

Submission

No 2

INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS

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Our Ref: N92.03

17th January, 2012

The Chair
Committee on Transport and Infrastructure
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Ms Vicki Buchbach, Committee Director

Dear Committee Chair,

I am pleased to attach a submission by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils Ltd (WSROC) in response to the Inquiry into the Utilisation of Rail Corridors.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our views on this important issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 9671 4333 if you would like to discuss our submission further.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Bartlett', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kerry Bartlett
Chief Executive Officer



SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE'S INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF
RAIL CORRIDORS

JANUARY 2012

PREPARED BY THE

WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS LTD

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THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS

Introductory Comments

WSROC welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure's inquiry into the utilisation of land adjacent to rail corridors.

At the outset WSROC emphasises its frequently-stated position that all transport planning issues, particularly for new infrastructure, but also relevant to matters such as this inquiry, need to be considered as a central component of an holistic integrated land use planning process. For too long, planning in NSW has been a fragmented ad hoc process undertaken in isolation from the long term strategic needs of the state. This inadequacy in planning, along with a pronounced and persistent deficiency in infrastructure investment, has impacted negatively on Sydney generally and on Western Sydney in particular.

Accordingly, WSROC's comments on the subject of this inquiry are made in the context of the broader planning needs of Western Sydney.

Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils represents the councils of Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith. The local government areas represented by these councils cover 1.6 million of the 1.9 million people in Greater Western Sydney. The economy of Greater Western Sydney is the third largest in the country, contributing \$85 billion a year to the nation's GDP.

The Western Sydney Context

As indicated above, any consideration of the utilisation of land adjacent to rail corridors must be made in the context of broader economic, infrastructure, social and environmental issues. For Western Sydney, these issues are significant and must form the prism through which planning and land use decisions are made.

1. The population of Greater Western Sydney is expected to grow by another 1 million by 2036 (Metropolitan Strategy Review), representing almost 60% of Sydney's population increase over the next twenty five years. This will mean an extra 400,000 homes will be needed in the region during that time. The Metropolitan Strategy Review targets 70% of Sydney's additional housing in existing areas and 30% in greenfield sites with 80% of new housing within walking catchment of existing or new centres. These figures have profound implications for the location of development and the features of urban design.
2. The Metropolitan Strategy estimates that Sydney will need an extra 760,000 jobs within the next 25 years. If Western Sydney's job deficit is not to worsen, an estimated 380,000 extra jobs will be needed in the region during that time. Even the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy's target of an extra 275,000 jobs in Western Sydney by 2031 will leave Western Sydney worse off and more of its residents having to travel outside the region for work. Further, Western Sydney employment is concentrated more in

manufacturing and retail and suffers from a shortage of high quality professional and business services jobs.

3. Investment in infrastructure, especially transport infrastructure in Western Sydney has not kept up with population growth. The rail network in Western Sydney has not been significantly expanded since the 1930s yet the region's population is five times the size it was then. The result is that residential growth has been pushed further and further from rail networks, with an increasing reliance on buses and private cars. Yet bus services, either private or public have not kept up and have not been adequately integrated with rail services. Cross-regional north-south public transport is almost non-existent for most Western Sydney residents. Severely congested motorways along with the long commute distances, especially for the 30% who work outside the region and rising fuel prices add significantly to the social disadvantage experienced by many in Western Sydney.
4. On most measures, social disadvantage is greater in Western Sydney than in Sydney as a whole. Unemployment rates are generally around 1.5% higher and in some pockets double the Sydney average, median income levels are lower and chronic disease and mortality levels are higher. In many cases, these problems are exacerbated by poor urban design, deficiencies in transport and under-investment in social infrastructure in areas such as health, education and community services.
5. Western Sydney faces the same environmental challenges as the rest of Sydney. However, in two respects, its challenges are greater and are impacted by development policies. Firstly, air quality is worse in Western Sydney. The geographical structure of the Sydney basin and the surrounding ranges, combined with prevailing wind patterns, means that pollutants become trapped in Western Sydney, giving it and South-Western Sydney in particular, the worst air pollution readings in Sydney. Secondly, urban sprawl and land clearing in recent decades have impacted severely on vegetation levels, biodiversity and average temperatures.

