



**Transport**  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

# **THE NORTHERN ROAD UPGRADE**

The Old Northern Road to Mersey Road  
Preliminary Concept Design

Report on community consultation

JUNE 2012

**RMS 12.152**  
**ISBN 978-1-922040-71-8**



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# 1. Executive Summary

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) formerly the Roads and Traffic Authority of New South Wales is continuing with the planning for the upgrade of The Northern Road between The Old Northern Road, Narellan and Mersey Road, Bringelly. RMS engaged Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) to prepare the concept design and review of environmental factors (REF) for this section of The Northern Road.

An access strategy of the proposed upgrade was displayed in July 2010 with comments closing on Friday 27 August 2010. All comments and suggestions were considered and as a result some of these were incorporated into the design.

This report documents community consultation for the preliminary concept design of The Northern Road upgrade undertaken in November/December 2011. This round of consultation was undertaken to inform the community on the work to date and obtain feedback on the preliminary concept design. Consultations included distribution of a community update, two staffed shopping centre displays and an information session.

A community update showing the preliminary concept design for the proposed widening of The Northern Road from a two lane road to a four lane divided road was letter box dropped to 6,000 households in the local area in November 2011. The community update invited comments on the preliminary concept design. Comments closed on Friday 16 December 2011.

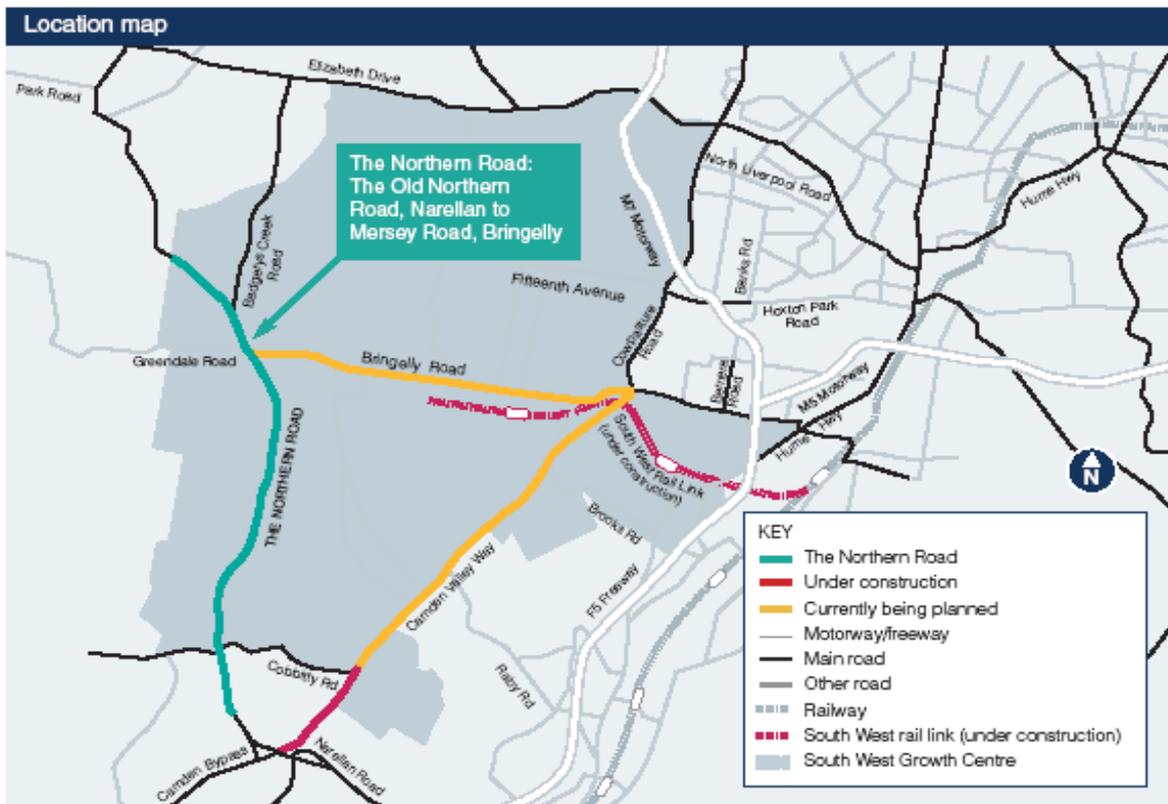
The two shopping centre displays outlining the preliminary concept design were held at Harrington Park Plaza on 1 and 3 December 2011. Stakeholders were encouraged to review the preliminary concept design and submit their feedback.

