

Item 3.3

Light Rail Along Parramatta Road and Broadway to Green Square via Central Station

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Light rail has transformed not only George Street but the entire city. What was once a grimy street clogged with noisy, polluting buses is now a tree-lined boulevard with quiet and efficient light rail attracting over \$8 billion in private investment.

George Street can be an inspiration for the rejuvenation of Parramatta Road and Broadway with a light rail line that will run to Green Square via Central Station.

The City's vision

Extensive consultation for Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision told us that our communities want increased city greening, more space for people, and improved connectivity to Green Square.

Parramatta Road and Broadway are up to nine lanes wide in some sections. Part of the justification for WestConnex was that it would remove traffic from Parramatta Road allowing it to become a liveable boulevard similar to those in Barcelona and Paris. With WestConnex now open, traffic has greatly reduced, and we must seize the opportunity to realise the City's vision for Broadway – a welcoming, green gateway to the City with trees shading wide footpaths, a separated cycleway, and light rail down the middle of the road.

A new light rail line in Parramatta Road will attract investment in desperately needed new housing contributing towards the National Housing Accord and new local housing targets. Connecting Parramatta Road to Green Square will transport thousands of workers and students to jobs and education, boost businesses, support the 24-hour economy, and contribute to Sydney's net-zero future by taking cars off the roads.

Light rail through the Tech Central Innovation Precinct will also support Sydney's start-up sector estimated to be worth \$102 billion and attracting around \$10 billion investment each year. With improved connectivity, Tech Central could be Sydney's strongest drawcard for attracting talent, investment, scale-ups and global companies looking for an international office location.

While Parramatta Road will still be able to accommodate cars, light rail along the corridor could carry over 14,000 people per hour – the equivalent of 175 buses. The 11-kilometre route will service destinations people want to get to such as the University of Sydney, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Broadway Shopping Centre, Tech Central as well as the library, aquatic centre and other community facilities at Green Square Town Centre.

Securing the Eastern Transit Corridor

At Green Square, light rail has been in the redevelopment plans since the mid-1990s. With planned densities of around 22,000 people per square kilometre, which is among the highest in Australia, transport is a key issue for both residents and businesses.

Over the past 20 years – as Green Square has grown from 2,500 residents to 33,000 with planning underway for another 30,000 by 2041 - the City has negotiated with developers to secure the Eastern Transit Corridor specifically for a mass surface-level transport service.

At \$40 million in Council land value, this preserved corridor at Green Square is 2.5 kilometres long, beginning at Green Square Library and Plaza stretching east along Zetland Avenue, north onto Defries Avenue and on to Gadigal Avenue.

The NSW Government failed to commit to extend Sydney Metro West to Green Square earlier this year. It is critical that an alternative mass transit solution such as light rail is provided for the existing community and thousands more expected to work and live there.

The campaign

Last month, I hosted a roundtable discussion about extending the light rail network along Parramatta Road to Green Square via Central with representatives from key businesses, industry groups and institutions. While acknowledging the challenges of the George Street light rail project, there was overwhelming support for the project.

On 25 July 2024, I attended the Committee for Sydney's The Future of Parramatta Road Summit hosted by the University of Sydney. It was encouraging to see the Minister for Roads join the conversation about reimagining transport on Parramatta Road to unlock investment in housing and connect to innovation precincts.

Since the George Street light rail project was announced by the NSW Government in 2012, many lessons have been learned and advancements made in construction and technology methods. For example, more infrastructure can be prefabricated off-site reducing disruption and project timelines.

The CBD and South East Light Rail line took three years to plan and four years to construct. If we want a light rail line along Parramatta Road to Green Square via Central Station to happen this decade, we must start planning for it now.

To demonstrate our strong commitment, I propose that the City of Sydney contributes \$100 million towards the public domain in our area, if the NSW Government also commits to this significant place-making project. Improvements would include footpath widening, tree planting and new street furniture, paving and lighting.

For years, successive governments have talked about revitalising Parramatta Road, and they have failed to act. It cannot wait any longer. Using important lessons learned from the past, the NSW Government must commit to progress planning and consultation for the new light rail line as soon as possible.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) a new light rail line along Parramatta Road and Broadway to Green Square via Central Station will attract investment in housing, boost businesses, transport thousands of workers and students to jobs and education, support the 24-hour economy and contribute to Sydney's net-zero future by taking cars off the roads;
 - (ii) the City has secured the Eastern Transit Corridor specifically for a mass surface-level transport service such as light rail;
 - (iii) the NSW Government has not committed to extend Sydney Metro West to Zetland leaving a significant mass transit deficit at Green Square; and
 - (iv) on 27 June 2024, the Lord Mayor hosted a roundtable discussion about extending the light rail network along Parramatta Road to Green Square via Central with representatives from key businesses, industry groups and institutions who support the project;
- (B) Council confirm its support for a new light rail line along Parramatta Road and Broadway and to Green Square via Central Station and commits to working with the NSW Government and other stakeholders especially the Mayors of Inner West and Burwood Councils and to accelerate the planning, consultation and delivery of the project as soon as possible;
- (C) Council approve a \$100 million contribution towards enhancing the public domain in our Local Government Area if the NSW Government commits to extending light rail along Parramatta Road and Broadway to Green Square via Central Station; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to review the City's Long Term Financial Plan when the NSW Government commits to extending light rail along Parramatta Road and Broadway to Green Square via Central Station, so that the \$100 million public domain improvements contribution is available in future years' City budgets to match the NSW Government's project timelines.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor