A Tale of Three Cities

Joint Submission to the Greater Sydney Commission on *A Metropolis of Three Cities* and Transport for NSW on the *Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056* and *Draft Services and Infrastructure for Sydney*

December 2017
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ................................................................................................................................. 3

Committee for Sydney’s Response to A Metropolis of Three Cities ....................................................... 8

1. The Vital Importance of the GSC ......................................................................................................... 8

2. Rebalancing Sydney .......................................................................................................................... 10

3. Planning for Jobs: A Big Challenge .................................................................................................... 14

4. Support Rebalancing Strategy ........................................................................................................... 17

5. Avoiding New City Barriers ............................................................................................................... 18

6. A Greater Sydney Connectivity Strategy Must be Mass-Transit Based ............................................ 22

7. Town Centres .................................................................................................................................... 24

8. Collaboration Areas ............................................................................................................................ 32

9. Housing ............................................................................................................................................. 33

10. Sydney in its Regional Context ........................................................................................................ 37

11. Planning for the City at Night .......................................................................................................... 38

12. Green Infrastructure ....................................................................................................................... 39

13. Funding ........................................................................................................................................... 40

14. Delivery ........................................................................................................................................... 43

The Committee for Sydney’s Response to the Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056 and Draft Services and Infrastructure for Sydney ................................................................................................. 45

15. Support for the Alignment of Transport and Land Use Planning .................................................... 45

16. Support for Recognition of ‘Place’ in Transport ............................................................................. 46

17. Ensure There is Efficient Mass-Transit Between the Three Cities .................................................. 49

18. Modal Shift and Density .................................................................................................................. 50

19. Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong ‘City-Region’ ................................................................................. 51

20. Shared, Autonomous and Electric Vehicles .................................................................................... 52

Appendix A: Aerotropolis definition and lessons learnt ....................................................................... 55

Appendix B: Complete Streets Case Study ............................................................................................ 57

Appendix C: Value Capture ................................................................................................................... 59

Appendix D: Infrastructure Appraisal ................................................................................................... 61

Appendix E: Road Pricing ...................................................................................................................... 63

Appendix F: Planning for Good Growth ................................................................................................ 64

Appendix G: Urban Development Corporations ................................................................................... 68
**Executive Summary**

The Committee commends the NSW Government for coordinating and integrating land use planning with transport and infrastructure, releasing *A Metropolis of three Cities* (AMO3C), *Future Transport 2056* and *Services and Infrastructure for Sydney* as the first step in this process.

By any measure Sydney is a successful city. The economy is entering its third decade of continuous expansion and Sydney continues to be the main driver of national economic growth. However, Sydney has problems needing urgent attention. Congestion is significant by international standards and connectivity across the metropolis poor, challenging urban productivity and inclusiveness. Housing is prohibitively expensive with many experiencing housing stress, or experiencing homelessness. Sydney has slipped down the international livability ratings, eclipsed by its competitors.

At the core of this decline are two fundamental deficiencies;

- A lack of integration between land-use and transport; and,
- A lack of metropolitan wide governance to give voice, shape and direction for Sydney.

By releasing these documents together, the Government has taken the first steps towards addressing the first issue. In establishing the Greater Sydney Commission and its role to develop a metropolitan wide land use strategy, the Government has begun the process of addressing the second deficiency.

**Part 1 – Response to A Metropolis of Three Cities**

**The importance of the GSC**

While the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission is an important and necessary first step, it should be afforded greater authority. The primacy of AMO3C needs to be reinforced and other state and local government plans should be required to conform and support the Strategy and its preferred urban structure, including all agencies which have a role in delivering infrastructure and services for the city. The WA Planning Commission, or the Greater London planning process provide possible models. The role of Local Government should be given more status in both planning and delivery.

**Support for a Polycentric Vision of Rebalancing Sydney and Planning for Jobs**

We support the GSC’s polycentric vision and its emphasis on rebalancing the quality and sustainability of place, and the connectivity to transport and jobs across the city. There is a clear divide between western and south-western Sydney, and the east and north. All should share in the opportunities of the city. More needs to be done to bridge the spatial divide, especially the lack of employment west of Parramatta. The drivers of urban employment; agglomeration and increasing jobs density, need greater support from strategies, focusing on the existing and emerging Town Centres of western and south-western Sydney, supported by transport and good urban design. We worry that planned employment targets for much of Central and Western Sydney will not match those Cities’ population growth. Without further action, Sydney will be as divided, if not more so, in twenty years’ time.
Support for a Rebalancing Strategy Focused on Connectivity and Placemaking

We endorse the Commission’s focus on the importance of ‘place’ and ‘liveability’ in the development of the modern knowledge economy and TfNSW’s recognition of its role to support and create ‘good places’, and the economic agglomeration they encourage, as well as improving urban connectivity, access and mobility. Supporting the revitalisation of our many town centres and improving their connectivity with better transport is critical to improving urban productivity, environmental sustainability and the health and well-being of our citizens.

Avoiding New City Barriers – Incentivise Transport Modes Which Bind the Three Cities Together

In supporting the preferred urban structure of ‘three cities’ we stress that these cities need to be linked to each other. In achieving this the Committee believes the prompt delivery of the Western Metro is critical and should eventually be extended to the Western Parkland City and the new Airport and be a high speed high volume connection, with few stops. Getting from the CBD to Parramatta in 15 minutes and the CBD and the new Airport in under 30 minutes is essential if the three cities are grow as one metropolis.

A Greater Sydney Connectivity Strategy Must be Mass-Transit Based

The key to rebalancing Sydney is a decisive shift towards more equal, mass transit access, across Western Sydney, connecting and binding the ‘three cities’ to each other and economic opportunity. This requires investment in the kind of fast rail networks that exist in the cities we are competing with.¹

To succeed, the following initiatives and ancillary interventions are required:

- A commitment to a clear target for increasing mass transit in both strategies.
- A better process for identifying, prioritizing and phasing for key transport projects.
- An integrated, fast rail network for Greater Sydney.

Town Centres and Collaboration Areas

We support the priority given to ‘centres’ in AMO3C, as well as the hierarchy suggested, differentiating between ‘metropolitan’, ‘strategic’ and ‘local’. There is merit in differentiating between ‘town centres’ and ‘centres’ of a neighbourhood scale. Town centres offer the best means of driving our urban economy and ensuring a better and fairer distribution of employment. The Committee is currently developing a Town Centre Renewal ‘Tool Kit’ which will be released in 2018. We are concerned however at the lack of detail about new centres in the Western Parkland City and how they complement and support the existing centres of Penrith, Liverpool, Campbelltown and Blacktown.

The Committee supports the concept of ‘Collaboration Areas’. Successful ‘cities collaborate to compete’ – across private, public, universities and not for profit sectors, between councils, state government and the Commonwealth. Collaboration Areas can promote this key principle supporting

universities and medical institutions (‘Eds and Meds’) as key ‘anchor institutions’ for their precincts, as employers, land-owners, investors and advocates. Collaboration with ‘Eds and Meds’ is associated with the success of ‘innovation districts’ – places where the right physical assets, eco-system and mix of uses are concentrated, and where talent agglomerates and creates value from the interactions these areas enable. We seek a greater and more long-term commitment from the Commission to delivering these precincts. To succeed they will need more and better transport and accessibility options.

There needs to be more focus on encouraging a vibrant, safe and economically successful town Centres at night. The Committee has initiated a Night-Time Economy Commission to help identify key interventions and this will be published in 2018.

**Housing Targets and Distribution Across Sydney**

We support the retention of housing targets for each District. A clear commitment to providing housing growth matched to or greater than, population growth is essential to resolve the housing affordability crisis. While increasing supply is not, of itself enough, we are concerned that the targets do not adequately reflect the employment and infrastructure capacity of each District. Greater justification is needed on why some Districts are to experience greater and faster population growth than others. The mismatch between housing and employment targets for some Districts may aggravate the existing spatial and economic divide in Sydney. Finally, we welcome the commitment to inclusionary zoning supported by the GSC but call for greater certainty on the target to be delivered in the planning system.

**Considering an Emergent Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong ‘City-Region’**

Sydney does not exist in isolation, but is increasingly part of much wider conurbation, stretching from the Illawarra to the Hunter. We need to start thinking about how to integrate and capitalise on this extended conurbation and how to better link it with faster mass transit.

**Green Infrastructure**

The Committee strongly supports the Green Grid and the fact that the GSC sees it as a core project. It should be implemented as a priority, building on the excellent pilot project around Parramatta. While the roll out will take years, an immediate start will signal to the community that in growing Sydney from 5 million to 8 million we can make the city not just bigger, but better. ‘Green Infrastructure’ must be at the heart of the future development of Sydney, as central to creating a more sustainable city and to generating community support for Sydney’s growth.

**Funding and Delivery**

Existing funding models are not adequate or robust enough to finance the transport and green infrastructure Sydney needs. We strongly support using Value Capture mechanisms to augment existing funding mechanisms. We question whether extending the SIC levy to certain precincts will suffice. The Committee’s preferred mechanism is a broad based, metropolitan land tax, hypothecated to key urban infrastructure, especially transport. Local Government needs a more robust funding mechanism and reiterate our call for removing the ‘cap’ on Council rates.

In delivering each of the Plans we see a greater role for the Commission in infrastructure appraisal and prioritization, expanding the City Deals as the best means of aligning and coordinating delivery
of urban infrastructure, as well as special purpose delivery vehicles for major precincts and new development corporations to drive town centre renewal.

Part Two - Response to the Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056 and Draft Services and Infrastructure for Sydney

The above are an important step-change in the approach taken to transport planning. The Committee’s benchmarking research concludes that the main challenge holding Sydney’s competitive performance and social inclusion back is the under-invested mass transit system. The network is heavily concentrated east of Parramatta, while residential development has trended westwards, reinforcing the economic attractiveness of Eastern Sydney, putting immense strain on west-east transport corridors and exacerbated both the economic and health divisions across Sydney. Good public transport access improves effective job density which benefits us collectively and individually and improves health outcomes by incentivizing people to walk to rail stations or bus stops. Places with poor access to mass transit perform less well economically, and are associated with what has become known as the ‘walking deficit disorder’ or type 2 diabetes.

Support for the Alignment of Transport and Land Use Planning

The Future Transport Strategy 2056 and linked Sydney draft Services and Infrastructure document embrace the objective of ensuring that the Sydney transport network going forward must reinforce core city planning objectives and outcomes – supporting greater access to jobs and increasing residential density close to public transport. It must enhance the livability of places and centres, serving a hierarchy of transport mode users with greater priority on pedestrians and cyclist than we have seen in previous transport strategies.

Core transport functions must ensure that Sydney is rebalanced and served via its transport network. As the city transitions to a metropolis of three cities, ‘convenient and reliable access for customers by public and active transport to their nearest centre ’is increasingly important for:

- ‘Productivity – reducing the time people spend travelling and increasing people’s access to jobs and business’ access to workers
- Liveability– improving the quality of life in Greater Sydney by reducing the need for long commutes and helping to manage congestion by better spreading transport demand
- Sustainability– increasing the share of trips by public and active transport and reducing the need to drive or reducing average journey lengths, reducing emissions and improving air quality’

Support for Recognition of ‘Place’ in Transport

The recognition of ‘place’ reflects emerging best practice globally, seeking to balance the efficient movement of people and goods with supporting the liveability of places on the road network. This will lead to the prioritisation of key infrastructure projects over others because they create better ‘place’ outcomes and in so doing enhance productivity, liveability and sustainability.

Ensure There is Efficient Mass Transit Between the Three Cities

As noted above the key intervention that can make a reality of a rebalanced Sydney comprising three 30-minute cities is a mass transit system. We are concerned that the West Metro is not
identified in the AMO3C plan as an urgent priority. Without it there is the danger of the three 30-minute cities amounting to an institutionalising of the current 90-minute city, and of the city continuing its sprawl trajectory. Prioritising the F6 and the Northern Beaches Link over West Metro will not have the rebalancing effect sought in the either GSC and TfNSW plans.

Set a Mode Shift Target for Mass and Active Transport

The Committee supports the unambiguous commitment to public transport and active transport modes, and strategies aimed at increasing their prominence. It is vital to set mode shift targets for Greater Sydney, with progress assessed at frequent intervals between current baseline and the end of the Plan’s implementation time-frame. Each of the three cities should be allocated their own target within a cumulative three cities total. Without such targets, there is no visible and accountable KPI or incentive for the transport system to deliver on TfNSW’s values and support for a mass and active transport Greater Sydney.

Consider the Mass-Transit Needs and Opportunities of the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong ‘City-Region’

We commend TfNSW for recognising that Greater Sydney is on its way to becoming a ‘city-region’ of five cities. Greater Sydney’s links with Wollongong, the Central Coast/Gosford and Newcastle are of increasing mutual significance. In international terms, they are arguably already part of a ‘city-region’ with Sydney at its centre and we believe such integration can only increase.

Planning for Shared, Autonomous and Electric Vehicles

City and transport planning must address the impact of technology and the pace of change as new technologies and modalities emerge, especially driverless cars. The lessons from history could serve as a good guide. Other policy initiatives will be needed to ensure that driverless vehicles and other emerging technologies support and reinforce our preferred urban structure.
Committee for Sydney’s Response to *A Metropolis of Three Cities*

The Committee for Sydney welcomes the opportunity to respond to *A Metropolis of Three Cities* (AMO3C). The Committee played a role in the emergence and design of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC), and we strongly support its key coordinating and planning roles for delivering a bigger, but better, Sydney. We believe that its performance, thus far, vindicates its creation. We see in AMO3C the kind of cross-government planning for Sydney that our city has so obviously needed and congratulate the GSC on a sound and comprehensive strategy.

AMO3C contains many values, analyses and objectives which the Committee shares and has championed over recent years. Fundamentally, it represents a step-change in the integration of land-use and planning whose relative absence has had adverse consequences on the competitiveness, liveability and social inclusiveness of Greater Sydney. The challenge, as ever with plans for Sydney, will be delivery and implementation. However, that very integration we see in the GSC Plan and the linked *Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056*, gives us grounds for greater optimism. We now have in place the beginnings of the kind of cross government collaboration and coordination that will be required to make Sydney not just bigger by 2056, but better.

In this spirit of integration, the Committee is providing a unified response to both of the strategies. Some of the comments and issues we raise below may be more salient to land use and spatial planning and others more salient to transport and connectivity. But they are all relevant to the overarching objective of ensuring Sydney is a more productive, sustainable and socially inclusive, city. We believe that all plans, strategies, and investments considered by each tier of Government over the next few decades, should be assessed against this overarching objective too.

1. The Vital Importance of the GSC

1.1 The GSC is necessary for metropolitan and cross-agency governance, as well as delivery

While the Committee commends the GSC for producing the AMO3C, the GSC’s job is not done with the publication of the plan. Rather, the AMO3C signals the end of the beginning, not the beginning of the end. There are many challenges ahead, and all state and local government agencies must ensure that their policies, planning, projects and investments conform with, and help deliver, the new metropolitan plan. Sydney has seen good metropolitan plans before which didn’t deliver their potential, because government silos prevailed over proper cross government coordination.

Fundamentally, this has often meant a contradiction between good urban planning principles favouring higher density, compact city development and the public transport needed to underpin them, and the transport infrastructure which encouraged sprawl. The result has led to a profound separation of jobs from homes and a city of long commutes, with all the adverse consequences for the economy, environment, health and social cohesion of our communities. In making this point, the Committee reflects the words of the 2014 Metropolitan Plan, *A Plan for Growing Sydney* which we believe should inform the NSW Government in delivering AMO3C:

> ‘Planning where people will live and work across Sydney, and how these places are connected to each other, will influence Sydney’s long-term success and the standard...’
of living our communities will enjoy. It is critical not to repeat the mistakes of the past—dispersed housing growth that resulted in a sprawling and poorly connected city, complicated by unique geographic constraints.\(^2\)

The GSC was created against this backdrop, and will be judged not just by the content of its plan but by the capacity of the metropolitan and cross-agency coordination it embodies and promotes to avoid repeating the errors of the past. That capacity will need not just to be safeguarded, but further enhanced over time. We need to assure our community that, because of this plan, they will experience that desired integration of land-use and transport, and that growth will be matched by the timely arrival of appropriate infrastructure. Without that assurance or evidence of the achievement of these objectives, there will be a continuation of the community resistance to growth and development we have seen.

1.2 Primacy of the GSC Plan

The Committee welcomes the clear hierarchy of land use plans outlined in AMO3C and the subordinate district plans. It is welcome that over the next few years all local environment plans will also be required to align with both the regional and wider metropolitan plans. The Committee called for such a hierarchy to be established. However, the Committee believes this hierarchy should made more explicit and that both metropolitan and district plans be made statutory, in much the same way that the WA Planning Commission or the Greater London planning process establish a clear hierarchy of plans. Local plans, and other government planning strategies, should be required to align with and support the metropolitan plan. Where they conflict, the GSC’s plans should take priority. To encourage further alignment going forward, we do believe, as we recommended at the time the GSC was founded, that Sydney’s councils should have a greater role in the governance of the GSC, perhaps through a twice a year or even quarterly ‘high level forum’ with the leaders and General Managers of those councils at which the plans and activities of the GSC could be discussed. This would have the added advantage of incentivising Sydney’s councils to come together to discuss the key strategic issues for the city whilst giving more community legitimacy to the work of the GSC.

