

Albion Park Rail bypass

Road corridor review summary



Transport
Roads & Maritime
Services

DECEMBER 2013



Roads and Maritime Services is planning for a future extension of the M1 Princes Motorway between Yallah and Oak Flats to provide a bypass of Albion Park Rail.

In 2013/14 the NSW Government allocated \$1 million to progress investigations and planning.

A review has been completed to assess if the reserved bypass corridor remains a suitable location for the bypass of Albion Park Rail.

The review has confirmed the reserved corridor is suitable. See map over page for the location of the road corridor.

Now that the bypass location is confirmed, detailed planning for the Albion Park Rail bypass will start.

A bypass of Albion Park Rail would be consistent with the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

In the mid 1990s, the then Roads and Traffic Authority undertook a study which identified a preferred route for the bypass.

To reserve land for this bypass route, a road corridor was included in the Wollongong and Shellharbour City Council local environmental plans. This road corridor protects the route from development and reserves land for the road.

BYPASS LOCATION REVIEW

The purpose of the review was to:

- Confirm the need for an Albion Park Rail bypass.
- Undertake an assessment of the reserved road corridor.
- Identify the next steps for the project.

The review involved:

- Identifying and analysing the issues on the current route.
- Reviewing the route selection study undertaken in 1996.
- Examining the key physical and engineering features of the road corridor to ensure the bypass can meet current road design standards.
- Analysing the traffic and transport performance of the road corridor to better understand traffic volumes and movements in the area. This work started in 2012.
- Traffic modelling to forecast usage of a bypass, given the reserved road corridor is three kilometres longer than the existing route.
- Consideration of traffic volumes, travel times, attraction for traffic and economic performance.
- Assessing the road corridor in terms of environmental, flooding, community and social issues.

Road corridor



PROBLEM DEFINITION

Current:

The M1 Princes Motorway/A1 Princes Highway between Yallah and Oak Flats is affected by:

- Heavy congestion – particularly during the morning and afternoon peak periods and in peak holiday periods. Traffic numbers and delays are increasing.
- Development – since 1996 the Illawarra population has grown substantially. Within the next 30 to 50 years development is planned at Calderwood, West Dapto, Tullimbar and Tallawarra. This will add up to 30,000 new home sites and increase traffic volumes along the existing route.
- Flooding – causes the full closure of the Princes Highway and Illawarra Highway for an average of 0.5 and 4.5 days a year, respectively.
- Inconsistent driving conditions – motorists experience a high-speed environment north of Yallah and south of Oak Flats. Lower speeds are experienced in between the two suburbs. The change of conditions creates frustration and reduces travel efficiency.
- Town bypass – The bypass of Berry will be completed by 2018, leaving Albion Park Rail as the only town between Heathcote in Sydney and Bomaderry just north of Nowra that has not been bypassed. Albion Park Rail has the only traffic lights on the M1 Princes Motorway/A1 Princes Highway between Heathcote and Bomaderry.
- Road safety – The A1 Princes Highway between Yallah and Oak Flats is experiencing a high and increasing number of crashes. The frequency of crashes is expected to worsen as traffic on the highway increases in future years.

Future without a bypass:

- Major congestion during peak periods at a number of key intersections in the next five years, extending to a large part of the day over the next 20 years.
- Travel times on the route would substantially increase.
- The number of crashes are expected to increase.
- Substantial additional development is planned in the surrounding area that would worsen current traffic conditions.

FINDINGS

- The reserved road corridor is suitable for the bypass of Albion Park Rail.
- The reserved road corridor performed well against a range of technical and environmental criteria.
- When designed to current day road standards the bypass would largely fit within the existing road corridor except for a small section around the Croom Regional Sporting Complex.
- If no action is taken to improve traffic flow on the existing route, traffic delays are likely to substantially increase.
- The road corridor is largely located on undeveloped land, which would minimise social and environmental impacts.

