

**Report to General Manager**

Attachments:

1. Letter to Minister for Transport re B-line

SUBJECT: Response to B-line Review of Environmental Factors (REF) Report**AUTHOR:** Nigel Turner, Strategic Transport Planner**ENDORSED BY:** Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On 5 December 2016, the Northern Beaches B-line Program team released a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) report, “to assess the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the B-line proposal under the provisions of Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979”. Public submissions to the REF were due by 1 February, with North Sydney Council having been granted an extension to these time frames to address Council reporting schedules.

The detail provided in the REF shows that the further development of the project has done little to address matters identified by Council as part of intergovernmental working group processes and in letters to relevant ministers on 14 December, 2015. These matters are as follows:

- Mode shift, traffic reduction and value for money objectives for the project are unclear.
- The extent to which parking removal and clearway extensions will impact pedestrian/retail amenity in Cremorne and Neutral Bay are unclear.
- A North Sydney CBD Northern Beaches BRT stop should be included in the scope of the project.
- A centrally aligned BRT option should be considered as part of the further development of the project as per the project’s pre-feasibility report recommendations.

In addition to these overarching concerns, this report identifies a number of further strategic and technical issues associated with the B-line proposals detailed in the REF. These matters should also be examined and taken into account as part of the further development of the B-line project.

This report makes 33 recommendations that seek to achieve the public transport objectives underlying this project as well as improve its transparency.

A letter has been prepared to communicate Council’s concerns with the B-line project to the Premier and relevant Ministers (see Attachment 1).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nil

Local Government Act 1993: Section 23A Guidelines - Council Decision Making During Merger Proposal Period

The Guidelines have been considered in the preparation of this report and are not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

1.THAT the 33 recommendations detailed in the conclusion of this report be submitted as Council's response to the B-line REF.

2.THAT Council write to the NSW Premier, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight enclosing copies of this report and expressing its concerns regarding the B-line project as per the attached letter.

3.THAT copies of this report be sent to Neutral Bay and Cremorne Chambers of commerce for their consideration.

LINK TO DELIVERY PROGRAM

The relationship with the Delivery Program is as follows:

Direction: 1. Our Living Environment

Outcome: 1.4 Improved environmental footprint and responsible use of natural resources
1.5 Public open space, recreation facilities and services that meet community needs

Direction: 2. Our Built Environment

Outcome: 2.1 Infrastructure, assets and facilities that meet community needs
2.3 Vibrant, connected and well maintained streetscapes and villages that build a sense of community
2.5 Sustainable transport is encouraged
2.6 Improved traffic management
2.7 Improved parking options and supply

Direction: 3. Our Economic Vitality

Outcome: 3.1 Diverse, strong, sustainable and vibrant local economy
3.2 North Sydney CBD is one of Australia's largest commercial centres

Direction: 4. Our Social Vitality

Outcome: 4.1 Community is connected
4.7 Community is active and healthy
4.8 Enhanced community facilities, information and services
4.9 Enhanced community safety and accessibility

Direction: 5. Our Civic Leadership

Outcome: 5.1 Council leads the strategic direction of North Sydney
5.7 Risks are minimised and continuity of Council's critical business functions is ensured

BACKGROUND

In June 2012, Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) released the Northern Beaches Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Pre-feasibility Study. This study provided a way forward for developing solutions to the two key problems for northern beaches bus services: reliability and travel times. Study recommendations included further investigation of both kerbside and centrally aligned BRT options, an east-west BRT link between Dee Why and Chatswood to relieve pressure on the Pittwater Road/Military Road corridor as well as a “bus tunnel” under Military Road.

Formation of the Northern Beaches BRT project team, tasked with the further development of these Northern Beaches BRT pre-feasibility options, was one of the key outcomes of the Northern Beaches Transport Action Plan, which the NSW Government released in 2014.

In early 2015, North Sydney Council officers were invited to join SHOROC's Northern Beaches BRT intergovernmental working group in order to "coordinate effective project design... (that) ...helps guide the delivery of projects to meet the required and desired outcomes". Council identified the following "desired outcomes" as part of the intergovernmental working group process:

1. Clarification of mode shift, traffic reduction and value for money objectives for the project.
2. Clarification of the extent to which parking removal and clearway extensions will impact pedestrian/retail amenity in Cremorne and Neutral Bay.
3. Inclusion of a North Sydney CBD Northern Beaches BRT stop in the scope of the project.
4. Consideration of a centrally aligned BRT option, as per the pre-feasibility recommendations, as part of the further development of the project.

The Northern Beaches B-line project, as announced on the 9 November 2015, and further development of the project since that time has done little to address these issues.

1. Neither the strategic nor final business cases for the B-line project have ever been publicly released. As such, there is limited evidence that the project will result in comparative bus passenger travel time benefits, motorist to public transport mode shift, a reduction in Military Road traffic or that the project represents a positive value proposition for the region.
2. The REF identifies the removal or partial removal of 37 parking spaces as part of the B-line proposals. Little justification is given regarding how this will affect Cremorne and Neutral Bay retail amenity in terms of:
 - improved public transport access to shopping precincts and resultant mode shift;
 - removal of the parking/ buffer zone between the carriageway/traffic environment and the pedestrian/ footway/ retail environment; and
 - convenience of Military Road parking options versus parking in side streets, particularly for shoppers with particular mobility requirements.

Furthermore, while clearway extensions are implied within the REF, the delivery of clearway extensions has not been included for consideration as a part of the B-line REF.

3. The inclusion of a Northern Beaches B-line stop for North Sydney has not been addressed as part of the further development of the project.
 4. The re-branding of this project from Northern Beaches BRT to B-line recognises that the proposed project does not demonstrate characteristics typical of a BRT project. As such and as previously reported to Council, it is unlikely that the B-line project will deliver the significant travel time, mode shift, traffic reduction and value for money benefits typical of a BRT project.
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According to TfNSW's specialist BRT consultant Derek Trusler, the proposed project will, "*not provide sufficient exclusivity or impediment free running of buses to provide quick reliable bus services.*"

On 19 November, 2015, Council considered the *Northern Beaches B-line (BRT)* report and resolved to contact senior NSW ministers to request further consideration of the issues outlined above.

