

At least ten years ago, the case was being made to extend the Chatswood to Epping heavy rail line through Carlingford to Parramatta. Federal assistance to build the line even became an election issue.

But, as so often has become the case recently, if one political party proposes a project, no matter how worthwhile, the other party is inclined to oppose it.

If, decided on different issues especially in the case of a federal election, the opposing party gains power, the project will not be granted the funding on which it substantially relies.

But the need for the project re-

Are we there yet?

or

On spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar

mains, its delivery is delayed and the benefits foregone, typically for decades.

In the case of the Parramatta Light Rail Project, the need for improved public transport is greater since first proposed as the population to be serviced along its length is projected to increase. This growth will continue unabated.

Along the proposed line are the teaching hospital and related medical services at Westmead, the growing commercial and administrative centre and heavy rail and bus transport hub around Parramatta Square, several Western Sydney University campuses and major new housing developments along the section from Dundas to Carlingford.

But there is a missing link. Residents in these new, soon to be more intensively developed suburbs lining the route, will expect to have convenient access to the established shopping centre at Carlingford Court.

Unfortunately this tantalisingly attractive, high capacity, frequent service is proposed to terminate just short of where they will want to go.

Intensive residential development (some of which is pictured) is nearing completion clustered on the western side of Carlingford station. Nearby vacant land awaits more development.

So long as the Light Rail project is proposed to end at Carlingford station, this will only serve newly increased

numbers of Carlingford residents travelling in one direction i.e., towards Parramatta.

If the Light Rail was extended to follow the route of the earlier proposed Parramatta to Chatswood line, residents east and west of Carlingford Court would have easy public transport access to it.

Therefore, after Carlingford Court, the line should be further extended along the previously proposed route to Epping with a stop to service Epping West Primary school next to the recently upgraded West Epping Park and adjoining YMCA.

Even before the previously mentioned new housing is occupied, the M54 “express” bus service from Parramatta station to Epping station is already running over capacity at times such that in the morning peak, fully loaded buses are often unable to convey passengers from Carlingford to Epping station.

Increasing the number of buses is not a long term solution when the new apartments along the proposed Light Rail line become occupied because Carlingford Road itself is already heavily congested.

The constraints on Carlingford Road are twofold, namely the intersection with Beecroft Road at Epping with traffic coming from the north, the two lane bridge at Epping and the two lanes beyond along Epping Road towards Macquarie Park and the CBD.



Good planning involves trying to anticipate and relieve future problems rather than merely delivering quick fixes to current difficulties—hazard reduction, not back-burning.

In this case, efforts must be taken to address the vexed, long term issue of excessive externally sourced traffic flowing through the Epping junction.

This is why steps must be taken to deliver a future proofed, light rail solution to connecting Parramatta Town centre to the expanded outskirts of the areas for which the City of Parramatta has responsibility.

Thalon Street Carlingford



Sydney's CBD, with its narrow streets, is becoming uncomfortably congested, even for pedestrians. In fact, despite warnings by some, it has been that way for a long time.

Yet for too long, transport and land use planning in Sydney have delivered a hub and spoke design predicated on heavy flows of commuter traffic in the same directions in the morning and evening peaks.

This leads to over-investment in infrastructure to cope with unbalanced commuting loads.

In the pre-digital age, co-locating commercial activity was a given: the stock exchange was operated by open outcry with the representatives of buyers and sellers gathering together at a physical venue.

But trading in financial instruments is now done electronically and remotely. Banks are required to return cheques to central locations for processing but now the volume of cheques being used as a payment medium continues to decline.

Communications during the work day (and beyond) are decreasingly reliant on the participants being co-located. The contacted person's location does not even need to be known. Yet when considering transport and planning proposals, one does not see any acknowledge these changes in the world of work.

From time to time, we are promised planning for the **30 Minute City**, but the conversation rarely progresses beyond the slogan.

An example of this is the burden imposed upon Epping by its Urban

But there is one more thing: the bigger picture

Activation Precinct land use rules.

Employers were virtually banished from Epping to make way for yet more residential accommodation. The question of where these people might find work was neither posed nor answered.