1.3 Aligning land-use and transport planning—and other government departments behind the plan

We also welcome the attempt, in releasing these three documents simultaneously, to align transport planning with land-use planning. The Committee commends the NSW Government for taking the first real steps towards integration in decades. However, the Committee believes this integration needs to be supported by process and governance arrangements that reinforce and support this integration. For example, we believe that the merits of all future transport infrastructure should be appraised against its ability to meet the preferred structure of the city. i.e. does it deliver on the city we are planning (and hoping) to have?

Government infrastructure provision must be required to align to the delivering AMO3C. While we welcome the undertaking by the GSC to play a coordinator role in driving governmental and departmental collaboration (and we support the GSC concept of Growth Infrastructure Compacts), more structure and certainty needs to be given to how this will happen. For example, in the Western City, the strategy is seeking to build a city roughly the size of Canberra today. Canberra currently has six town centres and just under 40 schools, and it is likely that this third Sydney ‘City’ will need to

\(^2\) NSW Planning & Environment, 2014, A Plan for Growing Sydney, Page 4
have a similar number. The Department of Education and Training should be required to publish a plan on how and where, so many schools are to be delivered and in what sequence—in accordance with the metropolitan plan (with land use and transport integration resulting in far more walkable journeys between schools and homes than has generally been the case of new development in Western Sydney). Similar plans are needed from all the major infrastructure departments of government, including local government.

1.4 Targets and measuring progress

Having a plan is not enough. We must build according to it. This requires appropriate, explicit and measurable targets and metrics to deliver the plan and the commitment to monitor progress. To this end, the Committee makes some suggestions in this response as to key objectives of which need to be monitored but overall we stress here that we currently find in AMO3C a plethora of terms such as vision, strategy, directions, metrics, objectives, actions, without sufficient clarity as to the differences between them—and as to which, if any, will be enforced by statute. The Committee believes that it is vital for Greater Sydney to become a more data-driven and responsive city and that Sydney cannot claim to be a Smart City without such an approach. At the heart of being such a city is not just data and technology, but clear and measurable metrics on the city’s performance against targets. To this end our recently published issues paper #wethecity3 called for the appointment of a Smart City Commissioner to the GSC, with a mandate to promote a more data-driven and responsive Sydney and GSC.

2. Rebalancing Sydney

2.1 Support for the polycentric vision

We support the GSC’s polycentric vision for Greater Sydney and emphasis on rebalancing the quality and sustainability of place, and connectivity to transport and jobs across the city. In the past, too many homes have been built too far from public transport or jobs, or way in advance of necessary social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and open spaces. Today, many of Sydney’s precincts are currently only accessible by car and thus un走able. The spatial inequities in health and economic performance that result have been mapped by the Committee in several research papers over the last few years, and have informed its advocacy for Western Sydney. The ‘rebalancing’ of Sydney requires that the disproportionately high obesity and diabetes outcomes in that region, associated with its dispersed and low density urban form, low penetration of public transport access and thus high car dependency, long commutes and low walkability, be tackled by cross government interventions to deliver the aspirations of AMO3C in this area.

2.2 Redressing the Western Sydney jobs gap

Rebalancing also requires a focus on what has become known as the ‘jobs gap’ of Western Sydney which must not be lost sight of in the re-badging associated with the three cities concept. The Committee has highlighted this issue in several of its issues papers, outlining that Western Sydney’s dramatic growth in housing has outstripped the number of jobs available for its local workforce. In particular, jobs in the rapidly growing knowledge economy continue to cluster east of Parramatta, though agglomeration of such jobs is clearly forming in Parramatta and Westmead (see Figure 1). Given that 2 million people now live west of Parramatta the challenge becomes clear.
The darker orange squares represent areas with a higher density of knowledge jobs. As you can see, the jobs gap embodies and reinforces the different socio-economic outcomes generated in Western Sydney. This region will need to overcome structural and connectivity divides if there is to be greater spatial equity and improved productivity at the metropolitan level.

It is vital that the rebalanced city, which the GSC rightly advocates, leads to a decisive shift in the proportion of knowledge jobs being created in Western Sydney—a bigger slice of a bigger cake—but also that the large number of jobs which are still agglomerating in or close to the ‘Harbour CBD’ are made more accessible to more people living in the Central and Western Cities, without forcing them into long commutes by car. While the Committee welcomes the GSC concept and organising principle of the ‘three 30-minute cities’, the challenge remains of ensuring the ability of large numbers of Sydneysiders to access jobs in the Harbour City within a reasonable time-budget, and one that bears comparison with the transport performance of competing cities globally.

Figure 2 shows the existing access to jobs within 30-minutes by any transport mode, highlighting the differential access to jobs across Greater Sydney. Progress in delivering the objectives of the GSC Plan and TfNSW Strategy need to be measured against how such maps change over time. We recommend that baseline mapping be done of access within 30-minutes by public transport now to each of the three cities, and also of 30-minute access by public transport to the Harbour City from all parts of Sydney. We also recommend mapping the current Effective Job Density (EJD) of Sydney (see Figure 3) and how that changes over the life of the GSC Plan and TfNSW Strategy.

---

Figure 2. Number of jobs accessible within 30-minutes in Sydney on a weekday morning

Source: Committee or Sydney 2017

The map measures the number of jobs accessible within 30-minutes by public transport or private vehicle, weighted by mode preference, on a weekday morning.

---

At the core of a balanced Sydney, is the need to rectify the current imbalance between access to public transport across the city (see Figure 4). In our view the economic rebalancing of Sydney sought by the GSC as between its three cities, can only come via a modal shift to mass transit. This also needs to result in a spatial extension particularly of Sydney’s rail network to cover more of Sydney to connect more Sydneysiders faster between where they live and where they work.

---

3. Planning for Jobs: A Big Challenge

3.1 Jobs in the knowledge economy

Planning for jobs is one of the biggest challenges for any urban planning process. It is clear that jobs in the knowledge economy—which the NSW Government’s own research shows will be the only jobs growing in significance over the next generation—are agglomerating and locating in certain places of cities. Places which have the assets and characteristics to attract talent and investment. The Brookings Institute has developed a specific analysis of ‘Innovation Districts’ which shows how important such places are in the new economy and how they work. They are mixed use, higher density locations, well connected by public transport and walkable, close to services, jobs, research institutions and ‘fuelled by caffeine’. That is, they are serviced by cafes, bars, and restaurants. Talent and investment—and universities—have been relocating away from ex-urban/suburban, single use locations, served only by the car, back closer to town centres with the right mix of uses.

In addition, there is an increasing trend of time-hungry people to trade the scale of homes, for amenity and the convenience of being closer to jobs and services. The result is that jobs have been agglomerating in more urban locations, putting strains on cities with poor public transport systems, and this poses deep challenges for sprawling cities—such as Sydney—as to how to link where people live more efficiently with where people work.

The so-called ‘jobs gap’ in Western Sydney is a consequence of these forces. It is a result of declining manufacturing, rising knowledge work, and dispersed residential development that is far from public

---

transport services, particularly rail. Research by WSU shows that while almost 14,000 people enter the work force each year in greater Western Sydney, only 8,000 jobs are created. Most of those are in retail or public services; particularly health and education. There are some emerging strengths around advanced manufacturing and design and logistics and the new airport will give these a further boost. The question is to what extent the GSC approach to jobs will shift the dial to redress the Western Sydney jobs gap.

3.2 Collaboration areas and ‘centres’ as economic drivers

We note elsewhere in this submission, that we strongly support Collaboration Areas as an economic concept. We agree that Collaboration Areas are critical in the modern economy. We commend the overall approach in the GSC Plan that enhanced liveability and connectivity are keys to job-creation in the forward-looking economy.

We also commend the emphasis on the importance of ‘centres’ to job creation though we think there needs to be more fine-grained analysis of what kinds of centres are likely to be the focus of jobs in future, what kinds of jobs and where those centres will be.

We note that most future residential development in Sydney is away from the existing ‘strategic centres’ and that most of the existing strategic centres are not in Western Sydney. This raises the question as to whether, in growing the population of the Western City, we are actually intending to create new strategic centres to help provide employment close to them, in addition to developing the amenity, connectivity, and economic attraction of Liverpool, Penrith, Campbelltown and Blacktown. We say more on this in Section 7 on Town Centres.

3.3 The ‘aerotropolis’ and its ‘centres’

While we understand that the new airport is anticipated to create a large number of higher value jobs in parts of far-Western Sydney, if placemaking and connectivity matter in the knowledge economy it’s difficult to know yet what kind of place the proposed ‘aerotropolis’ will be or what kind of rail connectivity it will enjoy, and what the centres around it will be like. Also, it is highly likely that much economic development promoted by the airport will be heavily automated, potentially leading to a relatively jobless growth scenario. We add that there needs to be much more detail provided of what an aerotropolis is as neither its nature or its location is established clearly in the GSC Plan (see further comments on the aerotropolis in Appendix A).

There are other positive economic forces at play in the area and universities are targeting investment and innovation in the corridors to and around the proposed airport. But there must still be a question as to the number, type and sequencing of jobs occasioned by the airport investment—and to what extent it will, if counter-strategies are not in place, actually cause some displacement of jobs from surrounding town centres, especially if there is a significant retail and entertainment offer at the airport. The new airport must be planned to support the region, and not cannibalise the existing strategic town centres of Western Sydney.

3.4 Prioritise transport and urban design which supports liveability and placemaking

In supporting the GSC’s emphasis on placemaking, liveability and connectivity as economic factors, we stress the need for government to prioritise transport projects and modes which actually support

---

7 O’Neill, P, 2016, Addressing Western Sydney’s jobs slide, The Centre for Western Sydney, Western Sydney University, 6
placemaking and liveability, and enable the increasing numbers of workers in the knowledge economy to access their jobs in centres in less than 30 minutes, without worsening congestion on the roads. The corollary of this is that government should not prioritise transport projects or modes which undermine these outcomes. We say more about this in Appendix D on infrastructure appraisal. We also stress below that in addition to supporting transport which aligns with placemaking objectives, government should initiate a town centre urban renewal and design program in association with local councils in Sydney, supported by the Government Architect (GANSW), to improve the urban design of centres, such as by implementing Complete Streets policies and providing the green infrastructure to improve their amenity and walkability. See Section 7 on Town Centres and Appendix B on Chicago Complete Streets.

3.5 Some concerns

We do have two main concerns around this jobs agenda. The first is that it is not clear on the GSC’s own numbers that the Western Sydney jobs gap will be filled or that Sydney will be rebalanced economically. It is difficult to compare data not least because ‘Western Sydney’ has been disaggregated by the GSC Plan into two cities (and in some senses extended to include Wollondilly which appears now to be part of Greater Sydney). But on our calculation, jobs east of Parramatta will still be outgrowing jobs in Western Sydney in the life of the GSC Plan, while the share of Sydney’s residential population in the west will continue to grow significantly.

Concerning ‘jobs in centres’, which currently make up half of the total jobs in Greater Sydney, and account for the growth in knowledge jobs that will agglomerate, on the GSCs numbers there appears to be little change in the spatial distribution across the city between now and 2036. Currently, for every dwelling in the Eastern City District there are 1.28 jobs in centres, increasing to 1.4 jobs in 2036 according to GSC targets. Meanwhile, for every dwelling in the Western City District, there are currently 0.32 jobs in centres, increasing to only 0.36 jobs by 2036. The proportional growth in agglomerating jobs in the Central City District is similar. Currently, there are 0.55 jobs in centres for every dwelling, projected to increase to 0.57 jobs in 2036. By the end of the Plan, at best, it looks like the jobs imbalance will be more or less the same. We want to see a growth of the Sydney jobs cake overall, but a shift westward in high value job creation is part of this. It is not clear this will happen on the GSC numbers. Part of the problem may simply be that the GSC Plan only project future jobs in centres. So, there could be more ‘out of centre’ jobs in the West than is currently clear from the GSC numbers (of course the % of jobs in centres should be something we aspire to increase so more people are near transport and services: the very premise of AMO3C). The GSC should consider publishing its research on jobs so stakeholders can fully understand the assumptions and implications. At the moment it’s difficult to avoid concluding that there is to be only a marginal

---

8 As per Greater Sydney Commission, 2017, Draft Eastern City District Plan, page 12, there are a total of 2,439,800 jobs in Greater Sydney. The number of ‘jobs in centres’ for each district is outlined on page 9 of the relevant Draft District Plans. Adding these figures together, the number of jobs in centres across Greater Sydney totals 1,205,900; 49.4% of total jobs.

9 As per Greater Sydney Commission, 2017, Draft Eastern City District Plan, page 9 there are currently 598,900 jobs in centres and 466,500 dwellings, making a jobs in centres/housing ratio of 1.28. The mid-range target for total jobs in centres (taken from adding the additional number jobs to the 2016 number of jobs) is 872,250 jobs and target number of dwellings in the district in 2036 is 624,000, making a jobs in centres/housing ratio of 1.4.

10 As per Greater Sydney Commission, 2017, Draft Western City District Plan, page 9 there are currently 122,900 jobs in centres and 388,000 dwellings, making a jobs in centres/housing ratio of 0.32. The mid-range target for total jobs in centres (taken from adding the additional number jobs to the 2016 number of jobs) is 204,750 jobs and target number of dwellings in the district in 2036 is 572,500, making a jobs in centres/housing ratio of 0.36.

11 As per Greater Sydney Commission, 2017, Draft Central City District Plan, page 9 there are currently 187,500 jobs in centres and 339,000 dwellings, making a jobs in centres/housing ratio of 0.55. The mid-range target for total jobs in centres (taken from adding the additional number jobs to the 2016 number of jobs) is 311,500 jobs and target number of dwellings in the district in 2036 is 546,500, making a jobs in centres/housing ratio of 0.57.
improvement in jobs per person in the west, but the improvement in the east is significantly stronger.

Secondly, although we understand that the GSC has done background research on the EJD of Sydney, this key metric doesn’t appear to be being used to understand future employment access issues in Sydney. Improving access to jobs, and thus job density across Sydney is a critical objective of the GSC Plan. We think that EJD should be adopted as a metric. We strongly commend using this tool as a measurement of success, and that it be regularly monitored to see if other interventions in the GSC Plan to deliver jobs access are working or not. The Committee thinks the whole issue of KPIs for the GSC Plan needs consideration and we see metrics like EJD, or Walk Scores (given the importance of walkability to economic performance and the relative absence of walkable precincts in Western Sydney) and modal shift targets, as crucial to delivering the Plan.

We recommend that the GSC be enabled to publish all research work and papers it commissioned as part of the process of developing AMO3C. This is good practice both in enabling scholars to understand the evidence on which certain decisions for inclusion in AMO3C were taken but also as an exemplar of open data, open government and accountability to the public.

4. Support Rebalancing Strategy

4.1 Improving connectivity and the quality of places

We endorse the GSC’s focus on the importance of ‘place’ and ‘liveability’ in the development of the modern knowledge economy. We also endorse TfNSW’s related recognition that its role is to support and help create ‘good places’, and the economic agglomeration they encourage, as well as to improve urban connectivity, access and mobility. This is a profound cultural shift albeit one that Sydneysiders will wish to see early evidence of the reality and benefits thereof. But, even to see the language used by TfNSW about the planning goals of transport investment is refreshing. We now need to see the language take form in prioritising projects which deliver AMO3C.

Sydney has long suffered from transport interventions justified solely on travel-time reductions for mode users, rather than on whether such interventions improved key Sydney places, the overall economic performance of the City or the welfare of Sydneysiders. We have called for a changed, more evidence-based, less siloed and less political approach to infrastructure appraisal and prioritisation. Basing infrastructure options on how they help deliver the metropolitan plan and particularly its preferred urban structure for Sydney, is a firm foundation for this changed approach.

It is clear from both AMO3C and Draft Future Transport Strategy that the GSC and TfNSW both embrace the key notion that cities are seeing the re-urbanisation of the economy, which has, at its core, the agglomeration and clustering of knowledge jobs in key centres—away from greenfield or suburban locations where manufacturing jobs used to be located.

The GSC’s economic thinking in AMO3C is largely premised on the importance of such centres for much of the jobs of the future. By better connecting two of the currently more important job centres (Sydney CBD and Parramatta) to labour markets and a third emerging one centred on the new Airport in due course is the basis of the GSC’s aspiration of Sydney as three, 30-minute cities. We welcome both the GSC and TfNSW’s embrace of the fact that such places require significant public transport improvements to connect them to labour markets, and that such centres must also promote more active transport modes, both within the centres and to surrounding precincts.
Improving walkability to and in our centres, is correctly recognised in these Plans as an environmental, health and economic issue.

