

Roydon Ng
PO Box 470
Lidcombe NSW 1825
0426 500 330
roydon@restoreinnerwestline.org.au
contact@ecotransit.org.au



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Keith Ng
Planner
NSW Department of Planning
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Keith Ng:

EcoTransit is transport that supports a sustainable economy and environment. The fewer resources used by the transport sector, the more efficient our economy is, and the less damage is done to the environment.

Public transport, walking and cycling fit these criteria. Urban freeway development that entrenches prolific car use does not support **EcoTransit** based economies and cities.

EcoTransit is a public transport advocacy group operating out of Sydney, but with a focus on all regional and rural parts of NSW that need better public transport. EcoTransit is a not-for-profit organisation made up of volunteers dedicated to the promotion of EcoTransit development.

EcoTransit advocates improving the local environment of towns, suburbs, and cities in NSW, by shifting transport from invasive modes like the private motor car that produce elevated levels of air, noise, and water pollution to the less polluting public transport modes.

EcoTransit is dedicated to the preservation of NSW's natural environment and heritage areas.

EcoTransit members are transport planning consultants, academics, trainspotters, bus drivers, commuters, cyclists, engineers, pedestrians, and combinations of all of the above.

We thank you for the opportunity to **provide comments** on the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 Environmental Impact Statement.

Please accept this letter as the submission made on behalf of **EcoTransit**.

Neither the submission's author nor EcoTransit has made any reportable political donations.

For more information about our position on Parramatta Light Rail and public transport, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,
Roydon Ng
EcoTransit Member

EcoTransit Submission on Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2

EcoTransit would like to provide comments regarding Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 for the construction and operation of an approximately 10km two-way light rail line connecting Stage 1 and the Parramatta CBD to Sydney Olympic Park via Camellia, Rydalmere, Ermington, Melrose Park, and Wentworth Point.

EcoTransit believes that Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 and 2 should operate fully with overhead wiring to reduce costs, reduce incidents arising from delays of pantographs failing to connect, and improve efficiency for the overall network.

Route Alignment

EcoTransit does not support the truncation of Parramatta Light Rail to Carter Street which is short of the original proposal for the line terminating at Strathfield.

The Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 should not merely be constructed to increase property values of the Carter Street Precinct and act predominantly as last-mile transit to provide connecting patronage for Sydney Metro West at Olympic Park Station.

Carter Street and the surrounding precinct should be designed to enable a future extension of light rail services. Please refer to the Maps in the Appendix outlining preferred alignments for Light Rail extension.

Extension to Strathfield and Sydney CBD

Significant opportunity exists for the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 to improve connectivity for the Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula with the Inner West.

Traffic congestion around the Underwood Road roundabout and Sydney Olympic Park has worsened in recent years, and WestConnex has done little to improve local journeys, hence Light Rail from Olympic Park to Strathfield is a vital link to connect communities, support jobs and urban renewal along the corridor.

Sydney Metro West and Parramatta Light Rail both should have a place in the corridor between Olympic Park and Strathfield as each serve as a response to different forms of commuter needs.

The Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 should not preclude a future connection and establishment of Parramatta Road Light Rail (to connect with Sydney CBD Light Rail at Central) as the fulfilment of the WestConnex project's planning conditions for 2 lanes of public transport along Parramatta Road.

Connecting the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula including Wentworth Point to the Inner West through light rail creates confidence in its permanence that ephemeral bus routes can never have, so light rail provides certainty for long-term investment by employers, developers, homebuyers, and small businesses.

Please see the **EcoTransit** webpage for Parramatta Road Light Rail at:

<https://ecotransit.org.au/wp/policy-priorities/priority-projects/parramatta-road-light-rail/>

Extension to Lidcombe (Cumberland Council)

EcoTransit believes the priority for improving transit between Olympic Park and Lidcombe is the establishment of Pippita CityExpress (using the Sydney Trains T7 Olympic Park line) and Pippita Rail Trail (Active Transport parallel to the T7 Olympic Park line on the former Abattoir Line).

The Pippita CityExpress service can provide a 19 minute express train from Lidcombe to Central via Pippita, Olympic Park, Pippita, (then through Flemington Junction) and Strathfield.

