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11 August 2026

Nathan Hagarty
Member for Leppington
Level 1 108 Ingleburn Road
Leppington NSW 2179

Dear Nathan,

Walkable NSW in practice – the Fifteenth Avenue Upgrade

I write on behalf of WalkSydney, to bring to your attention our concerns about the Fifteenth Avenue proposal, WalkSydney is urging you to request TfNSW revise their proposal to address **equity**. People of all ages and abilities use bus stops and footpaths – and around 40 per cent of people do not drive at all: every child, many older people, people with disability, and people who cannot afford a car. They all deserve better outcomes from a \$1.4 Billion road proposal.

WalkSydney is the peak body for walkability in Greater Sydney, advocating for people who walk across the region from Wollongong to Newcastle and the coast to the Blue Mountains. We provide advice and recommendations to state and local government, and our central concern is safer, calmer streets where the speed and dominance of motor traffic is reduced so that walking is a genuine choice for everyone.

We are writing because a project currently before Transport for NSW shows, with unusual clarity, the distance between your expectations and what the agency is delivering. The Fifteenth Avenue Upgrade – a \$1.4 billion project through the middle of growing communities of West Hoxton, Middleton Grange and Austral – ‘assessed’ via a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and an accompanying Urban Design report, stands to create a hostile walking environment that locks in car-dependence and actively suppresses transit and walking.

International best practice shows that Fifteenth Avenue, designed for 16,000 to 25,000 vpd, **should dedicate space to transit and cycling to keep its general traffic to three lanes** - to encourage people to travel by space-efficient modes like buses. A transit street is what Liverpool Council has been designing for nearly a decade (since the last government declined to extend the Sydenham metro via Liverpool to WSA). The road should not exceed 30m in width. The NACTO Global Street Design Guide) calls this a ‘Neighbourhood Street’:



RECONSTRUCTION
The street illustrated above depicts a 64-foot roadway within a 94-foot right-of-way.

While road diets are not appropriate on all 4-lane cross sections, streets carrying up to 25,000 vehicles per day function effectively with 3 lanes, depending on the traffic volumes of nearby adjacent streets.²

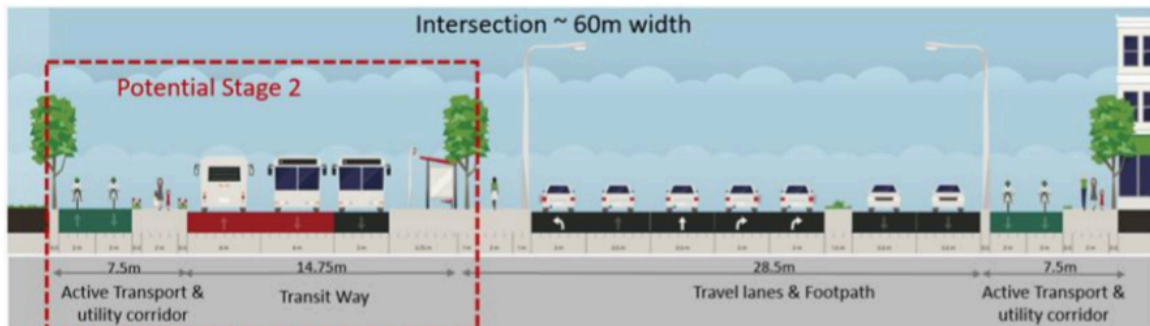


NACTO Neighbourhood Street (30m wide, 20,000 vpd) and real-life example in Brooklyn, NY

POI: South Dowling Street, including the Eastern Distributor, 24,000 vpd, is only 35m wide.

Instead, TfNSW is proposing a third motorway (after the M12 and Elizabeth Drive) to further slice through the West, an uncrossable 60m wide. *For comparison, Camden Valley Way, only 30m at intersections, causes massive severance.* Even if this was a reasonable road section, **only four pedestrian crossings are provided along the 4.0km stretch** between Kemp's Creek and Devonshire Road. TfNSW's own guidance recommends crossings no more than 200m apart, so 16 crossings are missing. For comparison, 1km is the equivalent spacing between Sydenham to Bankstown line stations - as if we walked as fast as metro.

On this, any suggestion of mode shift to transit is illusory, as this component is out of scope:



"Preferred" Option Y, a 60m section, with no public transport in scope. Walkers would cross a 28m carriageway to reach the future transitway. The maximum safe crossing distance is 20m.

The design is built around large, heavy and fast moving vehicles, not people walking. RUSA places people walking at the top of the road-user hierarchy. The REF does the reverse. It adopts a design speed of 80 km/h — higher than any speed band in Transport's own Movement and Place typology for this corridor, which tops out at 70 km/h and calls for 40–60 km/h where people are meant to be. It sizes lanes and intersections around a 19-metre semi-trailer and a 26-metre B-double. And it raises the road for one-in-100-year flood protection and in doing so lifts road levels up to eight metres behind retaining walls. These are motorway parameters, and every downstream choice for people walking follows from them.

