Frequently Asked Questions – Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt local network improvements

City West Link, Norton Street and James Street Intersection

Does the proposal affect the existing crossing of the left turn lane from Mary Street to Lilyfield Road?
The current proposal does not include changes to the left turn lane from Mary Street into Lilyfield Road. The existing pedestrian crossing would also remain.

Does the proposal allow traffic to enter Darley Road from Norton Street (North of City West Link)?
The current proposal does not allow traffic to enter Darley Road from Norton Street (North of City West Link.) This arrangement was considered to help reduce the proposed detour for James Street traffic. However, additional lanes provided on Darley Road resulted in a need to remove the southbound connection from James Street as the width of Darley Road became too wide to continue to allow southbound connection across City West Link. Norton Street is the closest and most suitable alternate route for this movement.

A direct connection from Norton Street (North of City West Link) into Darley Road would require an additional traffic phasing and a longer overall wait time for traffic at the intersection. Furthermore, to compensate for the increased delays, the removal of the signalised crossings across City West Link and removal of northbound travel on Norton Street would be required. The removal of pedestrian crossings would be able to be offset with a compact pedestrian bridge in between James Street and Norton Street however this bridge would introduce additional crossing times for pedestrians and cyclists whilst also removing all existing parking in the public car park between James Street and Norton Street. In addition, the removal of northbound travel on Norton Street would force the movement of a larger volume of trips from Norton Street onto alternate roads as compared to the proposed volume from James Street.

On average, the affected southbound movement on James Street is about 95 vehicles per hour in the morning peak and 120 vehicles per hour in the afternoon peak in comparison to average northbound through volumes on Norton Street which are 180 vehicles per hour in the morning peak and 140 vehicles per hour in the afternoon peak. Relocation of the least possible trips was seen as a more ideal outcome particularly since a southbound detour would not coincide with the proposed northbound detour as a result of the removal of the northbound right turn from Norton Street.

On the basis of the above, the proposal does not include a direction connection between Norton Street (North of City West Link) and Darley Road.

Does the proposal impact the existing trees on Norton Street? The removal of some trees are required to allow the existing roadway to be used by vehicles and cyclists. Offset planting and streetscaping of Norton Street will be considered in the next stage of the design. All urban design and landscaping needs, including offset planting, will be considered prior to the publication of an environmental assessment of the proposal.

Why does the proposal remove the northbound right turn out of Norton Street?
The proposal has been developed to provide a single, more efficient signalised intersection. The northbound movement out of Norton Street is the least utilised movement for traffic travelling northbound accessing City West Link. On average about 150 vehicles per hour in the morning peak and 75 vehicles per hour in the afternoon peak make this movement. This is compared to the Darley Road right turn movement which averages 275 vehicles per hour in the morning and afternoon peaks. Consolidation of the two right turn movements into a single approach was an important safety requirement for the combined intersection arrangement to operate.

The provision of a northbound right turn movement out of Norton Street would also require an additional dedicated lane on Norton Street. Introduction of a dedicated right turn bay to cater for turning vehicles would require the removal of an increased length of parking on Norton Street. Given the ability of the network and an upgraded Darley Road to cope with the redistribution of Norton Street's right turn traffic to Darley Road, removal of additional parking spaces on Norton Street to provide a northbound right turn movement was not included as part of the proposal..

Why has a pedestrian bridge to cross City West Link not been included as part of the proposal?
A number of options were considered for cyclists and pedestrians across City West Link. While a pedestrian and cyclist bridge across City West Link would provide further efficiency improvements to the network, there were a number of constraints to the inclusion of a pedestrian bridge. However the only location possible would be between James Street and Norton Street, over the centre of the intersection due to the light rail underpass and stop. This location would have required the acquisition of private properties and therefore was not considered.

How many more vehicles does the proposal place on William Street and local roads connecting to Darley Road?
The proposal delivers benefits to the local area and road network adjoining City West Link by simplifying the operation of the traffic lights and movements onto and across City West Link. In order to achieve improvements without an enlargement of the road and acquisition of properties there was a need to rationalise movements at intersections given their close proximity. Whilst the proposal interrupts existing amenity and redistributes traffic in new patterns it will lead to journey time, reliability and efficiency outcomes for the wider network. The proposal would require northbound trips which currently turn onto City West Link at Norton Street to instead use Darley Road to turn onto City West Link. In order to reach Darley Road an increased number of trips will need to utilise connecting roads such as William Street. On average it is expected there would be an increase of about 200 vehicles per hour in the morning peak and 170 vehicles per hour in the afternoon peak accessing Darley Road to turn onto City West Link.

