Report to General Manager

Attachments:
1. BRT Media Release - 9 November 2015
2. BRT B-Line Update 1 - November 2015
3. Assessment of B-Line Against NSCSP Transport Objectives

SUBJECT: Northern Beaches B-line (BRT)

AUTHOR: Nigel Turner, Strategic Transport Planner

ENDORSED BY: Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On the 9 November 2015, the NSW Government announced the delivery of the Northern Beaches B-line project, a program of works to deliver kerb-side Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services from Mona Vale to the Sydney CBD.

The North Sydney Community Strategic Plan (NSCSP) vision for transport in North Sydney supports the delivery of public transport projects that increase public transport use and reduce car reliance for trips to, from and within North Sydney. The B-line BRT project is, therefore, of great interest to Council.

The information provided in the Northern Beaches B-line media release and subsequent Councilor briefing on 9 November 2015, however, does not provide a clear case for the project’s public transport and traffic management benefits. Understanding the impact that the project could have on bus patronage and traffic volumes, particularly during the morning peak period, is critical.

The Government has acknowledged that the project is not fully refined and it is their intention to consult on the broad concept prior to detailed design. However, significant concerns must be raised regarding various aspects of the scope of the B-line project. These include:

1. The omission of a North Sydney CBD Station/Stop, resulting in a large number of North Sydney residents and workers not being catered for by B-line services despite North Sydney CBD being a major employment hub and forming part of 'Global Sydney' under the Plan for Growing Sydney.
2. The lack of information provided regarding the potential for mode shift and traffic demand management associated with this project.
3. The potential for extension of kerb-side clearways (possibly 24hr); loss of on-street parking; and the impact that this may have on walkability, business activity and property values in Cremorne and Neutral Bay.
4. Whilst identified as a BRT project, it fails to demonstrate characteristics that are typically associated with BRT infrastructure nationally and internationally such as:
   a. Operation of dedicated 24hr centrally aligned bus corridors,
   b. The provision of overtaking opportunities within the bus corridor,
   c. The delivery of off-board ticketing, and
d. The delivery of level boarding and alighting.

In its current form, the Northern Beaches B-line BRT project represents a missed opportunity in terms of the provision of improved services between the northern beaches and North Sydney, improved modal splits and traffic demand management, delivering positive walking and cycling outcomes as part of the project and the delivery of BRT services in line with international best practice principals. These should be core objectives of transport infrastructure in a world city that will rely increasingly heavily on public transport for the movement of its rapidly growing population.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council write to the NSW Premier, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and local member Jillian Skinner expressing its qualified support for the Northern Beaches B-line (BRT) project and encourage that the project be further developed to address the significant concerns identified in this report.

2. THAT Council assist TfNSW with identification of relevant stakeholders to ensure that its consultation process is as far reaching and focused as possible.

3. THAT Council request that the strategic business case for the B-line project be submitted to Council for its consideration.

4. THAT Council request that the full business case for the B-line, which identifies how the project will address broad NSCSP objectives as per issues raised in Attachment 3 to this report, be sent to Council as soon as it is finalised.
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

**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

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 the further analysis of both kerb-side and centrally aligned BRT options. The study also suggested options for an east-west BRT link between Dee Why and Chatswood to relieve pressure on the Pittwater Road/Military Road corridor.

Further development of the BRT project to 2015 has tended to focus on the kerb-side running options, similar to the existing bus lanes from Mona Vale to Seaforth, with less consideration given to a more typical, centrally aligned BRT option or the east-west relief corridor.

In 2015, North Sydney was invited to join the SHOROC Northern Beaches BRT working group and raised the following issues with the project:
1. A North Sydney CBD BRT Station was not identified as a key deliverable of the project.
2. Mode shift and traffic reduction were not identified as key objectives for the project.
3. Project proposals included investigations into the extension of clearways on the North Sydney section of Military Road, with the possibility of 24hr clearways identified.
4. A centrally aligned BRT option, which could address some of the issues above, had not been pursued as part of the further development of the project.

These issues have been raised on a number of occasions, at both SHOROC and TfNSW forums, but no further information has been provided to address them.

On the 9 November 2015, the NSW Government announced the delivery of the Northern Beaches B-line project, a program of works to deliver kerb-side Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services from Mona Vale to Sydney CBD. NSW Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Andrew Constance said B-Line services are expected to start by late 2017.