The resulting walking environment turns its back on people. See the Attachment - cross sections from the REF Report showing retaining, and drop offs next to the road — creating massive severance and barriers for people walking and riding. In both cross sections people riding are provided for on one side of the road only, on a shared path; the other side receives a bare 1.5-metre



footpath (narrower than TfNSW's own Walking Space Guide). Literally putting pedestrians in the way of danger, by design.

POI: Barry Way (80km/h, 25m wide) in Jindabyne, which similarly was to be the 'front door' of the new Jindabyne High School, was subsequently deemed so dangerous for school children that a separate circulatory road into the school was built and protective barriers installed.

The corridor's edge is a literal (retaining) wall, and within it a steel-rail and concrete safety barrier installed to protect the traffic lanes from roadside hazards, while the fencing provided for people walking exists to stop them crossing except at designated points, 1km apart. Existing bus stops are to be 'rationalised', with shelters provided at only some of them. This will further suppress transit attractiveness. Opportunities to cross a four-lane, 80 km/h road are limited to signalised intersections and a single mid-block crossing across six kilometres. What tree canopy is shown that would make walking bearable in Western Sydney is deferred to a plan that does not yet exist. TfNSW are effectively executing a **road-building pyramid scheme** on the government, driving people into cars and onto roads, or else out of workforce participation altogether.

Tellingly, the Urban Design report's own visual assessment treats motorists as the predominant viewers and discounts impact by how briefly a driver sees the corridor — while the people who will live with it, live alongside it or experience it at walking pace, and are exposed to it for far longer, are not credited with that greater sensitivity.

This is, above all, a question of equity. People of all ages and abilities use bus stops and footpaths — and around 40 per cent of people do not drive at all: every child, many older people, people with disability, and people who cannot afford a car. In Western Sydney, where heat and disadvantage compound, these are the very people this design disadvantages most:

- **A child cannot cross** four lanes of 80 km/h traffic scaled for B-doubles, and so cannot walk to school, to a friend's house, or to the shops alone.
- **An older person, or a person using a wheelchair or pushing a pram**, on a 1.5-metre footpath (too narrow for two wheelchairs passing) has a long detour to the nearest safe crossing, adding over 12 minutes' walk, with no tree canopy,
- **Bus passengers are left unsheltered**, in heat that Transport's own REF acknowledges imposes a "disproportionate burden of heat-related health impacts" on Western Sydney's most vulnerable residents. The buses themselves will be stuck in traffic, too.

In short, the corridor is being built only for those who drive, at the expense of the 40% who do not. It will induce some of those 40% to drive, and some to stop participating altogether.

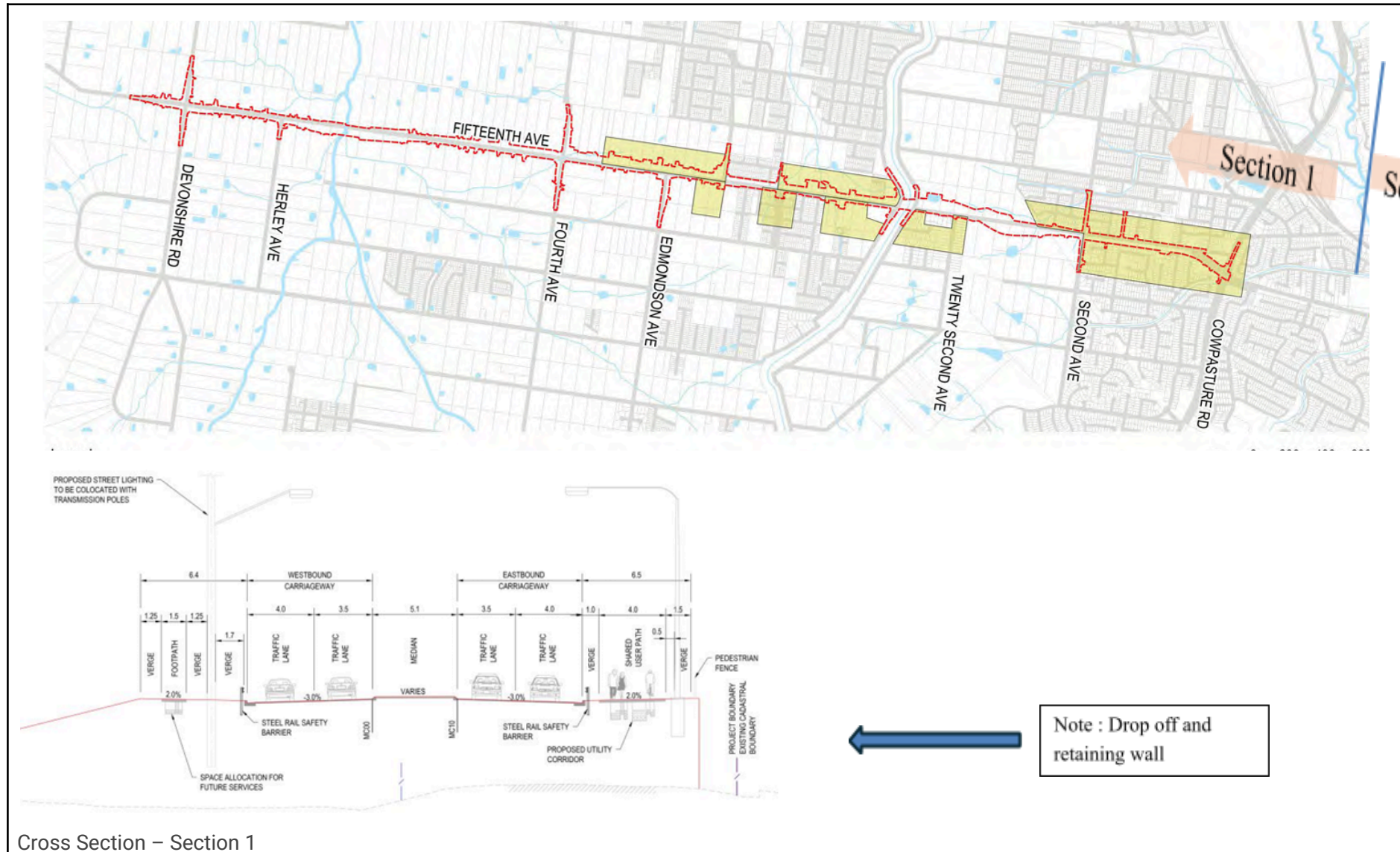
Of course these are not the only problems with the scheme - bus operations, road safety, the massive cut and fill, rather than working with the topography, running against TfNSW's own purported Designing with Country - but we will leave these aspects to others in the field.