4.2 Continued support for a multi-centred polycentric Sydney with infrastructure to support

We welcome the polycentric approach to managing Sydney’s development embodied in the three cities concept. However, the Committee believes there needs to be a more detailed conversation around the Western Parkland City, the concept of the aerotropolis, and the centre of Blacktown, which seems to have an unclear designation in the GSC Plan. We also wish to see a clearer discussion as to what extent the population and jobs growth anticipated in the Western City may require more centres (strategic or otherwise) to be created over the life of the GSC Plan.

The Committee has always taken the view that Sydney’s structure, topography and scale, requires a ‘multi-centred’ strategy. While no plan should be in any doubt of the overwhelming economic significance of the Sydney CBD and the need for fast and easy public transport access to its jobs and services from across Greater Sydney, its location at the eastern edge of the metropolis is an acute challenge. The Committee has long supported an approach to metropolitan planning which at its heart has a dual connectivity strategy of:

- Enabling better access from centres across Sydney to the CBD; and
- Developing better connectivity between key centres and each-other with mass transit, especially rail.

These need to be supported by improving the amenity of those centres and their capacity to attract jobs and through supporting a mix of uses, which globally has been shown to draw investment, talent and residents. More effort needs to be placed on supporting greater intensification and renewal of the town centres of the Central and Western Cities to support agglomeration and increase EFD.

The recent success of Paramatta CBD in generating new and better employment provides a model. It has done so by replicating the key drivers of the urban economy in the Eastern City; higher density housing, accessible public transport, and better urban amenity together with appropriate accommodation for modern jobs. In doing so it is thus attracting more and more of the higher value, service sector jobs. There is no reason why Parramatta’s recent success can’t be replicated in the main Central and Western City centres such as Liverpool, Penrith, Campbelltown and Blacktown. And, all centres can, by improving their amenity and connectivity, make more of a contribution to Sydney’s economy and liveability. We will discuss this in more detail in Section 7 on Town Centres.

5. Avoiding New City Barriers

5.1 Incentivise transport modes that bind the three cities together

In recognising Sydney’s polycentric structure, the Committee is keen to avoid new barriers being erected between cities and we stress that the objective of a polycentric approach is to strengthen the single ‘metropolis’ that is Sydney. We further stress that at the heart of that ‘Metropolitan strengthening’ is a fast rail network reducing the ‘tyranny of distance and time’ across Sydney. The Committee makes this point because the process by which transport infrastructure is selected for Sydney has seemed to assume that roads and rail have the same effect on a city. This historically
favours roads which can be funded by user pays/tolling. The evidence internationally is that the two modes have quite different impacts on a city, with roads tending to enable the dispersal of a city’s development pattern—low density sprawl—while rail enables a more concentrated urban form—the higher density ‘compact city’. Rail also has the advantage of being convergent with the agglomeration of knowledge jobs in town centres we are seeing globally and has a much higher capacity to transport more workers to such centres without worsening road congestion (see Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. Efficiency of different modes of transport

Corridor Maximum capacity of urban transport modes, in persons per hour in both directions

![Efficiency of different modes of transport](image-url)
5.2 Changing infrastructure appraisal process to deliver three ‘30-minute’ cities

In stressing this, the Committee welcomes the second key concept in the plans, that each of these cities must be accessible within 30-minutes by public transport. At its most stringent, this requirement would need a shift in the infrastructure appraisal process away from its current focus on travel-time reduction towards a focus on transport modes which deliver better and broader economic outcomes, greater amenity, sustainability and connectivity for more people; modes that deliver that higher density urban form in and around key centres which form the core of the GSC Plan for Sydney. All Sydney’s transport infrastructure should be selected henceforth on the basis that it helps achieve key objectives of AMO3C and that it helps deliver the 30-minute city.

The Committee has always supported the concept of the 30-minute city as an objective for public policy. We have written about this in past publications, emphasising that a 30-minute city has more social cohesion, stronger social capital and a happier, healthier population\(^\text{13}\), and have been pleased to see the concept taken up by the Prime Minister as part of his initiation of a new cities policy for Australia. Our work on job density and the 30-minute city stressed how few people currently in Greater Sydney can access a large number of jobs within 30-minutes by public transport so any such target in the GSC Plan will command our support.


5.3 Ongoing importance of Sydney CBD and connectivity to it

The concept of the 30-minute city must also include the capacity of Sydneysiders across Greater Sydney to access the job-rich areas of Sydney such as the CBD by public transport and in a time-budget which is in line with Sydney’s ambitions to be at the top table of world cities. It currently takes an hour to travel from Liverpool to the Sydney CBD. While the Committee seeks a decisive mode shift towards rail in Western Sydney with a network that effectively links Blacktown, Penrith, Liverpool, Campbelltown and Parramatta to each other and to the new airport, enhanced and faster rail links from all these town centres eastward remains vital. To be clear, the Committee has called for a network north-south via the new airport, but also stressed the need to ensure fast rail connectivity between the Sydney CBD, Parramatta and Badgerys Creek (see Figure 7 below). We don’t see why all of such a sensible rail network—not just single alignments announced in a piece-meal fashion—should not be identified now, even if delivered in stages over coming decades.

5.4 West Metro is critical

In this context, the Committee believes the proposed West Metro is critical for delivering 30-minute access to the Harbour City and its jobs for a broad swathe of the city’s population and for making the whole GSC Plan for Sydney work. At this stage, and without having access to the data to which the Government has access to, it looks to us that the purpose of such a Metro is to connect the two Sydney CBDs as fast as possible, stopping at fewer places (recognising the need to connect those places better to labour markets and homes, not least to enable value capture to help fund the project), with the objective of achieving something under a 20-minute journey between Parramatta and Sydney CBD. This is to enable business people to access both centres quickly, and without worrying too much about timetables or journey time. Shrinking the time budget, shrinks the mental and commercial distance between Sydney and Parramatta. In places like East London, the process of shrinking the time budget via speedy rail transport enabled new centres to become more of a commercial investment target.

Without the West Metro being prioritised, there is a danger of the ‘Metropolis of Three, 30-minute Cities’ being entrenched as a 90-minute, car-based, city for many of its inhabitants. Enabling that fast connectivity across Sydney is key, in our view, to binding the three cities together and to increasing the EFD in parts of the city currently too far from a rail network in Western Sydney. The objective of AMO3C is to overcome the structural barriers to Sydney’s economic performance and liveability to promote greater productivity, improve health outcomes and reduce spatial and intergenerational inequity. These are values and aims we share from our own work on Adding to the Dividend, Ending the Divide14, where we also stress the need for urban design and greening interventions, together with the implementation locally of ‘complete streets’ policies as part of a toolkit for town centre renewal (or for new ‘greenfield’ developments based on good placemaking foundations). In so doing we can make such centres more liveable and walkable, and thus attractive to investors, talent and residents.

But we always stress that improved town or strategic centre amenity, without improved mass transit connectivity, will not be sufficient in itself. The ‘divides’ in Sydney caused by its structural challenges cannot be resolved without a mass transit network which reduces or abolishes the barrier effects of the city’s topography. In London, one is not aware of when the Underground crosses the Thames, or goes from West to East London. And, with a new fast domestic rail service between North Kent and

Kings Cross taking 17 minutes for a journey that takes an hour by car outside rush hour, it is less clear now when a commuter actually crosses the London boundary. Commercial prejudices have reduced, and residential locational choices have changed because rail travel times reduced radically.

It is relevant in this context, to understand the impact that the new Crossrail line will have on Londoners wherever they live, as well as note the promotion of the new rail line by government as a project for economic growth and inclusion that will bind different parts of the city together.

6. A Greater Sydney Connectivity Strategy Must be Mass-Transit Based

6.1 Connectivity based on mass-transit

The Committee believes that the key intervention to rebalancing Sydney—not just in health but in terms of economic inclusion also—is a decisive shift towards more equal, mass transit access, across Western Sydney. Connecting and binding together, all the ‘three cities’ of Sydney to each other and to economic opportunity. This requires a recognition of, and investment in, the kind of fast rail network which we see in cities which Sydney is competing with, and whose comparative absence has begun to damage our standing in global benchmarking exercises.15

The Committee stresses that to succeed, the following initiatives and ancillary interventions are required:

- **A policy commitment or target around mass transit:**
  Greater Sydney needs an actual target of the modal shift to mass transit we wish to achieve in Sydney by 2056. Other global cities have such targets and they drive necessary change. (refer to Section 19).

- **A more appropriate process for the identification, prioritisation and phasing of key transport projects to support a metropolitan plan:**
  In both AMO3C and the Draft Future Transport Strategy there are allusions to an improved process for selecting transport infrastructure projects. The growth infrastructure compacts approach is a welcome mechanism for delivering the plan, and for ensuring greater community buy-in. More broadly, there is an urgent need for an improved infrastructure appraisal process to prioritise projects which promote the ‘city-shaping’ values and objectives of AMO3C and the TfNSW documents (see appendix below).

- **Building a fast rail network for Greater Sydney**
  Based on the experience of other cities internationally, a fast rail network for Greater Sydney will work to bind and agglomerate the ‘three cities’ together and integrate their communities. In partnership with the Federal Government, NSW should bring forward plans for a new rail network for Sydney which enables fast access from the CBD of Sydney through to Parramatta, and in due course onto the new airport (see Figure 7). We also think, and have said in our response to the Western Sydney Rail Options consultation, that our notion of the network Sydney needs to grow sustainably and includes a north-south rail link.

connecting the aerotropolis city cluster of Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown together. NSW is a rich state getting richer and more populous, with a capital city whose continued growth is vital to all. We cannot see why a city cannot plan to build, over time, not just one rail alignment as opposed to another, but a new rail network to serve a new Sydney. In our view, it is the only way for Sydney to achieve sustainable population growth and inclusive economic development without congestion and environmental degradation. Crucially, it is the only way not just to deliver a metropolis of three 30-minute cities and avoid Sydney being for many of its inhabitants, a 90-minute city.

Figure 7. The Committee’s rail vision for Sydney

Source: Committee for Sydney, 2016

The coloured arrows have been overlayed on to the Western Sydney Rail Options map and represent the Committee’s priority rail projects of a high-speed east-west line and a north-south rail link.


17 Ibid, page 10
7. Town Centres

7.1 The role of centres

We welcome the priority given to centres in AMO3C. We endorse the kind of hierarchy suggested of centres, which differentiates between 'health and education precincts', and 'strategic centres', though we think there is merit also in differentiating between 'town centres' and other centres of a small more neighbourhood scale. So, we seek greater clarity on the different assets to be found in each level of centre, and what is offered to its surrounding catchment by a ‘centre’.

The Committee is developing a strategic tool kit for ‘town-centre renewal’ in Sydney. We take the view that while ‘local centres’ are important and must have sufficient assets and connectivity to encourage walkability from their neighbouring suburbs, it is vital that the importance of Sydney’s strategically important - and in our terms—town-centres be recognised even more robustly in the GSC Plan and strengthened by it. The services and jobs we know are increasingly provided in such centres are what people are looking for from urban living.

In addition, in our view, large residential developments in previously un-developed parts of Sydney need to be serviced and supported not just by ‘local centres’ distant from the few existing ‘strategic centres/town centres’, but by new town/strategic centres and the assets to match. We are told that the population growth planned around Macarthur equates to a city the size of Canberra, but as we have noted Canberra has six town centres and almost 40 schools. We look to the GSC to ensure that the urban form of such growth in the Western Sydney Parklands leads away from a very suburban model which places thousands of low density homes, quite distant from major centres and only served by ‘local’ centres which might mean a supermarket and little else. The better model of development may need to include a new generation of ‘town centres’ in the Western Sydney Parklands together with better links to Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown—with appropriate health and education services and more potential for jobs and urban living, though that mix will need careful balancing and zoning.

In our understanding, it is such centres that will generate or host many new jobs in future Sydney. We endorse this view as the ‘re-urbanisation of the economy’ gathers pace. On this point, the GSC correctly puts emphasis on policies to enhance the liveability, walkability and connectivity of such centres. The Committee agrees and is working on its ‘town centre’ toolkit for this reason, and urge the NSW Government to adopt some of its ‘tools’ when seeking to implement the centres focus of AMO3C.

The Committee believes that this is the right time to review the existing assets and growth potential of our current town centres and design new ones using global best practice. This is partly due to the opportunity for rethinking them brought about by AMO3C, but also due to the re-imagining of retail and its presence in centres driven by the digital revolution and online retailing. Many town centre retail malls in Greater Sydney are coming to the end of their natural life, providing an opportunity for their owners to redesign them for contemporary uses. These forces for change can be captured and harnessed in a renewal program of town centres across Sydney. We think this program is implicit in the GSC approach to centres, but needs to be highlighted. Our own tool kit also suggests that the NSW Government might look to create a Town Centre Renewal Challenge Fund, which could put up some government funding, matched by local councils, and perhaps other private funding, for the best town master planning and transformation programs in Greater Sydney.
7.2 ‘Superbia’, renewing Sydney’s town centres and retrofitting suburbia

Revitalising and improving Sydney’s centres is clearly core to the GSC and TfNSW vision. Centres of all scales in Sydney can benefit from suitable urban design interventions and the Committee expects many smaller ones to be enhanced as their local populations and densities increase (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Growing new centres and stimulating new communities**

![Figure 8](image)

Source: NSW Government, 2014

However, we believe ‘centres of wider geographical significance, not just the metropolitan centres but the strategic’ centres, which we prefer to call town centres need special focus on renewal and greater connectivity with their surrounding suburbs. We believe this approach will help to heighten the quality of life of many people living in Sydney by bringing the jobs, services and amenity benefits.

The Committee believes that the GSC and Government should consider a suite of key interventions to strengthen and in some case, revitalise them because there is no single solution to the improvement of our town centres—and local government cannot do it all themselves (nor can just relying on the planning system be enough). In many cases, state government policies and actions continue to damage the vitality of those centres whatever local government does. Citywide policies, often around transport planning, for example have eroded the worthwhile fabric of many town centres. With the intention of improving access, high capacity road networks have brought cars into the heart of town centres and swamped and severed them. The same occurred with many rail lines.

---

Planning policies that favoured endless subdivision effectively built-in the role of cars, which required yet more space in town centres for roads and parking.

Compounding this problem is the absence of coherent town centre focused policies. State planning policies identify the need for centre-based renewal, yet many land uses are rigidly codified to exclude the kind of mixed uses that are features of good town centres. Enhancing the dynamic mix of experiences in town centres requires coordinated intervention. Isolated intervention—such as traffic flow improvements in response to congestion or a shopping centre development isolated from other uses—are likely to impact adversely on other important and valued town centres qualities, such as pedestrian amenity.

It is important that social and transportation infrastructure improvements are framed with wider renewal and city-shaping objectives in mind. This includes coordination of station upgrades, public realm enhancements and any development restructuring of the core area. Often government departments think within silos and their own landholdings rather than thinking how their project can be a catalyst for wider transformation in partnership with others. This is particularly important in relation to town centre renewal, transit oriented development and value capture. Coordinated town centre renewal strategies and investments are required and we believe the GSC/Government needs to develop these in association with local government.

7.3 Town centres: the once and future cornerstone of Sydney’s development?

Sydney’s town centres have been at the civic heart of their communities and were the historic cornerstone of the city’s growth. However, all town centres in Sydney have been through significant change since the 1960s, which is strongly associated with the car and the dispersal of economic and residential activity. This was in the high era of ‘drivable sub-urbanism’ which triumphed over ‘walkable urbanism’.

While it is arguable that in comparison to the UK, Sydney’s town centres have managed to hold on to more retail activity—and much more of what might be called the ‘in-town’ shopping malls—the result has still been a reduction over time in the diversity of town centre uses, and of their overall economic function. In some parts of Sydney, you will find, as much as in any US town, once vibrant and diverse retail clusters in historic centres now weakened by being on roads whose function now is simply to convey heavy traffic through such centres rather than to encourage them to stop to send money there.

The potential for change and reinvestment however is the new story around town centres here as internationally. Globally there has been a process of recovery in the economic and social functions of many cities and town centres—and their rediscovery as places to live and work. Residential demands have been changing but also workplace preferences with evidence of employee preferences for working environments which are what Business Week has called ‘living, breathing communities’ rather than ‘sterile remote compounds or research silos’. Favouring ‘city-ness’—complexity, density, diversity, messy intersection of activities, the layering of the old and new, and integration rather than segregation of uses—the ‘current generation of tech workers’, says Business Week ‘doesn’t want to toil in soulless office space complexes surrounded by moats of parking or in dispersed factories’. As a major developer in London puts it:

*Employers who are looking to hire the best people will always follow the talent. An out of town business park isn’t going to attract the best talent today. People want to be in*
lively and vibrant places both at work and after work. This drives an intensification of urban centres.\textsuperscript{19}

We thus see town centre renewal as a key way in Sydney to promote two interlinked agendas: growing the knowledge economy and increasing the number of walkable precincts in ‘sprawl Sydney’ with positive consequences both for the livelihoods and well-being of Sydneysiders. In \textit{Adding to the Dividend}, the Committee emphasised the finding from Christopher Leinberger’s research that walkability is a key source of economic valley as well as health, in the contemporary city.