This report provides an analysis of the broad implications of the proposed Northern Beaches B-line BRT project, identifies issues and recommends an advocacy strategy that encourages the NSW Government to review the project scope for all elements of the project between the Spit Bridge and The Sydney Harbour Bridge.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS:

The principals of improving walking, cycling and public transport safety and amenity while managing traffic demand are endorsed within the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan (NSCSP). As such, community engagement is not required to address this issue.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT:

The Economic, Social and Environmental impact of the Northern Beaches B-line BRT proposals for North Sydney have been explored in Attachment 3 to this report.

Ensuring that Council’s Northern Beaches B-line BRT advocacy reflects its overall transport vision for North Sydney will help to achieve many of the governance outcomes outlined in the Community Strategic Plan.

1. Project Description

According to information provided in its media release, the NSW Government expects the Northern Beaches B-line BRT project to include:

- Nine new B-Line stops at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Collaroy, Dee Why, Brookvale, Manly Vale, Spit Junction (Mosman) and Neutral Bay with real-time information, seating, weather protection and improved facilities for customers;
- Six new commuter car parks at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Dee Why, Brookvale and Manly Vale providing about 900 car parking spaces;
- New double decker buses with improved on-board capacity and comfort;
- On-road improvements, including new bus lanes, bus bays, and minor lane widening to support bus services; and
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle links to connect customers with B-Line stops.
2. Issues Identified

Further to the identification of specific issues below, a preliminary assessment of the B-Line BRT project against key NSCSP transport objectives has been undertaken and is provided at Attachment 3.

2.1. North Sydney CBD Station/Stop

ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011* data suggests that North Sydney is the destination for approximately 1 in 3 (32%) of the commuter trips to Global Sydney (see Metro Strategy) from Pittwater, Warringah, Manly, Mosman, and North Sydney. Warringah residents are the second largest contributors to the North Sydney workforce (after North Sydney) with approximately 8,000 commuter trips generated daily. Even if internal trips within North Sydney are excluded from consideration**, commuter trips to North Sydney make up 26% of all potential NB BRT corridor commuter trips.

*journey to work data sourced from .id community profile web pages
**due to the variety of destinations within the LGA, existing mode splits and limited potential for mode shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin/Destination</th>
<th>North Sydney (number of workers)</th>
<th>Sydney (number of workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pittwater</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>2801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warringah</td>
<td>3907</td>
<td>10859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>1631</td>
<td>6071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosman</td>
<td>1694</td>
<td>4815</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Sydney</td>
<td>9657</td>
<td>13907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Commuters travelling btw RBT LGAs and NSyd/Syd = 18,323 = 32% = 38,453 = 68%

Total Commuters travelling btw RBT LGAs and NSyd/Syd (excluding NSyd commuters) = 8,666 = 26% = 24,546 = 74%

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

This suggests that the inclusion of a North Sydney Centre BRT Station* should be a key deliverable as part of the further development of the project to maximise potential mode shift outcomes. Once this BRT Station is included in the project scope, further modelling should be undertaken to determine what level of benefit for northern beaches commuters (measured in terms of mode shift) can/is likely to result.
2.2. Mode Shift and Traffic Demand Management

According to preliminary modelling and feedback from the project delivery team, these proposals may see some marginal increase in the uptake of public transport in the order of 1%. This level of mode shift is:

a) Unusually low for a well designed BRT system, and
b) Could be reduced further where parking and traffic capacity works unlock latent traffic demand.

The following table shows levels of mode shift that have been achieved following the introduction of BRT systems in major Australian cities. This suggests that mode shift of 5-15% might be achievable for Military Road under a better designed BRT system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ridership</th>
<th>Adelaide Busway (ANEB)</th>
<th>Sydney Transitway (SLPT)</th>
<th>Brisbane SE Busway (BSEB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Usage per annum</td>
<td>7.0M (^1)</td>
<td>1.9M (^2)</td>
<td>26.0M (^7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Weekday average (^3)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>93,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peak hour</td>
<td>4,500 (^4)</td>
<td>d/k</td>
<td>15,000 (^5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Travel Impacts</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct corridor</td>
<td>24(^5)</td>
<td>56(^6) (47% new journeys)</td>
<td>56(^8) (17% new journeys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridership growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% new pax who previously drove</td>
<td>40(^5)</td>
<td>9(^6)</td>
<td>26(^8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station Usage</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board at stations</td>
<td>20(^4)</td>
<td>100(^4)</td>
<td>66(^9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board off system</td>
<td>80(^4)</td>
<td>0(^)</td>
<td>39(^9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