Finding ways of increasing capacity for conveying people to the CBD was an assumed preoccupation.

Consistent with this focus on needing even more commercial space in the CBD was the plan to complete the long-proposed Parramatta to

Chatswood heavy rail connection via Epping. At the time, this was said to be needed to relieve some of the crowding on the CBD to Strathfield part of the Main Western Line.

The advantages of a decentralised city can be seen in a city like Berlin whose U and S Bahn route map is shown. The city has a somewhat smaller population than Sydney, but its activities are not clustered in a predominant small area.

The city is served by a compre-

hensive web of interlocking public transport services leading to the holy grail of minimising the need for private transport.

Sydney has topographical challenges which prevent adopting a closely modelled European city-like plan.

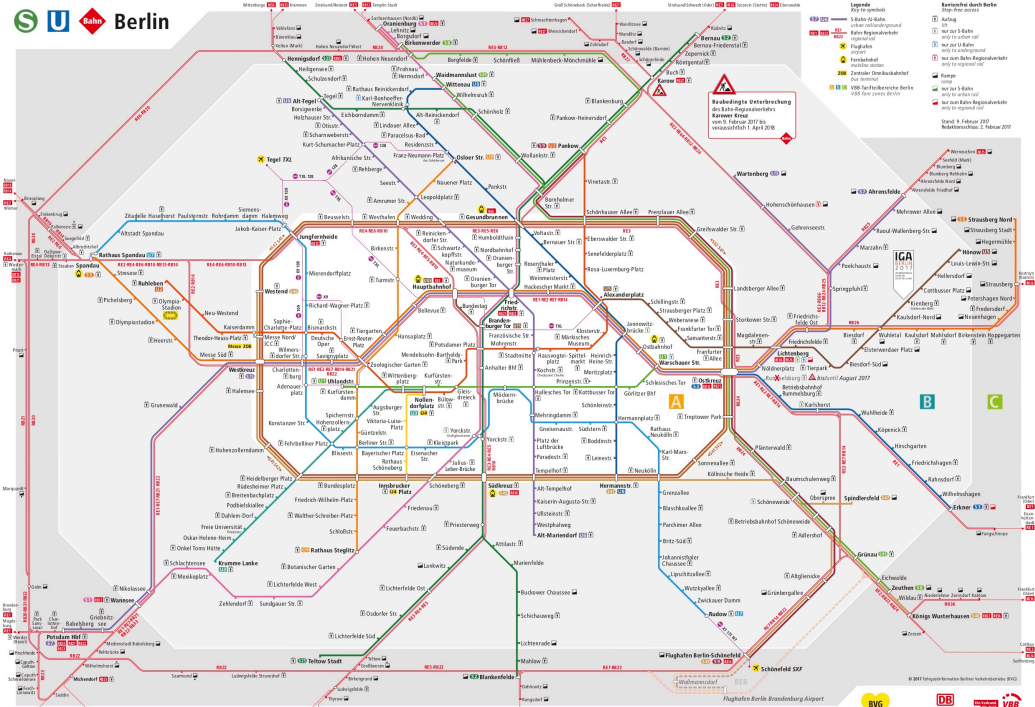
But extending the Parramatta light rail to Epping would be the biggest single move likely to move towards the goal of relieving pressure on the CBD and its immediate environs.

The future will see the spread of the influence of the digital economy with its enhanced communications. As Sydney grows, it is important for people to have easy access to various commercial hubs by public transport as these hubs grow.

Extend the Parramatta Light Rail to Epping. Macquarie Park, Norwest and Parramatta CBD and the residential areas between those centres will then all be linked by frequent public transport services at most requiring one change at Epping.

We have been realising for some time land is not quite as boundless as our national anthem proclaims. As Sydney grows, we should look to see how other cities which have faced similar pressure in the past have attempted to deal with the issues of previously unforeseen population growth.

Extending the Parramatta Light Rail to Epping and connecting these three major hubs would be the biggest single move likely to encourage public transport use.



Linking Parramatta CBD to Macquarie Park to Norwest with one change at Epping