It is worth noting, traffic movements in the local area already include a movement of about 80 vehicles per hour in the morning peak and 70 per hour in the afternoon peak using William Street to access Norton Street before turning onto City West Link. As part of this proposal, these trips would be removed from William Street and rerouted to Darley Road instead. These existing trips are examples of traffic reacting to extended queues on Darley Road and using William Street to bypass Darley Road congestion. On this basis, the actual increase on William Street is expected to be lower than the figures outlined above. Despite these increases on William Street, the volumes are not inconsistent with volumes already experienced on surrounding local roads in the area.

Another consideration given in simplifying the movements between Norton Street (on the southern side of City West Link) was the ability to retain as much parking as possible on that section of Norton Street. Reinstatement of a northbound right turn movement on Norton Street would result in more network congestion and further parking losses in Norton Street. It is recognised this

increase in traffic is undesirable from a local amenity perspective however this movement of traffic away from Norton Street allows the entire surrounding road network adjoining City West Link to operate more efficiently, particularly with more southbound traffic on Norton Street. These changes will lead to improvements in journey times and queue lengths on local and main roads. This results in more reliable journeys across and onto City West Link despite the proposed movement restrictions.

Why is the roundabout at the intersection of William Street and James Street proposed for removal. Can this be reconsidered?
The removal of the roundabout assists with managing existing traffic queues on William Street as it is very close to Norton Street. The proposed removal of the roundabout will be reconsidered in line with community feedback received.

Why is the right turn from Norton Street onto Lilyfield Road proposed for removal?
The ability of traffic to perform a right turn from Norton Street onto Lilyfield Road relies on suitable and safe gaps from all directions as this movement must give way to traffic on the left and right of Norton Street. With increased traffic using Norton Street to access or cross the City West Link, the right turn movement onto Lilyfield Road is expected to become less reliable and result in longer wait times for vehicles turning onto Lilyfield Road. Signalising or converting the intersection to a roundabout would result in parking losses and cyclist interruptions on Lilyfield Road. Removal of the right turn movement was considered the most reasonable option to preserve intersection reliability, safety and surrounding parking in this location.

Timbrell Drive, City West Link and Mortley Avenue

Why has the right turn from Timbrell Drive onto City West Link been proposed for removal?
The right turn from Timbrell Drive onto City West Link contributes to operational delays and safety issues at the City West Link, Timbrell Drive and Mortley Avenue intersection. The right turn is the least busy from Timbrell Drive with about 200 vehicles per hour in the morning and afternoon peaks. The right turn requires pedestrians crossing City West Link to complete their crossing prior to vehicles from Timbrell Drive being able to turn right safely.

The pedestrian protection provided by the traffic lights results in right turning vehicles being unable to turn immediately when Timbrell Drive is provided a green signal. In periods without pedestrians crossing City West Link, right turning vehicles are still required to wait and filter across Mortley Avenue traffic. This filtering process is unreliable as the Mortley Avenue traffic often continues for the majority of each green phase since it is a single lane of traffic flow from Haberfield. As a result, Timbrell Drive requires a green arrow towards the end of each phase to ensure vehicles receive an opportunity to turn onto City West Link without the concern of pedestrians or Mortley Avenue through traffic. This right turn arrow is an additional phase and often occurs with few other vehicles using the intersection during this phase.

Analysis has been undertaken to assess the impacts of removing the right turn from Timbrell Drive and reallocating the road space towards an additional dedicated left turn lane which is a busier traffic movement. The additional left turn lane on Timbrell Drive allows queuing and journey times towards the CBD to be reduced significantly, particularly in morning peaks.

It also removes the need for an additional phase which could be used to provide more green time throughout each cycle for other traffic movements.

In the worst instance, the removal of the right turn would require up to 200 vehicles per hour to use alternate roads within Rodd Point to reach Ramsay Street, Great North Road or Parramatta Road depending on their destination. These roads are all operating with reductions in traffic of at least 15% since the opening of the New M4 Tunnels and would each be able to cater for the additional traffic.

It is recognised the removal of the right turn movement from Timbrell Drive would directly impact access to the westbound New M4 Tunnel entrance from City West Link. Surveys of existing traffic indicate about 35 right turning vehicles per hour from Timbrell Drive are accessing the New M4 Tunnels. It is proposed to route this traffic through Haberfield to reach the tunnel entrance on City West Link. The proposed route via Mortley Avenue, Boomerang Street and Waratah Street is 600 metres longer than the current route along City West Link although the impact to travel time, particularly in peak periods is less than 30 seconds. This detour and travel time impact is considered reasonable given the relatively small volume of traffic accessing the New M4 Tunnels. It is worth noting the proposed route through Haberfield may result in improved travel times in periods where right turn traffic cannot turn onto City West Link in the same cycle and is forced to wait for another cycle.