If more significant BRT mode shift and traffic reduction outcomes can be locked in as part of this project, there will be greater opportunities for minimising the project's negative impacts in terms of loss of on-street parking, reduced walking safety and amenity and negative business/commercial impacts in the Cremorne and Neutral Bay areas.

Further development of the NB BRT business case should focus on the potential for delivering public transport improvements to support mode shift and reduce through traffic volumes on the project corridor.

2.3. Loss of Parking

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. However, 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 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.

2.4. Typical BRT Characteristics

2.4.1. 24hr Centrally Aligned Bus Corridors

National and international world leading BRT services typically operate within dedicated bus corridors (24hr) to avoid general traffic congestion, particularly at junctions. They are also centrally aligned in order to avoid interaction with turning vehicles at vehicle crossings and intersecting roads. In “Bus Rapid Transit Planning and Design” (2015) TfNSW consultant Derek Trusler states that:

“The approach to centre running buses for integrated BRT networks on existing roadways is both practical and relevant to each of the designated corridors.” (including Pittwater Road)

“...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.”

“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...”

2.4.2. Overtaking Opportunities

National and international world leading BRT services typically provide opportunities for buses to overtake each other within this dedicated corridor. Typically, this is achieved by providing wide bus corridors that allow overtaking in the peak direction where fewer counter-peak buses operate in the opposite direction.

2.4.3. Off-board Ticketing

National and international world leading BRT services typically provide off-board ticketing to improve loading speeds. This is particularly critical for running times and associated mode shift during the morning peak.

2.4.4. Level Boarding and Alighting
National and international world leading BRT services typically provide level boarding and alighting to improve bus accessibility as well as boarding/alighting speeds.

2.5. Additional Issues

Information provided to Councillors on 9 November 2015 suggests that:

- The proposed BRT service will replace existing express services with no increase in bus numbers along the project corridor (essentially, a re-branding exercise).
- “Commuter” car parks are to be provided within northern beaches commercial centres. This is not typical of “park and ride facilities”, where parking is provided at a distance from key trip attractors. Locating in shopping centres is likely to result in the use of these car parks for local vehicle based shopping trips. This unlocked latent traffic demand (Leeming, 1969) will result in increased congestion (the Lewis-Mogridge Position) and reduce uptake of public transport (the Downs-Thomson Paradox).
- Increased bus capacity on double-decker buses, reduced crowding and improved travel comfort may result in some level of mode shift from private vehicles to BRT services. However, there may be travel time implications associated with the loading and unloading of these double-decker buses. If loading and unloading takes significantly longer on these buses, travel time improvements, resultant mode shift and traffic reduction may be affected.
- On-road improvements must be carefully considered to ensure that travel time benefits are accrued by bus passengers and not by general traffic, which would, again, unlock latent traffic demand; increase congestion and reduce uptake of public transport. Introduction of new traffic signal or signal phasing infrastructure along the route may negatively impact bus and/or general traffic travel times, which will have mode shift and traffic implications.
- Loss of on-street parking will negatively impact walking safety and amenity unless an alternative buffer zone is provided between the footway walking environment and the on-road traffic environment. Reduced walkability will have a generally negative impact on business/commercial activity in the Cremorne and Neutral Bay areas and may affect property prices.