While the benefit proposition offered by the B-line proposals remains unclear, the cost of the project has more than doubled since its inception. Originally conceived as a \$222 million project, a figure of \$305 million was included in the Northern Beaches Action Plan for the project. According to the July 2016 budget updates, this figure has officially risen to \$512 million with further increases expected. Given that the benefit/cost ratio (BCR) for this project was based on the original \$222 million cost estimate and was still only calculated to be 1.42*, we can assume that the BCR for B-line is now less than half (1/2) of this original value, suggesting that, for every dollar spent on the B-line project, the region will receive approximately 60 cents return on this investment.

*identified in the *Northern Beaches Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Business Case Assurance Review*

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The following table provides a summary of the key sustainability implications:

QBL Pillar	Implications
Environment	There will be minimal direct environmental impact from this project as it is essentially a rebranding of existing express services and is unlikely to result in significant motorist to public transport mode shift due to travel time benefits being accrued by both of these competing travel modes. However, not providing significantly improved public transport services for the northern beaches will result in increased traffic on the project corridor and resultant negative impacts on local environment and environmental sustainability over time.
Social	Increased traffic on Military Road as a result of this project will result in greater barriers to local movements across Military Road and reduce the amenity of the Cremorne and Neutral Bay retail centres. Both of these outcomes will negatively impact community connectedness resulting in a more disjointed North Sydney community, reduced civic pride, an increased likelihood of anti-social behaviour and increased policing requirements.
Economic	A clear value proposition for the project has not been provided. In addition, reduced safety and amenity in Cremorne and Neutral Bay retail precincts will negatively impact business activity and increased traffic on Military Road will increase the cost of congestion along the project corridor.

Governance	Encouraging walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing, and reduced car dependence is consistent with the directions, outcomes, strategies and indicators defined in North Sydney’s Community Strategic Plan. There is no evidence that the B-line project, in its current form, will achieve these objectives.

DETAIL

1. B-line Review of Environmental Factors

On the 5 December 2016, the Northern Beaches B-line Program team released a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) report, “to assess the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the B-line proposal under the provisions of Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)”. According to Part 5 of the EP&A Act, the proponent of this type of infrastructure project, “must examine and take in to account to the fullest extent possible all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment by reason of the proposed activity”. The matters identified in this report must, therefore, form the basis of the further development of the B-line project given this requirement. The matters identified in this report correspond to overarching issues previously identified by Council, TFNSW’s objectives identified in the REF report, community objectives identified in North Sydney’s Community Strategic Plan and technical issues relating to turn bans and resultant re-distribution of traffic on to local roads.

2. Overarching Issues

As noted, the following key B-line issues have been identified by Council previously. They should be central considerations of the further development of the project in response to the REF process.

- Mode shift, traffic reduction and value for money objectives for the project are unclear.
- The extent to which parking removal and clearway extensions will impact pedestrian/retail amenity in Cremorne and Neutral Bay are unclear.
- A North Sydney CBD Northern Beaches BRT stop should be included in the scope of the project.
- A centrally aligned BRT option should be considered as part of the further development of the project as per the pre-feasibility recommendations.

The following section provides an explanation of why Council believes that these issues have not been addressed as part of the development of the B-line project or as part of the REF.

2.1. Lack of clarity regarding B-line objectives

The *B-line REF* notes that a strategic justification for the project has been outlined in the *B-Line Program's Strategic and Final Business Cases*, completed May 2015 and February 2016 respectively. Neither of these documents are available for public/Council consideration. As such, Council has not had the opportunity to consider the project in terms of an overarching vision for travel demand management: improved B-line passenger travel times, mode shift (motorist to B-line passenger) and traffic reduction along the project corridor. Contrary to the objectives of the project and community expectations, the REF traffic modelling suggests that the proposed B-line project will actually result in increased bus passenger travel times, no mode shift and increased traffic on Military Road.

In addition, the relative priority of this project in terms of its potential benefits vs cost (BCR) is not detailed in the REF. In June 2015, TfNSW's *Northern Beaches Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Business Case Assurance Review Report*, prepared by an independent engineering and cost expert review panel, stated that it was, "not confident that value for money has been demonstrated for the proposed capital expenditure". Given that the cost of the project has increased from \$222 million to over half a billion since this time, it is suggested that an up to date BCR for the project should be provided and include cost increases associated with the construction of 900 multi-story car parking spaces in northern beaches centres as well as consideration of how induced traffic demand (see 3.1.1) will effect the benefits associated with these proposals.

Recommendation 1:

THAT NSW Government prepare an updated B-line business case, using current cost and benefit estimates, demonstrating that the B-line project represents a positive value proposition for Sydney's northern district in terms of bus passenger travel time benefits, mode shift, traffic reduction and the North Sydney community priorities identified in Section 3.2.

2.2. Parking removal and clearway extensions

The REF identifies the removal or partial removal of 37 parking spaces to facilitate the introduction of local bus stops and BRT passing lanes in Cremorne between Holt Avenue and Cabramatta Road and in Neutral Bay between Young Street and Hampden Road. In addition, clearway extensions continue to be discussed as an essential component of the B-line project but no details are provided in the REF. It is understood that clearway extensions will be pursued separately through alternative RMS processes. This is confusing, given that the clearway proposals form an integral part of the B-line project.

There are significant issues with the loss of on-street parking in terms of convenience for drivers parking proximate to their destination, particularly for mobility impaired users. TfNSW officers have suggested replacing lost parking by increasing on-street parking numbers in local side streets. These parking spaces, if found, will not provide the same level of service for customers, particularly less mobile customers as those directly adjacent to property frontages. Further, there may be little opportunity to do this as parking numbers in these side streets have, to a large extent, already been utilised as a result of similar Council initiatives in the past.

There is also the broader and often overlooked positive impact that on-street parking has on walkability. Parked vehicles not only provide a buffer between the footway walking

environment and the on-road traffic environment, they also create side friction, which naturally slows traffic speeds. Reducing the walkability of the Cremorne and Neutral Bay precincts has the potential to negatively affect business activity and property values.

Removal of parking will also result in the loss of informal loading areas servicing businesses on Military Road. Coordinating deliveries/pickups for periods outside of clearway times or from local side streets will increase operational costs for these businesses.