With the removal of the right turn, a number of operational benefits at the intersection are possible including reductions in queueing and delays for left turning vehicles on Timbrell Drive, additional through movement green time for vehicles on City West Link, Timbrell Drive and Mortley Avenue and a reduced likelihood of traffic rat running around the Bay and through Rodd Point to reach the New M4 Tunnel portal on City West Link.

All proposals

Will these proposals be necessary once the M4-M5 Link is completed?
These proposals have been developed to ensure a sustainable network outcome now and beyond the M4-M5 Link opening. Whilst the M4-M5 Link is expected to reduce surface traffic on the network between the existing M4 Tunnel portals and the ANZAC Bridge, there will still be a significant volume of traffic that will continue to use the surface network to access their travel destination. The opening of the M4-M5 Link is currently expected to reduce traffic volumes on corridors such as City West Link and Parramatta Road, east of the existing portals is about 20%. The majority of existing traffic on the Inner West's surface network are not making continuous journeys into the CBD and therefore will not be affected by the opening of the M4-M5 Link. Additionally, any expected reductions will not take place until the opening of the M4-M5 Link which is scheduled for 2023.

In the meantime, traffic and demand for the surface network is expected to increase and has done so since the New M4 tunnels opened in July 2019. As a result, any reductions expected with the opening of the M4-M5 Link in 2023 will reduce traffic volumes on main roads through the Inner West to levels similar to those volumes experienced in 2018 and just prior to the New M4 tunnels opening.

The Inner West road network with 2018's volumes posed a number of safety, reliability and efficiency concerns and a number of submissions were received to address these issues prior to and during the development of the New M4 Tunnels project. These proposals have now been developed to respond to those original and current concerns in a manner which avoids permanent and/or significant widening of road corridors given other transport projects currently underway. None of the proposed outcomes would directly affect or require any existing dwellings in the Inner West and have been developed to ensure the network operates reliably and safely now and beyond the opening of the M4-M5 Link.

Why have these proposals been displayed to the community without specific traffic analysis and data?
The proposals have been developed with preliminary studies and traffic analysis to respond to the issues observed and reported on the network. This analysis has been undertaken by Transport for NSW to ensure these proposals are feasible, safe and will deliver the expected benefits. These proposals are still in the preliminary stages of development and it is recognised there are a number of changes which affect the amenity of local residents and road users.

On this basis, a preliminary period of community consultation was sought to allow Transport for NSW to receive feedback and further develop these proposals in a manner which balances the needs of all road users. Following this consultation period and the feedback received, a consultation report will be prepared outlining the responses and changes being considered to the proposals. The report will also include information about the traffic and operational impacts of suggested changes. Should these proposals proceed in any form they remain subject to an environmental assessment process which includes a formal consultation period. The development of an environmental assessment report (Review of Environmental Factors Report) will include specialist studies such as traffic, noise, hydrology, heritage and landscaping for community response.

Why do these proposals restrict access between Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt and the surrounding main road network?
In response to a significant number of feedback received in recent years and particularly since the opening of the New M4 Tunnels, Transport for NSW has investigated a number of changes to attempt to improve the balance between local amenity, safety and efficiency in the area. A recurring issue identified in many submissions and studies has been the increase in traffic using unprecedented parts of Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt for through travel to the detriment of the local communities. As a result, a number of these proposals have attempted to lessen the desire for regional commuters to use these suburbs and roads to link busier main roads and avoid congestion.

While the proposed changes do provide efficiency improvements to the main roads and motorway network this still supports proposal objectives by minimising the need for traffic to detour from these main roads since they can operate more efficiently, with less queueing and ultimately minimise the number of vehicles wishing to detour and avoid these roads.

Each of these proposals has been developed by considering the volume of traffic currently using turning movements and the proportions of traffic from these turning movements travelling to different destinations. Proposed alternatives have been developed based on the volumes of traffic accessing different destinations of the network in an attempt to improve local amenity while preserving connectivity with surrounding areas.

Without these proposed changes, direct access into parts of Haberfield, Ashfield and Leichhardt will continue to allow local traffic as well as regional traffic further opportunities to avoid main roads and utilise these local roads to avoid congestion.