

# SHOROC TRANSPORT STEERING COMMITTEE

# **RESPONSE**

TO

# TRANSPORT IN THE WARRINGAH PENINSULA: ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

**Prepared** 

By

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SHOROC Transport Steering Committee

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this submission is to reflect the Shore Regional Organisation of Council's (SHOROC) considered response to the Bureau of Transport & Regional Economics' paper, *Transport in the Warringah Peninsula: Issues and Options for Analysis August 2002* 

In formulating its response the Committee gave due recognition to the status of the SHOROC Regional Transport Policy 2002 a copy of which is annexed hereto.

In all discussions the consensus was that saturation level of each major route had been reached.

Reaffirming the SHOROC Transport policy it was decided that Options 1 and 3 are untenable for the reasons set out in SHOROC's response. Options 2 and 4 have merit with further investigation and there is an expectation that Option 5 will occur anyway.

The Committee considers that public transport should be given priority in any option and the infrastructure question requires investigation. Then with the acquisition of the corridor the other issues such as Travel Demand Management and integrated land use and transport planning ought to be addressed.

Building upon the bigger picture the Committee also felt there were risks in pigeon holing our options without regard to fully investigating the additional options created through the development of new technologies integrated into a systems approach. For example, should there be a call for expressions of interest in relation to innovative public transport solutions such as rapid rail.

The Committee is of the opinion that it is imperative to include in the report additional data such as that suggested by the State Transit Authority in order to fully appreciate the difficulties inherent in any of the proposed options.

The SHOROC Transport Steering Committee feels that until such time as the Issues and Options as presented are clarified that the merits of 'do nothing at this stage' are something else that must also be canvassed in full.

The depth of this report is restricted by the time frame for providing feedback so we look forward to the presentation by BTRE, Deputy Assistant Director, Phil Potterton on the revised date of November 4 2002 and the opportunity to review a more detailed document.

#### RESPONSE TO ISSUES AND OPTIONS

#### **GENERAL ISSUES**

- SHOROC supports widening Mona Vale Road to include at least two climbing lanes and one down hill lane just west of Mona Vale cemetery.
- Wakehurst Parkway is just about at saturation point in peak hours
- More emphasis should be placed on the use of public transport
- Effects on population increase and environmental amenity should be included
- Tollway revenue should be used to improve peninsula amenity

- Exit points to Warringah freeway (not clarified) would be choke points that require metering.
- Point to Transport Policy "demand managed"
- Page 1 SHOROC Transport Policy should be quoted in full to give correct meaning.

#### **SPECIFIC ISSUES**

- Page 2 Paragraph 1 Could BTRE provide feedback on reasons why public transport usage on the northern beaches is 6% compared with average of 11% (Mr Thompson)
- Page 3 Paragraph 3 After first sentence add: "The corridor reached saturation soon after the Harbour Tunnel opened'.
- All references to "busways" be replaced with term "public transport"
- Intersections to be fixed should include those in the SHOROC Transport Policy
- Buses use the Sydney Harbour Bridge, not the tunnel.
- As BTRE are consulting with Willoughby Council will they cross reference concerns
- Every option needs a dedicated corridor
- Population increases need to be considered from both Federal and State Government perspectives
- Seaforth roundabout causes traffic delays with nine (9) lanes coming into two (2)
- Prefer use of the term "public transport tunnel" instead of dedicated bus tunnel
- Are we able to obtain data on the number of buses travelling from the Burnt Bridge Deviation to Gore Hill:
- Need to recognise some substantial statistical differences in bus volumes; Buses: 800/day across Spit Bridge, 255/day across Roseville Bridge
- Need to look at journey destinations of Northern residents to try and estimate how many could use a tunnel that goes to the north west suburbs or the outer/inner city
- It is very difficult to access the interchange at Chatswood by car/road, therefore two lanes required to facilitate people going to Chatswood Station.