Recommendation 2:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating a case for parking removal in terms of:

- *potential for B-line based mode shift;*
- *impact on footway/shopping safety and amenity; and*
- *the relative amenity of Military Road parking compared to any alternative parking proposed as part of the project.*

Recommendation 3:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case, including consideration of any clearways extensions required to deliver the “bus passenger travel time benefits” and “general traffic flow benefits”, demonstrating how these clearway extensions will contribute to the overarching objectives of the B-line project (see 2.1).

2.3. North Sydney CBD B-line stop

According to 2011 census data, 1 in 3 journeys to work in Global Sydney from LGAs on the project corridor end in the North Sydney CBD. As such, the omission of a premium B-line bus stop in North Sydney CBD seems like a significant oversight of these proposals. This omission will mean a significant reduction (-33%) in potential commuter patronage during weekday peak hours.

<i>Origin/Destination</i>	<i>North Sydney (number of workers)</i>	<i>Sydney (number of workers)</i>
<i>Pittwater</i>	<i>996</i>	<i>2801</i>
<i>Warringah</i>	<i>3907</i>	<i>10859</i>
<i>Manly</i>	<i>1631</i>	<i>6071</i>
<i>Mosman</i>	<i>1694</i>	<i>4815</i>
<i>North Sydney</i>	<i>9657</i>	<i>13907</i>
<i>Sydney</i>	<i>438</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Total Commuters travelling btw RBT LGAs and NSyd/Syd</i>	<i>18,323 = 32%</i>	<i>38,453 = 68%</i>
<i>Total Commuters travelling btw RBT LGAs and NSyd/Syd (excluding NSyd commuters)</i>	<i>8,666 = 26%</i>	<i>24,546 = 74%</i>

ABS Census of Population and Housing journey to work data, 2011

Furthermore, Sydney's largest public transport infrastructure project, Sydney Metro is located within 300m of the B-line route. The omission of a premium B-line stop in the North Sydney CBD, near the new Victoria Cross Metro Station, overlooks the significant potential benefits associated with improved connectivity between these two projects and how this would result in significantly improved public transport access between the northern beaches and Sydney's north-west.

Recommendation 4:

THAT a North Sydney CBD Northern Beaches B-line stop be included in the scope of the B-line project.

Recommendation 5:

THAT significantly improved connectivity between the northern beaches and the North Sydney CBD be considered as part of the development of any alternative options to the proposed B-line project.

2.4. Options assessment

TfNSW's *Northern Beaches Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Pre-feasibility Study, 2012* identified 6 Options for further consideration as part of the further development of the Northern Beaches BRT project, including both kerbside and centrally aligned BRT options, an east-west BRT link between Dee Why and Chatswood to relieve pressure on the Pittwater Road/Military Road corridor as well as a "bus tunnel" under Military Road.

In TfNSW's "*Bus Rapid Transit Planning and Design*" (2015) report, author Derek Trusler states that:

"As a result of improved services, this approach (centre running BRT) can attract a significant mode shift. This helps "decongest" the existing roadways, improve the overall carrying capacity of existing lanes..."

*"The approach to centre running buses for integrated BRT networks on existing roadways is both practical and relevant to each of the designated corridors."**

*This assessment included the Military Road/Pittwater Road corridor.

According to the *REF*, the B-line team have only considered two options for this project: "do nothing" and "kerbside BRT". No explanation has been offered in the *REF* to justify why the other options identified in the *Pre-feasibility Study* and the *BRT Network Bus Rapid Transit Planning and Design* report were not explored further as part of the on-going development of this project.

North Sydney Council is concerned that the "Options" outlined in the *REF* constitute minor variations of the same option: "kerbside BRT" and do not constitute a "Strategic Options Assessment" in relation to the Northern Beaches BRT project as originally conceived.

Recommendation 6:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating why the recommendations of the Sydney BRT Network Bus Rapid Transit Planning and Design report and the Northern Beaches BRT Pre-Feasibility Study have not informed the further development of a Northern Beaches BRT project and why the options outlined in the Pre-Feasibility Study have not been more fully explored as part of the further development of the B-line project.

3. B-line REF Project Assessment

It is worth noting that the overarching issues previously identified are, in many cases, the root cause of the strategic and technical issues identified in this section of the report.

3.1. B-line REF project objectives

The Strategic Justification provided in the *REF* lists the following goals, targets and priority actions for the B-line project:

1. reduce travel times (minimising travel time for as many people as possible);
2. grow patronage on public transport (by making it a more attractive choice);
3. minimise public transport waiting times for customers;
4. improve public transport reliability;
5. improve coordination and integration between transport modes; and
6. improve customer experience with transport services.

TfNSW's Corporate Plan 2012-17 and NSW 2021 also identify the following objectives for all TfNSW projects, which might also be considered relevant to this project:

1. provide transport that is accessible to all users; and
2. undertake rigorous planning to ensure new infrastructure will meet future demand.

North Sydney Council is concerned that the B-line project will fail to achieve these objectives for the reasons detailed below:

3.1.1. Reduced Travel Times

Although the strategic options assessment table (pg 20) states that bus passenger travel times between Manly Vale and Neutral Bay will "improve" during the AM peak under the preferred option, travel time modelling (pg 88) shows that bus passenger travel times will increase from 22.51 minutes to 23.36 minutes by 2021 under the B-line proposals. While this is an "improvement" on "do nothing" scenario travel times, it is not an actual reduction in bus passenger travel times.

REF travel time modelling also shows a similar rate of travel time improvements for both bus passengers and motorist under the "proposal". This means that, by 2021, trips will take approximately half the time by bus under either the "do nothing" or the "proposal" scenario. Under the "proposal" there will also be very similar reductions in travel times (approximately 30%) for both bus passengers and motorists compared to the "do nothing" approach.