The information session was held on the 10 December 2011 to further discuss the preliminary concept design with the community. Members from the project team and RMS property section were in attendance to provide property owners and other stakeholders with more detail about the design.

Advertising was placed in the Liverpool Leader on the 23 November 2011, and the Southern Western Rural Advertiser and Macarthur Chronicle on the 22 November 2011.

The preliminary concept design was also on display at Narellan Library and Narellan Motor Registry from 25 November until 16 December 2011.

The Northern Road upgrade is expected to be constructed in stages in parallel with the development of precincts in the south west.



## 2. Key Issues

Following distribution of the November 2011 community update, the community was invited to provide their comments on the preliminary concept design. Two staffed shopping centre displays and a community information session were held to answer questions and receive feedback.

Community feedback indicated concerns about:

- When would the road be upgraded?
- Road closures and changes to existing intersections.
- Property impacts.

Categories of issues included:

- Loss of property access due to the left in/ left out restriction.
- Increased noise from future traffic and the extent of construction noise.
- The location and number of proposed traffic lights.
- The impacts of increased traffic on local roads.
- Environmental impacts of the new road.
- The extent of property acquisition.

38 submissions were received.

Sections 4 and 5 of this report provide a summary of the issues raised and details the issues, ideas and concerns. These will be considered by RMS as part of the concept design and REF.

### 3. Purpose of consultation

Consultation was undertaken to:

- Involve relevant government agencies, community representatives, residents, and landowners in providing feedback on the preliminary concept design.
- Inform the community of progress and next steps for the upgrade.
- Canvas comments and issues about the preliminary concept design from those who may be affected.
- Seek community ideas to be considered in the concept design.
- Advise potentially directly affected stakeholders of the project and its design impacts.
- Advise affected stakeholders how they could obtain further information and communicate concerns, complaints or suggestions.
- Provide the community with access to information about the South West Growth Centre to better understand the precinct planning process and timeframes.

In all sessions, conversations were documented for the project issues register and to assist with follow up meetings.

Letters outlining the preliminary concept design were also sent to 22 stakeholders including government bodies and utility providers. Comments from agencies were also reviewed and will be incorporated into the concept design.

#### 3.1 Community information sessions held in December 2011

Staffed shopping centre displays were held at:

- Harrington Park Plaza, Thursday 1 December 2011, 95 people attended.
- Harrington Park Plaza, Saturday 3 December 2011, 61 people attended.

A community information session was held at:

- Leppington Progress Hall, Saturday 10 December 2011, 14 people attended.

Venues were selected at both ends of the proposal to facilitate and encourage community participation.

Conversations with members of the community were on a one-to-one basis, enabling RMS representatives to answer questions and note issues and concerns regarding the preliminary concept design.

A representative from RMS property section was in attendance at the Leppington Progress Hall to provide property owners and other stakeholders with more detail about the acquisition process.



Shopping Centre staffed display session held on Thursday 1 December 2011 at Harrington Park Plaza.



Community information session held on Saturday 10 December 2011 at Leppington Progress Hall.



Community information session held on Saturday 10 December 2011 at Leppington Progress Hall.

## 3.2 Meetings

Meetings were held with government agencies such as the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Camden Council, Liverpool City Council and various utility providers to discuss the proposal and seek their inputs into the design.

Individual meetings were also held with affected landowners and business owners concerned with the extent of land acquisition and property value.

## 3.3 Advertising

Newspaper advertisements appeared in the Liverpool Leader on 23 November 2011 and the South Western Rural Advertiser and the Macarthur Chronicle on 22 November 2011. The advertisements invited the community to attend the two staffed shopping centre displays or the community information session. Written comments were invited on the preliminary concept design.

# 4. Issues raised at the community information sessions

The following issues were raised by the community during the consultation period:

## 4.1 Timing

- The majority of community enquiries asked when the upgrade of The Northern Road would occur.

## 4.2 Property impact issues

- The majority of property owner enquiries were about the extent and timeframe of property acquisitions.
- Some landowners were concerned that the proposal would affect the value of their property and their opportunity to subdivide. These owners asked if compensation would be paid in these instances.
- Queries were also received about who would pay compensation if property was damaged during construction.

## 4.3 Access issues

- Property owners believe left-in / left-out only access will devalue their property and asked if compensation will be paid.
- A local businessman asked how large delivery trucks would access his properties with left in / left out only access if they arrive from the north.

