

Traffic Engineer Referral Response

Application Number:	DA2023/1757
Proposed Development:	Demolition works and major alterations and additions to Forest Way shopping centre including road infrastructure works and a pedestrian overpass on Forest Way
Date:	07/03/2025
Responsible Officer	
Land to be developed (Address):	Lot 20 DP 1209801 , Forest Way FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086

Officer comments

Additional comments - 7/3/2025

The revised plans dated October 2024, additional traffic reports dated 18 June, 16 January 2025 and TfNSW referral comments dated 14 February 2025 have been reviewed. It is noted that TfNSW is not supportive of the plans as lodged which make provision for a right turn phase out of the carpark onto Forest Way. As Forest Way is a State Road and they are also the consent authority for any new or proposed changes to a signalised intersection the development plans as proposed cannot be supported. Although TfNSW has proposed conditions of consent, the absence of right turns from these traffic signals to Forest Way is of concern to Council. The proposed conditions of consent would result in significant implications on local road intersections as traffic wishing to depart the site to Forest Way in a southbound direction would be unable to do so and would need to exit to the north and use alternate routes through Council roads with resultant implications on both the internal circulation within the carpark and on the surrounding local road network. Given that the development plans as they stand are reliant upon right turn access to Forest Way and TfNSW is unsupportive of the egress arrangements the development proposal in its current form cannot be supported by Council's traffic team as the impacts of the changes required by TfNSW on the broader road network remain unknown. There is also concern that the internal circulation arrangements within the carpark would need to be amended to accommodate the changes required by TfNSW and this matter has not been addressed in amended plans or supported by revised internal queuing analysis.

In addition to the above, concerns raised in the original traffic engineering referral dated 21/5/2024 relating to Servicing and Loading have been unsatisfactorily addressed. A development of this size should cater for servicing by semi-trailers with forwards ingress and egress from the site accommodated. The swept paths provided show semi-trailers needing to reverse into the site from the opposing traffic lane and across the footpath in a high pedestrian activity area in order to access the loading dock. This is unacceptable on a shopping centre frontage near a school.

It is also noted that the lane width issues on Forest Way where the lanes deflect around the proposed inbound right turn bay remain unaddressed with TfNSW appearing to still be dissatisfied with the proposed 3.0m lane widths. In addition Council proposes a shared path along the Forest Way frontage of the site behind the indented bus bay. This shared path is proposed at a minimum width of 3m which would appear to be incompatible with the current development plans which significantly restrict the nature strip width along the development frontage and in front of the proposed relocated bus shelters.

The development proposal as it stands remains unacceptable to Council on traffic grounds

Original comments - 21/5/2024

The DA proposal is for alterations and additions to the Forestway Shopping Centre including an increase in Gross Leasable Floor Area of some 4777m² (from 9242m² to 14019m²). The development application also proposes to increase the offstreet parking supply on site from 348 to 505 spaces (an increase of 157 spaces) and proposes changes to the access arrangements serving the site including:

- Construction of a pedestrian bridge over Forest Way
- A new signalised intersection on Forest Way at the carpark entry/exit point
- Changes to the access arrangements off Russell Avenue
- A new access point to the basement carparking off Grace Avenue

The following comments are made with regard to the development application:

Parking

The applicants traffic consultant has referenced parking rates from the TfNSW Guide to Traffic Generating Development and estimates that the existing centre requires 303 parking spaces (with some 348 spaces being provided on site) and using the same rates has estimated that the proposed development will have a parking requirement of 530 spaces. This differs from the rates quoted in the Warringah DCP which reflect those in the TfNSW guide based on aggregated retail categories. The relative parking demand characteristics of different floor area types can however be used where they are known and this approach has been adopted by the applicants Traffic Consultant and is considered appropriate in this instance. The developer proposes to provide 505 parking spaces however also relies upon 80 parking spaces in the Sorlie Place carpark. These spaces are not on the development site but located on Council's Road Reserve. All of the spaces in the Sorlie Place carpark are subject to parking restrictions including 5min P, 1P, 2P, Bus Zone and a Mail Zone. While it is not correct that these spaces are part of the development and their use also supports the adjacent Forest Public School and School Bus Services, the spaces are primarily used by customers of the shopping centre, and on that basis the proposed 505 offstreet parking spaces is considered acceptable (noting that there is a concession has been made for the shortfall of 25 parking on the developers land).

The developers traffic consultant notes that the National Construction code requires shopping centres (a class 6 building) to provide 1 accessible parking space for each 50 spaces. For the 505 spaces provided by the developer this would equate to 11 accessible spaces. The traffic consultant advises that the development plans provide for 11 spaces and it is noted that these are all located offstreet within the development carpark. There are also two additional accessible spaces in the Sorlie Place carpark i.e on Council property. The level of accessible parking is considered adequate.

The development requires 63 medium to high security bicycle parking spaces and 29 low security bicycle spaces. While the developer's traffic consultant indicates that these can be accommodated on site and advises that this can be conditioned, given the number of spaces required it is requested that the locations of these spaces be indicated on the DA plans to ensure that the spaces are appropriately located for accessibility by cyclists and not sited where they will obstruct traffic movements or parking manoeuvres.

