significant funds will be required by the RTA preferred option. It is our view that these funds, should they become available, would be better deployed in reducing the large number of single occupant vehicles (SOVs) using this route through the provision of more efficient modes of transport in this corridor.

Additional freight capacity and improved rail freight systems, which aim to move much higher volumes than the current target of 40%, should also be considered as a means of ensuring that any increases in the volume of freight over the long-term can be accommodated in the most energy-efficient and cost-effective manner.

For these reasons, EcoTransit Sydney would like to advise the RTA to revise its existing study in line with the most recent developments in planning and land use, including the new NSW State Plan which is due for release in the very near future.

EcoTransit Sydney also recommends that details of a much wider range of options for addressing congestion in the M5 corridor be provided for community members to consider along side the proposals for further motorway development.