

MRAG Submission Preferred Metro Project 2018

18/7/2018

Summary

It is acknowledged that there have been substantial changes in The Preferred Project for Metro South West however during construction of the Metro there will still be significant disruption in Marrickville. Many aspects have not changed. From 2019 till 2024 there will still be rail possessions, full and partial road closures, increased traffic & congestion from replacement busses & project related haulage and sleep deprivation from noise and vibration. This disruption will be amplified by the commencement and completion of residential construction related to the Urban Renewal Corridor.

Loss of Heritage & Character of Marrickville

Although there have been changes in relation to retention of heritage station buildings, entrances, platforms and bridges developing areas surrounding stations will still result in extensive loss of heritage. Preferred Project Response about development is dismissive. Although station buildings will be retained, surrounding the stations there are many more historic properties including period houses, which are not listed near the station precincts. Project's Secondary Objective is "to serve & stimulate urban development" & in 2.7 "The project will play a role in supporting transit orientated urban development around stations". The Transport Administration Amendment Bill (Sydney Metro) 2018 was recently passed to create The Sydney Metro Authority which will have greater land acquisition powers and will be ripe for control by a private corporation such as MTR Hong Kong with a business model based on transport value capture along transport routes. Residential Towers planned around other Metro stops at Caste Hill, Tallawong, Crows Nest, Martin Place, Pitt St & Waterloo justify our concern as these developments are most unsuitable for stations along the Metro South route.

The Sydenham/Bankstown Urban renewal Strategy, linked to The Metro Project requires 6,000 new dwellings to be constructed within 800 metres on Marrickville Station. Thousands of historic, heritage/period houses (estimated 4,000) are targeted for demolition to be replaced by medium density/high rise developments that will destroy the character of Marrickville and other historic suburbs along the line. These plans for mass rezoning along the Sydenham/Bankstown line are strongly opposed by communities.

Timeframe: There is no confidence that the 2024 deadline will be met. This concern is justified given the delays on the City to Eastern Suburbs Light Rail and the West Connex and the complexity of the still extensive conversion works.

Estimated Cost: There are similar concerns regarding the Preferred Project's forecast budget. No cost analysis or business case has been presented to justify such substantial public funds expenditure. New unanticipated cost addition includes expensive import duties on carriages not built in Australia. MRAG is of the opinion that the social & financial costs of the project are not balanced by the level of benefit from the project.

Cumulative Impacts: Claim that “Cumulative impacts would likely result in reduced cumulative impacts due to reduced intensity & extent of construction works compared to exhibited project” is simplistic. This major project over 11 suburbs, spanning 5+ years will experience major cumulative impacts which will have a major impact on tens of thousands.

The impact of the Sydenham/Bankstown Urban Renewal Strategy is not considered as part of the Cumulative Impact Assessment due to the “draft nature of the plan” and the fact that the “construction timeframe is unknown” which is a most unacceptable omission considering that the expectation is that 35,400 new homes will be built along the line.

The cumulative impacts of increase in population density, vehicle use, increase in traffic congestion, noise, public transport demands, loss of heritage, loss of urban canopy & biodiversity, loss of amenity and social impacts will have major impact on current population & service provision and needs to be factored into Preferred Project.

Rail Possessions

Marrickville Residents will be severely inconvenienced due to rail line “possessions.” Although there is a reduction of time from 71– 53 weeks residents/commuters will suffer a great loss quality of life with disruption to their lives over 5 + Years. Living with noise, dust & vibrations, sleep disturbance from night-time weekly work, disrupted & longer, journeys by public transport or car & loss of amenity far outweighs the net gains of the project.

Noise & Vibration

Suburbs with the worst noise impacts will be, Dulwich Hill, Marrickville Campsie, because of number of residential properties along the track. Approximately 7,000 residents along the corridor are at risk of sleep disturbance. Very hard to determine how it was calculated that only 87 Marrickville people would now be impacted considering the large number of residents living so close to the station. There are e.g. 221 units in The Revolution apartments alone, which run along the line next to the station.

Road network performance in Marrickville

Congestion will be a major problem during construction and there will be significant travel impacts considering increased numbers of construction haulage vehicles, work vehicles, rail replacement bus services & additional bus services. Increased traffic congestion throughout Marrickville, will impact on intersection performance, the existing bus services & increasing hazards for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists sharing the roads.

Preferred Project claim that it would result in significant reduction in construction traffic impacts when compared to possessions for exhibited project is not accurate. Table 15.2 indicates some small improvements from EIS however 7 intersection performances will still experience deterioration of the level of service.

Poor Community Consultation

Community information sessions, such as those in Town Halls, community festivals & The Royal Easter Show are not consultation.

Community Sessions have been poorly attended due to limited timeframe, previous experience at such sessions and the knowledge that you will not be listened to nor your concerns taken seriously.

Measuring success by numbers of encounters & the lack of engagement with communities along the line gives communities little hope for meaningful consultation in the future.