Project benefits:

- Constructing the bypass would:
 - > Divert a substantial proportion of through traffic onto the bypass, allowing the existing A1 Princes Highway to mainly cater for local traffic.
This would:
 - Reduce travel times for through and local traffic in both directions and reduce driver frustration.
 - Improve the reliability of journey times.
 - Provide more consistent driving conditions.
 - > Increase the road capacity of the M1 Princes Motorway and A1 Princes Highway route. This would better provide for population growth in West Dapto, Calderwood, Tallawarra and Tullimbar.
 - > Maximise the benefits of upgrading the M1 Princes Motorway/A1 Princes Highway corridor between Sydney and Nowra by bypassing Albion Park Rail and the only traffic lights on the route between Heathcote and Bomaderry.
 - > Reduce traffic volumes on the A1 Princes Highway through Albion Park Rail. This would improve local amenity and access, and reduce other traffic related impacts, such as noise for nearby residents.
 - > Improve flood immunity. The bypass would remove the section of the Illawarra Highway near the Illawarra Regional Airport that is highly susceptible to flooding.

A full copy of the review is available on the project website at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/apr



ILLAWARRA HIGHWAY CLOSED DUE TO FLOODING – SEPTEMBER 2013
THE BYPASS WOULD REMOVE THIS SECTION OF THE ILLAWARRA HIGHWAY

NEXT STEPS

To progress planning for the Albion Park Rail bypass Roads and Maritime will:

- Start survey, geotechnical and hydrological investigations into the bypass.
- Start the concept design, including investigating potential interchange locations and their design.
- Investigate the area near the Croom Regional Sporting Complex to ensure that the concept road design can incorporate current road design standards.
- Investigate opportunities to shorten the route to increase attractiveness to traffic and reduce travel length and time.
- Further investigate environmental and social impacts.
- Recommence the community engagement process. The community will have opportunities to talk to the project team about the report and the project next steps in early 2014. Details will be available in early 2014. Later, there will be opportunities for the community and stakeholders to formally comment on the concept design and environmental impact assessment.
- Further investigate the potential impact of a bypass on Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal heritage sites.

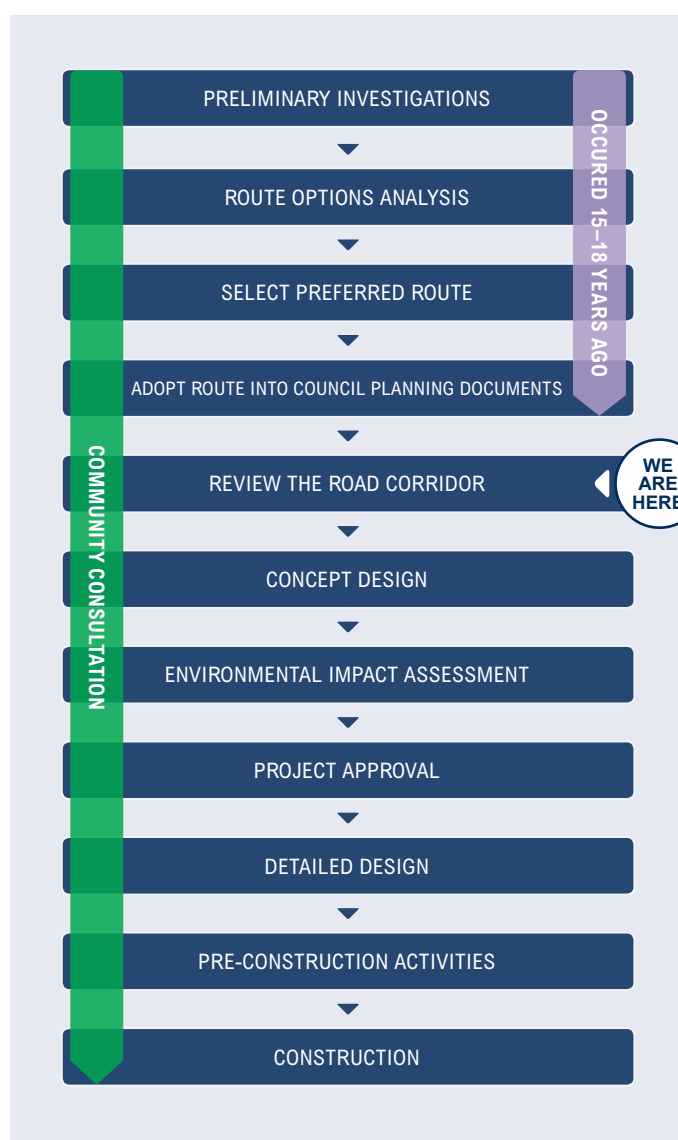
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