#### **OPTIONS**

#### Option No. 1

- Consensus was that this Option should not be considered in any further investigation
- Does not comply with SHOROC Policy
- Does not solve weekend traffic
- Spit Bridge remains a problem
- Exhaust stacks have not been addressed

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### Option No. 2

- This is a preferred option
- More in line with SHOROC Policy
- Should be transport tunnel with priority given to dedicated public transport lane
- No need to widen Spit Bridge
- Greater accessibility for northern peninsula
- Exit point needs to be specified at Gore Hill Deviation

#### Option No. 3

- Consensus was that this Option should not be considered in any further investigation
- Does not comply with SHOROC Policy
- Mainly beneficial for commuters
- Still have to use Spit Bridge (that opens)
- Ten (10) lanes to six (6) lanes at bridge still traffic congestion

## Option No. 4

- Public transport tunnel supported, but not in conjunction with Options 1 and 3
- Should be in conjunction with tunnel from southern end of Roseville Bridge through to Gore Hill
- Buses in tunnel infrastructure issues need to be clarified still need local buses on surface

### Option No. 5

- Consensus that this is an option that should be occurring anyway.
- Appears to be a 'band-aid' solution.

# COMMENTS ON THE PAPER RAISED BY THE STATE TRANSIT AUTHORITY

#### **General comments**

- It is disappointing that a very limited range of options, all road tunnels, is being considered.
- There are no bus priority options to be evaluated.
- No data has been sought from State Transit to assist in evaluation of options.

# **Specific comments**

• Page 1 - "Ferry transport at Manly and Mosman" understates the availability of ferry services. There are several wharves in the area. The 1996 Census data showed that over 10% of employees in Manly LGA used a ferry for their Journey to Work.

#### Data

- Page 1 Major transport infrastructure benefiting the region includes the Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway
- Page 1 The proportion of intra-region trips should be compared to other regions to indicate the relative importance. On its own, the proportion is not meaningful.
- Page 2 There is clearly ferry use in the Northern Beaches. Does the 6% include bus and ferry or just bus? The data on the average for Sydney in the para is not consistent: 4.9% + 6.2 + 1.8% totals 12.9%, not 11%.
- Page 2 Paragraph 1 Chatswood to Dee Why rail link: Although it was listed in Action for Transport, no planning work is being undertaken on the corridor.
- Page 2 North Sydney and Inner Sydney as interim destinations. What does interim mean in this context? Does "interim" mean in time or space?
- Page 2 Paragraph 2 Capacity on buses is not constraining population growth in the region. Capacity could be increased through a higher level of bus priority such as Transitways-style projects. Population growth reflects the water system and land capacity issues.

#### **Transport issues**

- Page 2- Use of north and south would be more informative than "above" and "below".
- Page 3 Accidents with buses. Do not make this claim if there is no data. Require more
  information from BTRE eg statistics, mirrors wiped out on buses by trucks going
  through narrow lanes through Spit Junction, Manly Rd, Spit Rd and Military Rd
  corridor.

(Council representatives commented that the data must exist, as commuters are regularly off loaded from buses that have lost side mirrors through being impacted by trucks plus photographic evidence is available depicting buses unable to pass wide trucks in the middle lane)

• Page 3 - Kerb-jumping is not a travelling issue but rather, is related to turning radii at intersections.

(Council representatives commented that this is a problem of road geometry that would require significant property resumptions to correct and is seen as a constraint to buses and trucks sharing the Military/Spit Rds corridor. The lanes on Spit Hill south of Spit Bridge are currently 700mm too narrow and too tight. There is really only room for two lanes.))

- Page 3 The viability of the T3 lane is related to bus routes converging on this corridor to offer a high frequency service.
- Page 3 Unpredictability of road conditions. This could be overcome with bus priority measures, at a substantially cheaper cost than providing rail to gain reliability. Rail also suffers from incidents that can disrupt the system.

(Council representatives commented that bus priority lanes would not necessarily reduce the accident rate along this highly congested corridor due the high level of cross traffic. It is a residential area and a significant number of bus accidents involve pedestrians)

- Page 3 Spit Bridge is not the choke point. The choke point is further upstream. The
  frequency of bridge openings is published information. The impact of the Bridge
  opening on weekend travel should be acknowledged.
- Page 4 Wakehurst Parkway. There is saturation only in the commuter peak.
- Page 4 Warringah Rd. Bus priority is related to patronage, rather than densities.
- Page 4 Planning is underway for a bus stop on Warringah Freeway to allow Forest buses to drop passengers off in North Sydney.
- Page 5 Chatswood to Dee Why. The planning status of this project should be confirmed.

