

**Submission
No 47**

INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Organisation: City of Parramatta
Date Received: 18 September 2023

NSW Legislative Council
Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the
Arts

Email:
PortfolioCommittee6@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Our Reference F2019/00088

Contact Gail Connolly

Telephone

Email

18 September 2023

Dear Chairperson,

RE: Submission by City of Parramatta Council - Inquiry into the current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney

In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, the City of Parramatta Council (Council) is pleased to offer this submission.

Council has long advocated for improvements to current and the provision of new public transport in and around Parramatta. It regards public transport as a critical need for the people who live, work and visit the City of Parramatta and is reflected in three of our key strategic documents:

Community Strategic Plan (updated 2022) has Accessibility as one of its six goals: *We can all take part and get to where we want to go.* To help realise this goal it identifies two strategic actions in response to the City's public transport needs:

- A.2.1 Advocate for public transport to connect our neighbourhoods and the Greater Sydney region.
- A.2.2 Connect our City with safe, equitable, and enjoyable networks for pedestrians and people riding bikes.

Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2017) has a goal to increase walking and cycling to 10% of all trips in the LGA by 2038. This goal is in response to feedback from our community who identify transport and congestion as major issues and want our City to improve in sustainable ways. This goal is supported by Council's Bike Plan, CBD Pedestrian Strategy and Parramatta Ways Walking Strategy.

Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020) identifies a planning priority to improve active walking and cycling infrastructure and access to public and shared transport. To achieve this, it outlines several policy directions and actions including:

- Advocating for accelerating the delivery of the Sydney Metro West
- Advocating for expedited delivery of Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2
- Advocating for other city-shaping transport (Parramatta to Epping, Parramatta to Western Sydney Airport, Parramatta to Norwest, Parramatta to Kogarah via Bankstown and Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2) and with improved walking and cycling access and public spaces for those services.

Contact us:

council@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au | 02 9806 5050
@cityofparramatta | PO Box 32, Parramatta, NSW 2124
ABN 49 907 174 773 | cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

Generally public transport infrastructure and services play three important roles for our city: increasing access and mobility for all our residents, workers and visitors; providing healthier and less polluting transport; and supporting the roles of our centres within Metropolitan Sydney. Active and public transport need to be considered together as very few public transport trips can be completed without some walking or occasionally cycling to access a train station, bus or light rail stop or ferry wharf.

For Sydney to truly function as a Global City requires strong and continued investment in public transport in Western Sydney commensurate with its expected population growth and contribution to the State economy. Council's position on the different modes of transport within the City of Parramatta and Western Sydney are:

Sydney Metro West

Council strongly supports the Sydney Metro West Project because of the city-shaping role it will play in strengthening key precincts such as Westmead, Parramatta CBD and Sydney Olympic Park together with the added accessibility and mobility it will give to people living, working and visiting Western Sydney. Council supports additional stations along the Metro West line at Camellia and Newington to support planned and future growth.

Council has prepared a submission to the NSW Legislative Assembly, Committee on Transport and Infrastructure's Inquiry into the Sydney Metro West project. A copy will be provided with this submission.

Parramatta Light Rail

Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) Stage 2 from Camellia to Sydney Olympic Park was originally included in the State Government's preferred network for light rail in the Central City. In response, significant planning and investment has occurred to facilitate increased residential development along part of the alignment. This project is important to our community and the development of the Central City as it provides much needed improved transport connections to and between significant growth precincts such as Melrose Park and Wentworth Point.

The current preferred alignment of PLR Stage 2 would service important precincts like Rydalmere and Ermington where there are significant opportunities for urban renewal. It also capitalises on the initial investment of PLR Stage 1 and supports a much-needed mode shift in the Central City from private cars to public transport.