While sharing travel time benefits between bus passengers and motorists may seem like an equitable approach to travel time savings, it is important to note that:

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- a) interventions that target “traffic flow improvements” will, inherently, limit the project’s ability to deliver bus passenger travel time benefits;
 - b) interventions that deliver “traffic flow improvements” in the short term will result in induced traffic demand in the short-medium term returning congestion to pre-project levels in the same timeframe;
 - c) delivering “motorist travel time improvements” will reduce the mode shift potential of the public transport component of the B-line project in the short term (the Downs-Thompson Paradox);
 - d) increases in traffic volumes on Military Road will result in increased congestion at upstream and down-stream pinch points, such as the Spit Bridge and the Military Road/Warringah Freeway intersection;
 - e) increased congestion at up-stream and down-stream pinch points will impact B-line passenger travel times where dedicated bus passing lanes are not provided (e.g. Spit Bridge general traffic lanes); and
 - f) increases in traffic volumes on Military Road will increase the negative impacts of traffic on the North Sydney community in terms of social well-being, health and economic outcomes.

In addition to the traffic inducing impact of traffic capacity increases along the corridor, the project team is also pursuing the delivery of 900 additional car parking spaces in Northern Beaches centres. Irrespective of what parking management initiatives that the B-line team put in place, there will be an increase in traffic associated with these parking spaces. This induced traffic demand will result in delays along the length of the corridor, particularly if access to parking is not strictly limited to B-line linking journeys (e.g. parking made available for weekend trips to Northern Beaches centres outside of weekday commuter periods).

The suggested approach to enhancing traffic flow along the Military Road corridor will inherently increase crossing times at pedestrian signals contributing to an increase in the overall time taken to complete local walking journeys, including the local component of B-line journeys. Increasing the amount of time taken to walk to and from local destinations will reduce the likelihood of people walking and increase the overall time taken for B-line journeys, reducing the mode shift potential for this project.

The suggested approach to enhancing traffic flow along the Military Road corridor will also increase delays for local traffic seeking to cross or travel along Military Road.

More typical BRT projects run in dedicated, centrally aligned bus only lanes to minimise interaction with general traffic, particularly traffic turning left from the kerb-side lane, and significantly reduce bus running times compared to equivalent private vehicle journeys. Typically, they also deliver all door boarding and alighting, off-board ticketing and level boarding and alighting at stops to help minimise boarding and alighting times as a component of overall journey times. By comparison, the inclusion of double decker buses as part of these B-line proposals is likely to increase dwell times at B-line stops as passengers, particularly less mobile passengers, must be given adequate time to climb and descend stairs safely.

Recommendation 7:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the B-line project will deliver targeted travel time benefits for public transport passengers travelling between the northern beaches and Global Sydney.

Improve Public Transport Reliability

B-line reliability is dependent on the extent to which B-line services interact with local buses and general traffic as a result of these proposals. Passing lanes (as per the proposed Neutral Bay and Cremorne contra-flow arrangements) and local bus laybys may go some way to reducing the interaction of B-line services with local buses on Military Road. However, not pursuing dedicated bus lanes as part of this project will make it impossible to guarantee the reliability of the B-line bus service as it will depend entirely on the level to which “other vehicles”* interfere with the operation bus services within the T3 lane. These “other vehicle” journeys are likely to increase significantly as population led traffic growth increases congestion on the project corridor over time.

*T3 lanes can be used by cyclists, motorcycles, taxis, hire cars and emergency vehicles as well as vehicles with 3+ passengers)

This approach is also inconsistent with the preferred approach outlined in TfNSW strategic bus planning and management document, “*Sydney Bus Futures*.” This endorses an integrated network approach to managing express and local service interaction using a 3 tiered approach: Rapid Bus Routes, Suburban Bus Routes and Local Bus Routes (*Sydney's Bus Future*, pg 14, figure 4). Using the preferred approach, higher levels of priority would be given to Rapid Bus Routes on Military Road without the need for significant property acquisition, road widening, parking loss and/or technological interventions e.g. contra-flow arrangements. The REF does not offer an explanation as to why this approach was not explored as part of the development of the B-line project and the complimentary *Bus Network and Service Plan Update*.

Running B-line service in the kerb side lane is not typical of world class BRT services and will result in B-line buses being delayed by left turning traffic, particularly where it conflicts with pedestrian crossing movements on side roads.

In TfNSW’s “*Bus Rapid Transit Planning and Design*” (2015) report, author Derek Trusler states that:

“...single kerbside bus lanes, with or without passing opportunities, does not constitute Bus Rapid Transit in a mixed use corridor.”

“Single kerb-side lanes, with or without indented stopping bays do not provide sufficient exclusivity or impediment free running of buses to provide quick reliable bus services. A consistent, reliable and frequent level of service with buses arriving “on time” at stops, interchanges and stations for customers is simply not achieved.”

Recommendation 8:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will deliver improved public transport reliability.

3.1.2. Grow Patronage on Public Transport

Assumptions used in REF traffic modelling suggest that there will be limited mode shift as a result of this project. This is probably accurate given that relative travel time benefits associated with the “do nothing” and the “proposed” approach are approximately equal for both bus passengers and motorists as a result of this project. Reducing car based travel times at the same rate as bus passenger travel times will not make public transport “a more attractive choice” in terms of the relative travel time benefits offered by these competing travel modes.

As noted previously, the omission of a North Sydney CBD B-line bus stop will mean a significant reduction (-33%) in potential commuter patronage during weekday peak hours.

Recommendation 9:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will incentivise public transport use without incentivising private vehicle use in order to maximise growth of public transport patronage.

3.1.3. Increased Service Frequency

Our understanding is that existing express services will be re-branded as B-line services and new double-decker buses introduced as opposed to a real increase in service frequency.

Recommendation 10:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will deliver increased public transport service frequency.

3.1.4. Improved Public Transport Integration

Sydney’s largest public transport infrastructure project, Sydney Metro is located within 300m of the B-line route. The omission of a premium B-line stop in the North Sydney CBD near Victoria Cross Station appears to be a significant oversight in the development of both of these projects. The inclusion of a B-line stop in the North Sydney CBD, to provide improved integration with Sydney Metro, would provide significantly improved public transport access between the northern beaches and Sydney’s north-west.

Recommendation 11:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will deliver increased connectivity between the northern beaches and the wider public transport network, particularly Sydney Metro services.