We would welcome meeting with you to discuss the project and how these issues could be addressed to ensure better outcomes for the people of Leppington and western Sydney..

Yours sincerely

Tegan Mitchell
President, WalkSydney

Fifteen Avenue street layout



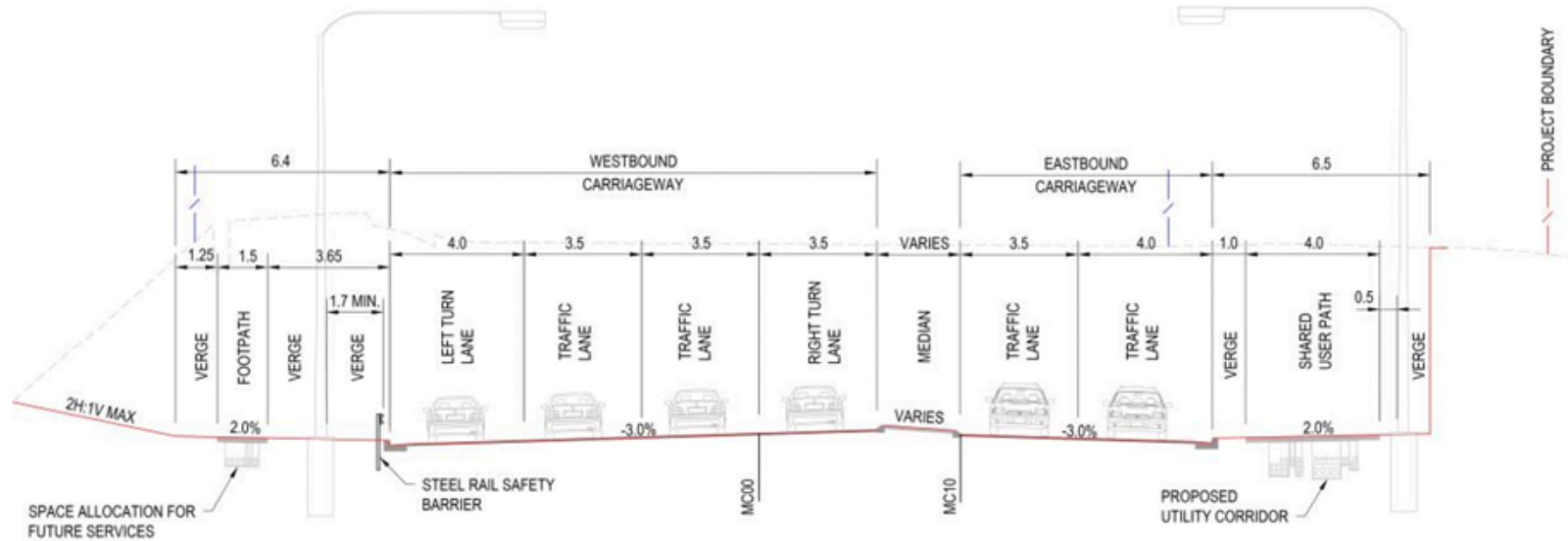


Figure 3-4: Cross-section of proposed lowering of Fifteenth Avenue east of Twenty Second Avenue

Cross section – section 2