

New Richmond Bridge and traffic improvements – Revised Preferred Option

Frequently Asked Questions

The Australian and NSW Governments are funding traffic improvements including a new bridge over the Hawkesbury River between Richmond and North Richmond.

What are the benefits of the project?

The key objective of this project is to reduce congestion between Richmond and North Richmond and build for future growth. It will improve:

- flood resilience, with the upgraded route proposed to deliver 1 in 20 chance per year flood resilience
- safety on road corridors between and around Richmond and North Richmond
- public and active transport connections
- economic development, liveability, and support Council's long-term vision for the town centres of Richmond and North Richmond.

Why have we changed the route?

Following the consultation period between June and September 2021, we have been analysing all community submissions. Feedback identified that majority of the submissions received did not support the previously displayed preferred option (Green option). The key feedback on the Green option showed us that the community's major concerns related to amenity and property impacts, flood resilience, economic impacts to businesses, and traffic. Additional investigations were completed to address community and stakeholder concerns and to help determine a revised preferred option.

What happened to the other options?

The Purple option does not adequately achieve the traffic objectives of the project and has the highest impacts to property, biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage. In addition, it cannot be delivered within the available funding. The Yellow option takes a longer route to cross the floodplain. Therefore, this alignment would cost substantially more to improve flood resilience and would be less efficient for traffic.

The Purple and Yellow options were therefore not considered further, and additional investigations focused on the Green and Hybrid (blue) options. The Green option could not provide 1 in 20-year flood resilience within the available funding.

A variation to the Hybrid option which included a flyover of Kurrajong Road was also investigated. The flyover would provide minimal improvements to traffic flow, would increase visual impacts in the floodplain, would substantially increase cost and could not be delivered within the available funding.

Why the Hybrid Option?

The Hybrid option with 1 in 20 chance per year flood resilience was recommended as the preferred option as it:

- delivers similar traffic benefits to other options
- delivers 1 in 20 chance per year flood resilience
- reduces property impacts including acquisition, noise and visual
- supports businesses in North Richmond town centre by maintaining passing trade and
- can be delivered within the available funding

What about traffic in North Richmond?

As a result of future growth, traffic modelling has identified that without further improvements, the traffic signals in North Richmond would have substantial delays in future years in all options other than the Green option.

To improve traffic flow and cater for future growth in North Richmond, as part of the revised Hybrid option, an additional eastbound lane on Bells Line of Road and an additional left turn slip lane from Terrace Road to Bells Line of Road have been proposed at the traffic signals.

Opportunities to improve pedestrian connectivity across Bells Line of Road and replacing on-street parking from Bells Line of Road to Beaumont Avenue will be further investigated during the next phase of design in consultation with businesses and the community.

What is Transport for NSW role in the proposed rezoning at North Richmond by Hawkesbury City Council?

In 2014, a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) was entered into with RMS (now Transport for NSW), Redbank Communities and Hawkesbury City Council. A VPA is a legally binding document voluntarily entered in to whereby the developer is required to dedicate land free of cost, pay a monetary contribution or provide any other material public benefit, or any combination of them, to be used for or applied to a public purpose. Transport for NSW is a party to the agreement due to the requirement for Redbank to deliver regional road infrastructure (or monetary contributions) and is the Roads Authority for works on Classified Roads.

Transport for NSW is also managing any property acquisition processes that might be required for the new road infrastructure. Potentially affected landowners have been kept informed about the proposal and Transport for NSW is working to meet their concerns and ensure fair outcomes are reached.

Transport for NSW will play a role to progress the project only if it is approved by the council.

Will this proposal create a bottle neck in North Richmond – given the expanding development in the area?

Traffic modelling has been completed in accordance with Transport for NSW modelling guidelines based on detailed traffic data collected and future land use projections. While traffic will continue to flow through North Richmond town centre, the design will incorporate further improvements to the traffic signals at the intersection of Bells Line of Road, Grose Vale Road and Terrace Road to cater for future traffic demands. A traffic and transport assessment will be included in the REF which will be prepared for public display.

Will the new bridge improve flood resilience?

The primary objective of the New Richmond Bridge and traffic improvements project is to reduce congestion between Richmond and North Richmond and cater for future traffic growth. We recognise that the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley has a high risk of flooding with a history of flood events, most recently earlier in 2022, which can result in road closures and disruption for local residents.

The existing Richmond Bridge is built below the 1 in 2 chance per year probability flood event level and is closed in moderate flood events. The new bridge is proposed to be built above this level. This would result in reduced risk of the bridge being overtopped, resulting in reduced closure times during flood events, with the entire route between Richmond and North Richmond achieving a minimum 1 in 20 chance per year flood resilience.

