

**Submission  
No 41**

## **INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

**Organisation:** Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)

**Date Received:** 18 September 2023

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The Chair  
Legislative Council  
Portfolio Committee No.6 Transport and the Arts  
NSW Parliament House

Dear Chair,

### **PIA SUBMISSION – INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) welcome the opportunity to highlight public transport issues and opportunities for more deeply integrated land use and transport planning in Western Sydney. Our submission has been prepared with the PIA Young Planners Network.

PIA strongly support improving equity of access to public transport throughout Greater Sydney by improving the availability and access to services where there is existing development. There is potential for further housing growth and density where public transport capacity and amenity are available or can be improved. Reducing car dependency can offer time and cost savings for residents especially in Western Sydney (See Attachment A).

PIA acknowledge that a transit network for Western Sydney is embedded in the entire regional network and is difficult to consider in isolation. PIA supports a reinterpretation of the distribution of transit links in relation to housing and job concentrations throughout Greater Sydney and we support stronger orbital connectivity - north-south links (e.g. through Parramatta and Aerotropolis).

PIA support addressing public transport needs alongside complementary improvements to local walking and cycling environments – including at night. PIA support an ‘movement and place’ approach to holistic planning for transport and amenity.

PIA acknowledge the role of planning to achieve better value from metros and other major transit investments. We note that an integrated land use and transport plan is vital for well-located growth to improve the return on public investment in services and infrastructure. We support the early preparation of business cases for potential transit infrastructure alongside forward planning for density and land releases.

The PIA submission has been assembled through interview quotes and consultation among members of our Policy, Transport and Young Planners Networks under the headings below in **Attachment A**.

Please do not hesitate to contact PIA for clarification or further information via

Yours sincerely

John Brockhoff  
PIA National Policy Director

## **ATTACHMENT A – PIA ASSEMBLED FEEDBACK ON TRANSPORT NEEDS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

### **Availability and accessibility of public transport at night**

- Importance of accessibility of public transport (PT) at night, and link to the night time economy goals and targets outlined in the PIA submission to the GCC Discussion paper ([link](#))
  - especially gaps in service and accessibility, including:
    - Extending trains beyond midnight
    - Night bus services to all stations from the city
    - Suburban bus routes due to the last mile problem. Getting people to the stations is important, but getting home is the next problem without suburban bus routes
- Funding infrastructure and programs to improve women’s safety and level of comfort travelling at night.
- Consider integration with TfNSW [Safety after Dark](#) outcomes so that women feel safe using Active Transport at night.
- Upgrade connectivity links to ensure adequate wayfinding, lighting and signage which also helps with women’s safety in the public domain as well as assisting less-abled or people prams to access transport easier.

### **Equitable access to public transport in Western Sydney**

- The easiest and cost effective way is to focus bus services to train stations and points of interest. For example, currently residents of the remote locations such as Wilton have little or no alternative to car.
- Equitable access requires economic considerations – some people cannot afford our public transport systems, leaving them isolated or unable to find employment when it isn’t close to home. Consider removal of student limits on distance (School Student Transport Scheme) which is currently non-inclusive and limits the amount of students who can access the service.
- Equitable access in Western Sydney must include a stronger focus on active transport (cycleways) and walkability must be priorities in designing new cities, as well as shade and tree canopy coverage. Universal design principles to be adhered to in new footpaths and connections. Safety in the public domains for women is an important consideration.

- Improved bus services and routes are supported, linking to community infrastructure and train stations.
- Cost-effective public transport would improve equity of access. The pricing of fares should better reflect the availability of choices and needs of low income people.
- Capacity constraints (for example on the T5 Cumberland Line) result in people missing out. Trains on the T5, the only North-South transport link in Western Sydney currently are every 30 minutes and only a 4 car carriage, resulting in significant overcrowding.