## 4.4 Noise issues

- Residents from Harrington Park asked if signs could be installed requesting trucks to reduce the use of compression braking in that area.
- Concerns were raised from local residents about additional noise caused by extra traffic on The Northern Road.

- Residents also asked if noise walls would be provided as part of the upgrade and if compensation would be paid to residents for noise proofing.
- Residents asked about noise caused by humps on the bridge and if the problem could be addressed.
- Additional planting and landscaping was requested to minimise noise levels.

#### 4.5 Pollution issues

- Property owners were concerned with the extra air pollution from trucks as they stop and take off from the new traffic lights.

#### 4.6 Flooding issues

- An enquiry was received asking if the upgrade would cause an increase in flooding to properties either side of the upgrade.
- Issues were also raised that if surrounding areas were flooded what would happen to The Northern Road.

#### 4.7 Traffic issues

- Majority of residents questioned the number of traffic lights in the proposal as this would increase travel times.
- Several residents also questioned why traffic lights were proposed instead of roundabouts and suggested the roundabouts at Fairwater Drive and Hillside Drive as examples.
- Other residents requested no roundabouts be used in the upgrade.
- Several requests were received from the community to provide grade separated interchanges (flyovers) at all intersections.

#### 4.8 Road design issues

- Several property owners questioned if the intersection location would change.
- Several residents and property owners asked why Cobbitty Road east and Cobbitty Road west were not aligned and why can't the intersections be left as is.
- Residents were also concerned about the arrangements for residents from Cobbitty Road (west) to go to Cobbitty Road (east).
- A question was received asking why the upgrade wasn't extended to include the current sharp turns at Badgerys Creek tributaries as there have been a number of crashes at this location.

#### 4.9 Safety issues

- Concerns were raised about the existing "kiss and ride" facility on Greendale Road outside Bringelly Public School. They were concerned that this would become a safety concern due to the significant increase in traffic from properties on The Northern Road between Belmore Road and Badgerys Creek Road.

#### 4.10 Other issues

- Local residents questioned if land use classifications would change as a result of the proposed road upgrade.

## 5. Key questions and answers from the community

1.	What will happen and when?	<p>It is expected that the concept design and review of environment factors would be displayed for public comment later in 2012.</p> <p>Currently, Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) is progressing the concept design, planning and environmental studies for The Northern Road.</p> <p>Field investigations to help develop the concept design include survey, geotechnical investigations, flora and fauna studies, noise monitoring as well as examination of heritage items, including those of Aboriginal significance.</p> <p>The Northern Road will be upgraded in stages in conjunction with precinct development in Sydney's south west. This will largely be determined by the future land releases and the allocation of funding by the NSW Government.</p>
2.	How much of my land is required by RMS for the upgrade? Will compensation be paid as the impact on land may reduce my property value?	<p>The amount of land required by the proposal is indicative and subject to change at this stage. Comments received during the display of the proposed concept design in November and December 2011 are being considered and this may lead to adjustments in the design.</p> <p>The REF is underway, which will include a property impact schedule. The concept design will then be displayed with the REF for further public comment later in 2012.</p> <p>After the project is approved and funding allocated for construction, a detailed design is prepared. This may modify the design and consequently alter the land acquisition requirements for the project.</p> <p>When land is required for roadworks, it is RMS's preference to purchase the land by agreement with compensation assessed in accordance with the principles contained in RMS' <i>Land Acquisition Information Guide</i>. This guideline is on the RMS website.</p>
3.	The proposed upgrade will impact our proposed development of our land, and we can't sell it until the road is upgraded. Can you buy the land now?	<p>RMS normally purchases land for a project immediately prior to when it is required.</p> <p>However, in the intervening period if you believe</p>