Sustainable Urban Renewal

More effective use of land adjacent to rail corridors can and should support the process of urban consolidation and renewal. This renewal includes not only ageing and inadequate housing stock but also, in many locations, aging and inefficient commercial premises.

WSROC supports the 2036 Metropolitan Plan for Sydney's objective of locating at least 70% of new housing in existing urban areas. As this will require considerable consolidation and increased housing density over existing levels, WSROC's view is that much of that consolidation should be adjacent to rail corridors. Specifically, WSROC supports The Metropolitan Plan's aim to locate 80% of all new housing within the walking catchment of existing and planned centres with good public transport links.

It is imperative that this urban renewal is well considered and does not merely create more of the "...outcomes of forty years of knuckleheaded urban consolidation – street after street of 3-4 storey gun-barrel walk-ups." (Prof. Bill Randolph, *"Socially Inclusive Renewal in Low Value*

Suburbs: A Synopsis of Issues and an Agenda for Action”” UNSW City Futures Research Centre” 2008).

To reap the maximum benefits it must:

- be focused near effective public transport networks;
- provide a genuine mix of housing types and avoid the loss or displacement of existing acceptable affordable housing;
- avoid concentrations of the social disadvantaged;
- incorporate good design features which maximise social amenity, green space and aesthetic appeal to attract a range of buyers and renters;
- include higher quality housing to be attractive to upwardly mobile households;
- be integrated with commercial renewal and retail/business/professional activities that provide high quality local jobs; and
- incorporate a range of essential community services.

Well-planned use of land adjacent to rail corridors can play a valuable role in urban renewal. This potentially has numerous benefits:

1. **Use of Public Transport:** The closer medium and high density housing is to rail stations, the greater the likelihood of residents using the rail system, thus reducing dependency on private motor vehicles. The resulting benefits include increased utilisation and economies for the rail system, reduced traffic congestion and its associated social and economic costs, reduced energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, a more sustainable transport system and improved activity and health levels as more residents walk or cycle to access rail services. While the evidence on this is mixed, much research shows that areas with higher residential densities and closer to public transport nodes experience lower vehicle kilometres per household. (G. Corpuz et.al *The Development of a Sydney VKT Regression Model*, 29th Australasian Transport Research Forum).

The 2005 NSW Greenhouse Plan reported that in the last 30 years the total number of Australian cars grew three times faster than the population. In the last decade in Sydney the average vehicle kilometres (AVK) travelled grew more than twice as fast as the population. It is worth noting the uneven pattern of increased usage: while the total annual VKT for Sydney grew by an average of 2.3% a year over the past two decades, the increase for south-west and outer west of Sydney was 23%, with a 10% decrease in inner and eastern Sydney. (*WSROC “Social Exclusion : The Transport Challenge in Western Sydney 2009 - Submission to the Independent Public Inquiry into Sydney’s Long Term Transport Plan*). This can be attributed largely to strong population growth with increased urban sprawl in outer Western Sydney and the limited availability of public transport options in those areas.

Projections by the Australian Government indicate that car traffic levels in Sydney in 2020 will be 33% higher than they were in 2002 resulting from a combination of the projected population increase and an increase of 7.9% in average VKT. (*Federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, State of Environment 2006*).

Motor cars are a major contributor to air pollution, affecting both greenhouse gas levels and air quality through nitrogen oxides (over 70% from motor vehicle emissions) carbon monoxide and dioxide, ozone, photochemical smog and particulates. The geographical structure of the Sydney basin means that residents in western Sydney, particularly south-western Sydney are the most affected by poor air quality.

Better use of rail corridor land which encourages greater use of public transport can also have economic benefits by minimising the economic costs associated with increased private motor vehicle dependence.

IPART noted that “There is considerable evidence that private cars impose substantial externality costs on the community in the form of environmental pollution, congestion and other such impacts. Therefore, by substituting for private cars, public transport creates an externality benefit associated with the avoidance of externality costs through having fewer trips made by private cars.’ (*IPART Review of CityRail Fares 2009-2012 Final Report 2008*).