2.6. Conclusion

Based on the information provided, it can be shown that the following trip types will be negatively impacted by the current project proposals:

a) The omission of a BRT Station/Stop within the North Sydney CBD will result in the proposed project not servicing approximately 1 in 3 commuter trips to/from northern beaches LGAs to/from Global Sydney (including North Sydney).

b) The removal of on-street parking (extension of Clearway periods – 24hr Clearways) will not only reduce the accessibility of these commercial precincts in terms of the convenience of parking opportunities, it will also bring more, larger, fast-moving buses to the kerb-side, create an unpleasant walking environment (the George Street experience), with the potential to significantly impact walking activity, business activity and property values.

c) Mixing more and bigger buses with cyclists in the kerb-side lane will deter existing cyclists and potential future cyclists from cycling through North Sydney or to local centres on Military Road.
d) Not providing level boarding and alighting will not improve the accessibility of bus services for passengers with particular accessibility needs (mobility impaired, aged, mothers with prams, etc.).

e) Removing kerb-side loading bays will create issues with daytime deliveries and increase complexity/costs for local businesses.

f) While additional parking and traffic capacity may make driving to local Northern Beaches centres more convenient in the short term, in the mid- to long-term, it will:
   o unlock latent traffic demand (Leeming, 1969),
   o increase traffic congestion at up-stream/down-stream pinch-points and, more generally, as traffic expands to fill the available road space (the Lewis-Mogridge Position), and
   o reduce uptake of alternative travel modes (the Downs-Thomson Paradox).

While the delivery of improved public transport services is generally consistent with the NSCSP transport vision, the information provided to date gives no indication of how these initiatives will contribute to an overarching vision for the project in terms of mode shift and traffic demand management. Nor does it provide any indication of the scale of on-street parking loss involved or how commuters will access the North Sydney Centre.

It is recommended that Council advocates for the further development of the project to address the significant concerns identified in this report. Further it is recommended that Council request the latest business case information which will help Council officers to assist with this further development of the project.
The NSW Government has today unveiled the future of bus travel on the Northern Beaches, with a fleet of double decker buses to run at least every 10 minutes during the day from new bus stops between Mona Vale and the CBD.

NSW Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Andrew Constance said services on the new 27 kilometre bus rapid transit network called B-Line are expected to be up and running by late 2017.

“The B-Line will transform bus travel on the Northern Beaches and, in just two years, customers will be able to rip up their timetable and catch a bus at least every 10 minutes,” Mr Baird said.

“New double decker buses will have plenty of comfortable seats, architecturally designed B-Line stops will include modern facilities and real-time service information, and customers will be encouraged to park and ride with about 900 new commuter parking spaces.”

The project will include:

- Nine modern B-Line stops at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Collaroy, Dee Why, Brookvale, Manly Vale, Spit Junction (Mosman) and Neutral Bay with real-time information, seating, weather protection and improved facilities for customers;
- Six new commuter car parks at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Dee Why, Brookvale and Manly Vale providing about 900 spaces;
- Brand-new double decker buses with improved on-board capacity and comfort;
- Roadworks including new bus lanes, bus bays, minor lane widening and other road improvements to support bus services; and
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle links to connect customers with B-Line stops.
Mr Constance said ahead of the new B-Line opening, about 480 additional weekly bus services will be added between February and October 2016 to address the immediate need for improved services.

“The NSW Government will now start the consultation process with the community and businesses on the preferred locations of some of the B-Line stops and commuter car parks along the 27 kilometre route,” Mr Constance said.

The NSW Government is taking action to deliver transport improvements for the Northern Beaches, including a program of works to deliver kerbside Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Mona Vale to the Sydney CBD.

The Northern Beaches BRT service will be called B-Line and is scheduled to start operating in late 2017. The B-Line will provide more frequent and reliable services for customers travelling between the Northern Beaches and the Sydney CBD.

About the program

The Northern Beaches BRT program will deliver a new B-Line bus service and improved facilities to make public transport more attractive for customers.

The program includes:

- a new B-Line double decker bus fleet for improved on-board capacity and comfort
- roadworks including new bus lanes, bus bays, minor lane widening and other road improvements to support bus services
- nine modern B-Line stops at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Collaroy, Dee Why, Brookvale, Manly Vale, Spit Junction (Mosman) and Neutral Bay including real-time passenger information and improved facilities for customers
- six new commuter car parks at Mona Vale, Warriewood, Narrabeen, Dee Why, Brookvale and Manly Vale providing around 900 spaces, as well as bicycle parking, to encourage customers to park and ride
- works to ensure integrated pedestrian and bicycle links to commuter car parks and B-Line stops
- modifications to the bus network to provide for a turn-up-and-go B-Line service with an average five minute wait for the bus during the day.
B-Line benefits

• Services at least every 10 minutes during the day, seven days a week, with services every five minutes in the AM and PM peak commute periods on weekdays.
• Services every 10 minutes in the late night up to 11pm.
• Increased frequency provides additional capacity on buses for improved passenger comfort, in addition to a new double decker bus fleet providing more seats on each bus.
• Modern B-Line stops with real-time information, seating, weather protection and reduced passenger crowding.
• Improved access to bus services through provision of additional commuter car parking, as well as bicycle parking and improved pedestrian and cycling links.