		<p>that the proposal prevents you from selling your property, you can write to RMS to request consideration to acquire your property. This can be under either RMS' Preferred Option Policy or when the scheme has been determined, owner initiated hardship acquisition provisions, as contained within the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act, 1991</i>.</p> <p>Further information relating to owner initiated property acquisition is contained in RMS' <i>Land Acquisition Information Guide</i>. This is on the RMS website address below.  <a href="http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/resources/documents/rms_land_acquisition_info_guide.pdf">http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/resources/documents/rms_land_acquisition_info_guide.pdf</a></p>
4.	<p>I am concerned about additional noise caused by extra traffic on The Northern Road. Will noise walls be provided? Will compensation be paid to residents for noise proofing?</p>	<p>A road noise consultant is currently carrying out a noise impact assessment as part of the review of environmental factors for an upgrade of The Northern Road. This review will include the measurement of current noise levels, predicted noise levels and identify ways to manage and reduce this noise. If your home is identified as being eligible for noise mitigation, this would be in accordance with RMS <i>Road Noise Mitigation Policy</i>. This is not expected to be by noise walls.</p> <p>The RMS <i>Road Noise Mitigation Policy</i> is on the website at:  <a href="http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/noise/index.html">http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/noise/index.html</a></p>
5.	<p>Please provide signage to reduce truck compression braking for properties near The Northern Road at Harrington Park. We currently experience a lot of truck compression braking noise.</p>	<p>Signs requesting drivers to limit their use of compression braking has not reduced noise in similar locations.</p> <p>If you believe that your home is impacted by traffic noise, please refer to the following link and fill in the application form.  <a href="http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/downloads/nap_application_form.html">http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/downloads/nap_application_form.html</a></p>
6.	<p>I am concerned about extra pollution from exhaust fumes especially from the trucks as they take off from traffic lights.</p>	<p>RMS is committed to improving emission quality by effectively managing the New South Wales roads and traffic system. We are working on a range of cleaner air initiatives to improve vehicle and fuel standards, reduce vehicle emissions and to promote greener transport alternatives. Emission cleanliness has improved over the last 20 years and we will continue to work towards reducing vehicle emissions and supporting initiatives that help keep our air clean.</p>

7.	<p>Why are there so many traffic lights? This will increase travel time. Building 14 new traffic lights will mean 14 red lights for motorists travel on the section of The Northern Road.</p>	<p>The proposed approximate one kilometre spacing of traffic light controlled intersections balances the performance of The Northern Road as a main road whilst providing access for the future development of adjacent land.</p> <p>Future development precincts will need access to The Northern Road and traffic lights would be required to manage access and provide safe intersections. Too few signalised intersections would mean increased volumes on side roads, which could in turn impact green light time available for The Northern Road.</p> <p>Traffic lights would generally be coordinated to favour the greater traffic flows on The Northern Road. It is expected that throughout the day, most motorists using The Northern Road would not get a red light at every intersection.</p> <p>The number of red lights a motorist encounters on a trip is affected by factors such as travel speed, time of day and how many directions traffic can take at individual intersections.</p>
8.	<p>Why not use roundabouts instead of traffic lights? They work well at Fairwater Drive and Hillside Drive at the moment and should still do so with heavier traffic.</p>	<p>Essentially because we are building for the future. The number of vehicles using The Northern Road is expected to increase to three times the current traffic volume in the next 20 years. It is proposed that The Northern Road has a posted speed limit of 80km/h after the upgrade. Roundabouts are not a suitable intersection treatment for these conditions as they would not provide adequate control and safety.</p>
9.	<p>Why not provide grade separated interchanges at all intersections?</p>	<p>An overpass or underpass costs significantly more than a traffic light controlled intersection. It is usually not cost effective to provide an overpass or underpass unless the side road carries very large traffic volumes.</p> <p>RMS will make provision in the concept design for a potential future overpass at the Bringelly Road intersection.</p>
10.	<p>Will the proposed intersection locations change?</p>	<p>The proposed intersection locations will not be finalised until the review of environmental factors is complete, which includes a public display for comment later this year (2012).</p> <p>The community has been asked to comment on proposed intersection locations during the access strategy and preliminary concept design. These</p>

		<p>comments have been incorporated in the revised design. It is not expected that the proposed intersection locations would change significantly,</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Why are Cobbitty Road (east) and Cobbitty Road (west) not aligned? What other arrangements are there for residents from Cobbitty (west) to go to Cobbitty Road (east)? Why can't the intersections be left as they are?</p>	<p>Due to environmental constraints, the Cobbitty Road intersections could not be aligned to provide a four-way intersection with The Northern Road.</p> <p>Due to the level of traffic expected on The Northern Road, it will also be unsafe to have the two intersections at their current locations. Traffic lights are proposed at Cobbitty Road (west) to allow Cobbitty Road residents making right turns. This arrangement is consistent with plans for the road prepared as part of the Oran Park precinct development.</p> <p>It is expected that traffic from Cobbitty Road (west) would use the Oran Park Link Road 1 (Peter Brock Drive) to access Cobbitty Road east. Further information can be obtained on the Oran Park development internal road network from the following website:  <a href="http://www.gcc.nsw.gov.au/oranpark-46.html">http://www.gcc.nsw.gov.au/oranpark-46.html</a></p> <p>At this stage, the Oran Park development is proposing the construction of Peter Brock Drive within the next two years. As the timing for the construction of Cobbitty Road intersections is not funded at this stage, it is expected that the alternate arrangement for the right turn movement into Cobbitty Road (east) would be in place before it becomes a left in/left out intersection.</p>