In seeking to strengthen the liveability and productivity of Sydney we agree with the GSC that we need economic and placemaking strategies for more than the CBD of Sydney however crucial that remains. We believe that the network of significant town centres that are such a feature of Greater Sydney can, if revitalised and re-invested in both through policy innovation and resources, add significantly to Sydney’s overall performance while also adding to the spatial inclusiveness of that success. We also believe that Sydney’s population growth requires more intensive use of our town centres and that the heart of meeting that challenge is to boost their amenity and connectivity.

7.4 Some concerns

In this context, we urge the GSC to consider the research presented below by the Committee (Figure 9). We know that much of Sydney’s future population growth is targeted in AMO3C at the Central and Western Cities. We also know the importance of existing town centres in Sydney in providing densities of jobs and amenities and that the GSC puts stress on the role going forward of ‘centres’ in the economic future of Sydney. We have also noted the current jobs gap in Western Sydney. It seems critical to the closing of that gap that the new Western Sydney (southwest and west of Parramatta and largely consisting of the new Western Parkland City) has a number of centres of a density to perform the economic and amenity functions that we see in denser/agglomerated centres in the Eastern City. Our own research below raises some questions. There is currently an imbalance between east and western Sydney in the number of strategic centres. Some of these centres have taken perhaps a century or more to assume their current function and offer. They also serve more concentrated development in their surrounding suburbs. We ask whether enough centres exist in the Western City, or are being planned there, in the right location, time-frame and with the residential densities in suburbs around them to provide the kind of jobs, services and amenity achieved in the Eastern City.

Greater clarity on this is we suggest required as there is an opportunity in building out the Western Parkland City—and in further leveraging the potential of Liverpool, Campbelltown, Penrith and Blacktown (while never forgetting Parramatta’s contributing and growing contribution to Greater Western Sydney)—to close the jobs gap of Western Sydney once and for all. However, we suspect to achieve this result, further focus must be put on planning for the number, density, character and connectivity of centres in that region. It is possible in order to redress the jobs gap and rebalance Sydney socio-economic outcomes, that more such strategic centres will need to be created there to provide the jobs hoped for and the amenity/assets which attracts them.

This ‘town-centre creating’ needs to be considered by the GSC—and delivered, as we say below in Appendix G, by a dedicated delivery vehicle. In our view, such a vehicle will be needed to deliver the scale of development which seems to be being targeted at the aerotropolis. There may be a need for

several such delivery vehicles to deliver AMO3C, particularly if new centres of scale will be created *de novo*.

### 7.5 Successful town centres are at the core of a rebalanced 30-minute city but we need more of them

The Committee strongly supports the 30-minute city objective as perhaps the most important step change in creating a more equitable city—one where opportunities to share in the benefits of living in Sydney are enjoyed by all the community.

Successful centres, of sufficient quantity, in the right locations, linked by mass transit, that provide jobs, services and dwellings are critical to achieving such a city. With the decline in manufacturing jobs that underpinned many of Sydney’s District Centres, existing centres must be reinvented and reinvigorated to attract these jobs, services and high-quality dwellings. But we also need centres of scale and quality in the Western City.

To successfully implement such a strategy, a staged process, with the right prioritisation of funded initiatives, including connectivity and placemaking /urban design interventions, is critical.

There is a *macro* and a *micro* aspect to this. It is critical that effective planning is carried out at both the strategic macro and the micro scale. That is, a clear vision that is carried down to the detail necessary to implement the plan. An effective plan will make reality of concepts such as ‘walkability’ by mandating maximum block sizes in Local Plans that cannot be bypassed by individual (government or private) for example. This is international best practice. On a Micro level, the existing and any new centres as we have seen must be of a *configuration and quality to attract contemporary jobs*, whether they be office, health, education, or retail. There must be sufficient consideration given to this in the District Plans so as to guide local plans. Without this the status quo will remain.

On the other hand, a truly macro or strategic plan for Sydney must in our view, achieve a significant rebalancing of the quantum and distribution of well linked centres within the Greater Sydney Region. Here, we have some concern. While the GSC Plan indicates a proportional number of centres to the population of each city (one centre per 150,000-170,000 people by 2036)\(^{20}\), the relationship between homes and centres is significantly more dispersed in the Western Parkland City (see Figure 9). By 2036, the Western Parkland City is projected to be a city of 10 centres, with a population of 1.5 million people, spread over an area that is roughly twice the size of the Central City and Eastern City combined. This means that the average distance from a home to a centre will be much further in the Western Parkland City, and the jobs and services that are located in centres will be less accessible.

This for us raises a key question given the importance of such centres for jobs: can Sydney be rebalanced without a more balanced provision of centres westward and specifically without the creation of new strategic or town centres in the Western Parkland City beyond what is envisaged—as yet unclear—in the concept of the aerotropolis.

---

\(^{20}\) The 2036 population for each city has been drawn from page 12 of the relevant Draft District Plans. The number of centres per has been drawn from page 9 of the Draft District Plans. The calculation for the ‘Eastern City’ is made up by adding the target 2036 population of the North District, South District and Eastern City District and dividing this by the combined number of centres of the three districts. The Central City and Western Parkland City figures are drawn from the Draft Central District Plan and Draft Western District Plan.
7.6 Important role of local government

The Prime Minister has said that ‘making sure our cities are wonderful places to live should be a key priority of both state and local government’. We say the same about our town centres and also stress the crucial role of local government. No one cares as much about their key places and centres as local councils even if they don’t have all the resources or powers they would wish to have to ensure the right policies and investments for them. However, they have key responsibility for local plan-making as part of the new hierarchy of plans overseen by the GSC. And, as importantly, they have the capacity to act as an advocate for the policies and investments their town centres require from the various government agencies operating in their areas. Overall, we wish to see more of a strategy for town centre renewal in Sydney, promoted by the GSC and Government but working in close harmony with local government. We also believe local government needs more resources to play its fore role in city-shaping.
7.7 A framework for town centre design and renewal

The Committee has been developing a framework for such town centre renewal. This includes planning, urban design and land use innovations but also land economy solutions and transport strategies, particularly those which support the most appropriate land uses in town centres and of course greater walkability.

Each of Sydney’s Town Centres are unique but typically have some or many of the following features:

- A rail and/or bus station at the centre, sometimes serving as a focal point for the centre, but often with tracks that are difficult to cross, dividing the centre into segments;
- Poor radial bus connections from the rail station to immediately surrounding suburbs, with transit instead geared to moving people into the CBD;
- Highly dominant roads, with large arterials or ring roads that severely constrain pedestrian access between the town centre and adjacent neighbourhoods;
- Large institutions on town centre fringes, such as hospitals, colleges and universities, which provide many of the jobs in the area but are frequently poorly connected to the centre;
- Large, introverted, car-oriented retail facilities with significant space devoted to large above-ground or surface parking lots;
- An underlying grid of streets, usually a legacy of their 19th Century development and predating the advent of the car;
- Remnants of a traditional 19th century main street, affordably accommodating small businesses and specialist retailers, but often struggling economically and poorly integrated with nearby shopping malls;
- Rigid mono-functional land use zoning—often with a series of introverted areas—such as shopping centres or a neighbouring industrial estate;
- Surrounding residential areas that lack a diversity of housing typologies—typically with large, homogenous low-density suburbs flanking the centre, with separate enclaves of more modern medium-density housing and recent high-rise tower blocks;
- A limited night-time economy, with most centres dead after 5.00pm;
- Municipal facilities, often a council chamber and offices, located near the centre;
- A lack of, or poor quality, green spaces;
- Other social infrastructure such as police station, courts, libraries, community and arts centres;
- Small-holding low-rise retail strips sometimes with distinctive ethnic businesses that serve local and regional needs;
- Small scale offices in mixed use buildings and medium scale offices in dedicated developments;
- Entertainment and leisure facilities, such as hotels, live entertainment, and performing arts facilities;
- Very little and low-quality residential accommodation.

Emerging elements of a town centre framework or toolkit are:

- A framework for walkable urbanism with an intensification of development based around a network of pedestrian routes that are a pleasure to use and connect the centre into
surrounding neighbourhoods and facilities—generating increased foot traffic and the economic benefits that follow from this.

- Well-designed high-density development that helps meet housing need, boosts vitality and makes efficient use of public transport—helping to increase accessibility and frequency, and lessening car dependency.
- Fostering start-up and small businesses employment growth—the compact ecosystem of town centre facilities and services and relative ease of accessibility can be a fertile environment for companies benefiting from having both an online and physical presence, a combination of ‘clicks and bricks’.
- Main roads retrofitted as attractive avenues or boulevards—requiring streets to be conceived as three-dimensional, people-oriented places that are well-landscaped, faced with buildings frontages and a safe pleasure to stroll along.
- Clarifying the difference in design and function between a road and a street—and establishing a proper hierarchy of users of town centre streets with pedestrians at the top where appropriate
- Exploiting opportunities for higher density development and mixed uses as part of transit oriented development initiatives
- A fine-grained, interesting mixture of uses—that offer vibrant and diverse town centre experiences—with mixed-use street frontages designed for human scale interactions, and an intermingling of shop-fronts, workspaces, civic and recreational facilities.
- An appropriate range of social infrastructure to support the diverse needs of a growing population—including schools, libraries, health facilities, leisure facilities, child play space and a variety of different types of public open space. This requires innovative design solutions, such as high-rise schools.
- A high quality public realm that is accessible to all and programmed for activation as well as being part of a wider joined-up public open space network of green and urban spaces
- A variety of residential building types and tenures—to create inclusive communities that include apartments within the town centre core and family sized terrace houses on the town centre fringe within easy reach of a range of amenities.
- Rationalisation of parking and servicing provision, with car parks in accessible locations that minimise unnecessary cross-centre traffic. Consolidated multi-storey parking makes efficient use of land and frees up development opportunities.
- Digital technology as an enabler for positive user experiences and for effective town management, from wayfinding and accessibility, through event awareness and product purchasing, to enabling data driven city management
- Exploring what retail in a digital era means for the design of and experience in each ‘high street’ in a town centre or for the redesign of shopping malls
- Exploring what ‘mobility as a service’, shared transport and AVs might mean for town centre parking and residential parking strategies
- Exploration of town centre management approaches including Business Improvement Districts
- Strategies for animating town centres through events and cultural programming
- Strategies for promoting the night time economy in each town centre across Greater Sydney

This we think is a necessary and timely piece of research and advocacy. Timely because as many existing town centre retail malls come to the end of their current lives, as many will be doing over the next few years, there will be opportunities from their reinvestment to redesign how they fit into or shape the town centres around them with the possibility of adding to their walkability and
contribution to town centre vitality. While currently, many town centres host large-scale single-use retail malls that present blank facades to pedestrians, in future, in addition to slimming down such malls will host additional uses, including residences above, and will also face the street. Models already exist in Sydney of in-town developments of retail mixed with residential such as at Balgowlah and Green Square and also that mix found in a ‘mall as streets’ design in Rouse Hill, now being connected by fast rail. We shall be seeing more modern versions of such approaches in a digital era but still based on the traditional virtues of good urban design for town centres. Appendix F on Planning for Growth sets out more detail on Principles of Urban Design and Making Great Places.

7.8 TfNSW’s ‘Movement and Place’—link with great placemaking in Sydney

TfNSW’s Movement and Place Framework provides potential for renewing our key town centres (see section 16.1). Better land-use and planning integration isn’t all about big projects or strategic planning for whole new parts of cities. Our existing centres need better integration of urban planning and transport planning particularly about the function and design of streets and roads that run through them—and who uses them.

We welcome the approach to the hierarchy of different users being developed by TfNSW and support TfNSW’s emerging approach to identifying a typology of streets. There has been a specific failure to recognise the difference between a street and a road. So-called ‘stroads’ have damaged the vitality of streets in town centres (see section 16.1 for further comments on the impact of stroads). We welcome the signs that both the GSC and TfNSW share a ‘complete streets’ view and think it is an essential component of any renewal of our town centres and of their capacity to be the jobs generators envisaged in the GSC Plan (see further comments on Complete Streets in Appendix B).

8. Collaboration Areas

8.1 Support for Collaboration Areas with place focus

The Committee welcomes the concept of the ‘Collaboration Areas’. The Committee has argued that ‘cities collaborate to compete’—across private, public, universities and not for profit sectors, between councils, state government and the Commonwealth—and sees the Collaboration Areas as promoting this key principle. We note that these areas also recognise and support the notion that universities and medical institutions (‘Eds and Meds’) are key ‘anchor institutions’ for their precincts, as employers, land-owners, investors and advocates.

The Collaboration Area concept is an economic initiative of considerable importance and not just a ‘nice to have’. With ‘the re-urbanisation of the economy’ in the knowledge jobs, cities which have such districts—either organically in existence or created anew—do better than others. As we have noted, manufacturing jobs are more distributed spatially around cities, as are retail jobs which follow population growth. But knowledge jobs have been agglomerating in higher density, mixed use places with key ‘city-ness’ assets that are not found in low density suburban or exurban locations, poorly connected by public transport and not walkable. Companies have located where the talent wants to be. Making sure Sydney has such places—and more of them across a wider swathe of the city, such as Liverpool, Westmead, Macquarie Park, as well as Ultimo—is vital and we commend the GSC for recognising this.
However, ‘places’ need curating and that is not the work of one sector or one government department, but the work of collaboration. A key advisor to both the Committee and the GSC, Professor Greg Clark, has noted that because city placemaking and liveability are so important in a knowledge economy and do not arise by accident, that such collaborative ‘city-management’ is now more important than ever. As he has said:

*One key implication of the shift to knowledge based economics is that whereas the people used to follow jobs and firms, these now follow the people. Advanced firms will locate where talented workers are willing or wanting to live. The quality of life and place, the amenities, ambience, and facilities of cities become a critical competitive tool in attracting knowledge workers, who are themselves the magnets for external corporate investment and local expansion. City leaders that are in tune with the needs of international firms and leading sectors can make a big difference if they calibrate local services and infrastructures to support them, and actively try to solve the local operating problems such firms face.*

We believe the Collaboration Area concept can help bring government and private sector together to ‘calibrate local services and infrastructures’ to support business platforms and can help ‘solve local operating problems’.

8.2 Some concerns

The Committee has two concerns about Collaboration Areas. Firstly, that the timeframes for activity and focus on the Collaboration Areas by the GSC seem very short term for a 40-year plan and raise questions about how long term these interventions are meant to last, and what support there will be after this initial burst of GSC activity. What is the longer-term role of the GSC in such areas and how, if it is meant to be short-term, will they be maintained after the GSC role is over? Internationally, such areas tend to be structured around and supported by Business Improvement Districts and we suggest this model be looked at in the Collaboration Areas.

The second concern is that Innovation Districts internationally are heavily reliant on good public transport access and walkability, and it is not clear whether all nine of the Collaboration Areas will have such infrastructure. A related point is also to what extent the areas are reflected in and supported by the District Plans, and their infrastructure planning regime and growth compacts. One other idea put to the Committee by its members is to not think of the proposed Collaboration Areas as separate but to think through the ways they may be connected in future city-scale public transport network planning.

9. Housing

9.1 Housing targets and supply

We welcome the retention of housing targets for each district. Without a clear commitment to providing housing growth matched to or greater than, population growth, Sydney will be unable to resolve its housing affordability crisis. Supply, in and of itself, is not the only cause of our affordability crisis. In addition to ensuring supply Sydney needs a more nuanced and multifaceted

---

policy approach to housing our population affordably, sustainably and inclusively. The Committee is urging the GSC and the Government to develop a comprehensive housing strategy for all tenures and typologies, existing and emerging, to support AMO3C.

A weakness in the GSC housing target of 725,000 extra dwellings by 2036 or 36,250 per year, is that it assumes that the peak productivity rate of growth we’ve seen in the last 3 years will be maintained, if not increased. We’re not convinced that this rate of development will be maintained over the next three years let alone the life of the plan. While we support mechanisms to encourage, developer led, housing construction, there is a limit to what the private sector can currently build in any housing market. There is also a limit to what banks will finance and what housing markets can absorb. To ensure the targets in the GSC Plan are met, there needs to be alternative mechanisms that encourage new housing, new typologies of housing, and a wider range of housing providers with different business models beyond ‘build-to-sell’. These include:

- Greater public-sector funding for new and affordable housing;
- Removing planning and non-planning barriers to small, family led developments, such as terrace and attached housing. These include removing barriers of minimum lots sizes, especially around transport nodes; and
- Encouraging new housing business models, such as built-to-rent, and new entrants to the housing provider market

9.2 Housing locations

We also question the location of some of the housing targets and stress that the location of housing is critical to achieving a sustainable and liveable, 30-minute city, with homes closer to jobs. For example, for every 10 people in Eastern Sydney there are eight jobs, and for every 10 people in Western Sydney there are three jobs.\(^{22}\) It may be necessary to locate much of Sydney’s future housing where there are currently few jobs. However, without a focussed economic strategy and long-term cross government collaboration in support of the connectivity, placemaking, investment and governance required for success, there is a risk that the sprawl model of Sydney will be maintained and re-asserted. To balance Sydney, it is critical that more homes are provided close to jobs and public transport, and that public policy is consistent on this matter.