3.1.5. Improved Customer Experience

The B-line proposals outlined in the *REF* focus on improving the user experience in terms of:

- *redistributing uneven passenger loads outside of peaks by increasing services in the shoulder peaks;*
 - it is unclear from the *REF* to what extent re-distributing passenger loads in to the shoulder peaks is possible/desirable

 - *introducing new bus stop infrastructure to improve bus stop amenity;*
 - improving bus stop amenity/infrastructure is a positive outcome for the project but should be consider in the context of wider streetscape improvements to improve the safety and amenity of the walking leg of the B-line journey (walking to and from B-line bus stops) (see additional comments below)

 - *introduce double decker buses to reduce crowding at major bus stops;*
 - increasing the capacity of individual buses will reduce delays associated with stop skipping
 - however, increased boarding and alighting times inherent in the use of double-decker buses will result in longer dwell times, which could disrupt peak B-line stopping schedules
- and
- *increasing the legibility of the bus services by rebranding express services under a B-line umbrella.*
 - re-branding existing express services to increase legibility may provide some benefits as part of this project

As noted previously, the B-line customer experience will begin and end away from Military Road buses and bus stops. As such, consideration must be given to improving the customer experience in terms of the safety and amenity of the local walking (or cycling) leg of the B-line journey.

The project team should revisit the introduction of 40km/h High Pedestrian Activity Area speed limits in Cremorne and Neutral Bay as per Council's recommendations.

The B-line project should also commit to supporting the delivery of active transport and streetscape improvement works in Cremorne and Neutral Bay, which will provide the public realm interface with the B-line service.

Recommendation 12:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how a "whole of trip" approach will be taken to delivering an "improved customer experience" along the project corridor.

Recommendation 13:

THAT 40km/h High Pedestrian Activity Area Speed Limits for Neutral Bay and Cremorne centres be included in the scope of the B-line project.

Recommendation 14:

THAT improved walking and cycling links to local centres, local bus stops and B-line stops be included in the scope of the B-line project.

3.1.6. Accessibility

Accessibility improvements (above what is currently provided by kneeling bus technology) do not appear to have been considered as part of the proposal.

Recommendation 15:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how improved access for customers with particular mobility requirements will be provided as part of the project.

3.1.7. Undertake rigorous planning to ensure new infrastructure will meet future demand

The REF notes that, over the next 15 years, NSW will require infrastructure to support 40 per cent more train trips, 30% more car trips and 31% more households. A similar understanding of Northern Beaches/B-line travel demand and infrastructure requirements would be useful for understanding TfNSW's vision for the B-line project.

Recommendation 16:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address future northern beaches travel demand.

3.2. Community objectives

The North Sydney Community Strategic Plan identifies a variety of transport related directions, outcomes, strategies and indicators. These form the basis of the following assessment of community outcomes resulting from the B-line proposals detailed in the REF.

3.2.1. Travel Safety

Parking removal, extension of clearways and prioritisation of traffic flows along Military Road will result in more/larger vehicles running in the kerbside lane closer to Military Road footway/shopping environments. In addition, displaced traffic resulting from turn bans will increase conflict between pedestrians and traffic on local side roads. Both of these outcomes will contribute to poorer travel safety (actual and perceived) in Cremorne and Neutral Bay and reduce the uptake of walking for local trips to local destinations and public transport nodes, including the local leg of B-line journeys.

While the REF traffic modelling assumes “no mode shift” in order to provide a “conservative” analysis of traffic demand, doing the same for pedestrian modelling means that the REF assessment of pedestrian capacity, crowding and amenity will significantly underestimate pedestrian infrastructure upgrade requirements.

Street tree removal, resultant increases in the visual width of carriageways and obstruction free overrun areas along Military Road will result in increased traffic speeds outside of congested periods. Increased traffic speeds will increase the risk of all crash types occurring and the severity of injuries when crashes occur.

Any short term footway/road closures and/or diversions should consider the safety impact of redirecting pedestrians and cyclists away from preferred routes and what impact this will have on pedestrian management at road works and crossing compliance. In all instances, temporary pedestrian facilities should be provided on the same side of Military Road as the footway closure with appropriate ramping provided for mobility access, even where this requires the temporary closure of a Military Road traffic lane.

The proposal includes the relocation of two local bus stops, city and out-bound between Cabramatta Road and Holt Avenue. The existing outbound bus stop is located within 50 metres of the midblock pedestrian crossing near Cabramatta Road. The proposed location of the new bus stop opposite Holt Avenue is located approximately 120 metres to the west. The nearest pedestrian crossing is 130 metres away at Winnie Street. Without any formal pedestrian crossings nearby, the proposed location is not convenient for many pedestrians coming to and from the south side of Military Road. This is likely to result in less passengers choosing to use this stop and/or an increase in dangerous crossing manoeuvres, including pedestrians leaping over central reservation barrier fencing.

Recommendation 17:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to road safety on Military Road and adjoining local roads.

3.2.2. Transport Security

Parking removal, extension of clearways, increased traffic on Military Road and displaced traffic resulting from turn bans will reduce the uptake of walking for local trips to local destinations and public transport nodes, including the local leg of B-line journeys.

Travel security, which is most effectively delivered through increased street activity and passive surveillance from adjacent buildings, will also suffer as a result of declining walking numbers. Increased traffic and reduced activity on Military Road/local side streets will result in future development orientating away from these traffic conduits to avoid the visual and auditory imposition of traffic and fumes and to address perceived safety considerations. This will result in reduced passive surveillance, starting a downwards spiral of reduced activity, reduced security and increased dominance of traffic in local centres.

Again, REF pedestrian modelling does not address the desirability, in terms of travel security, of increasing pedestrian and cycling participation through the provision of high quality walking and cycling infrastructure.

Relocation of bus stops away from Cremorne and Neutral Bay centres will also reduce natural surveillance of passengers waiting at these bus stops.

Recommendation 18:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to public security on Military Road and adjoining local roads.

3.2.3. Social Well-being

Increased priority for traffic on Military Road and local side roads will also increase the barrier effect that these roads have within the North Sydney community. Where local interactions decrease, communities become less connected. Reduced community connectedness will negatively impact social inclusion and feelings of civic pride as well as increasing the likelihood of social isolation, associated mental health issues, anti-social behaviour, and policing requirements.