## 6. Issues summary

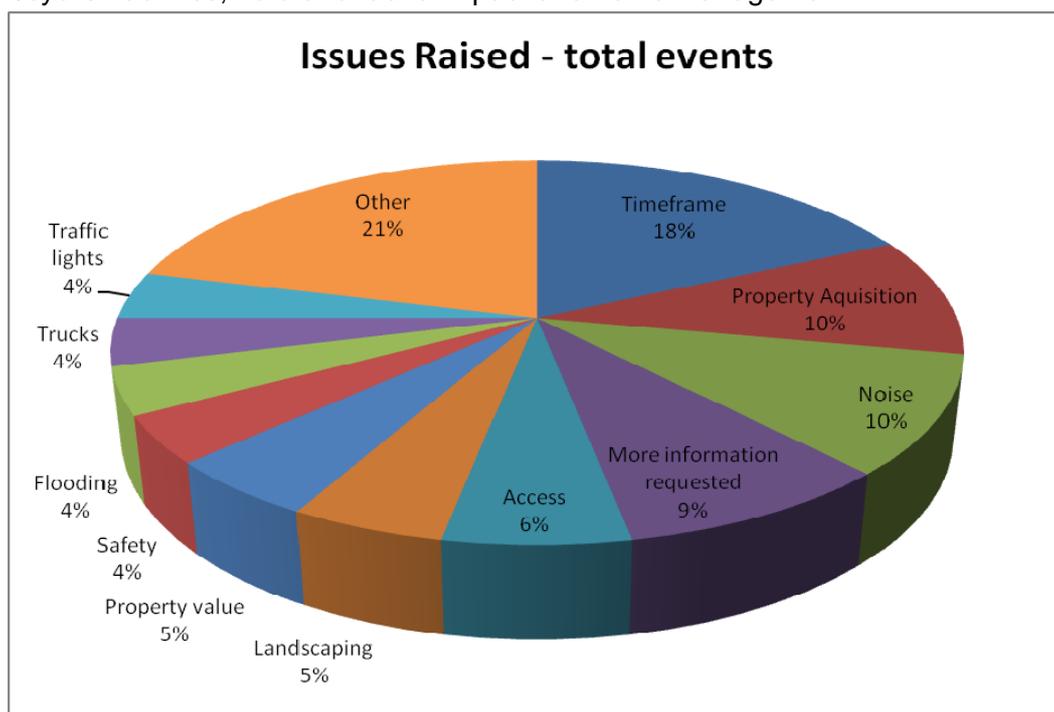
38 submissions were received in response to the preliminary concept design. These included feedback forms, letters, calls and emails.

Issues raised during the preliminary concept design community displays are summarised below. The issue of when The Northern Road would be upgraded was again a key concern for the community (similar feedback was received from the access strategy displayed in 2010). Issues with property acquisition and anticipated noise levels and the extent of measures to reduce impacts were also common amongst community members.

The table below highlights the main frequency of issues raised by the community from 23 November 2011 to 16 December 2011.

Issues raised	Percentages
Timeframe	18%
Property acquisition	10%
Noise	10%
More information requested by the community member	9%
Access	6%
Landscaping	5%
Property value	5%
Safety	4%
Flooding	4%
Trucks	4%
Traffic Lights	4%
Other	21%

Other issues raised during the consultation process (each representing 2% or less of total responses recorded) were: intersection location issues, road corridor concerns, growth centre development impacts, roundabout locations, access to Cobbitty Road, impact on businesses, pedestrian/cyclist facilities, flora and fauna impact and traffic management.



## 7. Next steps

The next steps will be:

- Incorporate feedback on issues raised by the community in the next community update on the concept design.
- Continue ongoing meetings with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, local councils, utility providers, Transport for NSW and community stakeholders.
- Finalise the concept design and review of environmental factors. The concept design and REF is expected to be placed on display for community comment in late 2012.
- Continue ongoing updates to the immediately affected community during the detailed design phase and consultation with community stakeholders to assist in managing impacts during construction.