Based on figures from the Bureau of Transport Economics, the Metropolitan Strategy Review estimates that the cost of traffic congestion for Sydney will rise from \$4.6 billion a year in 2009 to \$7.8 billion a year by 2020. A 2005 study commissioned by the Sydney Morning Herald (*Sydney’s Transport Infrastructure – The Real Economics*, Centre for International Economics, 2005) projected a 30% increase in accident costs, road subsidies and greenhouse gas emissions from \$4.75 billion to \$6.1 billion a year.

Because of the benefits of public transport, a stated target of *NSW 2021, A Plan to Make NSW Number One* is to “Increase the proportion of total journeys to work by public transport in the Sydney Metropolitan region to 28% by 2016”. This will not happen only by improving public transport services. The other half of the equation must be urban planning which results in people living near and/or working near public transport services. Urban renewal and consolidation which makes more effective utilisation of land close to rail corridors is critical to achieving this outcome.

2. **Community Impacts:** Urban consolidation and renewal close to public transport can reduce the effects of geographical and social isolation associated with urban sprawl. Access to a range of community services such as community health, early intervention services, primary health care, education and community centres is more difficult in low density outer metropolitan areas such as western Sydney where such services are less available than in eastern and inner Sydney suburbs. Mixed use medium and high density housing, particularly close to town centres, shopping services and transport, can increase access to such services. This is particularly important for socio-economic groups who are already disadvantaged such as the elderly, people with a disability and those who cannot afford private transport.

Further, mixed use development incorporating medium and higher density housing can reduce levels of isolation and build community connectedness by providing more opportunities for incidental contact and interaction.

An extensive literature review by UNSW found that: “Research suggests that sprawling suburbs... undermine social capital. This is generally attributed to the increased distances between uses, overt reliance on private car travel and typically closed

residential form... these factors reduce opportunities for interaction and result in feelings of disconnectedness and isolation”.

It concluded that: “Planning policies based on new urban design, including increases in densities and mixing of uses will generally encourage social interaction.” (UNSW City Futures Research Centre, Healthy Built Environments, 2011).

This is acknowledged by the Metropolitan Strategy Review Sydney Towards 2036 : “Mixed use development, if well planned and designed, has the potential to generate an interesting, vibrant atmosphere that brings people closer, increases social capital and social cohesion, addresses environmental issues and fosters economic development.”

Carefully planned use of land adjacent to rail corridors as part of an urban renewal program can help achieve this outcome. Importantly, it needs to include an integrated component of public housing, in order to help address issues of social disadvantage.

3. **Health impacts.** Another potential benefit from well-planned urban renewal is the improved public health effects. Specifically, urban design affects the “walkability” of suburbs and neighbourhoods and therefore impacts on exercise levels and health. This is a result both of increased housing density and of the mixture of development.

UNSW’s Healthy Built Environments refers to several studies which “... indicate significant associations between sprawl and physical activity”(Feng et al.) and result in “... less utilitarian physical activity and higher obesity outcomes ” (and Dunton et al.). As an example, to maximise densities, the Western Australian Government recommends “30 to 40 dwellings per site hectare within 400m of town centres and metropolitan railway stations”. (UNSW op cit.).

Importantly, the UNSW research review goes on to show that it is not so much density per se but mixed use in association with density which is important.

“The intuitive notion that higher density may encourage physical activity is now being substituted in the research by the concept that density, mixed use and micro-design elements in some combination are most likely to influence levels of physical activity.”

This is because “Destinations give people a place to walk to. Replacing uniform urban form with a variety of uses can lead to shorter distances, thereby encouraging active forms of transport.(*Healthy Built Environments : A Review of the Literature*).

Thus the National Heart Foundation recommends to “Locate food stores, shops and local facilities (such as post boxes and public telephones) within close walking distance of dwellings and businesses... usually between 400 to 800 metres.”

Thus utilisation of land adjacent to rail corridors needs to focus on increasing residential densities with mixed use development and urban design which encourages physical activity. It may well need to incorporate renewal of commercial and service facilities with residential renewal.

Mixed use activity will not happen on its own. As a prerequisite, zoning and LEPs need to be appropriate to allow varied uses, combining medium to high density housing with retail and commercial activities, community facilities and open spaces that create or retain amenity. Market forces may well attract local retail and service businesses if population densities are adequate, but some government support, such as relocation incentives may also be appropriate, particularly in attracting necessary services. Further, the strategic location of government services can also assist in this.