North Sydney Council and Cremorne and Neutral Bay Chambers of Commerce have worked closely with local communities to develop streetscape improvement plans, including drainage, signage, lighting, removal of pedestrian barrier fencing, and landscaping, for Cremorne and Neutral Bay centres to help improve visual amenity, increase civic pride and improve community connectedness. All B-line works should contribute to the delivery of streetscape improvement works by delivering the streetscape pallet identified in North Sydney Council's Public Domain Style Manual. Any B-line works must be coordinated with North Sydney streetscape improvements to ensure the consistent delivery of streetscape improvements throughout Cremorne and Neutral Bay.

Social activities, such as outdoor dining, can also contribute to community connectedness. Consideration should be given to how the location/relocation of local and B-line bus stops will affect existing Military Road social spaces (outdoor dining, etc.).

Community identity can also be linked to heritage items such as the "heritage" bus shelters on Military Road, which should be retained/relocated to service local bus stops where possible.

Recommendation 19:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to social connectedness in Cremorne and Neutral Bay.

3.2.4. Active Health

Increased priority for traffic on Military Road and local side roads combined with road safety and travel security concerns will deliver reduced uptake of walking and cycling for local trips to local destinations and public transport nodes, including the local leg of B-line journeys. Reduced uptake of these more active travel modes will negatively affect the health of individuals and the North Sydney community.

Consideration should also be given to how night works will affect local communities in terms of health outcomes.

Recommendation 20:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to the health impacts of B-line proposals.

3.2.5. Fair Access to Parking

As discussed in section 2.2, there are significant issues with the loss of on-street parking in Cremorne and Neutral Bay.

The proposal will affect 37 parking spaces in Military Road. 25 of those will be removed permanently due to the creation of full time Bus Zones or No Stopping zones. The remaining 12 will be affected in the AM peak only. Clearway extensions associated with the delivery of B-line outcomes will further limit access to parking in Cremorne and Neutral Bay. Although it is not stated in the EIS, there are also likely to be a number of parking spaces that will be removed in Cabramatta Road to enable a turning facility near the partial road closure. There are a number of delivery and service trucks which use Cabramatta Road each day to service local businesses and any turning area would need to be appropriate for those vehicles to enable them to exit the street. It has not been quantified how many parking spaces in Cabramatta Road would be impacted by this facility.

If significant mode shift were predicted as a result of B-line proposals, it might be possible to justify reduced access for motorists against improved access for public transport users. However, because “no mode shift” has been assumed as a result of the B-line project, Council can only consider the loss of parking in isolation.

In addition, parking included in the northern component of the project is not typical of park and ride parking facilities where parking is located away from urban centres where land is cheaper and the negative impacts of additional traffic accessing this parking is minimised.

Recommendation 21:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to parking removal in terms of:

- *improved public transport access and resultant mode shift;*
- *relative parking amenity of parking on Military Road verses nearby side streets;*
- *reduced footway/shopping amenity; and*
- *access for deliveries.*

3.2.6. Environmental Sustainability

Increased priority for traffic on Military Road and local side roads, combined with road safety and travel security concerns will reduce walking, cycling and public transport mode share and increase motor vehicle mode share in Cremorne and Neutral Bay. Reduced uptake of less polluting forms of travel and planning for significant increases in traffic on major arterials and local roads will result in significant increases in green house gas emissions unless significant changes to the vehicle fleet, from internal combustion engine to e-vehicles, is completed. Removal of street trees will also impact local carbon sequestration capacity.

Recommendation 22:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to environmental sustainability.

3.2.7. Local Environments

Increased priority for traffic on Military Road and local side roads, combined with road safety and travel security concerns will reduce walking, cycling and public transport mode share and increase motor vehicle mode share in Cremorne and Neutral Bay. This will have knock on impacts on local environments in terms of air, water and noise pollution. Increased particulate emissions from more traffic will deliver poorer air and water quality and there will be increased engine and tyre noise from both buses and traffic.

In addition, the trees proposed for removal along Military road between Cabramatta Rd and Hampden St are considered of high value due to their location adjacent a high trafficked arterial road. The local environment benefits that these trees provide in this location have a major impact on North Sydney Council's ability to achieve its Street Tree Strategy and Urban Forest Strategy goals. These goals include limiting the urban heat island effect and covering hard surfaces with shade. Once trees are lost in these high traffic areas it is very difficult to replace or offset the benefits they once provided.

Recommendation 23:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to the impacts of the proposal on local environments.

3.2.8. Transport Affordability

The issues identified in this section all have a financial cost to proximate local communities. These costs should form the basis of a revised B-line business case that also addresses the updated infrastructure cost of this project.

In addition, Council does not support the privatisation of the B-line services following the delivery of the B-line project.

Recommendation 24:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to the financial impacts of the project in terms of its overall cost as well as the financial implications of its impact on safety, security, social well-being, health, fair access to parking, environmental sustainability, local environments, the cost of fares, congestion and business activity.

Recommendation 25:

THAT NSW government commit to the retention of the B-line service under public management in perpetuity.

3.2.9. Congestion

Planning for significant traffic growth and delivering increased priority for Military Road through traffic as part of the B-line proposals will unlock latent traffic demand and deliver significant increases in traffic. This will limit the ability of the project to deliver significant travel time benefits for B-line passengers, resultant mode shift benefits or reduce traffic volumes on Military Road and local side streets. Furthermore, as Cremorne and Neutral Bay local centres become less viable due to the issues identified, it will increase the number of resident journeys that will, in future, need to be made to more regional centres with better pedestrian/shopping amenity. Accommodating more traffic in this way should not be an objective of the B-line project.

Recommendation 26:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to planned increases traffic and its impact on Military Road congestion following the delivery of this project.

3.2.10. Business Activity

Parking removal, extension of clearways, increased traffic on Military Road and displaced traffic resulting from turn bans and the effect that this will have on the safety and amenity of the Cremorne and Neutral Bay retail precincts will negatively impact business activity in these retail centres. Removal of parking, in particular, will reduce the amenity of footway/shopping environments, with the potential to negatively affect business activity and property values.