To present a 1,000 page document to be read, considered, researched well in order to make a well informed submission requires much more time than has been granted.

The process to develop a submission is almost as demanding as a university assignment which makes it difficult for full time employed, time poor people, those who speak other languages or who have limited English literacy skills.

Commuter/Residents' concerns

- Claim that Metro is needed in order to upgrade stations with lifts and create better access, however upgrades have been undergone in a timely fashion along all other train lines without the expense or disruption of The Metro.
- Design of Metro described as having a mix of seating and standing, however the majority of the passengers will be standing with a reduced capacity from 896 to 378
- Claim that Project is customer focussed is not accepted considering complete disregard for aging population, extended families travelling with young children and customer comfort with passengers forced to stand over long distances.
- Claim that trip will be more comfortable, however not if you are elderly, short statured, tired, pregnant, not physically able to hold on whilst standing, travelling with young children or unwell and have to stand all the way (66kms) or from any station to the city or to Chatswood or on the journey home you will not consider your trip as comfortable. Manners/courtesy regarding Priority seating have been long forgotten.
- Capacity levels quoted would be extremely uncomfortable, based on "crush capacity in Tokyo with pushers to get people onto trains. The actual capacity does not take into account back packs, baby back packs, luggage or bikes & prams.
- Claim that Metro will provide better access to Education facilities is not correct as there is no stop at Redfern for Sydney University. Students and staff will have to back track after interchanging. Younger students travelling to school will be faced with interchanges rather than a direct route.
- Claim that Metro will create a more modern service could be easily fixed with removal of battered old dirty rolling stock & replacement with more modern comfortable Waratah trains and improved signalling system (as has been mooted for two other lines)
- Commuters have expressed concern that there will be no driver or conductor on Metro. and fear for commuter safety on long underground stretches. The fact that commuters can see through the length of the carriage does not allay security fears. There is supposed to be CCTV however it is implied that commuters will be responsible for "active surveillance"
- Security issues are still of concern to commuters regarding long distances underground and include "What happens if someone lights a fire while underground? What happens if the computer control system is hacked and customers are underground & locked inside? What happens when power black outs occur? How would wheelchair customers be removed from a Metro without the guidance of on-board staff? What will happen in the event of racial abuse, fighting breaking out, aggressive behaviour from drug affected customers or terrorist threats/acts without trained on board staff?
- Monitoring of Metro at Tallerwang Rd does not dispel concerns.
- Docklands light Rail in London is driverless but all trains have a conductor on board.
- Customer assistants are promised at every station and moving through the network during day and night" however with constant cuts to the rail network workforce, what guarantee can be given that this will be the case long term?
- On Metro trains there are only 2 multipurpose areas for prams, luggage and bicycles, whilst on current trains there are 2 per carriage and they are very congested on weekends when extended families travel to the city.
- Commuters are concerned that the initial use of 6 carriage trains will create overcrowding and that overcrowding will continue to be a problem as population densities increase along the line. With 2026 passenger demand forecast of daily customer movement of :
- 23,800 for Bankstown, 13,800 for Punchbowl, 11,400 for Wiley

- Park, 14,800 for Lakemba, 13,00 for Belmore, 13,800 for Campsie, 14,200 for Canterbury how much space will there be left for the 14,200 for Canterbury, 9,400 for Hurlstone Park, 13,800 at Dulwich Hill, 13,800 for Marrickville and unknown number at Sydenham and Waterloo?
- Travel time reductions are not believable considering that commuters west of Bankstown, may have several train changes, and any commuter going to Circular Quay (a popular work, family, ferry, Cruise line and Opera House stop) may have difficulty walking 800 metres. Passengers from Marrickville to Central would save up to 4 minutes, however if they needed to change trains for a city circle train their 4 minutes would be quickly lost.
- On page 74 commuters west of Bankstown are effectively being told to go backwards to Cabramatta & interchange for trains to the city. Their travel times will definitely not be improved.
- Terminating a train at Bankstown will involve a major operational change.
- For 6 of the 9 trains west of Bankstown travel times will increase for trips to city with interchanges for Bankstown Metro, possibly Sydenham or Central for city access.
- 9 Stations west of Bankstown will lose all direct city trains & 19,000 commuters will face interchanges. This number will increase dramatically as population densities increase in the south western suburbs.
- Alternative transport arrangements during possession periods will have a major impact on commuters and their families. These include loss of kiss & ride, potential loss of dedicated & informal commuter parking areas, road closures and road network changes, leaving earlier, getting home later, with longer journeys needing to be planned for and family routines changed over a long periods of time adding to the stresses of daily life.
- 10.4.3 EIS Changes to parking states that "there are 1,200 unrestricted on street parking spaces within 400 metres of Marrickville station with 81% utilisation and that there would be capacity to absorb temporary loss of space during construction. (Local residents would doubt these statistics), This statement does not however consider all the other construction work that will be happening at the same time within the 400m mark and remains a problem for the preferred Project
- Alternate transport arrangements will have the potential to result in noise & air quality impacts and for an increase in public safety risks due to the increase in vehicles on the road network.
- The Metro will most probably be developed by a Hong Kong developer and there are fears that the line will be privatised and expensive as the private T2 airport line is. Opal card and state set fares will be available at the start but for how long?

