

10 reasons for not building an F6 Motorway



TOO MANY CARS AND NOT ENOUGH SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPTIONS

On Tuesday 15 March this year, the Minister for Roads, Michael Costa, overturned a previous announcement by former Minister for Roads, Carl Scully, and resurrected the F6 Motorway option. This was done without consultation with the community, his colleagues in cabinet or the ALP caucus. What is even more puzzling is why anyone would want to waste the community's time discussing an outdated and destructive proposal when it is clear that Sydney needs a comprehensive public transport system.

Here are 10 reasons why an F6 Motorway should never be built and why the decision to abandon a motorway option should be allowed to stand.

1. The F6 was proposed in 1948. Sydney needs modern sustainable transport solutions, not discredited motorway options.

The F6 Motorway was originally proposed under the County of Cumberland Scheme in 1948. At that time traffic engineers did not understand that urban motorways encourage more traffic and pull passengers off nearby public transport services. They didn't realise that motorways increase congestion during peak hour and reduce access generally. *We can do better than transport proposals from 1948.* Sydney needs sustainable public transport improvements that reduce traffic congestion and petrol dependency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2. There would be nowhere for F6 traffic to go once it reaches Alexandria.

When Carl Scully decided to abandon the F6 motorway corridor, the primary reason he gave for dumping it, was that there would be nowhere for the traffic to go once it reached Alexandria. There is no way of connecting it to the existing motorway network in the inner city. King Street, Newtown, Euston and McEvoy Streets, Alexandria and Gardeners Road, Mascot are already filled with traffic. The F6 would be a disaster for the inner city if thousands more cars were funneled into streets that should be used for light rail and public transport.

3. An F6 Motorway would be built as a private tollway, ruling out chances of private sector funding for a FastRail link between Sydney and Wollongong.

The private sector has recently developed a viable financial model for building a FastRail link to connect Penrith, Parramatta and Sydney along the Western Sydney rail line using private sector capital. If built, the *Western FastRail* proposal would run at travel times between Parramatta and the CBD of 11 minutes. A similar FastRail service could be built in the St George-Illawarra region connecting Wollongong and Sydney cutting around 30 minutes off current journey times. If an F6 motorway were built it would compete with a FastRail link undermining its commercial viability. This would discourage development of an environmentally friendly rail option.

4. An F6 Motorway would destroy local heritage areas and divide communities.

The path of the F6 corridor moves through several significant natural heritage and recreational areas in Tempe, Rockdale and the Shire. Marrickville Council recently spent just under \$7m on restoring Tempe reserve after assurances from the previous Minister for Roads, Carl Scully, and senior RTA officials, that the investment would not be undermined by a motorway. Playing fields, open space and wetland areas in Rockdale that are home to migratory wading birds would go under the bulldozer, if the corridor were used for a motorway. In Sutherland Shire heritage landscape sites in Sylvania Waters and a part of the Royal National Park would be adversely affected. In Rockdale and the Shire a motorway would divide the community in two.

5. An F6 Motorway would draw people off Illawarra Rail Services, adding to road congestion.

In all the other sectors of Sydney where motorways have been built (the M4 in Western Sydney, the M2 in the north-west and the M5 in the south-west) there was a corresponding drop in rail

passengers on parallel rail lines after new motorway sections were opened to traffic. The shifting of rail passengers to the road network occurred because travel speeds for journeys by car had temporarily improved. But as congestion levels rose and journey times became slower this stopped. This is a counter-productive result. If resources are invested in public transport, traffic and passengers shift in the other direction. Cars are taken off the road as people choose quicker public transport. This has the effect of reducing traffic congestion and lifting what transport planners call the *equilibrium speed* of the entire transport network.