**Case Study: Public transport time and cost penalties for a resident of Western Sydney**

*An Analysis by R Islam (in New Planner, September 2023) found that for a resident of Middleton Grange (outer SW Sydney) working in central Sydney, there is 600 hours extra travel and \$2,190 more on public transport tickets each year above that of a resident of Wentworth Point. Whilst the cost of property in Wentworth Point (Central City) may be higher than that of Middleton Grange these sort of cost differences need to be considered before we can decide what is truly the more expensive option. (See Attachment B)*

**Limited orbital / cross town public transport links through Western Sydney**

- Greater Sydney's transit network remains radial – hubbing from the Eastern CBD. As Greater Sydney has grown this has limited access opportunities for the Central and Western Cities.
- There is a significant opportunity to better connect southern and northern origins and destinations through Parramatta by mass transit. PIA has advocated for planning for mass transit connectivity between Hurstville - Bankstown – Parramatta - Macquarie Park / Norwest
- Reconceiving orbital / N-S links would open up substantial urban growth potential as well as offering choices for residents to access the region differently and independently of congestion of the inner network.
- Likewise PIA support metro extension to Leppington and Macarthur from Aerotropolis towards Rouse Hill - to support better outer N-S transport connections though outer Western Sydney.

**Need for integrated transport planning for new suburbs and urban density**

- Transport and land use are interrelated and need to be taken into account when planning for new suburbs.
- Tying in the renewal / housing opportunities along potential orbital and other planned mass transit alignments.
- Role for integrated plans tying in nodes and coordination in re-zonings to ensure that land surrounding transport nodes have both enabling transport infrastructure and amenity.
- A renewed focus on urban renewal means a different transport system – networks / less radial / more orbital and at a local scale more walkable.
- Opportunity for a Transport Orientated Development SEPP to greater enable density and renewal around new and emerging transit hubs.

**Bus services focus – prioritising bus services to rail stations and schools**

- Western Sydney contains some of the most disadvantaged suburbs with low incomes and low provision of public transport services. This limits access to jobs, schools, tertiary institutions and other services such as hospitals, resulting in social isolation and higher crime rates.
- Provision of regular bus services to rail stations, employment centres and education services is a quick and lower cost solution and can reduce car dependency.

- Better integration with other transport modes (i.e. trains) to ensure easy transfers and appropriate trip lengths.
- Future land releases should have 'head start' bus programs to provide access to points of interest (e.g. schools) before the land development is completed. Bus 'head start' programs (provide infrastructure before development) ensure good public transport from the get go.
- School public transport - consider removing distance from home to school limits for school children so more students can access public transport discounts.

### **Support for Metro West – and extension**

- PIA supports the Metro West proposal both to relieve heavy rail congestion and to support increased densification around stations potentially supported by improvements to access and amenity part funded via value capture opportunities.
- There is also an opportunity to consider extensions to the metro network linking Western Sydney via the Metro to additional destinations in the inner South East.
- The heavy rail western line is at capacity with passengers experiencing excessive levels of train crowding. Over the years NSW state governments from both sides of politics had concluded that extra capacity on the western line is needed and a metro system is the solution. The latest Sydney Metro West project went through a business case process which considered multiple alignments and station locations. The role of the Sydney Metro West is to:
  - provide additional capacity to the overcrowded western rail corridor services,
  - provide access to mass transport to new suburbs,
  - provide an opportunity for Transit Oriented Development around new stations,
  - provide quicker access between the Sydney CBD and Parramatta,
  - support broader development of Sydney.
- The Sydney Metro West project has absorbed a large amount of funds in planning and land acquisitions. This project will encourage more use of public transport and better economic and environmental outcomes for all of Sydney.

### **Planning for local accessibility**

- PIA appreciates that transit links work as part of system of overlapping local / district and city networks. Mass transit works best where local access functions well.
- One of the key ideas underpinning the Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities is the 30-minute city. This aims to increase the proportion of residents who can reach their nearest metropolitan centre within 30 minutes using public or active transport.
- The 15-minute neighbourhood is an extension of this concept which emphasises local accessibility and the role of active transport: everyone should be able to access essential goods and services within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from their home.
- This type of neighbourhood is more economically efficient, more sociable and healthier than car-based settlement. Workplace flexibility has increased the importance of our local places. Although the clustering dynamic of the urban core remains, people now prefer to spend more time working from home in their local neighbourhood.
- This demands improvement of local active transport networks to allow short trips to be completed safely and comfortably without the need for a car (ref: Greater Sydney Commission 2020, 'City-shaping impacts of COVID-19).