Please see the **EcoTransit** webpage for Pippita CityExpress at:

<https://ecotransit.org.au/wp/policy-priorities/priority-projects/pippita-centre/>

If the Cumberland Council proposal for Light Rail from Carter Street to Lidcombe were to be adopted, the preferred alignment is via Hill Road – Parramatta Road – John Street.

The cost of Pippita Station (which provides heavy rail for north Lidcombe residents and commuters driving from Greater Western Sydney) with an adjoining Park N Ride (off the M4 Motorway in the Olympic Park Hockey Centre Carpark) would cost \$147 million¹ in comparison to \$550 million² for light rail from Carter Street to Lidcombe Station.

Public Transport in the Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula

EcoTransit supports an additional Sydney Metro West station between Olympic Park and Parramatta such as at Silverwater or Camelia or Rydalmere.

The Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro West will not be enough to reduce car dependency in the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula, especially around Silverwater and Newington.

Noting the route length of Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 with its current alignment and journey times, integrated multi-modal timetabling must be undertaken to avoid the Light Rail becoming an orphaned transport project.

In the interim, the 401 Bus from Lidcombe Station to Carter Street should be restored to its former route servicing Olympic Park Station and Sydney Olympic Park Wharf.

EcoTransit opposes the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project team's proposal and planning for light rail to replace Sydney Trains on the T7 Olympic Park line and the T3 Bankstown to Lidcombe shuttle line³.

¹ Sydney Alliance calculated the cost of Pippita CityExpress to be \$130 million in 2015. Based on the RBA Inflation Calculator (2021), the revised cost of Pippita CityExpress is now approximately \$147 million.

https://web.archive.org/web/20150222084627/http://www.sydneyalliance.org.au:80/m4_park_and_ride_faqs

² The 12km Sydney CBD & South East Light Rail line has a cost of [\\$3.3 billion](#). Hence the per kilometre cost of the Light Rail is approximately \$275 million, therefore a 2km Light Rail from Carter Street to Lidcombe would be \$550 million.

³ Sydney Metro City & Southwest: Alternative Shuttle Options for T3 Bankstown to Lidcombe line and T7 Olympic Park Line (Light Rail Transit Concept), obtained under GIPA Act and published at <https://www.savet3.org/bankstown-lidcombe>

Light Rail Infrastructure

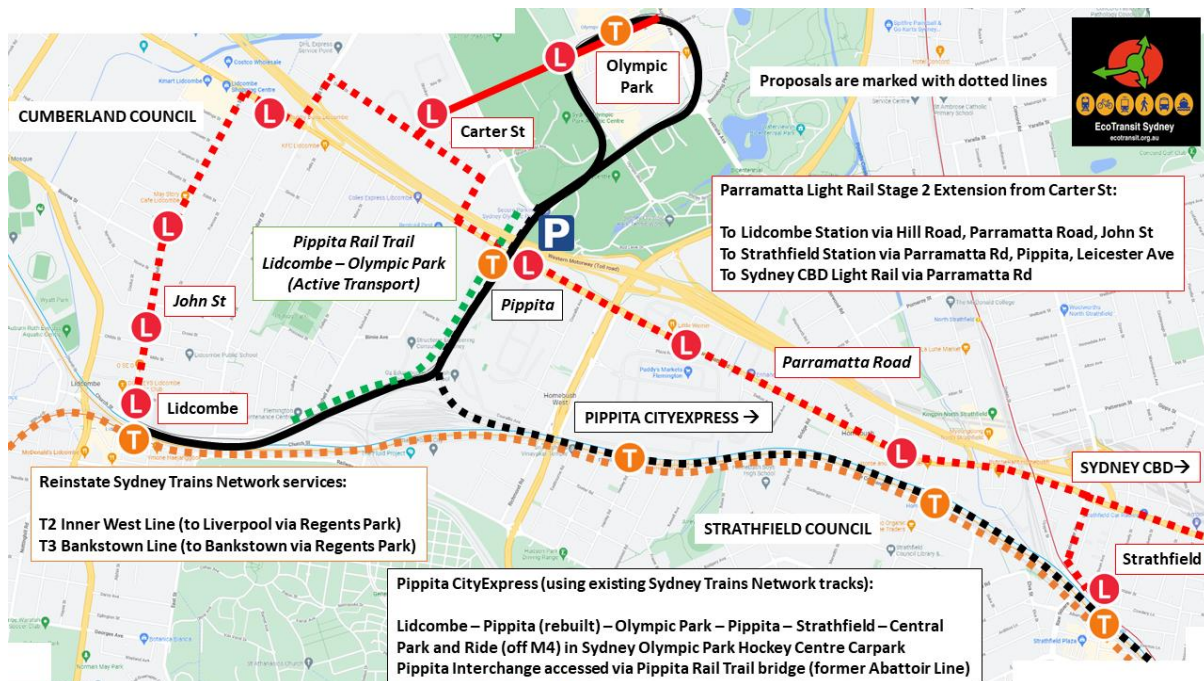
EcoTransit holds the view that light rail should have overhead wiring. Overhead wiring reduces overall operational and maintenance costs. Wire-free trams cost more and are less reliable.