6. A Motorway would add to noise and air pollution.

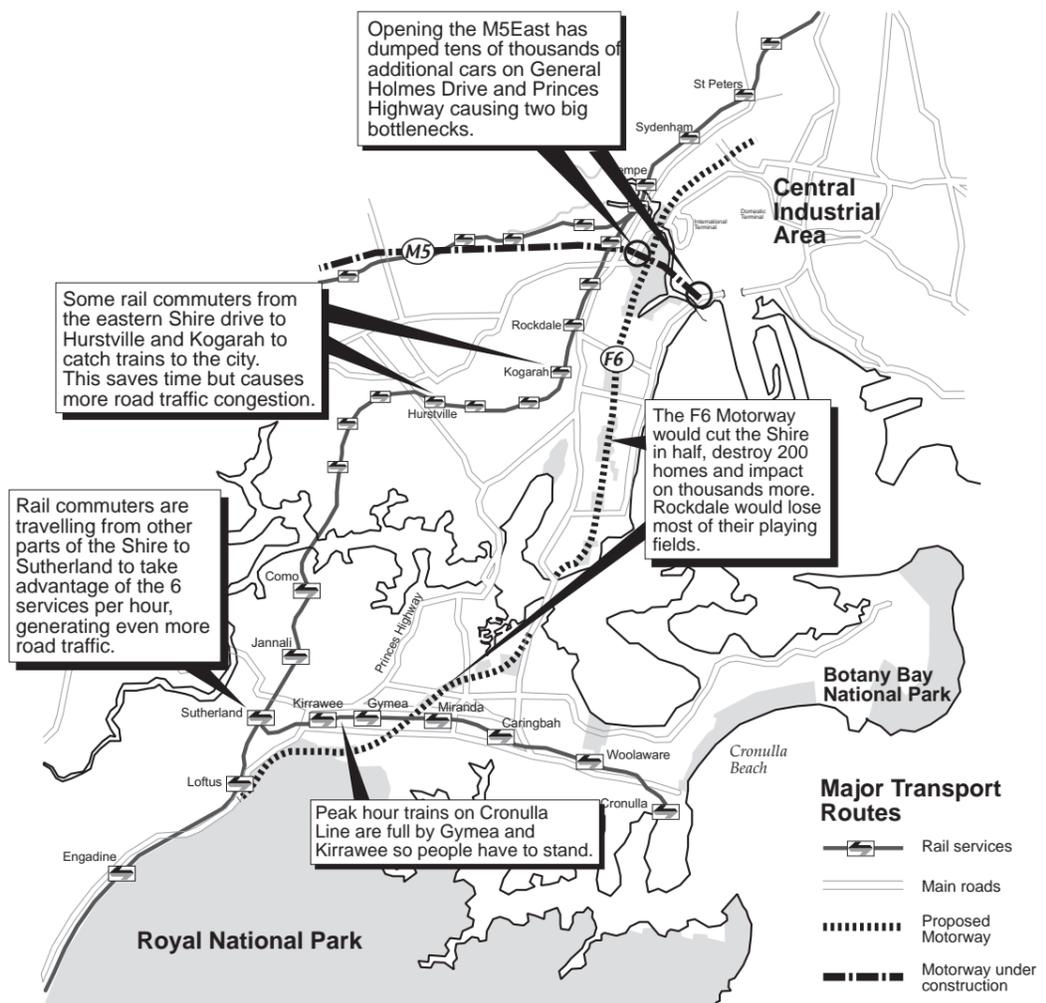
With increases in traffic volumes come increases in noise and air pollution. It is untrue to say that motorways reduce pollution by relieving stop-start traffic. This is because the total volume of traffic increases when more motorway capacity is introduced. Congestion hot-spots are simply moved from one point in the transport network to another. If the motorway were built in a tunnel, pollution generated by traffic inside the tunnel would have to be pumped out through large exhaust stacks. This would dump concentrated pockets of exhaust emissions and sooty-particulates on some households. This would be unfair on many families and households.

7. An F6 Motorway would take at least 8 to 10 years to build. By that time, petrol prices will have increased dramatically and the need for public transport improvements be even more urgent.

Petrol prices are increasing rapidly at the moment, causing inflation and putting pressure on interest rates. Development of a comprehensive public transport network is vital in combating the adverse economic impacts of this emerging problem. By focusing on a motorway option now, precious time is being wasted. From the first serious attempts to investigate and design a major transport proposal, most projects take between eight to ten years to complete.

8. If built in a tunnel, a motorway would cost around \$300m per kilometre, bringing the total cost to well over \$6billion. This would be better spent on public transport.

The F6 corridor passes through highly unstable, sandy and acid sulfate soils. Tunneling in the F6 corridor would require special technology unlike tunnels built through Sydney sandstone. This would push the cost of construction up dramatically. *Public transport investment provides more 'bang for your buck'*. For



example, the single rail line at Como carries the same number of passengers in the morning peak period as eight road lanes on the three bridges that cross the Georges River (Captain Cook Bridge, Tom Ugly's Bridge and Alford's Point Bridge).

9. Many local roads throughout Rockdale and the Shire along the path of an F6 Motorway would experience increases in traffic, not reductions.