Comparisons between the housing numbers being planned on the Upper North Shore of Sydney versus those planned for the Canterbury-Bankstown corridor are illuminating and somewhat surprising, as are the housing numbers and densities expected along the Northwest Rail Link (now Metro) compared with the Metro in the Sydenham-Bankstown corridor. It is difficult to understand why the housing numbers and densities in and around both corridors are not more closely aligned (see Figure 10). And, why the North Shore communities with the best rail connectivity in the city, and better access to jobs are not being targeted for more homes and higher density linked to transit-oriented development. The Committee suggests there is scope to increase the housing targets for those areas that currently have the best connectivity and employment, and to modify the housing targets for some other areas further West, or at least to defer the period for building out those targeted homes towards the latter periods of the plan. Doing so will also avoid the premature rezoning of land for housing in inappropriate locations without public transport.

\(^{22}\) Kelly, J-F, Donegan, P, 2015, City Limits, Grattan Institute, Melbourne University Publishing
By any measure, the current disparity between housing numbers and jobs in the south-west corridor as compared with the North Shore (Hornsby Line)/North-west, as reflected below, needs addressing. The difference in placemaking investment and design of stations between the two also needs further consideration (see Figure 11 and Figure 12). The Committee’s research reveals the broader problem in Sydney of some places having higher than average densities whilst being nowhere near a rail link: such as Manly where the ferry services have to a degree compensated and other parts of the Northern Beaches where growth is still being premised on road transport investment alone. We believe this is a questionable approach and priority for that part of Sydney and its peak-time congestion challenge and certainly raises questions as to how it reflects the aspirations of the GSC and TfNSW for effective land use and transport integration combining respect for both ‘movement’ and ‘place’.

At the same time, the notion that simply building more housing in peri-urban areas will lead to the generation of more employment on the peri-urban fringe is the kind of assumption which caused the existing jobs gap. When comparing the jobs growth projection to the housing targets in the GSC Plan we see broadly a ratio of jobs to houses of 1.1. The assumption that all homes are equal when it comes to jobs is questionable. This fails to consider the economic dynamics of density, or account for EFD, mode share, or age profiles of people living locally. We need to see more reflection on the economic strategy for, and the precise interplay between, homes and jobs in different urban contexts in Sydney.

---

23 Canterbury-Bankstown Council, 2017, Sydenham to Bankstown Metro: Key issues and opportunities, page 6
Figure 11. Comparison between the design of the Metro Northwest and Southwest

Source: Canterbury-Bankstown Council, 2017

Figure 12. Above average population density in proximity to a train station

Source: OneMap and Committee for Sydney, 2017

This map illustrates where there is above average population density close to a train station such as the Bankstown and Inner West Train Corridor, areas with above average population density that are far from train stations and areas in close proximity to train stations that have below average population density such as in the North Shore Hornsby corridor.

24 Canterbury-Bankstown Council, 2017, Sydenham to Bankstown Metro: Key issues and opportunities, page 5
25 Source data: ABS 2016, SA1 Land and Property Information 2016. Average population density for Greater Sydney is 51 persons per hectare.
9.3 Inclusionary zoning

The Committee welcomes the commitment by the GSC to an inclusionary zoning approach for developments to include a proportion of affordable—which is to say ‘sub-market’—rental. This is a breakthrough in the metropolitan planning system. However, we wonder whether the caveats and uncertainties around what remains a modest inclusionary zoning target set out by the GSC will result in the amount of affordable housing the GSC/AHURI believe is annually needed in Sydney. The caveats include inclusionary zoning in preferred locations, and that the proportion of a development actually delivered under this provision will be subject to ‘viability’ considerations. Moreover, even if the proposed 5% target were actually ‘viable’ and delivered, the caveat on location suggests to us some falling short of meeting the amount cited as needed by GSC/AHURI.

The GSC and the private sector have clearly had a very positive conversation around the inclusionary zoning principle. Government does need to understand the circumstances or preconditions under which inclusionary zoning can be made to work—and those conditions need to be met. Committee members in the development and community housing sectors are already innovating to ensure that there are more housing choices for a range of incomes. They stress that the key issues surrounding inclusionary zoning and the ability to provide affordable housing as part of a development are residual land value, the proportionality of any levies imposed, and a need for certainty from local and state governments so as to plan effectively.

For inclusionary zoning to work, any expectations on the private sector to deliver affordable housing must be identified prior to the purchase of the land—any change of circumstance after this will unreasonably impact on the capacity of developers to deliver projects. This will allow developers to take inclusionary zoning requirements into account from the start when planning projects, and incorporate it into their calculations of residual land value and project feasibility. Developers also want to be sure that inclusionary zoning is not layered on top of other planning requirements or developer obligations and that levies in the round are proportionate.

Where Government is disposing of its own land, it can of course incentivise the development of affordable housing by not insisting on highest and best value. The upcoming large-scale development of homes on public land in Waterloo is an opportunity to achieve significant numbers of sub-market homes. But government must not sell public land at maximum value and then expects developers to deliver additional public benefits such as affordable housing or impose inclusionary zoning requirements after developers have already negotiated options with landowners. Effective collaboration involves unlocking public land and providing clear direction around inclusionary zoning expectations. In this context developers may find it more acceptable to get certainty from the planning system of say a 10% or target on all developments above 10 homes on land bought after the provision was introduced. The locational and viability caveats and uncertainties may raise developer costs more than a straightforward target.

10. Sydney in its Regional Context

10.1 Considering an emergent Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong ‘City-Region’

The Committee takes the view that while Sydney may consist of two existing cities and one emerging city, we need to plan for what Greater Sydney might be spatially or in terms of enhanced connectivity and impact by 2056. Already there are significant economic and transport flows between Sydney and the Central Coast and Illawarra. The Committee has mapped some of these
interactions and is now working on a study of what they might be if this emerging city region were better connected by fast public transport. We are pleased that the potential for greater mutually beneficial interactions between Sydney, Newcastle/Gosford and Wollongong has become part of the discussion in AMO3C and TfNSW’s Strategy.

We also suggest that in planning the future city region we may find that Parramatta is the most natural centre and rail interchange, not just for the Greater Sydney of three Cities but the city region of five cities in 2056. By that time, rail connections to Canberra are also likely to have been transformed—a realistic scenario meaning that key elements of an ‘eastern mega region’ will be in place. For more about this emerging ‘city-region’ and its transport basis see our response to the Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056.

11. Planning for the City at Night

11.1 Encouraging Sydney’s night time economy

We believe there needs to be a more strategic GSC focus on encouraging a vibrant, safe and economically successful town centres at night. The city needs to be planned-for at night as well as in the day, though we accept and endorse the drive in AMO3C to make our centres more liveable and accessible will help create environments which can work better at night too. However, we would like to see more explicit strategizing around this goal. We have initiated a Night-Time Economy Commission to help identify key interventions.

We also recognise that our city at night is a complex ecosystem that sometimes creates conflict within itself. For example, there is in some centres a growing division between the desire for more outdoor activities at night, such as outdoor dining, night markets or live music, and an ever-increasing number of inner-city dwellers resistant to potentially loud activities taking place outside their residence.

Sydney’s night-time economy must be seen as more than just a question of entertainment or licensing, though these are relevant and as we have seen—the density of cafes, bars and restaurants in certain urban locations, adding to the mix of uses, is increasingly recognised internationally as a source of attraction for talent and investment in a knowledge economy. We need to evolve a genuinely 24-hour city, where day-to-day activities such as shopping, visiting a museum, going to the gym or a public library become as normal at 10pm and they would at 10am.

There is also a key workforce element to consider in the night time economy. What are the options for those travelling to and from work at night, particularly using public transport? Can they access food and drink facilities during or after their shift? We can also further enhance Sydney’s tourism offer, by diversifying activities and locations for tourists to visit after dark. Night-time transport in Sydney must reflect the continued growth of the population, workforce and visitor economy.

Diverse night-time attractions create a viable transition from day-time to night-time economies, and this economic diversity is critical to fostering a more inclusive and safe night-time environment and attracting a mixture of people. This mixture of users naturally creates more calm on the streets and makes unsociable behaviour seem less acceptable.

Town centres that are ‘dead’ after work are little different to the suburbs that they sit within. Mono-cultural town centres that operate by exclusion rather than attraction—ones that exclude many groups such as the very young and the old—can also be problematic. Vital town centres, and
ones that operated day and night, are characterised by a multitude of attractions and by populations that support those attractions economically. Town centres need populations close by and good public transport backed increasingly by shared transport connecting them. We accept the GSC and TfNSW have much of this agenda in mind. We think that going forward there should be a greater emphasis on the night time performance of Sydney’s centres.

12. Green Infrastructure

12.1 Green infrastructure is an urban necessity

The Committee has long supported the Green Grid and welcomes that the GSC sees it as a core project in the development of Sydney. We now need to start to see implementation of the Green Grid, building on the excellent pilot project around Parramatta. Although the roll out will take many years, we need to show the community early that in growing Sydney from 5 million to 8 million we can make the city not just bigger but better. In our view, such ‘Green Infrastructure’ must be at the heart of the future development of Sydney. Not as a ‘nice to have’ but as central to creating a more sustainable city and to generating community support for Sydney’s growth.

Green infrastructure has often been seen as a counterpoint to the city, rather than as an integral part of the urban environment upon which the prosperity, viability and resilience of the city depends. Partly because of this, the provision of green infrastructure has been largely under-appreciated and its benefits unrealised beyond formulaic planning approaches such as the amount of green space required per person for amenity and recreation or the need to protect and conserve special landscapes and natural assets. Its role in supporting successful urban development and in growing the city economy has been less noted and seldom forms part of an infrastructure appraisal process or business case. Correctly understood, Green infrastructure is essential urban infrastructure hidden in plain sight. This approach has a strong resonance with the public of Sydney who recognise its importance both environmentally and in terms of the amenity of urban life, of particular significance to their experience of Sydney’s streets and centres.

We believe Green Infrastructure supports a number of key agendas we have raised in our response. For example, more street trees across Sydney—combined with a policy to preserve those we have—will mean safer streets as drivers moderate their speeds because of them, will help contribute to a reduced heat-island effect and improved natural drainage, help promote walkability not least between home and school, help increase amenity in our centres and help raise property values. As these are all vital to the sustainable growth of Western Sydney, ‘more street trees’ as a policy should actually be seen as a key contribution to the overall objective of rebalancing Sydney—and be prioritised accordingly in the infrastructure appraisal process. In this context we welcome the Minister for Planning’s initiative to provide trees free of charge to home-owners while stressing that the greatest impact of such a provision for places such as Western Sydney comes from locating them on the street not in back gardens.

12.2 South Creek Corridor

The South Creek Corridor Plan is bold in scale and aspiration, proposing a fundamental restructuring of the urban form of its region. In our view, such a paradigm shift is essential if the very qualities that characterise this parkland region are to be maintained while supporting a future population of some 1.5 million people, as well as major job centres of the future. The success of the Western Parkland will rely heavily on this initiative which can transform the urban form of the region from its
current car based form to a more sustainable one, catalysing sustainable communities, improving the health of waterways on a regional scale as well as improving microclimate amenity.

We agree that strong governance will be required to deliver the South Creek Corridor, achieving the very aspirational goals which we also strongly endorse. While Infrastructure NSW will lead the Plan, it will require the co-operation of all agencies including TFNSW if its regional scale structural corridor function, including sustainable transport is to be achieved.

The Committee applauds the South Creek Corridor Plan and its dual role as the key provider of both amenity and environmental outcomes, creating attractive urban communities. Amenity and environmental outcomes must embrace sustainable urban design principles specifically urban form and its integration with mass transit, as indicated on the diagrams on Figure 47, South Creek Urban Design Principles, which indicate fine grain pedestrian oriented centres, within easy walking distance of mass transit. The principles set out in the government’s Better Placed guidelines strongly support this approach.

South Creek and a north/south rail corridor together are proposed as the dual north/south organising principles of the Western Parkland City. It will be critical that these two spines are integrated with the other key element; the ‘ring’ of University Cities, Liverpool, Campbelltown, and Penrith, all strongly linked to the Western City Airport. Committing to the transport spines upfront will be a ‘game changer’.

The vision for well-connected transit oriented compact communities within a Parkland City can only be achieved if the spread of low density housing into Parkland areas is avoided. Such development will reduce tree canopy, push housing further from jobs and services in centres, as well as threaten the water functions of the Corridor. While we strongly agree with the principle of connectivity, at grade creek crossings should be for pedestrians not cars.

We strongly support the policy to maintain riparian corridors in public ownership as stated in the Plan. These will require sufficient funding for acquisition (where required), improvement, and ongoing maintenance. Government has previously worked in partnership with the private sector, as in the case of the 70-hectare Central Parkland Corridor within the Ponds, which has become the community glue for some 10,000 residents. Funding mechanisms for the riparian corridor were derived from the development of this community.

13. Funding

13.1 Funding models for public transport and affordable housing

Most infrastructure in Australia has a well-designed funding structure. Utilities have a user charge which funds both operational expenses and future expansion. Schools and hospitals are supported by Commonwealth/State funding agreements and the national Medicare levy. Roads are well funded with a tax on petrol and user charges in the form of tolls and registration fees (though both sources of funding will come under pressure as society moves towards electric, autonomous and shared vehicles and mobility as a service—which will require a shift to a road-pricing as set out Appendix E). However, there are two types of infrastructure that are chronically under supplied, and lack a separate, well defined, funding model. These areas are affordable housing and public transport.

Affordable housing and public transport are largely funded by state government consolidated revenue. Unlike health and education, they are not universal services, and are generally not
supported by funding from other government tiers. The user charged and rents that area raised do not come close to covering their capital or recurrent funding costs, with public transport income from the fare-box only paying 20% of operating costs. In Sydney, the result of this is a chronic undersupply of affordable housing (defined as subsidised sub-market rental homes) and a glaring deficit in the provision of public transport.

Sydney needs a proper and robust financial model to increase the supply of affordable housing and the extent and capacity of public transport

13.2 Value capture and value uplift

The Committee welcomes the intention in the GSC and TfNSW strategies to explore the introduction of value sharing mechanisms to help defray the costs of new infrastructure. We have long championed the idea of capturing some of the uplift in property values created by investments in civic amenity and connectivity. We believe that the community understands that when public infrastructure investment creates significant unearned income it is fair for there to be some mechanism to enable the public sector to share in the uplift. We also believe the community understands that without such mechanisms and payments we cannot fund the projects we need.

While the GSC Plan canvasses a Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) levy in some precincts to support enabling infrastructure, this is not the only model of value capture which should be explored (see Appendix C for further comments on value capture). A SIC levy can increase the cost of producing new housing and may lead to less housing being produced. Moreover, we are concerned that the SIC is not being uniformly levied across the city. It is anomalous that a SIC levy is being imposed to support the Parramatta Light Rail, but the Eastern Suburbs Light Rail is fully funded by tax payers.

More importantly, while a SIC levy can contribute to help cover the capital cost of new infrastructure, it is only a one-off contribution and does nothing to support the recurrent cost of operating the infrastructure. This is a problem for public transport, which has an annual recurrent subsidy from the state Government over $500 million. It is this ‘gap’ in the recurrent cost that has stymied new investment in public transport in recent decades.

We need to find a long term new source of income hypothecated to key infrastructure. This should not be just reducible to a charge on new development as a) that can suppress delivery of homes and b) it’s not just new development that benefits from new or renewed infrastructure: existing communities can benefit too but currently there are few mechanisms to tap into their benefit as ‘pay-back’ for the public investment. And of course, any public benefit in property uplift goes to the federal level in the form of taxing capital gains, there is less state benefit than there might be from such uplift. We have to find better ways and ones which while helping to fund significant and expensive public transport projects and services are not experienced as disproportionate by the community: such as paying a contribution annually over a long period rather than a big one-off payment. This leads to a discussion of initiatives such as Land Tax and of enabling local government to charge appropriate rates.

13.3 Regarding Henry: Enter the land tax

Sydney is one of the few global cities that doesn’t have a broad-based land tax. While all properties are subject to small council rates, much of Sydney’s land is largely untaxed. A broad-based land tax helps to use land more efficiently and prevent land banking, and the tax is unavoidable, equitable, cheap to collect. The Henry Tax Review identified land tax as one of the top priorities for tax reform
because of its many benefits, including as a mechanism for capturing uplift from public investment. The Committee has long supported introducing a broad-based land tax to support Sydney’s development and to help fund necessary public transport. The tax does not need to be high, it just needs to help defray the gap between ticket revenue from public transport and the government subsidy.

While taxing the family home may prove difficult politically, this is not as insurmountable a problem as many of our politicians would believe. Across the United States and in Europe, dozens of cities are voting to impose special levies and taxes on themselves and their own homes. In Denver for example an entire new light rail network and some road building was funded through a half cent sales tax hypothecated to transport, bonded over 30 years. The money raised through these levies is typically hypothecated to supporting and expanding public transport, which as a benefit to all is seen as a legitimate charge on all. The citizens are paying for it because they see they directly benefit from it.