Removal of parking will also result in the loss of loading bays servicing businesses on Military Road. Coordinating deliveries/pickups for periods outside of clearway times or from local side streets will increase operational costs for these businesses.

Neutral Bay and Cremorne Chambers of commerce have both expressed serious concerns regarding the impact of B-line proposals on these centres.

Recommendation 27:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the project will address community priorities in regards to business activity and the viability of Cremorne and Neutral Bay centres.

4. Technical Issues

In addition to those strategic issues outlined above, we would suggest that following technical matters should be reconsidered as part of the further development of the B-line project.

4.1. Re-distribution of Traffic on to Local Roads as a result of B-line Proposals

The traffic assessment includes modelling of signalised intersections along Military Road. However, there is no quantitative assessment of impacts on local roads which are expected to accommodate displaced traffic resulting from changes to Military Road operations.

Recommendation 28:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the overarching benefits of the project will off-set the significant dis-benefits associated with the displacement of traffic on to local side roads in Neutral Bay and Cremorne: poorer travel safety, reduced uptake of active travel modes, poorer local environments, etc.

Recommendation 29:

THAT Transport for NSW undertake traffic counts on all affected local roads, including but not limited to Spencer Street, Watson Street, Yeo Street, Waters Road, Winnie Street and Young Street, within 12 months of implementation of any proposed turning restrictions to verify the relative increases in traffic volumes and to determine if further measures are required to ameliorate negative impacts on local safety amenity as a result of the B-line project. Any proposed future measures should be the subject of consultation with the affected community and Council.

4.2. Cabramatta Road Half Road Closure

The traffic report notes that 86 vehicles per hour turn left into Military Road from Cabramatta Road. The report assumes that these vehicles will either divert to Spofforth Street or Spencer Road to turn left. Appendix D of the REF includes an assessment of the relative increases in traffic on these roads, however there is no comparison of existing traffic volumes. This assessment estimates 50% of displaced vehicles will use Spencer Road and 50% will use Spofforth Street to turn left onto Military Road.

Spencer Road has an average daily volume of 913 vehicles. There is a predominant flow of traffic in the north-west direction (65%). Peak hourly volumes on Spencer Road are in the order of 80 vehicles per hour. Based on the assessment in Appendix D which estimates 50% of displaced vehicles using Spencer Road, this would see traffic volumes on Spencer Street increase by 63%. This relative increase is likely to be adversely felt by local residents of Spencer Road. (see further comment below)

Recommendation 30:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the overarching benefits of the project will off-set the significant dis-benefits associated with the displacement of traffic on to Spencer Road: poorer travel safety, reduced uptake of active travel modes, poorer local environments, etc.

4.3. AM Peak Right Turn Restriction from Military Road into Murdoch Street

Appendix D of the REF includes an assessment of the relative increases in traffic on these roads, however there is no comparison of existing traffic volumes. Based on historic traffic count data and figures in Appendix D, it is estimated that traffic volumes will increase by rates in the table below.

AM	Street	Existing			Displaced Vehicles			TfNSW Projected			Rel. Inc (%)
		North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	
	Waters Road	151	80	231	89	89			320	139%	
	Winnie Street			970		89	89		1059	109%	

The proposal will therefore see a 39% increase in traffic on Waters Road in the AM peak which is a major pedestrian thoroughfare in close proximity to Cremorne Shopping area, Bouganvillea Retirement Village and SCECGS School. This increase in traffic volumes is likely to be adversely felt by local residents, businesses and the school community. (see further comments below)

Recommendation 31:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the overarching benefits of the project will off-set the significant dis-benefits associated with the displacement of traffic on to Waters Road: poorer travel safety, reduced uptake of active travel modes, poorer local environments, etc.

4.4. Ben Boyd Road/ Military Road Intersection

It is proposed to ban:

- i. the left turn from Military Road outbound, except for buses;
- ii. the left turn (westbound) from Ben Boyd Road into Military Road.
- iii. the right turn (westbound) from Ben Boyd Road into Military Road.

The traffic report assumes that all traffic will divert via Watson Street and Yeo Street. Appendix D of the REF includes an assessment of the relative increases in traffic on these roads, however there is no comparison of existing traffic volumes. Based on historic traffic count data and figures in Appendix D, it is estimated that traffic volumes will increase by rates in the table below.

AM		Existing			Displaced Vehicles			TfNSW Projected			Rel. Inc (%)
Street		North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	
Ben Boyd Road	Nth of Military Rd				-	-	-				
Ben Boyd Road	Military to Yeo	181	234	415	154	68	222	335	302	637	153%
Yeo Street	Ben Boyd to Watson	349	444	793	150	236	386	499	680	1179	149%
Watson Street	Yeo to Military Road	518	369	1208	150	236	386	668	605	1594	132%
PM		Existing			Displaced Vehicles			TfNSW Projected			Rel. Inc (%)
Street		North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	
Ben Boyd Road	Nth of Military Rd				-	-	-				
Ben Boyd Road	Military to Yeo	212	242	454	306	93	399	518	335	853	188%
Yeo Street	Ben Boyd to Watson	455	312	767	162	375	537	617	687	1304	170%
Watson Street	Yeo to Military Road	518	369	887	162	375	537	680	744	1424	161%

Traffic volumes in Watson Street are expected to increase in the order of 32-61% and traffic volumes in Yeo Street are expected to increase in the order of 49-70%. Ben Boyd Road (south of Military Road) traffic volumes are expected to increase in the order of 53-88%. These are significant increases in traffic on local roads which are likely to be adversely felt by local residents and businesses. (see further comments below)

Council has previously received concerns about the volume of traffic on Watson Street and Yeo Street and poor pedestrian access due to the volume of vehicles using this route. Any increase in traffic, and particularly the expected increases discussed above, are likely to exacerbate these issues. Pedestrian facilities should be considered at this intersection.