No Motorcycle parking has been provided and there are no specific provisions within the Warringah DCP setting out rates for the supply of such spaces such spaces. The Pittwater DCP requires 1 motorcycle space for each 100 car spaces for business /industrial developments and given the increased use of motorcycles generally and that the WDCP has a requirement for motorcycle parking to be provided within new residential developments in the Frenchs Forest Town Centre it is considered

that motorcycle parking at the rate recommended in the Pittwater DCP should be provided i.e a minimum of 5 spaces. Spaces should be designed as per the requirements in AS/NZS 2890.1 clause 2.4.7 and there location indicated on the DA plans

Servicing and Loading

pg 19 of traffic report says loading by 15.5m semi - but swept path shows reversing into site across a footpath that will be well used by school children given the proximity of the site to the Frenchs Forest Public School. This is unsafe. The articulated vehicle swept path also shows significant encroachment of the truck onto opposing lanes when reversing. This is also unsafe and unacceptable. The Loading Dock access arrangements should be revised so that any truck reversing movements take place off-street on the development site with forwards entry and exit to/ and from Grace Avenue by all trucks accessing the Loading Dock area to be facilitated.

Traffic Generation & Site Access Arrangements

The developers traffic consultant has estimated that the proposed development will result in 578 additional vehicle trips in the PM peak period and 289 vehicle trips in the AM peak period. The traffic consultant has assigned these traffic movements to the proposed site access points of Forest Way, Russell Avenue and Grace Avenue.

The developer proposes a new signalised intersection to serve the site on Forest Way. It is noted that Transport for NSW have raised concerns about the proposed signal design and not provided their concurrence to the proposed changes due to the adverse impacts on Forest Way and in particular the intersections of Forest Way/Warringah Road and Forest Way/Naree Road.

Given that the development is reliant upon access to and from Forest Way and TfNSW is unresponsive of the access arrangements at Forest Way the development proposal in its current cannot be supported by Council's traffic team.

The following aspects of the proposed arrangements are inadequately articulated or require further information:

- The traffic report advises in section 5.3 that a left in/left out arrangement at the Russell Ave driveway will be enforced by a new median however no detail for the median island have been provided on the DA plans. The left in/left out arrangement while it will ease congestion at this driveway will redirect traffic egressing traffic into Grace Avenue, and noting that TfNSW is not supportive of a signalisation arrangement that requires a third phase i.e catering to the right turn out of the carpark at Forest Way, there is concern that unacceptably high volumes of traffic will be forced to exit via Russell Avenue and circulate through Grace Avenue and other residential streets to access Warringah Road or destinations south and west of the Forest Way shops.

- While the removal of the signalised pedestrian crossing over Forest Way is supported subject to its replacement with a pedestrian overbridge that incorporates lift access for the mobility impaired, it is considered that there will also be a need for the existing centrally located pedestrian fencing to be extended to the north to prevent pedestrians from trying to cross other than at the overbridge, noting that there are bus stops on either side of Forest Way. It is noted that TfNSW will require a Road Safety Audit as part of the approval process for the overbridge and this type of issue would be captured in that audit. It is noted that there will still be a need for a signalised crossing to be retained as a fail safe in the event that the lift is out of action. The plans indicate a marked crossing to cater for this eventuality but this is unsafe and inappropriate on a multi-lane road. The signalised crossing would only to operate when the lift and/or bridge is out of action with an automated gate to manage access as has been implemented at Warringah Mall. The approval for and operation of the pedestrian bridge

will be the subject of an ongoing lease and maintenance agreement with TfNSW. It is noted that the existing plans for the pedestrian bridge are only conceptual with no detailed designs submitted. The existing concept plans are not sufficient for approval to be given.

- While a signalised entry/exit at Forest Way is not opposed in principle and the inclusion of a signalised crossing of the carpark egress is also supported, it is noted that the current 3 phase traffic signal arrangement has not been supported by Transport for NSW and it is understood that they favour an arrangement which does not incorporate right turns into or out of the carpark at Forest Way i.e left in/left out only and a two phase signal arrangement. This would result in a significant redistribution of traffic to Russell Avenue and Grace Ave which is likely to result in unacceptable traffic impacts on the Council Road network.
- TfNSW does not support the right turn out of carpark as it adds a third phase. TfNSW are only supportive of a two phase signal operation. If the right turn out is not possible this then leads to increased traffic using residential streets to head south or west from the development. This needs further review by the applicant.
- It is noted that the modelling shows the right turns into and out of Russell St at Forest Way will both be over capacity particularly in the PM peak which will result in queuing issues, increased numbers of risky turns, increased right turn crashes and increased use of alternate access routes. These concerns will be exacerbated if right turns are not facilitated at the proposed signalised access to the carpark off Forest Way. It should be noted that Council proposes to close Russell Street in conjunction with development of the Frenchs Forest town centre. If too much traffic is redirected to Russell Street and unacceptable traffic impacts result Council may consider bringing this work forward. The proposed redevelopment should not assume that access to the site will remain available from Forest Way to Russell Avenue and should be demonstrated to be workable with that point of access closed.
- It is also noted that the post development modelling shows a PM queue length within the carpark of 48m for both the left and right turn queues which, as noted by TfNSW, is expected to result in unacceptable impacts on circulation within the carpark. Further queuing analysis is required to demonstrate that queuing issues won't eventuate into or out of the carpark
- The plans show an amended bus bay arrangement on the west side of Forest Way which results in a slight reduction in length of the bus bay. The existing length of the bus bay should be maintained or increased. The reduction in length of the bus bay is understood to be unsupported by TfNSW and bus service contractors operators and these concerns are supported by Council.
- It is noted that TfNSW have raised concerns about the widths of travel lanes on Forest Way where the road deflects around the proposed right turn bay. If these lane widths are increased Council would potentially have concerns about reduced footpath widths

Summary

Given the number of issues with the current proposal and the fact that the access arrangements are not supported by TfNSW with the changes required to gain their support likely to result in unacceptable levels of impact upon the Council road network. The development cannot be supported in its current form

The proposal is therefore unsupported.

Note: Should you have any concerns with the referral comments above, please discuss these with the Responsible Officer.

Recommended Traffic Engineer Conditions:

Nil.