In London some part of the Greater London Council rate is hypothecated to help fund the cost of the Crossrail project. Also funding Crossrail is a levy on all major development projects in London and an increase in business rate for those along the route. These are acceptable because the community sees that the projects would not happen without them and because the charges are small but levied over the longer period. The Committee believes our politicians see the logic of such an innovation but believe voters would never support a tax on their own home. The least we could do is ask them. In that context it is worth considering how to apply to Sydney the kinds of consultative plebiscites which are everyday events in US cities and states. The Denver sales tax hypothecation model for the fastrack light rail scheme came as a result of a referendum across the various municipalities in Greater Denver. We need to replicate this consultative mechanism for getting community buy in to infrastructure funding here, whatever the apparent constitutional or governance barriers. Innovation is required.

13.4 Lifting the cap…and the capacity.

As Sydney grows to be a city of 8 million in just a few short decades time, there will need to be a significant investment in placemaking and a significant expansion of civic infrastructure, such as better local streets, more open space, libraries and other civic services. Most of this will need to be delivered and financed by Local Government. Although local government is tasked with such delivery, it has not always had the capacity or financial means to manage this growth as it would wish, so as to ensure our local neighbourhoods, parks and streets remain sustainable and liveable. While there are significant exceptions to this analysis—and everywhere councils are still seeking to deliver and innovate on limited resources—four decades of rate capping by State Governments has left Local Councils in Sydney under resourced and underfunded. Local Councils in NSW now levy the lowest rates in Australia. This lack of resources is already causing significant problems for our City. While households may be better off, our public spaces/realm and local infrastructure are often struggling to live up to our community expectations. If our local councils are struggling to service our existing city today, it will certainly be unable to service the city of 8 million people in the future.

If there was ever a rationale for capping Council rates in 1976, there isn’t one now. Council rates in Sydney are now substantially lower than every other city in Australia. Yet the need for stronger, more robust Local Councils in Sydney has never been greater. Not only is the cap on rate increases handicapping our city and frankly disrespectful to an increasingly important tier of Government, rate capping is directly undermining the capacity to manage urban growth and house our citizens. Those LGA’s that are experiencing the faster population growth have less scope to increase revenue than those LGA’s with the least growth. This is particularly the case for Councils experiencing the most in-
That is no way to fund a growing city. If rate capping is not to be removed completely, consideration should be made to changing how IPART determines the annual increase. A simple formula might be combining CPI increases with a further proportional increase to reflect the rate of population growth in each LGA.

14. Delivery

14.1 Cross-agency governance and metrics

Delivering AMO3C will obviously be the work of many existing institutions, public bodies, government agencies and tiers of government. It will also require innovation in such institutions and processes such as a changed infrastructure appraisal process (see Appendix D). A further process innovation would be to identify the key metrics that demonstrate the implementation of the GSC Plan in a transparent fashion. We have said we wanted to see greater clarity around targets and metrics from the GSC Plan.

Of course, the Committee has a long involvement in the effort to make Sydney more ‘data-driven and responsive’ and to ensure governments make decisions on the basis of evidence of city performance. We pioneered city benchmarking in Australia and have seen this influence the emergence of the GSC’s attempt at a performance dashboard and the recent benchmarking exercise and tools developed by the Australian Federal Government as part of their new cities policy. We believe that clarity around benchmarks, metrics and targets for assessing the implementation of the GSC Plan and the progress of the city is important—and that much insight can be obtained to inform what might be done from the published work of the Committee and the new Federal Cities Performance Framework.26

Such a city performance framework with clear metrics and targets will also help Sydneysiders understand how their city is doing, promote a better civic discussion about that performance and identify what interventions might be needed to improve. It would also help increase accountability to the community for that performance. Our lack of a metropolitan-wide Greater Sydney Council or a Minister for Sydney has in our view held our city back.

The GSC is currently our best hope to end this. The GSC should be given greater authority and powers to review other Government agencies beyond just a role of collaborator and facilitator. The GSC is a significant step forward in breaking down government silos to promote better land use and transport integration and of thinking about Sydney at a metropolitan scale. However, its creation we hope, is merely the ‘end of the beginning’ of the longer journey to a metropolitan wide, self-government model for Sydney, accountable to its inhabitants. In the long run consideration should be given to providing a democratic mandate to the GSC so the Sydney and Sydneysiders can finally find their voice.

14.2 City Deals

City Deals are a positive innovation in Australia as they represent a serious effort to have the three tiers of government working on a coherent common strategy to agree on interventions and to manage growth. The City Deal for Western Sydney involving 8 local councils has been a welcome experience for those councils. They rarely have the opportunity to work together to deliver

---

26 Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2017, National Cities Performance Framework: Final Report, Canberra
strategic/structural city change around the development of the Sydney airport—let alone to have the opportunity to do so in partnership with the State or Federal Governments. We need more such opportunities in Sydney for local councils and state government to collaborate on strategic city shaping.

We endorse this governance collaboration and urge such an approach be considered for a pan Sydney City Deal process involving the three tiers of government in the delivery of elements of AMO3C across the city. Furthermore, we believe that some internal and more modest State government-local government version of a City Deal or cross tier collaboration should be established in relation to a program and strategy for Town Centre renewal across Sydney and the creation of new ‘strategic centres’. Significant infrastructure projects could also be better leveraged for wider benefits (jobs, homes, training, SME opportunities) through such collaborations.

14.3 Delivery vehicles or special purpose vehicles for big urban transformation and building new towns

It is crucial that there is a robust planning regime in place to guide the quality, appropriateness and location of private development in a city. However, such a regime cannot in itself be relied on to deliver great places particularly in larger scale developments. The Committee recommends the adoption of special purpose delivery vehicles such as Urban Development Corporations (UDCs). Appendix G explains the purpose and functions of UDCs with reference to New Town Development Corporations that was established in the UK.
The Committee for Sydney’s Response to the Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056 and Draft Services and Infrastructure for Sydney

The Committee for Sydney welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the future of transport in Sydney. Given that the challenges facing the city between now and 2056 will largely be defined by its population growth from 5 million to 8 million, there could be no more important issue than how transport will support that growth and enable it to achieve a city that is more liveable, more productive and more equitable. We believe that it is possible with the right policy settings and values to make our city not just bigger by mid-century but better.

Our overall response to the Draft Future Transport Strategy 2056 and the Draft Services and Infrastructure document for Sydney produced by Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) is that they amount to a welcome step-change in the approach taken towards transport planning for our city and contain many of the key elements the Committee looks for when assessing what Sydney needs to do in transport to enable it to perform well, both for Sydneysiders and for those who wish to visit here, invest here and move here on its journey towards the top table of global cities.

The Committee’s own benchmarking research has shown that the main challenge that is holding Sydney’s competitive performance and social inclusion back is our historically under-invested mass transit system. Further, the public transport network we do have is heavily concentrated East of Parramatta, while residential development has been trending westwards. This has reinforced the economic attractions of Eastern Sydney, put immense strain on west-east transport corridors and exacerbated both the economic and health divisions across Sydney. Good public transport access improves EFD which benefits us collectively and individually and improves health outcomes by incentivising people to get out of their cars and walk to rail stations or bus stops. The Committee has shown that places with poor access to mass transit perform less well economically, and are associated with what has become known as the ‘walking deficit disorder’ or type 2 diabetes.

15. Support for the Alignment of Transport and Land Use Planning

15.1 Transport as an enabler for productive, liveable and sustainable cities

It is clear that TfNSW has embraced the objective of ensuring that the Sydney transport network going forward reinforces core city planning objectives and outcomes—such as supporting greater access to jobs and increasing residential density close to public transport. It must enhance not just mobility but also the liveability of places and centres, and must serve a hierarchy of transport mode users with greater priority on pedestrians and cyclist than we have seen in previous transport strategies. This is all welcome.

---

We regard this as amounting to a breakthrough in understanding the role of transport in a modern global city, which is not just to reduce travel time, but to enable the city to remain productive and liveable, and to provide residents across Sydney with efficient and equitable access to opportunities be they jobs, services or leisure activities.

Essentially, TfNSW through Future Transport is committing itself to that integration of land-use and transport planning whose absence has played such a formative and one might say ‘deformative’ role in Sydney’s sprawling urban form. It is also showing the benefits of the cross-government collaboration around planning for Sydney’s growth, symbolised in and greatly strengthened by the GSC. We commend the two organisations for the unique extent of the collaboration that has been achieved thus far, and note that such collaboration will be required year in year out sine die if Sydney is to be sustainable and successful at mid-century. Sydney would go backwards if siloed transport and land-use planning were to return or if the GSC were to be reduced in scope or influence.

15.2 Delivering the 30-minute city
At the core of the collaboration, is TfNSW embracing the core high-level structural concept of Sydney being a ‘metropolis of three cities’. In detail, this means TfNSW accepting and seeking to design transport services for Sydney as three ‘30-minute cities’. It also means accepting the primacy in transport policy and strategy of helping the city to function effectively and more equitably in terms of access to jobs and services. Instead of designing transport services separately from the way the city is or should be structured—as has been the norm, with the result that transport infrastructure has often undermined wider planning objectives around increasing urban densities and exacerbated Sydney’s sprawl—TfNSW now sees its role as to assist the GSC in delivering its structural objectives and outcomes, which essentially are to rebalance Sydney around its two existing metropolitan centres and one emerging metropolitan city cluster.

That is to say, for TFNSW now the core transport functions are not just to improve mobility and access, but also to ensure that Sydney is rebalanced and served via its transport network. From this point, as the TfNSW document for Sydney states, as the city transitions to a metropolis of three cities, ‘convenient and reliable access for customers by public and active transport to their nearest centre ‘is increasingly important for:

- ‘Productivity—reducing the time people spend travelling and increasing people’s access to jobs and business’ access to workers
- Liveability—improving the quality of life in Greater Sydney by reducing the need for long commutes and helping to manage congestion by better spreading transport demand
- Sustainability—increasing the share of trips by public and active transport and reducing the need to drive or reducing average journey lengths, thereby reducing emissions and improving air quality

16. Support for Recognition of ‘Place’ in Transport

16.1 Movement and Place Framework
TfNSW ‘s innovative Movement and Place Framework is a welcome addition to its strategy, demonstrating leadership among transport authorities in Australia (see Figure 13). The recognition and appreciation of ‘place’ reflects emerging best practice globally, in seeking to, as a ‘key principle’ balance the efficient movement of people and goods with supporting the liveability of places on our
road network. This is a critical breakthrough in understanding which we hope will lead to one in practice, on the streets, with some key infrastructure projects being selected by government over others precisely because they create better ‘place’ outcomes and in so doing enhance productivity, liveability and sustainability.

Figure 13. TfNSW Movement and Place Framework

This is a crucial shift in mindset for a state transport department as for decades the most important, and arguably the only objective has been the ‘efficient movement of people and goods’ particularly in regard to roads. As we stress however, such a shift should now be reflected in the core transport infrastructure appraisal process of the state government. To this point, the process has been largely premised on the goal of travel time reduction and thus the speed at which cars are able to flow as a prime virtue. Although in reality, as the Committee has shown on the basis of international evidence, increased road supply does not in practice reduce congestion except for a short amount of time, as it soon induces more cars to use the road, the attempt to prioritise the ‘efficient’ use of the road for drivers over its role as a place for other users, often has the effect of killing its liveability assets. This is why residential prices can drop alongside a new or widened road and why shops can close down—or become lower grade—along that road.

Hence, the vital importance of the recognition by TfNSW that such ‘efficient’ road use needs to be ‘balanced...with supporting the liveability of places on our road network’. In support of this ‘balance’, we would stress the importance of the emerging TfNSW Movement and Place Framework in establishing as never before in Sydney, the difference in that network between a ‘street’ and a ‘road’ and the relative prominence to be given amongst the potential ‘hierarchy of users’ in one or the other. There are too many ‘stroads’ in Sydney, unclear as to which one they are, a street or a road, resulting in both pedestrians and drivers being frustrated—and at worst, not just in the erosion of liveability and amenity along the route but in unnecessary injury and death. The identification of a street as opposed to a road is nuanced and tied to the attributes of a local geographical area—be it an urban residential area, a suburban town centre, or a bustling city centre. A clear categorisation of street types as suggested by TfNSW (see Figure 14) and needs of road users (see Figure 15) can ensure that commuters get a consistent level of service and quality of experience.

Figure 14. TfNSW example street types matrix

![Figure 14](image)


---

Figure 15. Example road user hierarchy and needs

- **Pedestrians**: A dense network of footways, crossings on desire lines and footpaths
- **Cyclists**: A comprehensive network of shared paths, quiet streets and segregated cycle lanes
- **Public transport and other mass transit**: Priority bus lanes and rapid transit, in some locations with access for new shared mobility services
- **Freight**: Additional incentives to prioritise high-capacity and higher utilisation of HGVs and clean-fleet vehicles over LGVs
- **Commuter and tourist coaches**: Additional incentives for clean vehicles
- **Taxis and PHVs**: Mobility services for individual use, additional incentives for clean vehicles
- **Private motor vehicles**: General traffic, with additional incentives for clean vehicles

Source: Centre for London, 2017

---


30 Centre for London, 2017, Smart Streets, page 40
16.2 Designing transport stations and stops as places

The new Mobility and Place Framework should also have a focus on how transport efficiency and good placemaking can be combined when developing new rail services and stations. We share the concerns expressed by Canterbury-Bankstown council that the balance is not right yet vis a vis the ‘efficiency’ of the new Metro through their area and the quality and impact of station design at Bankstown. In building new mass transit capacity TfNSW must not forget its own impact on the liveability of places and centres in Sydney.

17. Ensure There is Efficient Mass-Transit Between the Three Cities

17.1 Mass-transit for the 30-minute city

Fundamentally, the main government intervention that can make a reality of a rebalanced Sydney of three 30-minute cities is a mass transit system, which provides fast rail links between the three cities or to be precise the two cities and the third ‘city cluster’. That means a rail system, which as the very first step, gets a commuter or investor between the Sydney and Parramatta CBDs as fast as would be achievable in international cities with which Sydney is in competition. That is a sub 20-minute journey.

We are concerned that the proposed West Metro, which we understand would achieve this timetable is not identified in the GSC Plan as an urgent priority. We don’t see how the GSC objectives of rebalancing Sydney can be met without it. Without it there is the danger of the three 30-minute cities amounting to an institutionalising of the 90-minute city that we have now, and of the city continuing its sprawl trajectory.

It must also be stressed that given the evident and continuing trend towards the ‘Harbour CBD’, and places close to it as a main generator of Sydney’s knowledge jobs—which trend will not, on the GSC’s own data be reduced significantly in the next decade or even longer—many hundreds of thousands of Western Sydneysiders will be looking to be part of a ‘30-minute city’ connecting them to this eastern labour market, as fast as possible by public transport, whichever of the three cities they happen to sleep in.

Building the three 30-minute cities must not supplant the objective of all successful global cities, which is to build a rail network connecting all parts of the metropolis with the main labour markets as efficiently and quickly as possible. It should not be forgotten that London’s fast rail network enables many hundreds of thousands of workers to get to their jobs in 30-minute journeys which started outside London.

We are thus surprised that the NSW Government seems to have prioritised the F6 and the Northern Beaches Link over West Metro when neither would have the rebalancing effect sought in the GSC and TfNSW plans. These projects reinforce the ‘eastern’ emphasis of infrastructure spending and the priority of roads—which experts see as having a dispersing effect on Sydney’s development pattern and urban form over rail which has a concentrating effect. They do not seem to have been selected because of their capacity to deliver better urban performance or better placemaking although as the appraisal has never been made public it is not clear on what evidence they were preferred. There is thus sometimes a contradiction between the Sydney TfNSW and GSC are seeking to build and the one being built by other parts of the NSW Government. There must be greater alignment between
these parts of Government around transport infrastructure projects being prioritised because they deliver the objectives of the metropolitan plan and its preferred urban structure for Sydney.

18. Modal Shift and Density

18.1 Set a mode shift target for mass and active transport

The Committee welcomes the unambiguous commitment to public transport and active transport modes such as walking and cycling, and strategies aimed at increasing their prominence. However, it is vital that there be a mode shift target for Greater Sydney, with progress assessed at frequent intervals between the current baseline and the end of the Plan’s implementation time-frame. Each of the three cities might be allocated their own mode shift target within a cumulative three cities total. Without such a target, there is no real visible and accountable KPI or incentive for the transport system to deliver on TfNSW’s values and evident support for a mass and active transport Greater Sydney.

This is a particularly serious omission in relation to Western Sydney and the districts which form it. There we need to see a dramatic shift towards public and active transport to meet government economic and health targets, and to bind Western Sydney closer to the rest of Sydney and to itself in terms of journeys between its core centres. We note that TfNSW itself stresses that by 2056 the ‘Harbour CBD’ will have a population density ‘similar to Singapore today’, while Greater Parramatta will have a population density ‘similar to what London has today’. And yet, in the Future Transport document, the private vehicle mode share of Sydney in 2056 is depicted to be significantly higher than the current levels of leading global cities (see Figure 16). To support population shift and density, there must be a public transport network similar to that currently enjoyed by a Singapore or a London. We cannot see how that will be achieved without a mode shift target of sufficient ambition and robustness.