### **Promoting Active Transport in Western Sydney**

- Building safe, healthy, attractive and climate-friendly streets in Western Sydney is more important than ever as the city adapts to flexible and remote working. Treating some streets as places and encouraging walking and cycling improves health, reduces the cost of living and supports local economic activity. The environmental benefits of reduced car-dependence are a win for the entire region and important to promote health and wellbeing outcomes as well as sustainability initiatives.
- PIA support resourcing, funding and implementing the Active Transport Strategy. Active transport will help to keep our school kids healthy, our suburbs and communities more connected and our streets more liveable.
- PIA have called for immediate actions on:
  - Committing to funding and delivery of priority active transport initiatives and
  - Elevating the status of an Active Transport Ministerial Portfolio – and keeping all Transport Departments under one agency. This would have economic as well as efficiency benefits. There would be more opportunity to coordinate works and programs with a full suite of consistent stakeholders and communities consulted, rather than a piecemeal process. Better active transport facilities at train stations (i.e. bike racks or buses i.e. bike racks to encourage greater uptake).
- PIA also support resourcing, funding and implementing the Active Transport Strategy. Active transport will help to keep our school kids healthy, our suburbs and communities more connected and our streets more liveable. The key elements of the strategy should be reaffirmed:
  - Completing Strategic Cycleways Corridors Program
  - Reaffirming the key guidelines (i.e. The Movement and Place Practitioners Guide, Walking Space Guide, Cycling Design Toolbox, Network Planning in Precincts Guide, NSW Public Spaces Charter and NSW Guide to Walkable public space)
  - Strengthening the governance framework for TfNSW's Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy
  - Safe and Active Routes to Schools Project.
  - Travel Behaviour Change programs/incentives

### **Infrastructure delivery and value uplift**

- Public investment in mass transit infrastructure contributes to land value uplift to land owners which benefit from rezonings that are enabled. PIA has supported State and local Government sharing an increment of unearned uplift to reinvest in supporting infrastructure and amenity benefits.
- In addition, the Housing and Productivity Contribution will collect a development contribution to support infrastructure delivery in the region. It is not yet clear how the funds would be distributed towards priorities in Western Sydney.

### **ATTACHMENT B – Case Study: How Transport Housing Policy can make or break inclusivity outcomes - cost burden (R Islam (2023) PIA New Planner Magazine)**

Distance and lack of reasonable public transport options in parts of Western Sydney can force residents to rely on car travel and expend greater fuel costs. While excessive public transport costs and times further disadvantage people in these areas. The cost of housing needs to consider the increased cost of travel compared to inner city area...further cementing economic differences in groups who can only afford fringe housing options. Looking at the examples of

someone who lives in Middleton Grange (outer South West) and someone who lives in Wentworth Point (Sydney Olympic Park) , using their midpoints we can make a comparison.

<b>Origin</b>	<b>Middleton Grange</b>	<b>Wentworth Point</b>
<b>Destination</b>	<b>Townhall Station</b>	<b>Townhall Station</b>
Time (one trip)	2 hours	48 min
Time both ways yearly (*2*250 weekdays )	1000 Hours	400 Hours
Ticket cost	\$10.29	\$5.91
Ticket cost both ways Yearly	\$5,145	\$2955

Figure 2: Comparison of travel cost between Middleton Grange and Wentworth Point (Source: Islam, R – transport info)

From Middleton Grange, there is 600 hours extra travel and \$2,190 more on public transport tickets each year. Whilst the cost of property in Wentworth Point may be higher than that of Middleton Grange these sort of cost differences need to be considered before we can decide what is truly the more expensive option.

## **ATTACHMENT B – INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Inquiry into the current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney**

1. That Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts inquire into and report on the current and future public transport needs for Western Sydney, and in particular:

- (a) the availability and accessibility of public transport services across Western Sydney, the adequacy of connectivity between public transport hubs and commercial hubs and any gaps in services
- (b) the current and anticipated levels of demand for public transport services and the public transport requirements to meet this demand
- (c) the changing nature of public transport needs due to shifting demographics, new suburbs, planned infrastructure and increased density
- (d) the social, economic and planning impacts of vehicle dependency and poorly integrated public transport
- (e) the affordability compared with other areas of Greater Sydney and New South Wales and relative to means
- (f) the role of public transport and future transport technologies to reduce car dependency in Western Sydney, including barriers to improving public transport services
- (g) the role of the public and private sector, including local government and the use of innovative funding models, such as transit oriented development and value capture mechanisms, in public transport provision
- (h) the staffing and future workforce planning, taking into account predicted service demand based on predicted population growth in Western Sydney
- (i) any other related matters.

2. That the committee report by 29 March 2024.