Furthermore, it is very likely that a significant proportion of motorists who would usually turn left into Ben Boyd Road are more likely to travel the 160 metres up to Young Street as this is a more intuitive route, rather than the circuitous Watson Street/ Yeo Street Route. Conservative estimates based on 50% of these displaced vehicles using Young Street and 50% using Watson Street/Yeo Street reveal the following relative increases in traffic volumes

AM		Existing			Displaced Vehicles			TfNSW Projected			Rel. Inc (%)
Street		North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	
Ben Boyd Road	Nth of Military Rd				-	-	-				
Ben Boyd Road	Military to Yeo	181	234	415	36	68	104	217	302	519	125%
Yeo Street	Ben Boyd to Watson	349	444	793	150	236	386	499	680	1179	149%
Watson Street	Yeo to Military Road	363	416	1550	150	118	268	668	605	1936	125%
Young Street	Military Road to Grosvenor L	100	66	166	118	0	118	218	66	284	171%
PM		Existing			Displaced Vehicles			TfNSW Projected			Rel. Inc (%)
Street		North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	North / East	South / West	Combined	
Ben Boyd Road	Nth of Military Rd				-	-	-				
Ben Boyd Road	Military to Yeo	212	242	454	119	93	212	331	335	666	147%
Yeo Street	Ben Boyd to Watson	455	312	767	162	375	537	617	687	1304	170%
Watson Street	Yeo to Military Road	476	270	1550	162	188	350	680	744	2087	135%
Young Street	Military Road to Grosvenor L	118	69	187	188	0	188	306	69	375	201%

This will place around 71-101% more traffic on Young Street, which is the centre of the Neutral Bay Shopping area and has a very high volume of pedestrians. This conflicts with Council's

plans to downgrade the vehicular role of Young Street and enhance the streetscape and pedestrian amenity of the area.

In addition, no consideration has been given to the Woolworths delivery trucks which currently access the Woolworths Loading Dock via Ben Boyd Road and Grosvenor Lane. These trucks cannot physically use Young Street and it is not desirable for these trucks to use the alternative route via Watson Street and Yeo Street which passes a residential area and Neutral Bay Public School.

Recommendation 32:

THAT NSW Government prepare a revised B-line business case demonstrating how the overarching benefits of the project will off-set the significant dis-benefits associated with the displacement of traffic on to Watson Street and Yeo Street: poorer travel safety, reduced uptake of active travel modes, poorer local environments, etc.

Recommendation 33:

THAT further investigation of the closure of Young Street to traffic at Military Road, including significant upgrades to walking and cycling infrastructure to improve access to the Neutral Bay centre and B-line bus stops, be undertaken.

5. Conclusion

The Northern Beaches BRT project was originally conceived as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, delivering “rapid” bus passenger travel times relative to comparable private vehicle journeys. The proposals identified in the *REF* do not reflect the original aspirations of this project.

The information provided in the REFs does not provide a clear case for the project in terms of targeted passenger travel time benefits, mode shift and traffic reduction. Nor does it provide a clear case for the project in terms of its relative benefits vs cost (BCR). Given that TfNSW professional review panels were “not confident that value for money” had been demonstrated before significant cost escalations occurred, it would seem reasonable to pursue a revised understanding of the value of this project before continuing with its delivery.

These B-line proposals should be re-assessed and alternative options developed to ensure that any proposed public transport improvements for the northern beaches delivers significant travel demand management benefits in the form of:

1. significantly improved passenger travel times between the northern beaches and Global Sydney compared to equivalent private vehicle journeys;
 2. significant mode shift away from private vehicle travel modes;
 3. freeing up of existing Military Road traffic capacity and locking in the traffic reducing benefits of the project; and
 4. reducing the negative impacts of traffic on communities on the project corridor.
-

In its current form, the Northern Beaches B-line BRT project represents a missed opportunity in terms of the provision of world class public transport services between the northern beaches and Global Sydney. These issues outlined within this report should be addressed in order to deliver world class transport for a city that will rely increasingly heavily on public transport for the movement of its people.



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ABN 32 353 260 317

The Hon. Andrew Constance, MP
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

16 February 2017

Dear Minister Constance,

RE: North Sydney Council does not support B-line project in current form

North Sydney Council strongly supports the provision of public transport infrastructure and services that reduce car reliance and increase public transport mode share. These outcomes should be the core objective of transport infrastructure in a world city that will increasingly rely on public transport for the movement of its rapidly growing population. However, the recently released Review of Environmental Factors (REF) report does not make a clear case for the B-line project in either of these respects.

Throughout the development of the project Council has raised a number of key issues that are yet to be adequately addressed, including:

- The mode shift, traffic reduction and value for money objectives for the project are unclear. Information contained within the B-line REF indicates the project will perform poorly in all these respects. Importantly, the cost of the project has more than doubled since its inception drawing into question any previous decisions based on a now outdated benefit/cost ratio (BCR) contained in the strategic business case.
- The extent to which parking removal and clearway extensions will impact pedestrian/retail amenity in Cremorne and Neutral Bay are unclear. Again, information contained within the B-line REF indicates the project will have a significantly detrimental impact on the shopping strips of Cremorne and Neutral Bay.
- A North Sydney CBD Northern Beaches BRT stop should be included in the scope of the project to support the North Sydney CBD and facilitate interchange opportunities with Sydney Metro. The lack of integration between the B-line and Metro rail initiatives is at odds with the State governments stated objective to connect centres with a networked public transport system.
- The Northern Beaches BRT Pre-Feasibility Study (2012) identified six bus service improvement options for further consideration. These six options, including a centrally aligned BRT service (as opposed to kerbside), should be considered as part of a revised business case for the B-line project. No assessment or comparative analysis of the six options has been provided to justify pursuing the current proposals.



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While it is unclear whether the residents of the northern beaches will experience any significant benefits from this project, it is clear that the not inconsiderable dis-benefits associated with the current proposals will significantly impact residents and businesses in North Sydney.

In its current form, the Northern Beaches B-line project represents a missed opportunity for the provision of world class public transport services between the northern beaches and Global Sydney, including North Sydney CBD. Council asks that NSW State government addresses the above concerns as part of a revised business case for the B-line project, using current B-line cost and benefit estimates.

North Sydney Council appreciates your consideration of the matters outlined in this letter. A more detailed examination of the issues associated with the B-line project can be found in the attached report submitted to the B-line REF community consultation process. If you would like to discuss the comments above, please contact Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy on 9936 8300.

Yours sincerely,

Ross McCreanor
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER