

Thurgoona Drive consultation summary

September 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Many of the transport routes we use today – from rail lines, to roads, to water crossings – follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation’s First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Transport for NSW is committed to honouring Aboriginal peoples’ cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Table of contents

1.	Definitions	5
2.	Related policy and supporting information	5
3.	Purpose of the report	5
4.	Project overview	5
4.1	Consultation.....	5
4.1.1	Consultation objectives.....	5
4.1.2	How we consulted	6
4.1.3	Engagement approach.....	6
4.1.4	Engagement activities.....	7



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Versions

Version	Amendment notes

1. Purpose of the report

The Hume Highway through Albury is classified as an inner bypass and separates the Albury CBD from East Albury and Thurgoona.

A number of east-west connections, including pedestrian and cyclist overpasses, provide connectivity between residents and services west of the Hume Highway with residents and services to the east.

The interchange at Thurgoona Drive currently experiences some congestion and queueing in the morning and afternoon peak hours and is anticipated to become more congested as development in this area progresses.

Transport for NSW is currently investigating the upgrade of Hume Highway-Thurgoona Drive interchange in Albury to help improve traffic flow and road safety on the road network.

The community was invited to provide feedback on its experiences when using the Thurgoona Drive and Hume Highway interchange. Feedback received from the community, key stakeholder groups and transport customers will help progress and inform the priorities of the project.

This report outlines feedback received by Transport during the consultation. It provides an overview of:

- consultation activities
- themes in community feedback
- how feedback was considered
- next steps.

2. Project overview

The Thurgoona Drive and Hume Highway intersection upgrades aim to benefit the community by:

- supporting economic and residential growth by meeting future transport needs in and around Albury
- improving safety
- delivering a high-performing and efficient transport network
- improving accessibility to transport infrastructure and services for all community members
- providing a more reliable journey and better-connected transport services in the Albury area.

A preliminary concept design for upgrading the Thurgoona Drive intersection with Hume Highway was prepared by Transport for NSW to consider opportunities to improve the traffic congestion and queuing on the west and east roundabouts.

- Consultation

2.1.1 Consultation objectives

Transport consulted with the community on the preliminary concept design during January and February 2023 to:

- seek comment, feedback, ideas, and suggestions for Transport to consider when developing the proposal

- build a database of interested and concerned community members with whom we can continue to engage with during the proposal's development.

2.1.2 How we consulted

Community members were encouraged to provide feedback, leave comments and make submissions via an online survey, mail, email or phone contact with the project team.

Albury City Council assisted in the promotion of the consultation through its social media channels.

Consultation activities included:

- early stakeholder engagement meetings with Albury City Council
- project web page with information including background information and a link to an online interactive mapping tool and survey
- newspaper advertisements inviting comment
- social media campaign
- media release inviting comment and including contact options for the community to get in touch with the project team.

A survey and online mapping tool encouraged feedback from:

- residents
- transport users
- business representatives/owners
- council.

Respondents were asked to consider personal experiences of using the Thurgoona Drive and Hume Highway intersections, and to review the proposed concept design.

2.1.3 Engagement approach

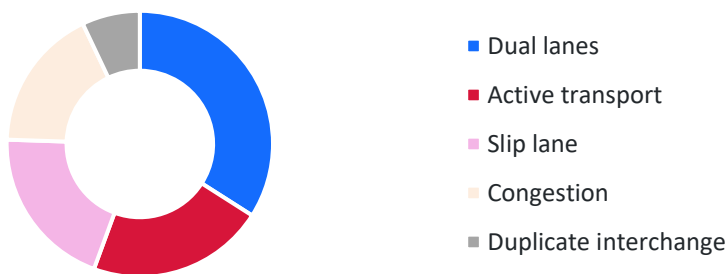
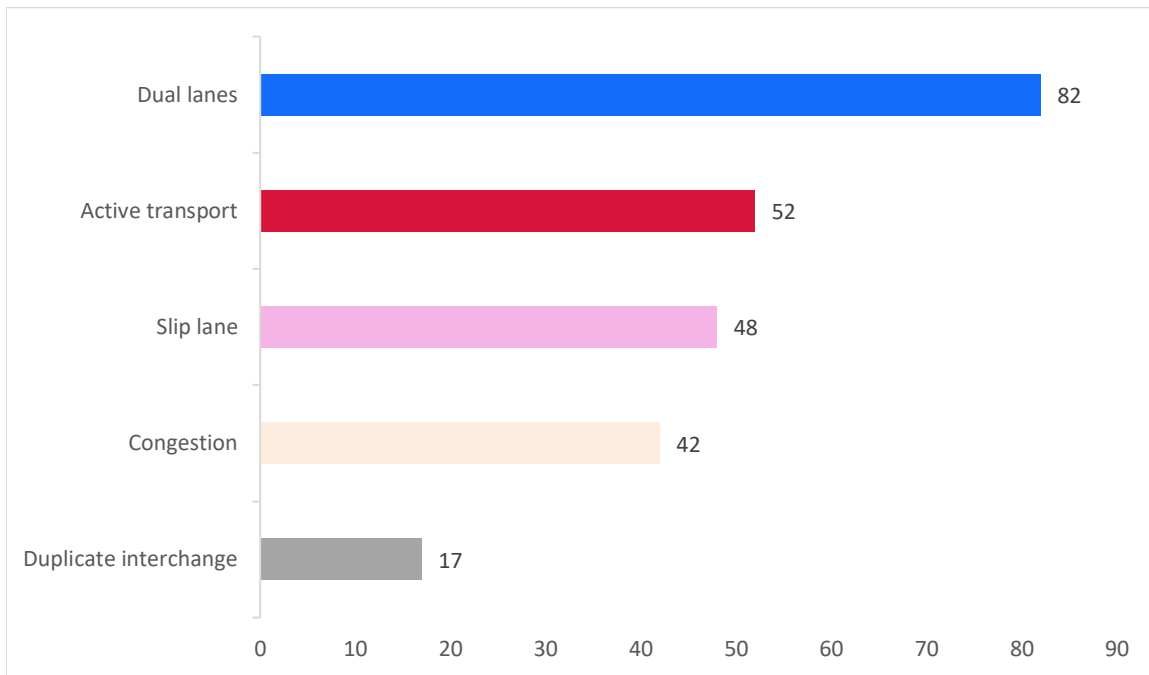
A place-based interactive mapping tool was published on Transport's *Have Your Say* website.

The interactive mapping platform received 147 submissions on the website by 95 engaged contributors – 78 comments included support for additional lanes and 49 comments related to active transport.

Transport also received eight submissions via email. The stand-out sentiment from these responses was also to prioritise active transport and additional lanes.

Feedback also included the need for slip lanes, the need to alleviate congestion and the possibility of duplicating the interchange.

Key feedback themes



2.1.4 Engagement activities

What we heard

Community input was generally positive that the intersection upgrades were being made a priority, however many had concerns with the effectiveness of the proposed design.

Dual lanes

The most common theme in responses related to the provision of dual lanes on Thurgoona Drive. The majority of these comments related to the section of Thurgoona Drive extending from the Hume Highway to the traffic lights at Elizabeth Mitchell Road, or in some cases through to Table Top Road. This suggests that for many road users, congestion on this section of the local road network is a significant issue and for many, this is possibly a more significant issue than the congestion at the interchange intersections. Only a small number of these responses were in relation to the provision of a four-lane arrangement on the interchange overpass. There is a strong belief within the community that the four-lane configuration on Thurgoona Drive east of the Hume Highway is required to address existing and future congestion issues. This local road issue highlights the need for Transport to collaborate with Albury City Council in developing options for the Thurgoona Drive interchange upgrade project and develop a solution which is compatible with the local road network and future traffic conditions.

Active transport

The second most common theme in responses related to the lack of active transport facilities at the site. There is strong desire in the community for a separate shared path providing east-west connectivity through the interchange. Council also voiced its concern for Thurgoona residents having limited active travel provisions to the western side of the Hume Highway. This would provide connectivity to areas of employment for many active transport users. Council believes incorporating safe pedestrian and cyclist access at the interchange should be made a priority.

Slip lane

A number of responses suggested the addition of extra slip lanes and provision of auxiliary lanes to address congestion issues caused by vehicles queueing at the intersections. Two primary congestion points were identified as needing additional space to cater for queueing traffic. This includes the left turn for westbound traffic at the eastern roundabout for traffic turning from Thurgoona Drive. Based on responses this is a common issue during morning peak times. The other key congestion point identified was the need for additional queueing space at the northbound off-ramp from the Hume Highway due to queueing at the western roundabout. This is a common issue during afternoon peak times.

Congestion

Responses raised concerns about congestion at the key points on the eastern approach to the interchange when travelling on Thurgoona Drive and for the northbound off-ramp as discussed above. The community has also expressed concerns in relation to a number of locations on the local road network near the interchange, in particular at locations to the east of the Hume Highway along Thurgoona Drive and, to a lesser extent, at the section of Thurgoona Drive to the west of the Hume Highway.

This highlights the need to work collaboratively with council on solutions which consider the issues on local roads near the interchange with a broader focus than just addressing issues on the state road network.

Additionally, there were multiple responses which proposed duplicating the interchange at an alternative location or improvements at the Racecourse Road interchange by providing southbound and northbound off-ramps for the Hume Highway at this location to reduce the need for motorists to use the Thurgoona Drive interchange.

Concerns raised by Albury City Council

Albury City Council provided a detailed submission raising concerns that the proposed design would not future-proof the interchange for upwards of 20 years. It believes Thurgoona's increasing population would benefit from more substantial improvements. Traffic demand at these intersections during peak times exceeds the interchange's capacity and the proposed left turn slip lane and eastbound travel lane may only address short-term congestion.

Council also raised concerns about the lack of active transport facilities present at this location, with the nearest shared path facility being the Union Road path, 2.5 kilometres to the south. There are no shared path facilities to the north of the Thurgoona Road interchange.

Council requested the following items be considered in the development of the final proposal for the intersection upgrade:

- proposed improvements consider ongoing growth of the Thurgoona Wirringa precinct, and cater for at least 20 years' growth
- the extent of the work to the east must connect with council's recent upgrade of the Thurgoona Drive and Elizabeth Mitchell Drive interchange (dual lanes in each direction)

- provision of safe active transport infrastructure is critical in this location, and is to be included as a priority in the interchange upgrade (separate overpass to be considered if provision cannot be made using the existing overpass)
- investigation into the signalisation of the interchange as this will cater for both unbalanced traffic flows and provide safe crossing opportunities for people walking and riding.

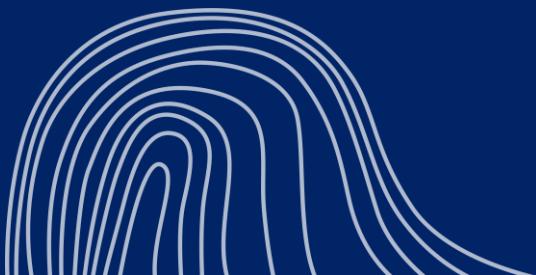
Next steps

Transport will use feedback received from the community consultation to develop further options for the Thurgoona Drive and Hume Highway intersection upgrades.

Next steps include:

- developing further concept designs to respond to issues raised during community consultation
- preparing a strategic business case to consider concept design options which will assist in the process of securing funding for the final business case and construction
- carrying out community consultation on concept design options following the strategic business case to inform the identification of a preferred design.
- There are no timeframes for the start of construction of this project as funding has not been committed.

We are committed to working with the community while developing plans for Albury's future transport network.



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