

Peter Middleton submission re Transport Survey

I agree that there needs to be a significant emphasis on the development of reliable and frequent east/west public transport. I agree that our retail and commercial centres are currently, relatively car dependent. For this reason, it is vital that we don't kill those centres by putting transport corridors through villages ahead of the priority of the ongoing healthy commercial and social success of those villages. To a very large degree, the centres on and adjacent to east-west corridors from the northern beaches to the north shore and north-west, such as Chatswood and Macquarie/Epping, grew up as way-points along evolving arteries.

Conversely, the villages of the northern beaches were first destinations, that later became linked by roadways. (E.g. Newport was first a port on Pittwater accessible only by boat, with a track to link it to the ocean beach. It and other leisure destinations, such as Bilgola, Avalon, Palm Beach subsequently became linked by north-south access ways. To diminish – and even destroy – these destinations by turning them into transport corridors is to move away from everything that is the historical, the emotional and the community core of these “northern beaches”. This is where the proposed ad hoc extension of the B-Line to Newport is at odds with the spirit – the very existence – of the northern beaches. We need real foresight in transport planning. Mona Vale is both the town centre and the transport hub (south, north, north-west and west) for the villages and beaches north of Dee Why. Proper planning would have efficient feeder services (i.e. something with superior core planning to that of the Keoride experiment tacked on way after the commitment to a Mona Vale to CBD B-Line). Planning with foresight would have as its base, a true transport interchange in the light industrial area adjacent to the retail sector in Mona Vale (i.e. with the current bus depot as its origin).

Commuters should be able to interchange from properly planned feeder services, that run the same hours as the B-Line/bus services, to provide a true northern beaches public transport system: one that does not generate the need for MORE cars onto the road, as does the current B-Line situation at Mona Vale – a cancer which will grow further with any B-Line extension to Newport. If the objective is for “a '30-minute city' where commuters can travel to their nearest city centre by public transport within 30 minutes”, this can never be achieved by planning to force more people into private vehicles to connect to mass public transport. To plan for that is to plan to fail.

We need logical solutions based on the experience of the leading international transport minds, not short-term and ad hoc politically motivated band-aids. A transport system planned in this way will then be in a position to integrate imminent and future developments, such as light-rail (the rubber-wheeled, painted track kind, already operational in China) into an integrated transportation system, which can readily evolve. Many of the current, half-baked ideas are destined to need sequential scrapping followed by totally fresh starts: hardly a planned approach. Let's look at this holistically, in ways INTEGRATED with our unique topography, environment and community existence and say 'No' to stop-gap ad hocery.