Current status

The Premier of NSW announced that the new BRT service for the Northern Beaches would be called B-Line at an event on Monday 9 November on the site of the proposed Brookvale B-Line stop and commuter car parking facility on Pittwater Road, which will be integrated with the proposed new Brookvale Community Health Centre building.

The program has moved into the development and delivery stage and environmental impact assessment documents are expected to be available for review and comment in the first quarter of 2016. Construction is expected to begin by late 2016, with B-Line services scheduled to start in late 2017.

Get involved

To help us prepare the environmental impact assessments and finalise concept designs, the project team would like your feedback about key aspects of the program of works.

From 23 November, you are invited to provide your feedback on proposed works in Warriewood, Narrabeen and Manly Vale, where car park and bus stop infrastructure are proposed to be constructed.

Newsletters will be prepared for each area, outlining the key scope and preferred options, and information will be available on the project website at b-line.transport.nsw.gov.au. Community information sessions will be held in late November and early December where the project team will be available to speak with you about the proposed works. These will be advertised in the newsletters, on the website and in the Manly Daily.

We will also be speaking with local business owners along the corridor to start discussions about potential impacts on traffic and parking in the area and how these will be addressed.

Opportunities to provide feedback on proposed works in other areas along the route will be provided in 2016.

In the meantime, please contact the project team on 1800 048 751 or email projects@transport.nsw.gov.au if you have any questions or require further information.

Facts and figures

• 27 kilometre route
• Nine B-Line stops
• Around 900 new commuter car parking spaces
• 25-30 new double decker buses
• Services every five minutes during the AM and PM peak commute periods

Artist’s impression of proposed B-Line stop at Mona Vale. Image is indicative only and subject to detailed design.

Artist’s impression of proposed B-Line stop at Collaroy. Image is indicative only and subject to detailed design.
## Next steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 November 2015</td>
<td>Premier of NSW announces new bus service will be called B-Line and is scheduled to start operating in late 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Nov/Early Dec 2015</td>
<td>Local community and business owners invited to provide initial feedback on preferred options for some new infrastructure and potential traffic and parking impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 2016</td>
<td>Environmental impact assessment documents on public display for comment. Ongoing community and business owner consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>125 additional weekly bus services added to the network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-late 2016</td>
<td>Construction begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>360 additional weekly bus services added to the network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early-mid 2017</td>
<td>Changes to road network (clearways and parking restrictions) commence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 2017</td>
<td>B-Line services operational.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ATTACHMENT TO CiS01 - 16/11/15

Attachment 3

NORTH SYDNEY COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP) PROJECT ASSESSMENT

Northern Beaches B-Line (BRT)

1.1. Road safety

Injuries to on-board bus passengers are uncommon.

However, extension of clearways; loss of on-street parking buffer zones; and increases in the number, size and proximity of buses to walking and cycling environment (the George Street experience) will negatively impact actual and perceived walking and cycling safety. This is contrary to outcomes, strategies and indicators of NSCSP 2.6 and 5.7.

Improving the safety of more vulnerable road users such as walkers (including passengers accessing BRT Station/Stops), cyclists, the young and the elderly should be a key objective of the B-line project. Further information demonstrating the project’s impact on road safety should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.

1.2. Travel choice

The BRT proposals could result in significant increases in bus patronage on the project corridor. However, extension of clearways (possibly 24hr) and loss of on-street parking buffer zones will reduce walking and cycling amenity and resultant uptake of walking and cycling on the corridor. Reduced uptake of walking and cycling is inconsistent with the objectives of NSCSP 2.5.

Further information demonstrating the project’s overall impact on the uptake of priority travel modes: walking, cycling, public transport and ride sharing, measured in terms of mode splits, should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.