The February 2020 flood was around a 1 in 5 chance per year flood, while the recent floods in March 2021 and March 2022 were between a 1 in 10 and a 1 in 20 chance per year flood. The revised preferred option proposes a new bridge which would remain open during floods of this level.

Will the new bridge provide an evacuation route?

Richmond Bridge does not form part of any flood evacuation route. Nevertheless, the upgrade to the corridor will substantially improve flood resilience, reducing the frequency and duration of closures.

How will the new Richmond Bridge design affect the alignment of the former Kurrajong Railway?

The New Richmond Bridge is proposed to be built 30-60 metres downstream of the existing bridge and the existing bridge which carried the former railway will be preserved. A review of environmental factors (REF) will be prepared for public display as part of the concept design stage of the project. Heritage studies will inform the REF including a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) which will allow Transport for NSW to assess and mitigate potential impacts to any heritage items.

Will the new bridge destroy the timber posts of the original North Richmond Bridge?

The New Richmond Bridge is proposed to be built 30-60 metres downstream of the existing bridge which would not directly affect the timber posts. Heritage studies will be undertaken as part of the REF to consider any remnants of the original timber structure and identify any mitigation measures required during construction.

Will there be any property acquisition, and will I be affected?

The revised Hybrid option would reduce the need for property acquisition by upgrading Bells Line of Road through North Richmond rather than bypassing the town centre. As the project progresses however, there will be a need for Transport to acquire some properties. This would include both full and partial acquisitions. Transport for NSW understands property acquisition is difficult for people impacted, and we are committed to ensuring any person impacted by property acquisition because of our projects has full personal support at all times. A Transport for NSW Personal Manager will be available to affected property owners to help them with their specific needs as the proposal progresses.

More information about the property acquisition process is available at [Property Acquisition NSW](#)

How will the preferred option impact the local environment?

Transport for NSW will carry out an environmental assessment on the design that will include analysis of the project's potential biodiversity, noise, Aboriginal heritage, Non-Aboriginal heritage, socio economic, air quality, water quality, flooding and traffic impacts, including proposed mitigation of any potential negative impacts. We will continue to keep the community updated as the project progresses. The community will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the concept design and environmental assessment before the project proceeds to detailed design and construction.

What impact will the preferred option have on Inalls Lane and Southee Road?

To avoid congestion on the eastern approach to Richmond Bridge, many vehicles utilise the local road network including narrow country lanes such as Inalls Lane and Yarramundi Lane. The preferred option would upgrade Inalls Lane and provide a new road parallel to Southee Road between Castlereagh Road and Londonderry Road to separate local and through traffic. This would improve road safety and reduce congestion on these roads.

We appreciate that the new road could increase traffic noise for Southee Road and Inalls Lane residents. During the next stage of design, Transport for NSW would work with residents, Western Sydney University and Hawkesbury City Council to identify noise mitigation measures. We would also seek to identify ways to manage the visual impacts of the new road.

We propose to retain mature vegetation on Southee Road where possible and where space provides, use vegetated noise mounds rather than noise walls to manage noise impacts. Further design and consultation will occur during the next phase of the project.

How will the preferred option improve active transport connections?

There is currently a lack of active transport connections between Richmond and North Richmond. During the next phase of design, Transport for NSW will work with Hawkesbury City Council, local bicycle user groups and the community to determine a preferred route and design for the active transport connection between the two town centres.

Will there be any impact to the State Heritage listed Mountain View property due to the preferred option?

The revised preferred option would not intrude on the curtilage (property boundary) of the State Heritage listed Mountain View property. Potential impacts of the proposal on heritage will be assessed during the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) process. Control measures will be recommended to manage potential heritage impacts, if identified, during construction and operation of the proposal.

What is the total budget for the project?

The total budget for the project is \$500 million. This includes \$400 million from the Australian Government and \$100 million from the NSW Government.

Next steps and when will construction start?

The project has been divided into two stages to deliver early safety benefits to the community. Stage 1 includes upgrades to The Driftway between Londonderry and Blacktown Road. The remainder of the project will be delivered in Stage 2.

We are progressing with the detailed design for Stage 1 and will start early works late 2022.

We will prepare the concept design and environmental assessment for Stage 2 which will be displayed for feedback. Timeframes for construction of Stage 2 will be developed as part of the next phase of design.

How will the community provide feedback?

We will consider all comments at any stage of the project and will continue to keep the community updated as the project progresses.

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