4. **Land Use:** Urban consolidation is imperative if Sydney's projected population growth (see above) is not to seriously threaten Sydney's highly valuable peri-urban agriculture. Inexorable urban sprawl in recent decades has seen a steady decline in agricultural land in the Sydney basin. While changes in statistical methodology make it hard to obtain conclusive figures, best estimates are that the area under agriculture in the Sydney basin has diminished from around 100,000 ha in 1994 to 82,000 ha in 2007. (UWS Urban Research Centre, Sydney's Agricultural Lands : An Analysis, 2010) With 40% of Sydney's most productive land within the north-west and south-west growth areas, this decline is set to continue. The resulting economic loss in a \$1 billion industry and the impact on food costs and health, require concerted efforts to slow the trend.

The NSW Metropolitan Strategy Review clearly identified this as a key issue, acknowledging that: "...viable agricultural lands are facing continual pressures from alternative land uses and have a role in contributing to a sustainable future for Sydney. This is especially important given the expected population increases, projected housing needs, changing rainfall patterns and the increasing cost of transport."

State and local government zoning laws can help resist the decline, but while ever population pressures result in urban sprawl this will be a losing battle. Part of the solution has to be a commitment to urban renewal and consolidation. Again, this requires strategically planned use of land along and adjacent to rail corridors.

5. **Environmental Impacts.** Urban renewal and consolidation is potentially more sustainable than greenfield development and urban sprawl. As discussed above, motor vehicles are a significant contributor to air pollution and air quality issues in Sydney. Motor vehicles contribute approximately 7% of total greenhouse gas emissions (Australian Parliamentary Library How Much Australia Emits), up to 70% of nitrogen oxides, and are a major contributor to photochemical smog and ozone. Residential developments which reduce the dependence on private motor vehicles should reduce the growth in these pollutants.

Further, residential developments which reduce the rate of urban sprawl will reduce the rate of land clearing, the removal of carbon sinks and threats to biodiversity through the removal of remnant Cumberland Plain woodland, listed as an endangered ecological community under the 1995 NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service lists "Clearing for agriculture and urban development (as) the greatest threat to Cumberland Plain Woodland."

Clearly urban consolidation is no panacea for these issues but planned consolidation and renewal which slows the rate of urban sprawl is critical to addressing

environmental degradation related to development. And as stated above, strategic utilisation of land adjacent to rail corridors provides significant potential for supporting urban renewal.

Implementation

Underutilised land adjacent to rail corridors provides significant potential to form part of the Government's urban renewal program. However, the evidence shows that market forces themselves have not in the past produced the desired outcomes and that is not likely to change, especially considering the scale of urban renewal needed.

"Most importantly, for our low value middle suburbs, where 100,000 new dwellings will be need in the next twenty five years, the market is unlikely to deliver socially acceptable or sustainable outcomes at prevailing values and within current planning frameworks without assistance." (Randolf, op cit.).

A number of challenges make urban renewal difficult:

- fragmentation of land and strata title blocks
- the potentially high purchase price of such properties and doubtful financial viability
- the lack of co-ordination across council jurisdictions
- potential conflicts between profit maximisation and open space and community amenity requirements
- lack of co-ordination and differing objectives of state and local authorities

An effective approach requires strategic government leadership that brings together planning policy and housing policy and includes key stakeholders – local councils, public housing authorities, private investors and relevant community organisations.

Key components outlined by UNSW's City Futures Research Centre (Randolf, op cit.) are relevant, particularly for renewal in lower income suburbs where returns may not be high enough to attract investment:

- 1) Local urban renewal strategies must take a "whole of government" approach which considers housing, social amenity, employment and local amenity issues.
- 2) Local government planning will need to be proactive and will need to be given the flexibility to identify opportunities for renewal and rezoning and to set locally suitable development guidelines.
- 3) A coordinating agency such as an "Urban Renewal Trust" will be required to bring the public and private sector resources together, to undertake the necessary land and property acquisitions and to manage the resulting developments and publically owned property assets.
- 4) Funding arrangements will need to be configured in a way that maximises private sector investment, appropriately shares public and private risk, and ensures long term amenity and local infrastructure and service provision.
- 5) Along these lines, WSROC's 2010 submission to the Metropolitan Strategy Review outlines a proposal for the establishment of a Western Sydney Regional Renewal Trust (see Appendix) with the objectives to "Instigate the renewal of lower value local town

centres and suburbs in the middle ring of the Sydney region...” and to “Ensure the retention of affordable housing.”