Expanding the Metro/RailNetwork

In December 2018, Council considered the Central City Rail Economic Impact Study, an economic analysis of the opportunity provided by four new rail lines serving the Central City proposed by the then State Government's Transport Strategy, *Future Transport 2056*. The report found clearly that a heavy rail, mass transit network centred on Parramatta was needed to support the growth of the City, ease congestion, and recalibrate the jobs imbalance between West and East. Council resolved to accept the report and advocate for the following priorities for future rail links to Parramatta:

Priority 1 – link between Parramatta and Epping

Priority 2 – link between Parramatta and Western Sydney Airport

Priority 3 – link between Parramatta and Norwest

Priority 4 – link between Parramatta and Kogarah via Bankstown.

Council has taken every opportunity since the Central City Rail Report was released to advocate for north-south and east-west rail lines through the Parramatta CBD.

Parramatta CBD

Council's Parramatta CBD Integrated Transport Plan (ITP), which was endorsed for submission to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to support Council's CBD Planning Proposal in July 2021, identified a shift away from car mode share to walking/cycling and public transport is needed to serve our growing City, and it identified the need to provide additional infrastructure to cater for this demand. Council considered that State and Local Governments share responsibilities for transport, and the two levels of government need to work together on solutions. The next step should be to progress the Parramatta CBD Access Strategy work which has been delayed and should recommence immediately. The ITP identified several relevant actions for the Parramatta CBD which should be pursued in the Access Strategy work, including:

- Promoting walking and cycling as a means of accessing the CBD and improving facilities
- Providing efficient management of parking, including consideration of park and ride locations outside Parramatta CBD
- Planning and implementing rail connections to Parramatta from all Metropolitan Sydney
- Improving the coverage, frequency and accessibility of the public transport network
- Working with the NSW Government to investigate the prioritisation of on-street public transport services (such as buses and light rail) and investigating new bus layover areas
- Securing surface and underground corridor protection for future public transport services
- Establishing travel demand management programs for Parramatta CBD

Bus Services

Council has resolved on several occasions to advocate for increased bus services, particularly those serving the Olympic Peninsula and between Parramatta and Newington. The ITP for the CBD notes that a significant increase in bus services will be needed to provide access to our growing CBD. The ITP highlighted the need to plan for increased services and improve infrastructure including reducing pinch points, investigating options to provide greater prioritisation and improving layover capacity.

Ferry Services

In February 2020, Council responded to proposed changes to the F3 Parramatta River ferry service. Council advocated for expansion of ferry services including improving frequencies and speed between Parramatta and the Sydney Olympic Park Ferry Wharf in Wentworth Point.

Active Transport

Walking and cycling facilities complement public transport infrastructure and services. Through its ongoing capital works and maintenance programs and implementation of its Bike Plan, and CBD Pedestrian Strategy and Parramatta Ways Walking Strategy, Council delivers numerous walking, cycling and shared path facilities every year. It funds these activities through a combination of

general revenue, developer contributions and State and Federal grants. Council expects to continue to provide these facilities for its residents, workers and visitors with ongoing financial assistance from all levels of government.

Recommendations

Council requests that any formal inquiry findings refer to the Council's position on the key issues critical to improving public transport within Parramatta and Western Sydney and recommends that the NSW Government:

- a) Commit to and fund the delivery of the Sydney Metro West project as a central plank to facilitating increased housing supply across Metropolitan Sydney.
- b) Include in any revised business case for the Sydney Metro West project new stations at Camellia and Newington and at a minimum, future-proof their provision.
- c) Commit to and fund the delivery of the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 to support existing high density residential precincts and to facilitate further urban renewal in the City of Parramatta.
- d) Provide a clear timetable for delivery of additional Metro/Rail links within Western Sydney with particular emphasis on connecting Parramatta to other parts of the region and the aerotropolis.
- e) Commit to the Parramatta CBD Access Strategy being completed as the next stage to further improve accessibility within the Parramatta CBD.
- f) Provide increased capacity for bus, ferry and active transport networks.

Council has a strong interest in the current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney and would be pleased to further contribute to the Inquiry. My office can be contacted on

Yours sincerely,

 Gail Connolly PSM
Chief Executive Officer