

Submission

No 12

INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS

Organisation: Penrith City Council
Name: Councillor Greg Davies
Position: Mayor of Penrith City
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20 February 2012

Mr Charles Casuscelli MP
Committee Chair
Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Casuscelli

Inquiry into the Utilisation of Rail Corridors

I refer to your letter dated 30 November 2011 regarding an invitation to make a submission to the Transport and Infrastructure Inquiry into the Utilisation of Rail Corridors. Council would like to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

In addition to those matters listed by the Committee in the Terms of Reference, Council requests that the following matters be considered.

It is important to ensure that the primary function of the rail corridor should not be compromised and it is critical that transport nodes (for example, existing and future railway stations) are retained as a priority to facilitate a comprehensive integrated transport strategy. Therefore, any decision relating to rail corridors and critical nodes cannot be taken in isolation. It must complement and integrate with State agency strategies to manage transport needs now and into the future.

Council, in conjunction with the State Government, has progressed the Penrith Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (PITLUS). This Study has identified future infrastructure required to meet the demands of the anticipated growth across the City and across the Region. This Study critically identified the need for future railway stations at University of Western Sydney, between Werrington Railway Station and Kingswood Railway Station, and also at Oxley Park.

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Furthermore, this Study identifies the need for duplication of the western line corridor from St Marys to Penrith. To this end, we are continually asking the State Government for these improvements, and it is critical that these infrastructure needs are identified and secured through the present Inquiry.

Prior to the consideration of any development within the corridor land or disposal thereof, it is essential to consider the needs for the supplementary transport services, such as transport interchanges and parking facilities, as a priority. In addition, the implementation of ancillary transport facilities, such as commuter car parks and interchanges, should not be compromised by any future land development or land disposal.

The contemplation of any development within these corridors needs to complement adopted regional and local planning strategies. A balanced and integrated approach is required for all commercial, retail and residential developments. An inter-agency planning approach should be considered to achieve high quality urban outcomes to avoid compromising primary functions (for example, rail transport).

The provision of public transport services and infrastructure is integral to the fabric of the City and a critical element of the urban form. Accordingly, public space and access needs are critical and must be integrated into any development proposal. The associated rail corridors play a vital role, and establish an important public interface with the public transport system. High quality urban form along these interfaces is vital and should be carefully examined through the present Inquiry.

Council has embarked on a comprehensive review of our City Centre, in particular the Rail Corridor. Making stations truly dynamic places and providing innovatively designed pedestrian movement over rail lines is challenging, however there is a clear need to connect communities either side of this barrier and to investigate opportunities to improve the character, performance and liveability of our city.

Campement Urbain was recently commissioned to develop a master plan for part of the Penrith CBD, and highlight the potential influence this region could have on models of urban renewal, sustainable lifestyles and community development. One important component of this work addressed the significant barrier of the railway line which fragments the social, economic and physical connection between North Penrith and the Penrith City Centre. A copy of the CD containing the Campement Urbain project is enclosed for your reference.

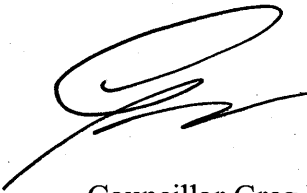
The connection and integration of these urban spaces should be of high quality. Campement Urbain provides an inspired idea of utilising the rail corridor to provide better amenity for Jane Street which could attract activity, build community and enhance public transport patronage.

The decision for any disposal of assets or land should be taken in the context of the overall needs of the transport system and should be assessed through a net community benefit test. All profits need to be channelled back into integrated public transport facilities or broader government agency transport needs. The approach should focus on greatest community benefit, not simply a profit-driven exercise. A genuine study that clearly identifies the rail needs, both presently and into the future, is critically required before considering alternative use within the rail corridor or the disposal of land.

Finally, the decision of the Committee should be deferred pending the development and adoption of the NSW Government's Long Term Transport Master Plan and the development and adoption of the proposed Penrith Regional City Transport Strategy. Therefore, consideration must not be given to use/disposal until there is a comprehensive integrated transport strategy (critically incorporating light/heavy rail needs and ancillary transport services) to meet the existing and future needs. Local Government needs to play an integral role in any consideration for the use and/or development of Rail Corridor land.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Inquiry. Should you wish to discuss the issues raised in this submission, please contact Council's Engineering Services Manager, Mr Adam Wilkinson, on telephone 4732-8190.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Greg Davies
Mayor

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