While these proposals are not confined to land near rail corridors, they equally apply to such land. In many instances, particularly in those middle ring suburbs in Western Sydney, much of the housing established in the middle of last century was close to rail corridors. Much of it is lower density housing and is an ideal target for a strategic program of urban renewal which would yield the benefits outlined above.

Employment

More effective use of land along rail corridors has the potential to improve employment outcomes.

Employment issues are significant in the planning for Western Sydney’s future. Sydney will need an estimated extra 760,000 jobs over the next twenty five years and Western Sydney will need 380,000 of these if its job deficit and the associated social disadvantage are not to worsen. Substantial restructuring of housing, employment and transport interactions in Western Sydney will be needed to achieve this.

The three main components of employment growth are designated employment lands such as traditional industrial areas and newer business parks and warehousing/ logistics centres; major shopping centres and business centres; and CBD activities.

Much of this is outside the consideration of this Inquiry. However, while the utilisation of rail corridor land is not the central part of employment generating policies, it can still make a contribution.

Providing a range of employment options across the Sydney region and as close as possible to where people live, is a key to reducing social disadvantage and reducing travel time and costs. Because of the benefits of the increased use of public transport and reduced reliance on private motor vehicles, the Metropolitan Strategy Review aims “... to ensure most new housing and jobs are located near public transport.”

The strategic use of land adjacent to rail corridors can be part of this formula. Clearly it is not suitable for manufacturing, warehousing or logistics, but is suitable for other employment types such as retail, business financial and professional services, government services, and community services. Currently Western Sydney is seriously under-represented in professional employment opportunities, providing only 17% of banking, finance and business services jobs, but 51% of Sydney’s manufacturing jobs. These business and professional jobs are the ones which need to be attracted to suburban centres in Western Sydney to provide a better range of employment opportunities for its residents. They are also the jobs which can be more easily accommodated as part of a strategic program of urban renewal and targeted economic development, including better utilisation of land adjacent to rail corridors.

Land near rail corridors, especially as part of high density residential and mixed use development, can also be an ideal target for government decentralisation policies. The relocation of selected government agencies and departments from Sydney’s CBD to strategic locations close to rail lines in outer suburbs can be a significant generator of jobs in regions such as Western Sydney. For example, significant government offices adjacent to Parramatta

station, and smaller examples in other locations such as Blacktown, Liverpool and Penrith are vital providers of local employment. As well as providing much-needed local jobs they reduce travel time for a large number of commuters, potentially increase public transport usage and reduce congestion on the roads. Further, they provide a magnet to attract associated private sector support activities and the employment opportunities they generate. The savings from reduced real estate costs, either rental or ownership, associated with moving out of Sydney's CBD should at least partially fund the costs of relocation and could well contribute to desired mixed use development in these areas.

Strategic government planning needs to consider the utilisation of land adjacent to rail corridors as part of the formula for Western Sydney's employment requirements. By considering relocation of some of its own activities it can lead the way in this.

It must be pointed out in this context that these recommendations only comprise a relatively small part of the solution to Western Sydney's employment needs. Some 60% of travel in Western Sydney is cross-regional and so long as the rail system is a radial one focused on the CBD, the problems will persist. In addition to better utilising rail corridor land for residential and job-generating renewal, high priority must be given to improving cross-regional public transport services.

Transport Interchanges

Land directly adjacent to railway stations is often partially utilised for transport interchange facilities, albeit with very diverse levels of amenity, efficiency and usage levels.

RailCorp's analysis of the modes of transport used by CityRail customers to access its railway stations shows that 46% walk, 12% arrive by bus, 14% drive and park and 17% are dropped at stations as private vehicle passengers ("kiss and ride"). (*A Compendium of CityRail Travel Statistics*, RailCorp June 2008).

Evidence indicates that the quality or lack of quality of interchange facilities at stations can significantly affect the usage levels of public transport.