1.3. Community health

Community health outcomes are affected by uptake of active travel options and local environmental factors. There are likely to be some health benefits associated with walking to BRT Station/Stops and reduced pollution associated with mode shift and traffic demand management. However, extension of clearways (possibly 24hr) and loss of on-street parking buffer zones will reduce walking and cycling amenity and the uptake of walking and cycling in the corridor. Reduced uptake of active travel options that result in fewer sedentary lifestyle illnesses, improved community health outcomes and reduced community health costs is inconsistent with the objectives of NSCSP 4.7 and 4.8.

Further information demonstrating the project’s impact on community health outcomes should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.
1.4. Social well-being

Social well-being outcomes are affected by uptake of more social travel options and resultant opportunities for incidental social interaction. There are likely to be some social benefits associated with walking to BRT Station/Stops. However, extension of clearways (possibly 24hr) and loss of on-street parking buffer zones will reduce walking and cycling amenity and the uptake of walking and cycling in the corridor. Reduced uptake of more social travel options that increase opportunities for incidental social interactions, contribute to a sense of community, increase civic pride, reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour, improve perceptions of personal security and reduce the cost of community policing is inconsistent with the objectives of NSCSP 2.3, 4.1 and 4.9.

Further information demonstrating the project’s impact on social well-being outcomes should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.

1.5. Environmental sustainability

TfNSW have a statutory responsibility under the EP&A Act to consider the impacts of its projects on the environment. To fulfil this responsibility, an assessment of the likely impacts of a proposed activity on the environment will be undertaken before a decision is made on whether to undertake the project.

Environmental outcomes are affected by uptake of less polluting travel options and reduced consumption of natural resources. There will be environmental benefits associated with increased BRT patronage. However, extension of clearways (possibly 24hr) and loss of on-street parking buffer zones will reduce walking and cycling amenity and the uptake of walking and cycling in the corridor. Reduced uptake of more environmentally sustainable travel options that result in less pollution and reduced consumption of natural resources is inconsistent with the objectives of NSCSP 1.2, 1.4 and 5.1.

Further information demonstrating the project’s impact on the environment should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.

1.6. Other economic impacts

There are tangible economic benefits associated with the road safety, health, social well-being and environmental sustainability outcomes outlined in previous sections. Other potential economic impacts of the B-line project are identified below.

1.6.1. Supporting local economies and commercial activity

As noted, extension of clearways (possibly 24hr) and loss of on-street parking buffer zones will reduce walking and cycling amenity and resultant uptake of walking and cycling on the corridor. This has the potential to negatively affect business activity and property values. Reduced business activity is inconsistent with the objectives of NSCSP 3.1.

Further information demonstrating the project’s overall impact on business activity should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.
1.6.2. Travel times

Levels of bus travel time benefits discussed for the project in its current form should result in significant levels of mode shift and traffic reduction.

There may be some marginal increases in private vehicle based travel times, particularly for ride-share users who currently use the Military Road T3 lane, which is likely to become a dedicated bus lane as part of this project.

Walking priority at traffic signals may also be affected as a result of prioritising bus travel along the project corridor.

Further information demonstrating the project’s overall impact on travel times should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.

1.6.3. Congestion

There should be significant congestion busting benefits associated with increased BRT patronage. In the short term, this will reduce traffic congestion; improve the reliability and speed of all vehicle journeys; and reduce public demands for capacity based traffic engineering projects. However, without locking in the traffic reducing benefits of the project, any liberated traffic capacity will shortly be filled due to induced traffic demand.

Providing more general traffic capacity improvements and providing additional parking in commercial centres on the Northern Beaches also has the potential to: unlock latent traffic demand (Leeming, 1969); increase congestion, particularly at upstream and downstream pinch points (the Lewis-Mogridge Position); and reduce uptake of public transport (the Downs-Thomson Paradox). This has potential to significantly reduce driving amenity/reliability as well as negatively impacting the potential mode shift/traffic reduction benefits that the B-line project may have.

Extension of clearways (possibly 24hr), loss of on-street parking buffer zones and reduced walking and cycling amenity may also result in some mode shift from walking and cycling to car use in the corridor.

Potential increases in traffic congestion are inconsistent with the objectives of NSCSP 2.1 and 2.6.

Further information demonstrating the project’s overall impact on traffic congestion should be a key deliverable for the development of the B-line business case.