Figure 16. TfNSW private vehicle mode share diagram

Source: TfNSW, 201731

19. Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong ‘City-Region’

19.1 Mass-Transit Needs and Opportunities

We commend TfNSW for recognising that while Greater Sydney may be a metropolis of two cities and a city cluster, we are on our way to a ‘city-region’ of five cities for which we need to plan, and which we need to enable, via transport. The Committee is delighted that TfNSW has taken up an initiative of the Committee’s to think through the fact that Greater Sydney’s links with Wollongong, the Central Coast/Gosford and Newcastle are of increasing mutual significance. In international terms, they are arguably already part of a ‘city-region’ with Sydney at its centre and we believe such integration can only increase.

The Committee has done research which shows the extent of the journeys already being taken between the centres, and suggest what can be achieved if for example rail trips between Wollongong and Sydney and Sydney and Gosford were reduced to an hour—which by international standards is reasonably achievable. We think any planning for Greater Sydney in 2056 should be based on such transport integration. Therefore, we are pleased to see both GSC and TfNSW embrace this concept and we look forward to developing the approach with them.

19.2 Parramatta as the city-region rail interchange of Sydney

The Committee thinks that it is possible that Parramatta, the geographical centre of Greater Sydney may actually be the natural ‘city-region’ rail interchange for the emerging Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong region. A rail interchange at Parramatta would reinforce the concept of the Central City, support connectivity to Western Sydney, as well as connectivity to the economies of Wollongong and Newcastle/Gosford (see Figure 17).
20. Shared, Autonomous and Electric Vehicles

20.1 Transport and city planning in a digital era

The final observation is around the vexed question of transport and city planning in a digital era, which is seeing the dissolving and creation of business models not least in transport, through shared or autonomous vehicles (AVs) and electrical vehicles, which in themselves will destroy the current basis for taxing road users through charges on petrol.

It is perhaps the most difficult time to do city and transport planning because of the uncertainty around the impact of technology and the pace of change. We believe the transport minister got to the heart of the challenge when he recently pondered what AVs and shared vehicles might mean for car ownership as we move towards ‘mobility as a service’. While this also raises questions about the precise relationship between public, private and mass transit, the minister thought we should as a
society be asking questions such as, ‘Do we really need to be building four and five-lane motorways today when automation could completely change the thinking?’ He continued, ‘We will see people, I think [doing] the first mile, last mile stuff where they will catch a pod to the mass transit solution and jump on a metro train. They won’t need to travel across the city in a car like they used to. It’s going to be an incredible change’. The Committee shares this view and wonders whether in the final iteration of the Future Transport Strategy there should be more focus on the minister’s questions.

To their enthusiasts, AVs will usher in a new urban nirvana. They’ll be safer, eliminating up to 90% of all automobile accidents, saving millions of lives. They’ll provide transport to the elderly, disabled and kids; improving mobility for millions. They’ll dramatically increase road capacity and traffic flow. They’ll free our cities and towns of the need for parking. They’ll be cleaner and greener. Perhaps they’ll even free us from even owning a car at all, with cheap driverless taxis and car share vehicles providing our mobility. But there is also the possibility AVs will mean that cities become clogged and congested as more vehicles join the road. That we’ll use our vehicles to run simple deliveries. That our kids will get off their bikes and be driven, driverless, to school. That more people will have access to cars and we’ll be using them more frequently and drive further. Far from ending traffic, we make it worse. That we won’t make our cities more liveable and connected, but more fragmented and sprawling.

Which of these different outcomes eventuates will come down to our own decisions and those of policy makers. If AVs are inevitable, we should be thinking now about how we are going to manage their impact on our city’s urban form and performance.

20.2 AVs can reinforce or undo the transition to a higher density city

AVs can either reinforce this trend or undo it. If AVs improve the efficiency of our road network it is very likely that they will induce more demand for road space, increasing congestion. If they generate more frequent road trips our local neighbourhoods and streets could grind to a halt. If they allow for longer, albeit more comfortable commutes, we will sprawl again, threatening our environment and increasing social isolation and exclusion.

Alternatively, AVs could free our cities from congestion and even car-ownership at all. Most cars are used less than 6% of the time and much of this use is just looking for a place to park. AVs could allow us to develop “on demand” vehicles, which turn up when we want one and then leave to either park themselves or to pick up someone else. Used more efficiently, the number of cars on our roads could be reduced by half. Moreover, not owning a car means we don’t have to dedicate so much of our house, or streets, to providing parking.

It all comes down to the transport and planning policies we choose to support. We need to ensure an approach to AVs that is not focused on the individual customer of transport services but on the best outcomes for the city.

20.3 For individuals or for shared use?

Another key aspect of this key new urban debate seldom heard is whether AVs are for individuals or meant to be shared. A recent report by McKinsey suggests that if your city is already a sprawling city with low density drivable suburbs, then AVs for individuals will make long commutes to job centres...
the norm. In principle, AVs could complement the public transport network by connecting commuters to it in the ‘last kilometre’ between homes and train public transport stop, in practice it may entice individuals to complete journeys entirely by car. That is a worrying thought for Sydney and one that should galvanise us to seek an alternative destiny.

The good news is that in certain parts of Sydney—the higher density City of Sydney area for example—we have already seen a significant shift to car-sharing, with more residents taking up options like GoGet than in cities such as Boston or San Francisco. Our aim should be to ensure the integration of this emerging mode with our wider mass transit system. Rather than “autonomous cars”, our optimum city-shaping approach should be to promote ride-sharing driverless vehicles as part of a mass transit system. We need to ensure that the deployment of AVs in Sydney fits and serves the overall strategic spatial plan for Sydney being created by the GSC.

Appendix A: Aerotropolis definition and lessons learnt

What exactly is an “Aerotropolis”—an ‘airport city’ or ‘region’?

International studies\(^{34}\) note that “The creation of a real ‘airport city’ has eluded us”. With the global privatisation of major airports, operators have focussed on convenient and efficient customer access and exit, principally by private vehicle, with intense retail in the terminal. From this perspective planners, in search of new employment centres, may compromise the fundamental function of the airport as a place of efficient transit, placing constraints on airports that merely compromise their legitimate function. There is thus significant international debate questioning the extent to which airports can realistically shift from being primarily infrastructure nodes to becoming more active urban centres. Is the real role of the contemporary airport more to act as a regional catalyst anchoring other centres? The Berlin experience and the examples examined, shed some useful insights, and illustrate some of the complexities involved.

Global Airport City Drivers

The underlying conflict is that while the potential for air travel is unlimited, the development of airports and their activities isn’t. In fact, the more important and significant the airport, the more constraining its urban surrounds tend to be. It is the balancing of the two that is increasingly critical. Airports are spatially embedded in their region.

While much has been written about airport-cities including the so called aerotropolis model, and its role as an urban catalyst, it must be born in mind that the value of an airport for a region is the accessibility of the rest of the world and vice versa. The performance of an airport can be measured by the number of passengers, the tons of freight and number of direct connections.

The international accessibility by air traffic attracts companies that benefit from this form of accessibility. Critically the process for Berlin Airport has been to first understand the spatial dynamics of the airport region, its opportunities and constraints before expectations of future development are addressed. A similar process for Western Sydney Airport would be valuable.

Balancing Node and Place Function

‘Node and Place Function’ needs to be in balance. As an airport and its region continue to grow and develop, the balance between them is continuously changing and emerging imbalances can create tensions. There are four major negative spatial impacts:

- Spatial demands of the airport and related economic activities
- The rise in employment activities in and around the airport creating a demand for housing in addition to natural growth
- The combination of air travellers and increased workers leads to traffic congestion and the need for additional transport infrastructure
- The rise in air traffic results in additional noise and without adequate spatial planning, a greater number of noise-burdened homes, leading potentially to additional restrictions on the function of the airport

The positive relationship between airport and the economy can be eroded over time by three negative feedback loops:

\(^{34}\) Refer Airside meets Landside, Berlin-Brandenburg Regional benchmarking study
Spatial constraints
Noise disturbance
Congestion

Congestion can be ameliorated by transport infrastructure, noise by less noisy aircraft and better spatial planning, and spatial constraints by more intensive higher density uses to better utilise the land available. However, all three become increasingly expensive and the airport can become a victim of its own success.

Case Studies

London-Heathrow and London City Airport

Heathrow Airport suffers from all the constraints noted above—it lacks space to expand and is increasingly surrounded by more intense uses. In 1987 London City Airport was developed for smaller quieter aircraft for short haul flights. It has grown strongly, maintaining good relations with its neighbours because of quiet planes and a nightly and partial weekend curfew.

Paris—Orly, Charles de Gaulle and the “troisieme aeroport”

Orly airport originally replaced Le Bourget due to its lack of space for expansion. Orly also became encroached and had a nightly curfew enforced in 1968. In response Charles de Gaulle was opened in a near empty area in 1974. Spatial planning included building restrictions that were not ultimately upheld. This has resulted in increasing community protest leading to consideration of a “troisieme aeroport”.

Zurich—An Integrated Planning Process

Zurich Airport is 13km’s from the city, initially publicly owned and subsequently privatised in 1999. Prior to sale region planning measures were developed, including an integral planning process that included the federation, the canton, regions, municipalities and the airports in a series of ‘Perimeter talks’. Key integration issues included:

- Managing housing stock
- Handling landside traffic
- Integration of the shopping mall and train station
- Development of the landscape surrounding the airport

Amsterdam Airport-Schiphol—A Retail and Real Estate Airport City

Amsterdam Schiphol dates from 1916. Extensions to accommodate larger aircraft in the 1960’s resulted in stricter spatial policies that have been rigorously adhered to. Because of comprehensive land use policies, few people are noise affected though growing affluent populations outside the zone are increasingly concerned. Growth can now only increase with the use of quieter aircraft.

All airports are an attractive location for retail because of the continuous flow of passengers. An airport exploits its place value through the shops in the airport as well as through the exploitation of its real estate. This is the so-called Airport City concept developed at Schiphol and being copied elsewhere. Retail and real estate income forms 80% of Schiphol’s profit.

Schiphol in reality is a large ‘retail plaza’ within the terminal with a business park comprising a linear commercial spine of commercial buildings terminated at both ends by hotels. A large conference
facility sits along the central spine. The business park is surrounded by runways on all three sides and is thus landlocked. It is not integrated with the airport itself.

Conclusions and recommendations for Sydney

- When a city’s main airport becomes highly constrained, then satellite airports have increased investment potential—This is potentially the case for Sydney
- Benchmark analysis shows that the city will always grow towards the airport and without strict planning controls the city will overwhelm the airport or increasingly constrain it
- An airport cannot become a hub without a ‘home carrier’ airline—what is the plan for the airport at Badgerys Creek?
- Carry out a long term strategic review of Badgerys Creek that integrates regional scale governance, economic drivers, and long term spatial planning
- Airport corridors between the airport and city centre are drivers of economic development
- Airport and economy have a mutually enhancing effect in regional as well as international airports
- Involve all levels of government and stakeholders in the planning of the airport prior to major political decisions are locked in
- Be clear that an airport’s primary function is one of transit—passengers and freight, not urban catalyst in isolation—danger is getting this the wrong way around—in which case both functions may fail
- Develop a 30-year Airport Region Plan
- First understand the spatial dynamics of the airport region, its opportunities and constraints before expectations of future development are addressed.

Appendix B: Complete Streets Case Study

Excerpt from Complete Streets Chicago35

“When we say “complete streets”, we mean designing streets for people. We mean designing for all users and all modes. We mean protecting our most vulnerable users and eliminating pedestrian and bicyclist deaths” Gabe Klein, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Transportation

Reversing the Paradigm

The Complete Streets Chicago Design Guidelines inverts the current car based paradigm, adopting a pedestrian-first modal hierarchy, from one of ‘roads’ to ‘streets’, prioritising the pedestrian over the automobile (refer the hierarchy of users diagram). The guide is not ‘anti-car, rather it balances, better addressing the needs of ALL users. In the guide’s words, streets suitable for all users are more ‘complete’.

Macro and Micro

Complete Streets addresses the macro and micro aspects of streets, from the metropolitan scale to the detail street cross section from pavement to pavement. At the macro or city scale, street typologies are used to develop a citywide street classification system. Citywide Typology Maps

---

inform precinct master plans, illustrating the pattern of development of the city, and are integrated with Roadway Form and Function Typologies that set out the hierarchy and type of streets at the city scale.

At the *micro* or local scale, Urban Form and Street Function are integrated in matrices that set out the most appropriate street typology to address both aspects. The matrices provide guidance on vehicle speeds and volumes, as well as precinct uses. Building Form and Function sheets illustrate each street typology describing compatible land uses, urban form and fit, street function, character and best practice local examples.

**Governance and Delivery**

Importantly from a governance and delivery perspective, the guidelines are implemented by a Complete Streets Compliance Committee charged with updating and enforcing the guide.

A Mayoral Executive Order mandates a public right-of-way ‘so that even the most vulnerable—children, the elderly and persons with disabilities—can travel safely’.

*Source:* Department of Transportation, 2013[^36]  

[^36]: Department of Transportation, 2013, *Complete Streets Chicago*, page 7
Appendix C: Value Capture

Excerpt from Committee for Sydney, 2016, A Fork in the Road

Sharing the costs (and benefits): Capturing value from public transport investment

There is a growing acceptance in government that new funding mechanisms and sources of finance are going to be needed if we are going to expand our public transport network to meet our city’s needs. An acceptance that if we are going to deliver the type of transport choices our community wants, we need to develop new financial models which help pay for public transport and reduce its recurrent draw on consolidated revenue. Some options include:

- Increasing the fare box, by raising ticket pricing and/or increasing ridership.
- Efficiency measures to reduce operation costs.
- Employ new, more efficient, technology and transport modes.
- Congestion charges and levies.
- Increasing development charges
- Capturing some of the value created through intensification of land-use around transport nodes.

---

37 Department of Transportation, 2013, Complete Streets Chicago, page 9
Capturing some of the increased property values created by new transport services and routes.

It is the contention of this paper that some or all of these options will be needed if we are to provide transport choice for our citizens. While none of these are without difficulties they should all be considered as part of a new funding arrangement for delivering public transport. Yet it is the final two mechanisms, capturing property value uplift and value from intensification around transport links, which offer the best hope for closing the gap on meeting the costs of subsidising new public transport. Both are used extensively around the world yet have rarely been used in Australia. One of the key questions this paper is seeking to answer is why?

Why do we use value capture so rarely and sparingly?

Socialising the cost and privatising benefits

When it comes to land use in cities, there are two main ways government can create “value”. One is through the land zoning system, which can increase the density, productivity and “yield” of certain parcels of land, making them more “valuable”. This is often done at the stroke a Planning Minister’s pen but can also then require some enabling infrastructure to accommodate the higher land use. For example, expanding the sewerage network can allow farmland on the urban periphery to become suitable for a higher and better land use, like housing. Similarly, new public transport can make low density residential areas suitable for a higher density zoning. In each of these, the value of the raw land, and individual properties, can be increased dramatically. The other is to improve the connectivity and amenity of certain parcels of land, making them more liveable or desirable places, and improving their value. A new rail service can significantly increase the value of land along its route, reducing commute times to a job, or increasing the catchment area for your business. Yet while the public is outlaying billions of dollars building such lines (and millions of dollars in annual subsidies), local residents are seeing their private wealth skyrocket.

“Hedonic Spatial Value” and public transport

What is it that makes one property more valuable than another? There are two main determinants of value. One is the intrinsic value of the property, this is the combination of the value of the land and the quality and size of the buildings minus the costs, like land tax, council rates and maintenance. But the other determinant is what economists refer to as the hedonic value of the property. That is the value we give a property, other than its intrinsic value. For example, two identical houses, on identical piece of land, sitting side by side on the same street might have vastly different prices paid for them, if one of them has a harbour view and the other one doesn’t. Similarly, property which is located close to or in easy access to jobs and services, has a higher hedonic value than properties far from jobs and services. As people we value connectivity instinctively, if sometimes unconsciously. We are essentially very social animals, we want to be near the buzz of urban life, to see people and be seen. And we are prepared to pay a premium to live, work and play in such places.

Government policy and infrastructure can improve or reduce the hedonic value of land. The announcement of a new municipal waste dump or a new freeway can significantly reduce local amenity, reducing the hedonic value of a place or property. When this happens, the government is often forced to compensate local property owners for the loss of this value. While governments can’t build us any more Sydney harbours, they can improve the connectivity and liveability of certain places through improving public transport. People place a high (hedonic) value on living near public transport corridors, even if you don’t use public transport personally. Simply having a choice of
transport modes is seen as valuable. Countless studies have shown that even the announcement of a possible new public transport corridor by government can increase the value of land around the route. For example, it is estimated that the building of the Mandurah Rail Line in Perth increased the value of existing properties within 400 metres of the main stations by 40%. Just as the public sector is often required to compensate for the loss of hedonic property value they should also be able to claim back some of the uplift when new infrastructure increase property values. They can do this through a land tax or a special council rate on properties closest to the transport node. That is value capture.