Incidents of the light rail pantograph not connecting with overhead wiring or failing to retract correctly have caused avoidable delays on the Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail.

Pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety is also an important reason for overhead wiring. Light rail infrastructure that is clearly visible to all road users reduces unnecessary intrusions and accidents in the light rail corridor.

EcoTransit believes that light rail track construction should be designed to minimize the impact on the environment including increased CO₂ arising from excessive concrete. Ballasted sleeper track which can be turfed or sown in with robust plants should be considered as well.

Appendix 1: Map of Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 Extension (to Lidcombe, Strathfield, Sydney CBD), Pippita CityExpress, Pippita Rail Trail, and reinstatement of T2 Inner West Line (City to Liverpool via Regents Park) & T3 Bankstown Line (City to Bankstown via Regents Park)



Please see the animated map of EcoTransit proposals for the Lidcombe - Pippita - Olympic Park - Strathfield area at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ8lCI1uHfc>

A summary of the EcoTransit proposals is included in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2: EcoTransit proposals for Lidcombe - Pippita - Olympic Park - Strathfield

1. Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 Extension from Olympic Park to Lidcombe (via Carter St, Hill Rd, Parramatta Rd, John St). Stopping at Parramatta Rd, Carool St/John St, Chadwick Reserve/John St, Lidcombe Station/John St.
2. Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 Extension from Olympic Park to Strathfield (via Carter St, Birnie Ave, Parramatta Rd, Leicester Ave). Stopping at Pippita, Flemington Markets/Parramatta Rd, Underwood Rd/Parramatta Rd, Strathfield Station/Everton Rd. An additional extension of Light Rail along Parramatta Road east of Leicester Ave would continue to Railway Square to join the Sydney CBD Light Rail.
3. Pippita CityExpress (19 minute direct train) from Lidcombe to Central via Olympic Park (via Pippita [rebuilt] and Strathfield). Stopping at Lidcombe, Pippita, Olympic Park, Pippita, Strathfield, Redfern, and Central (with optional extension to City Circle). Pippita CityExpress uses existing T7 Olympic Park Line tracks and is the Special Event train to Central with an added Pippita Station.
4. Pippita Rail Trail (active transport link) from Lidcombe to Olympic Park on the former Abattoir Line including the disused rail bridge parallel to/west of the T7 Olympic Park Line. A dedicated cycleway/off-road shared path between Lidcombe Station and the Flemington Maintenance Centre (Bachell Ave) separate from the T7 Olympic Park line is preferable.
5. Pippita Centre including interchange for Train and Light Rail (Parramatta Rd), and new multi-storey Park N Ride (including vehicle access off the M4 Motorway) in the Sydney Olympic Park Hockey Centre Carpark (P4). Pippita Train Station is connected to Park N Ride using the Pippita Rail Trail active transport link. The Park N Ride would also provide parking for the future high-speed rail/fast rail from Sydney (Olympic Park) to Newcastle as well as the growing commercial/residential precinct in Carter St/Olympic Park.
6. Reinstate Sydney Trains Network services on the T2 Inner West Line: City to Liverpool via Regents Park and T3 Bankstown Line: City to Bankstown via Regents Park.
7. (Not shown in Appendix 1 map) New Western Express Line (instead of Sydney Metro West) operating per Sydney Trains Network standards from Sydney CBD and Central to Strathfield to Parramatta in tunnel then joining the T1 Western Line at Westmead, providing new track pair for the Blue Mountains and Western Line services to avoid congestion of stations east of Parramatta.

For more information, please visit: www.EcoTransit.org.au