A common argument used to support motorways is the idea that traffic on existing networks will shift to the new motorway and local streets will be there for use by local traffic only. The problem with this argument is that in order to use the motorway, traffic has to come through local streets. Streets used as feeders to a motorway would see an increase in traffic. Because an F6 Motorway would be built as a tollway, traffic avoiding the toll would use existing main roads and local streets. The final outcome would be high traffic levels on existing roads and additional traffic generated by the new motorway. This has certainly been the experience in other parts of Sydney where tollways have been built. The only way to reduce congestion on existing main roads and take it off local streets is to increase the speed, frequency and reliability of rail and other public transport services.

10. An F6 Motorway would drive down local house prices while public transport will enhance access and real estate values.

Any real estate agent will tell you that when a house is surrounded by noisy traffic and air pollution its value declines. Homes with good access to public transport and facilities have higher values. An F6 Motorway would have a catastrophic impact on house prices along its route. Recent investments made by home owners, who thought the road reservation had been lifted, would be greatly undermined. While impacts on individual house prices often get lost in debates over motorways, these impacts are important to the families who have bought them and can have dramatic impacts on the lives of individuals.

Rising oil prices set to change how we think about urban transport over next two years

Global oil prices have hit record highs in the last week and most experts are anticipating prices to keep heading upwards.

Sydney's average petrol price last week was 106.7 cents a litre, although Shell's average price across the city on 30 March was 112.2 cents a litre. Experts are predicting that Sydney will soon see petrol prices hit 120 cents a litre.

Meanwhile Commsec economist, Craig James, estimated the average household would spend almost \$150 this month on petrol — \$16 more than in January. This is equivalent to an interest

rate rise of a quarter of a per cent on a \$100,000 home loan.

Why is it happening? It's happening because the rate at which oil can be supplied can no longer keep up with the rate at which the global economy wants to use it. Strong growth in both the Chinese and Indian economies has seen global demand for oil increase rapidly in the last couple of years.

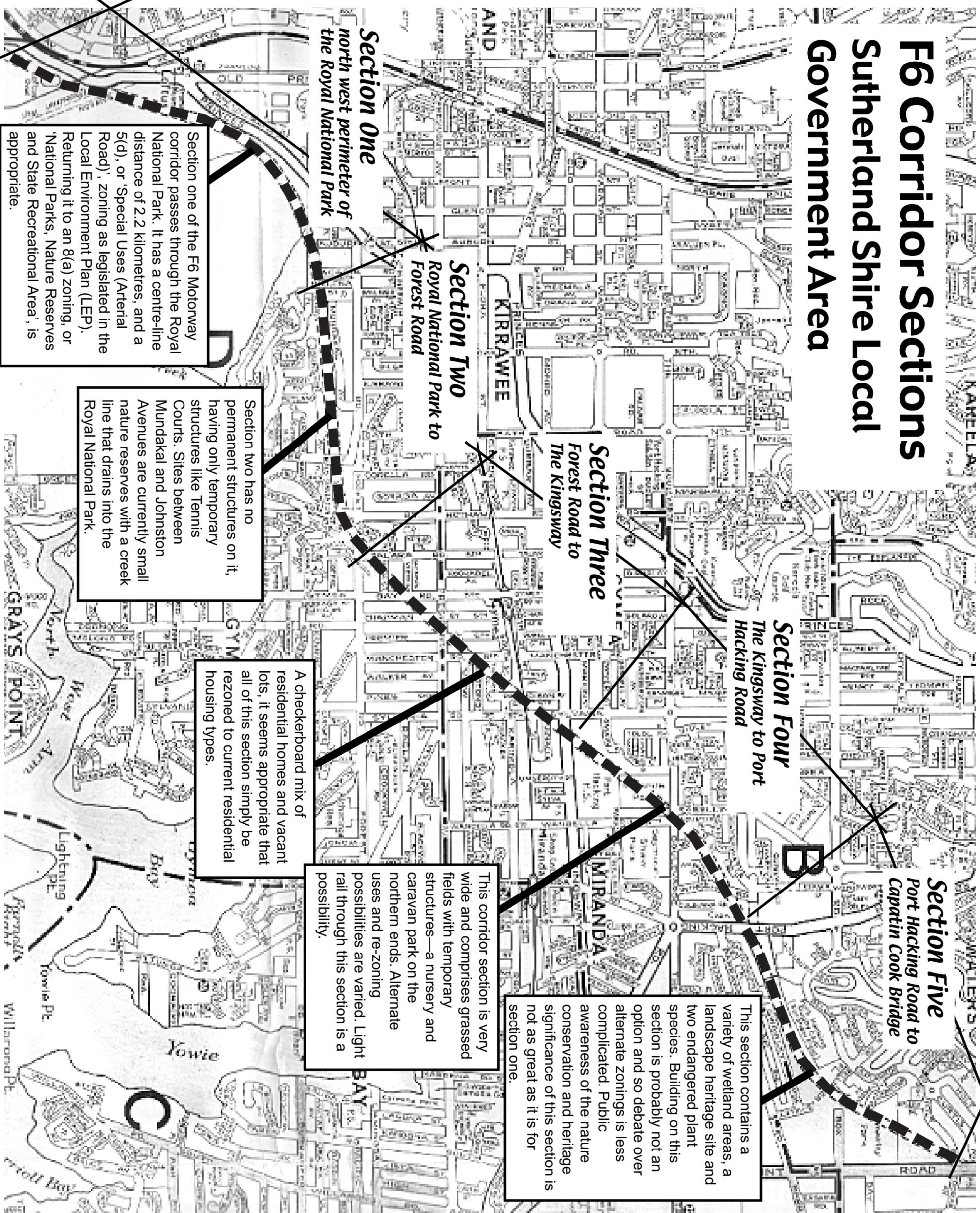
Adding to problems is the peaking of oil production. About half of the world's total oil reserves have now been consumed. The first half was easy and cheap to extract, the second half is