The need for value capture

There are many different ways of capturing these windfall gains and some are already in use in NSW. Some are in the form of direct levies on new development such as, Section 94 and State Infrastructure Charges (SIC) or through Voluntary Planning Agreements. However, we have never really embraced value capture in a systemic or substantial way. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, we never needed to in the past. As Sydney grew and expanded the existing 19th century transport network could simply and cheaply be expanded to accommodate new growth. The post war period saw the rapid adoption of the private car and urban sprawl became cheap. Government could just lay the road network down and the private car could take care of the rest. In fact, public transport was actively dismantled to get it out of the way of cars. The tram tracks were ripped up and the ferry services reduced. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, we didn’t have the huge commitment for health spending squeezing public coffers that we do now.

Yet the dynamics of Sydney has now changed. We are reaching the limits of how far we can sprawl. Our road network is at capacity and it is doubtful we can build our way out of the traffic. As global Sydney expands to a city of 8 million people by 2050, maintaining and leveraging our position as a global city means dramatically improving our public transport network.

Appendix D: Infrastructure Appraisal

The process by which governments select infrastructure in and for Sydney is called appraisal. When it works properly the selection is based on firm evidence that a specific piece of infrastructure—a road or rail project—is the answer to a specific need in or fits a key strategic purpose for our city. Getting this process right is a crucial matter as what Sydney needs is not just quantity of public spending on road or rail, welcome though that is after decades of low investment. Rather, it needs a focus on quality and specifically on ensuring the specific infrastructure preferred is the right one.

Having reviewed international best practice, the Committee believes we need to see reform in the ‘appraisal process’ by which governments select infrastructure in and for Sydney. Certain choices made by governments have caused controversy and raised concerns in the public mind. We believe that to avoid this, certain key principles must underpin this process to ensure we select the right infrastructure and to reassure the public about the objectivity and empiricism behind decisions. We set the key ones out here.

With tens of billions being allocated to infrastructure as of writing, it is important that this process is based—and is seen to be based by Sydneysiders—on firm evidence that a specific road or rail project is the answer to a specific need in or fits a key strategic purpose for our city.
The project should be tested rigorously against other options and modes—for example, does a railway answer the need better than a road project? We also need to test whether a ‘no new infrastructure option’ involving the more efficient ‘sweating’ of existing assets might deliver as much public benefit as a multimillion dollar new piece of kit. Road pricing and demand management are for example far more effective at managing congestion than new road capacity. This also means that the appraisal process needs to be multi-modal or non-modal and not over-influenced by the inevitably siloed bias of a single government agency.

A project’s value for money, its total costs and benefits and all its potential up and down sides should be objectively and transparently assessed. Currently too much weight in the selection process is giving to projects which purport to significantly reduce travel-time—80% of the benefits claimed for a road scheme can be travel time reductions which research and our own experience demonstrate are never ultimately realised. At the same time, too little weight is given to the residential value or GDP uplift achieved by some modes over others. This is a crucial benefit of rail projects whose value uplift should be captured by the public sector to subsidise infrastructure costs. Rail projects enable higher density, reduce a city’s sprawl and encourage economic agglomeration—all such benefits count for little in our current approach.

Crucially, the project’s capacity to raise or depress productivity and create jobs should be a key factor as will how the project fits with and reinforces the objectives of the overall development plan for Sydney—for example, will this project reduce or further entrench our city’s sprawl and better connect the West with economic opportunity? Current appraisal processes don’t require such a strategic fit with the statutory plan for growing Sydney.

To ensure that any such benefits were in fact realised, before the project is implemented a data baseline for the area impacted by the infrastructure project should be modelled so that after implementation a true picture can be identified of the actual benefits achieved in relation to benefits claimed beforehand. Then we can know whether those travel time reductions actually happened, congestion improved, remained the same or went backwards, whether residential values rose or fell, did the number of jobs claimed actually eventuate and overall and crucially, and did the strategic improvement sought for the city from this project take place: overall, did the city function better or worse as a result of this project? On the basis of this learning and feedback, our appraisal, infrastructure planning and procurement process would be significantly improved.

At the heart of this reformed appraisal process would be a deep and transparent process of community engagement not only on the basis of ensuring accountability but also to secure buy-in to the project as a legitimate and perhaps only answer to the strategic need identified. Big infrastructure projects have massive city-shaping and potentially city-damaging consequences, as well as massive costs. Clearly, the community should have open and continued access to the key information or arguments driving infrastructure decision-making and their views must be factored deeply into the process. We will get better decisions that way.

We can and must do better. There are emerging examples of better practice which we must learn from and apply more deeply. The consultation on the rail options and airport links for Western Sydney commendably ask for wider evidence of land-use benefits than is usual and importantly ask for views on the ‘city-shaping’ impact of options: that is what option will improve the way the city works best? Similarly, early discussions around the emerging West Metro project are focussing on the economic uplift for Paramatta and Sydney overall from a rail alignment, and the impact on residential numbers and densities. Crucially, the emerging TfNSW transport strategy looks to be
much more about linking infrastructure with land-use than any previous approach. These are positive moves towards a better appraisal process.

We add one other reform. Siloed government leads to modal bias. If your very purpose as a department is to build roads you are simply not going to recommend a rail project. This structural problem requires a number of reforms. One is that no significant infrastructure project in Sydney should proceed past the ‘strategic fit’ requirement without the approval of the GSC to show it conforms with the Sydney Plan. Beyond that the day cannot be far distant when we see a fully unified transport department subsume a roads section. Cities cannot have the infrastructure they need in the round—or community confidence in the growth strategy for their city—where there is a separate and powerful department for a single mode.

Appendix E: Road Pricing

Excerpt from Committee for Sydney, 2016, A Fork in the Road

In transport, as in any network, managing demand can be a cost-effective alternative to increasing capacity. Of course, congestion is itself a blunt form of demand management. Either through paying with time or paying with money, we all pay for using roads. Queuing on congested roads just happens to be the most inefficient form of demand management available. We can do better. A key demand management mechanism is road pricing. Demand management in its road pricing form is, of course, not new to Sydney. We have of course also seen numerous examples of tolling to pay for new road capacity. While this demonstrates that road pricing impacts on road usage, the Committee is concerned that the NSW Government’s ability to toll specific and discrete road projects is an example of the tail wagging the dog: with projects being promoted because they are fundable rather than because they are necessary or the best way of meeting a strategic transport or access need. Equally, there is a concern that road pricing via tolling has become a way of paying for roads and of inducing rather than shaping demand. Furthermore, there is a danger that the proliferation of tolling regimes for different road projects, usually locked down for decades, will make it more difficult to introduce a coherent, strategic approach to road pricing and thus congestion management across Sydney, including for existing roads.

In addition to tolling and modest road pricing initiatives, parking levies have been implemented in the Sydney CBD, North Sydney, Bondi, Chatswood and Parramatta to encourage the use of public transport and improve air quality. Academic research has confirmed that parking restrictions are an effective form of broad area demand management. However, we have failed to adjust parking levies in line with demand, and failed to extend the policy to emergent centres where, despite significant public investment and some innovative interventions by companies to improve take up by staff of mass transit alternatives, commuting by public transport remains low.

Political Willpower

In our digital era, the challenge of demand management is not a technical one. We have the infrastructure and technology. Nor is the challenge a policy one as examples like London’s congestion charge show the way. The challenge in Sydney is one of political leadership and community buy-in. As the RAND Corporation says of Los Angeles, though it applies here too: leaders must ‘summon the political willpower to face a tough decision’ to put a price on congestion.

Pricing Congestion

The only strategies proven to address congestion over time, without creating the effects of ‘triple convergence’, involve the use of pricing to manage the demand for peak hour automotive travel. There are four objectives that road pricing is used to achieve: 1. Funding the construction of individual roads, as per the current use of tolling in Sydney; 2. Funding the operations, maintenance and new construction of roads projects, with the ring-fencing of revenue to roads alone; 3. Forward-funding the construction of roads and public transport projects, with a mode-neutral approach to transport funding; and 4. Changing behaviour—reducing congestion through reducing trips in peak times on congested roads. The Committee believes an appropriate road pricing scheme for Sydney should prioritise the last 2 objectives—funding and maintaining mode-neutral transport infrastructure and changing behaviour.

Why is road pricing so effective?

Academics and economists agree, pricing roads and parking works. The most effective way to manage congestion is to manage demand with price. For a long time, we have accepted the need to price public utilities like electricity, water and public transport. We have even come to accept the need to price peak usage of such things and increasingly have smart technology enabling us to do so. The smart pricing of our roads is a concept which is long overdue in Sydney.

Appendix F: Planning for Good Growth

Principles of Urban Design and Making Great Places in Sydney

Underpinning AMO3C is a commitment to improved liveability and amenity of ‘places’ as we have seen. That aim runs through the Committee’s work on town centres broadly but also informs our view of the challenge of achieving ‘density done well’ in different contexts across Sydney whether in local or strategic centres, urban or suburban settings, existing or new places. There are certain principles and interventions we would like to see the GSC Plan explicitly promote. In this section we identify some of our principles, echo those of the Government Architect and suggest use be made of recent work by the Centre for London.

Density done well

In 2016 the Committee released a discussion paper Making Great Places—Density Done Well, recognising a need to improve current practice. Research into best practice case studies both in locally and internationally demonstrated that there was the capacity and talent in the local market to improve current practice.

From consultations, case study analysis and a review of international studies, the following findings were made:
A high level of urban design must create the framework to achieve good density. Good density must first be achieved at the **precinct** or **town centre** scale in the first place;

- Deep collaborations are essential to make a great city. The GSC has a key role to play in the Sydney context;
- The community must be involved in the conversation. Poorly conceived higher density precincts are a growing community concern, quite rightly;
- Mixed use can create more active and vibrant places. The high value of residential in Sydney challenges mixed use zoning as it will tend to dominate; and
- Amenity must improve and accompany urban intensification—bigger and better, not just bigger and bigger. Depending on context key improvements include:
  - Mass transit
  - Walkability—small fine grain blocks
  - Social infrastructure—schools, health, community facilities
  - Green open space and recreation facilities
  - Built form in scale with the public realm including the street
  - Built form design excellence

Better placed

*Better Placed*, the Government Architect NSW publication supports a strategic approach to good design aimed at delivering better places as our cities grow. The Committee strongly supports this publication and recommends that its seven Design Objectives are included in the District Plans as follows:

- Better Fit—built form that responds to context and integrates with place;
- Better Performance—development that is sustainable;
- Better for Community—diverse and inclusive developments;
- Better for People—a public and private domain that is liveable;
- Better Working—develop buildings and spaces that can adapt to rapid change;
- Better Value—Value for the community; and
- Better look and feel—Built design quality

Planning for good growth: 10 principles identified by the Centre for London

There have been many different sets of design principles drawn up to achieve good growth and encourage healthy active lifestyles. Drawing on the common elements of these, the Centre for London recently identified in *Street Smarts* a list of general attributes of well-designed roads and streets, to encourage the use of active modes and public transport, and to create a high quality of life for residents.

London’s spatial planning policies for the last two decades have supported densification and mixed-use intensification in proximity to public transport nodes. This model of city development offers in the Centre for London’s view, ‘an opportunity to apply principles of good growth, which can design in non-car dependent and healthy lifestyles’. The Committee finds these principles, which echo much of Better Placed, applicable here. We believe commitment to such principles by the NSW Government would strengthen community support for the growth envisaged by AMO3C. They are:

1—**Character**: a place with its own distinctive identity.

---

40 Centre for London, 2017, *Street Smarts*
41 Ibid, page 74
2—**Quality**: clearly defined, attractive, well maintained public spaces (including green areas) that people want to spend time in.

3—**Integration**: respecting historical and urban context and integrated into its surroundings.

4—**Connected**: easy access to local facilities and amenities within walking distance, co-location of facilities should be promoted through mix of land uses.

5—**Transport**: good public transport links, easy access to stations and stops.

6—**Easy to walk**: clear and intuitive sense of space ownership, sufficient crossing points, appropriate speed controls, creating a safe environment for pedestrians, accessible for people with restricted mobility.

7—**Easy to cycle**: clearly defined, safe and integrated cycle routes and sufficient bicycle parking.

8—**Parking**: minimal resident and visitor car parking, sufficient bicycle parking, EV charging infrastructure, car club bays and pick-up/drop off space for mobility service providers.

9—**Amenity**: multifunctional open spaces to support activities including sport, recreation and play.

10—**Social value**: sufficient community spaces, with shade, places to rest, street art and a range of social activities.\(^{42}\)

Below is a characterisation of a ‘before’ (today) and ‘after’ (potential) town centre transformation along some of the principles above as a prompt for the GSC and Government to do similar work.

\(^{42}\) Ibid, page 75-76
Before and after: An integrated transformation of a hypothetical Sydney town centre.

**Today**

- Outlying business park
- Drive-in retail park and light industry
- Medium-rise residential alongside main road
- Homogeneous low-rise suburbs disconnected by main roads
- Rail and bus station
- Town centre dominated by big-box retail and surface parking
- Super-sized roads separate town centre and context
- Remnants of traditional main street, poorly integrated
- ‘Shutter zone’ jumble of building forms on town centre fringe
- Crude town centre land use zoning, with large roads denoting town centre boundary

5 minutes walk (400m)

**Potential**

- Town centre expands to north, creating a more balanced pattern, with a clear mixed-use intensity and density gradient focused on the station
- Humanized streets enable town centre boundary to ‘blur’, with mixed-use fringes providing services for adjacent communities
- Where retained, big-boxes are wrapped with fine-grained mixed and human scale buildings
- Streets as places – three-dimensional, landscaped, walkable and integrated
- High quality green open space network
- Mixed-use redevelopments create positive frontages with street address
- Road reallocation for active transport and landscaping overcomes community severance
- New public open space opportunities
- Increased north-south links introduced in conjunction with station upgrade
- Traditional main street upgraded and better integrated
- Surface car parks rationalised, strategically placed multi-storey structures replacing scattered surface car parks, providing development opportunities for intensification
- Grid is rediscovered, with a focus on walkability

5 minutes walk (400m)

Source: Arup and Committee for Sydney, 2017
Appendix G: Urban Development Corporations

To do big urban transformation well, there is a need for special purpose development vehicles. The main example of this is the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) which in the UK was derived from the New Town Development Corporation model. The Committee believes that Government needs to urgently review the need for such a vehicle to deliver some of the scaled up urban regeneration/transformation projects in AMO3C such as the transformation of the area and centres around the new airport (linked to the aerotropolis proposition but potentially with a wider area or remit) and GPOP/Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula area. We also note the possibility that more ‘new towns’ may need to be created in the Western Parkland City which in our view can only be well done with a dedicated SPV and governance structure.

New town development corporations

In ten years from 1948 in the UK 32 NTDCs were created in the UK and provided homes and communities for 3 million people, largely on Greenfield sites close to cities. Established by central government, they were given powers to designate and acquire land for development, by agreement or compulsorily. They borrowed from the Treasury to purchase land and deliver supporting infrastructure. They had planning powers enabling them to re-zone agricultural land as residential land—and captured the value uplift incrementally as housing was built and values increased. They then paid the Treasury back with interest. This was a self-financing business model for placemaking at scale. It also meant that the necessary public role in city placemaking on a big scale was assured and the public interest was protected—not least in the fact that the public sector itself secured the return to the public coffers for infrastructure it funded and for value it had created either through its infrastructure or its zoning/planning powers.

Urban development corporations

In the UK, UDCs, established under the Local Government Planning and land act 1980, had a broad remit to:

- Secure the regeneration of a defined area achieved by bringing land and buildings into effective use
- Encourage the development of existing and new industry and commerce
- Create an attractive environment
- Ensure housing and social facilities are available to encourage people to live and work in the area

To achieve this, they had powers to compulsory purchase, planning powers and a general power to ‘do anything necessary in the interests of their objectives’. They had a limited lifespan of between seven and 10 years. The Board of a UDC was accountable to the Minister. The most significant of the UDCs was the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) which helped to create London’s new financial heartland at Canary Wharf, London City Airport, Excel Exhibition Centre, the Docklands Light Railway, and 140 kilometres of new roads, bringing more than 120,000 new jobs to the Docklands and making the area highly sought after for housing.

The UDC model is internationally recognised as working best for area renewal and development on large brownfield or greenfield sites. We recommend some such SPV/UDC be applied to key development opportunities of scale and complexity such as the ones identified in the GSC Plan.
note the GSC alludes to such a vehicle in AMO3C though there is no commitment to it yet by Government. We also note that Landcom has access to powers to form a development corporation. At one level what matters whoever has oversight of such a vehicle is that such a vehicle is created and applied to take the role we have suggested. The best result may be some collaboration between the GSC and Landcom.