## **Transport issues in overview**

- Page 5 State Transit supports the view that incremental capacity increases will have limited overall impact.
- Page 5 Constrained road environment. The focus should be on moving people, not moving vehicles.
- Page 6 What is the timing of plans to widen Mona Vale Rd?

### **Improvement options**

- Page 6 Another limitation of tunnels is where they connect with the existing road network.
- Page 6 State Transit's response to Mosman Council on a tunnel under Spit Bridge is attached.

• Page 7 - System-wide initiatives. The Warringah region is sufficiently self-contained that non-infrastructure initiatives could be effective if implemented throughout the region.

(Council representatives commented that this does not take into account Urban Freight movements in and out of Warringah to service their local employment initiatives. Military/Spit Rd is a designated truck route)

- Page 9 Option 3 is an expensive way to overcome a constraint caused by a roundabout.
- Page 9 Option 4. Waiting in tunnels accessed by escalators is unlikely to provide a safe and welcoming waiting environment for passengers. If more expensive infrastructure were provided to improve amenity it would reduce the number of stops that could be provided.

(Council representatives commented there is an assumption that the waiting environment is catering for 19<sup>th</sup> century style buses and does not have regard to purpose designed Guided Busways or more modern demand managed rapid transit systems similar to "Val" or "Bishop – AusTran")

- Page 9 It is not true that "most buses" would use the tunnel. This option does not address the issue of local buses in the Mosman area. How will passengers interchange between services?
- Page 9 Paragraph 3 Clarify under Option four: "Since most, if not all, buses would use the tunnel ..."

(Council representatives indicated this comment was based on Professor Hensher's Guided Busways concept)

- Page 10 As the TRESIS model is a strategic level model, is it appropriate for modelling demand for tunnel options within the Warringah region?
- Page 11 Timeframe; the paper notes the BTRE will be finalising research and analysis in September but no data requests have been received for bus patronage data.
- In evaluation of the tunnel options, the use of the surface road space should be investigated. Increases in road capacity, without corresponding improvements in public transport performance, will lead to increased car use and reduced public transport use.
- There is no discussion of public transport priority.
- Clarify infrastructure requirements for tunnel
- Buses use the Sydney Harbour Bridge because there is a dedicated bus lane to the CBD
- Options all tunnel focused have not talked about use of surface road space
- Note that NSW Department of Transport specify bus service levels to 7pm, set in 1990 with the introduction of the Passenger Transport Act
- Cost benefit analysis will have to consider a particular mode during evaluation

#### STA Recommended Additional data sources

Roads and Traffic Authority (2002) *Sydney Transit Lane and Bus Lane Survey: Travel Time and Vehicle Occupancy March 2002*, Transport Planning Section, RTA, August 2002. The report shows that

- The Military Rd T3 lane (PM outbound) provides slower travel than the comparable non-Transit lane.
- The Military Rd T3 AM inbound lane carries 4,334 persons/hour compared to 943 persons per non-Transit lane.
- The Military Rd T3 PM outbound lane carries 3,322 persons/hour compared to 1,535 persons per non-Transit lane.

 Buses also use non-Transit lanes. On the Military Rd T3 (AM inbound, 2 hour, Spit Junction to Ben Boyd Rd section), there were 152 buses in the Bus Lane, and 24 in non-Transit Lanes.

#### **SUMMARY**

The SHOROC Transport Steering Committee would like to summarise its position by indicating that both Options 2 and 4 have merit with further research and investigation with Option 5 being understood as a foregone conclusion. However, the consensus of opinion is that any Option needs to be revisited in the light of a systems approach taking into account the development of new technologies.

The Committee believes that whatever Options are considered, provision must be made for cross-region as well as CBD links. This need is represented by the words, "well connected", in the SHOROC Transport Policy and is also supported by available destination data that shows the majority of traffic is not CBD bound. This leads to the requirement that public transport and road connections from the SHOROC Region should be to the Warringah Expressway at Gore Hill.

The Committee looks forward to revisiting the Issues and Options with the inclusion of the additional data and a response to its concerns.

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#### **Contributors**

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