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MRAG Position

MRAG opposes the conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown rail line. There are many reasons for this opposition. For the purpose's of this submission the case outlined in The Preferred Project forms the backbone of our opposition.

MRAG is concerned that an opportunity has been lost to extend Sydney's rail network to parts of Sydney that currently don't have a rail service, the decoupling of the Sydenham to Bankstown line from the Sydney heavy rail network, problems to be faced by commuters west of Bankstown, the reduction in seating per train from 896 to 378, the rail service to be leased to a private operator and reducing the public interest, and the residential over development associated with the introduction of the Metro line.

We believe that Sydney needs a good integrated, public transport system, however the Preferred Metro Project as presented still does not provide the best value for taxpayers' money, nor is it an improvement to an already well functioning rail service, considering the disruption over 5+ years and forfeits the opportunity to expand the public transport system to suburbs without a rail link.

In September 2017, Opposition leader Luke Foley said of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro:

“People don’t get a new rail line. Residents get their existing rail line shut for 16 months and 100,000 new residents. The point of the rail upgrades should be to add to the rail network”.

MRAG agrees with Luke Foley.

Recommendation

That:

- The Sydenham to Bankstown rail service not be converted to a Metro service.
- The preferred Project should not be approved because it lacks bipartisan political and community support and is the product of a process that has lacked transparency, democratic decision making and good governance.
- Options for alternative Metro Routes need to be analysed and considered.
- Any extension of The Metro line beyond Sydenham be to suburbs not currently serviced by rail.
- Station upgrades & other necessary works re accessibility be carried out as part of the works schedule for City Rail

That should the Metro construction between Sydenham to Bankstown proceed:

- An embargo be placed on planning “up zonings” in the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban renewal Corridor (SBURC) until after the completion of the Metro Line
- To protect heritage & character along the rail line a full heritage analysis of the corridor should be conducted for the Preferred Project.
- Project needs to appropriately manage impacts of Climate Change & severe weather events on construction & project infrastructure functioning.
- Preferred Project is retaining existing infrastructure where possible & minimising the extent of corridor works however Flooding& Hydrology advice from Sydney Water & Inner West Council need to be heeded not be dismissed.
- The project should address in detail the existing flood risk & anticipated flood management system requirements to service future catchment conditions” and that “Flood management should not rely on existing informal storage.”

- Modelling outside the Marrickville Valley, along the line should be carried out so that a flood management system is designed now so that residual flood risk to people & property is minimised.
- Sustainable initiatives must be reviewed & updated & relevant initiatives implemented including the use of renewable energy to minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
- Drainage design, water sensitive urban design, inclusion of renewable energy sources & assessing & mitigating climate change should be mandatory for all aspects of the project not just when “relevant and feasible.”
- Need to clarify how many hectares of vegetation will need to be removed and minimise the number of trees to be removed.
- Greater effort is needed to retain existing canopy (503+ trees to be removed), considering paucity of urban canopy in area, cumulative impact of loss of trees at other transport development sites and number of years taken to re-establish trees.
- Sydney Airport concern regarding Obstacle limitation surface (OLS) & procedures for air navigational services – aircraft operations (PANS-OPS) surfaces for heights of buildings and cranes in future development of land around the stations in areas around Sydenham, Marrickville & Dulwich Hill needs to be heeded not dismissed.
- Temporary Transport Strategy needs much more planning to minimize disruption for commuters.
- The TTS will have a significant impact on local roads & modeling needs to be done with regard to local streets as well as major intersections.
- Cumulative impacts of increased development from Sydenham/Bankstown Urban Renewal Strategy, population & vehicle numbers and impact of West Connex on Sydenham & Marrickville should not be dismissed but considered and planned for.
- Loss of Parking and worker parking needs a definite plan. Tradies do not catch trains nor will they catch buses when the lines are closed. They drive big trucks which take a lot of street space where parking demands already exceeds supply.
- Any residents affected by vibration, noise, light and dust during the construction period be appropriately compensated and facilities made available to ensure they can maintain healthy lives.
- Residents should be notified as to where noise barriers will be needed.
- Dilapidation reports should be done for all properties that will possibly be affected by construction works.
- The franchising to a private operator is not supported. This has not worked in Melbourne or Newcastle and should not be implemented here.
- The Hong Kong model of value capture development, utilized by MTR Corporation is totally inappropriate for many of the heritage rich, and garden suburbs with unique character along the corridor.

- Any plans to privatise the Metro should be transparent, put to parliamentary vote and business cases made available in the public interest.
- Conductors should be assigned to each Metro train to allay commuters concerns.
- There needs to be much more consultation & cooperation with State planning, local councils & their communities at planning stages.