less easy and far more expensive to access. As oil wells age, extraction is more difficult and becomes more costly. This combination of factors is why prices are now going up.

Given that transport is such a fundamental part of our economy, when petrol prices rise the price of everything else rises with it. Rail and public transport systems that use electricity and less fuel, are less susceptible to these inflationary pressures. Development of a comprehensive public transport system would help to immunise the Australian economy against the threat of rising oil prices and keep interest rates lower.

F6 Corridor Sections

Sutherland Shire Local Government Area



Section One
north west perimeter of the Royal National Park

Section one of the F6 Motorway corridor passes through the Royal National Park. It has a centre-line distance of 2.2 kilometres, and a 5(d), or 'Special Uses (Arterial Road)', zoning as legislated in the Local Environment Plan (LEP). Returning it to an 8(a) zoning, or 'National Parks, Nature Reserves and State Recreational Area', is appropriate.

Section Two
Royal National Park to Forest Road

Section two has no permanent structures on it, having only temporary structures like Tennis Courts. Sites between Mundakal and Johnston Avenues are currently small nature reserves with a creek line that drains into the Royal National Park.

Section Three
Forest Road to The Kingsway

A checkerboard mix of residential homes and vacant lots, it seems appropriate that all of this section simply be rezoned to current residential housing types.

Section Four
The Kingsway to Port Hacking Road

This corridor section is very wide and comprises grassed fields with temporary structures—a nursery and caravan park on the northern ends. Alternate uses and re-zoning possibilities are varied. Light rail through this section is a possibility.

Section Five
Port Hacking Road to Captain Cook Bridge

This section contains a variety of wetland areas, a landscape heritage site and two endangered plant species. Building on this section is probably not an option and so debate over alternate zonings is less complicated. Public awareness of the nature conservation and heritage significance of this section is not as great as it is for section one.

What is the F6 Corridor?

The F6 is part of a radial and orbital freeway scheme that was developed back in 1948 under the County of Cumberland Scheme. The F6 is the southern sector radial of this 1940s freeway plan. The northern head of the corridor is located in the Central Industrial Area at Alexandria. It then heads south, passing through the centre of Rockdale before reaching the Sutherland Shire and ending in the Royal National Park.

The centre-line distance of the corridor within the Shire is just over seven kilometres. It is a long strip of land that snakes through the centre of Sutherland Shire from Captain Cook Bridge at Taren Point in the north to the Royal National Park in the south. Sections of the corridor are vacant plots of land; others are occupied dwellings and commercial structures; and others, like the section that goes through the Royal National Park, have natural heritage and conservation significance.

Residents from the Sutherland Shire who live within the vicinity of the F6 Motorway corridor met in November 2000 to discuss the severe impacts a motorway construction would have on their homes, alternate transport developments for the region, as well as alternative uses for the corridor.