"Interchanges can promote access to the public transport network with good waiting environments and fast transfers. But poor interchanges with long walks, stairs, poor travelling information and poor weather protection can substantially discourage access to public transport." (NSW Audit Office, 2007, *Connecting with Public Transport*).

Thus WSROC recommends targeted investment in interchanges, particularly at strategic stations, as a means of encouraging greater use of the rail system. Stations easily accessible from major roads and with ample low-cost land should provide substantial parking facilities to encourage "park and ride" commuting and all stations should be designed to facilitate "kiss and ride" usage. At many stations interchanges need to be improved to facilitate passenger transfer from buses to trains.

Investment also needs to address issues of safety and security, general appearance, cleanliness and amenity, adequate lighting, accessibility, the availability of weather protection, convenient signage and secure bicycle storage.

The use of bicycles for commuting in conjunction with public transport is very low in NSW compared with other states and territories, with combined bicycle/public transport accounting for only 0.6% of commuter trips at the time of the 2006 Census. However, these numbers are expected to grow and a stated aim of *NSW 2021* is to “More than double the mode share of bicycle trips made in the Greater Sydney region, at a local and district level, by 2016.”

The provision of secure and convenient bicycle parking facilities at stations is a prerequisite to encouraging multi-modal commuting, with the added advantage that “... parking space for bicycles etc., can be provided much more cheaply and efficiently than for cars, especially where land is expensive or restricted.” (*Independent Public Inquiry, Long-Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney Preliminary Report 2010*).

While improved interchange facilities will not be the decisive factor for all who commute, improvements which make journeys more seamless will encourage greater use of public transport and the rail system in particular. If such facilities are not available many will simply resort to using private motor vehicles for their whole journey.

New Rail Corridors

The construction of the South West Rail Link and the proposed North West Rail Link provide excellent opportunities to avoid the mistakes of the past. These two significant (and long overdue) projects should be prototypes of strategic planning by fully integrating rail corridor land use with the new infrastructure itself rather than allowing ad hoc, unplanned land use to occur in these crucial areas. This needs to be planned in such a way as to maximise the achievement of a number of the key objectives discussed above, particularly:

- providing medium density mixed housing, including affordable public housing, within walking and cycling distance of stations, with quality interchange facilities to maximise both the usage of public transport and active commuter access to that transport;
- attracting commercial activities to local centres near residential concentrations and transport links, thus increasing opportunities for local employment; and
- providing a range of essential community services.

It is acknowledged that these two new rail corridors are intended to serve large residential communities in new greenfield site developments. However, planning for the use of that section of land adjacent to those rail corridors should still be designed to maximise the benefits discussed earlier. The critical point is that effective mixed use development needs to be planned and encouraged rather than hoping market forces will do the job. A necessary (but not sufficient) starting point is appropriate zoning and targeted land release policies to ensure that land use fits with State Government regional and sub-regional plans.

The Government’s current process of consultation with the ROCs is a promising start in terms of identifying regional priorities. However, it is also essential that local governments, both individually and through their respective ROCs are included early in the planning process so that acceptance for strategic priorities is achieved. This will help avoid problems which often occur when local communities pressure councils to oppose proposed Government infrastructure projects. Further, the engagement of a range of other community groups will be needed to ensure a full suite of community facilities to serve the new communities. While

not all can be near rail corridors because of the significant geographic spread of these suburbs, those that are will be more accessible to users of public transport.

Conclusion

Issues related to the use of land along and adjacent to rail corridors must be considered in the context of Sydney's broader planning needs. For Western Sydney, many of these issues are profound and there is no easy single solution, but strategic and targeted use of rail corridor land provides opportunities for urban renewal which may help. While developments in Western Sydney are obviously critical for the region's residents, they are significant for the whole of Sydney. Western Sydney already adds \$85 billion a year to the NSW economy, more than Sydney's CBD, and its rapid population growth means that within 25 years it will be home to 50% of Sydney's population. What happens in Western Sydney is critical to the economic strength and social well-being of Sydney and the state.

REFERENCES

1. Prof. Bill Randolph, *Socially Inclusive Renewal in Low Value Suburbs: A Synopsis of Issues and an Agenda for Action* UNSW City Futures Research Centre" 2008
2. G. Corpuz et.al *The Development of a Sydney VKT Regression Model*, 29th Australasian Transport Research Forum
3. WSROC *Social Exclusion : The Transport Challenge in Western Sydney 2009* - Submission to the Independent Public Inquiry into Sydney's Long Term Transport Plan
4. Federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, *State of Environment 2006*
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11. Australian Parliamentary Library *How Much Australia Emits*
12. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service website
13. *A Compendium of CityRail Travel Statistics*, RailCorp June 2008
14. NSW Audit Office, 2007, *Connecting with Public Transport*
15. Independent Public Inquiry, *Long-Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney Preliminary Report*, 2010
16. WSROC *Submission to The NSW Government's Review of the Metropolitan Strategy*, May 2010

APPENDIX

WSROC Submission to the NSW Government's Review of the Metropolitan Strategy, May 2010)

Western Sydney Regional Renewal Trust

Local Governments have either already completed or are currently completing planning for local areas or town centres (i.e. Local Area Plans), under the Metropolitan Strategy or as part of updating Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).

The proposed Western Sydney Regional Renewal Trust (WSRRT) would be established as a not-for-profit organisation (i.e. as a trust or similar) with an appointed Board made up of local government General Managers, Directors/Group Managers, Councillors, and other persons of significance.

The WSRRT would act as an "unblocking" agency for development by being more flexible, more likely to win community acceptance and participation and better able to deliver solutions tailored to the needs of each and every renewal community in Western Sydney.

WSRRT Goals and Objectives

The establishment of a Western Sydney RRT would:

- Instigate the renewal of lower value local town centres and suburbs in the middle-ring areas of the Sydney Region to progress the objectives and targets of the Sydney Metro Strategy; and
- Ensure the retention of affordable housing, which will compliment current Federal Government investment in social housing.

At an operational level the WSRRT would:

- identify and prioritise areas for renewal in accordance with the principals set out in the Metropolitan Strategy;
- develop lands for a variety of purposes, incorporating the general housing on the open market, social housing, affordable housing, parklands, community facilities, retail, and transportation;
- bring forward master plans for renewal in a range of targeted centres in line with Local Area Plans;
- implement these master plans in a coordinated and sequential manner with local partnership with the public, private and community sectors;
- include socially sustainable renewal on a non-profit basis;
- leverage under-utilised or unused local, state and federal government lands; and
- deliver efficient, cost effective localised planning and control which in turn maximizes resident buy-in and developer return on investment.

The WSRRT would also have property acquisition powers entrusted to it to provide integrated urban renewal and affordable housing, and so be empowered to merge or combine lots and/or sites to ensure maximum efficiency and economies of scale in achieving appropriate residential and infrastructure development.

The WSRRT would have the advantage of concentrating in one place a range and depth of skills - planners, development backgrounds, social planners, and expertise to assist councils in developing their own land holdings - not possessed by individual councils.

Alternative ownership models may include: Local Public Trust; Social housing providers; Local Councils; New organisation/authority; and/or Freehold sales.

Councils would expedite the renewal process by identifying appropriate sites and targeting specific localities for redevelopment.

Funding Options

The following two alternative funding options for the WSRRT would be equally effective in achieving the desired outcomes:

- 1) Consolidation/amalgamation of land (for a specific development), after which a development proposal is on-sold on the open market for private investment to undertake the development. Under this approach, profits would be reinvested to commence new projects within the context of a local development master plan; OR
- 2) The WSRRT would be federally funded to undertake the building of the project, with end returns from development rights sales recycled through the life of the agency and returned to the public purse.

Required legislation and regulatory support

State and possibly Federal legislation and regulatory reform would be required to enable the establishment and operation of a Western Sydney RRT.

The necessary measures would include, but not be limited to:

- Setting up broad principles regarding the use and acquisition of local, state and federal government lands;
- Establishing the Trust terms regarding acquisitions and probity;
- Reviewing Strata legislation and regulations - making it easier to acquire such lands; and
- ensuring transport and infrastructure development is integrated into this process. WSROC stands ready to work with the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to develop the appropriate legislative and regulatory reforms to support the establishment of a body such as the proposed WSRRT.