Planning Institute of Australia (NSW Division)

Submission: Metropolitan Transport Plan – Connecting the City of Cities

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is the peak body representing professionals involved in planning Australian cities, towns and regions. The Institute has around 4,500 members nationally and around 1,300 members in New South Wales. PIA NSW plays key roles in promoting and supporting the planning profession within NSW and advocating key planning and public policy issues.

This submission has been prepared on behalf of PIA NSW by Members of the Institute.

Introduction

The Planning Institute of Australia - NSW Division (PIA NSW) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Metropolitan Transport Plan (the Plan) which was released by the Premier on 21 February 2010.

The Metropolitan Transport Plan tacitly acknowledges the previous submissions of PIA NSW in that transport and land use planning cannot be considered in isolation. The current Metropolitan Strategy Review Discussion Paper – ‘Sydney Towards 2036’ supports the creation of an integrated planning and transport strategy. The Metropolitan Strategy Review offers an opportunity to also integrate within the single strategy a broader range of planning related matters including how social issues will be addressed, what economic levers are now necessary and how other physical infrastructure needs, not just transport, can be met. PIA NSW has submitted a separate submission to the NSW Government on the Metropolitan Strategy Review.

Consistent with PIA NSW’s use of the Council of Australian Government’s (COAG) criteria for Capital Cities in its submission to the Metropolitan Strategy Review, the following submission for the Metropolitan Transport Plan has been developed with regard to Part 3 a) to e) of the COAG criteria which relate to transport and infrastructure.

PIA NSW believes that the Metropolitan Transport Plan should be framed to specifically address the criteria which are:

- transport corridors;
- international gateways;
- intermodal connections;
- major communications and utilities infrastructure; and
- reservation of appropriate lands to support future expansion.
This submission primarily focuses on the key strategic elements of the Plan rather than the detail of individual targets and proposals.

Regarding the Metropolitan Transport Plan, PIA NSW commends the NSW Government for addressing the following issues:

- Reaffirming a commitment to integrating transport and land use planning;
- Committing to a transport plan for the metropolitan area to writing;
- Outlining a 25 year vision for land use planning;
- Publishing a 10 year fully funded package of infrastructure;
- Proposing to set up a new Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority;
- Establishing a ‘memorandum of understanding’ partnership with City of Sydney;
- Adopting a planning scenario for Sydney’s population (1.7 million increase to 5.98 million by year 2036, MSR p. 11);
- Continuing commitment to the City of Cities concept, with Parramatta as a second CBD;
- Including the funding and construction of Northwest and Southwest Rail Links;
- Including a suite of projects shown on the Plan’s ‘Challenges and Vision Plan’ (pages 8 to 9), all of which are broadly supported by PIA NSW; and
- Supporting a better customer experience to encourage healthy choices of public transport, walking and cycling.

PIA NSW however, submits that the following concerns regarding the Metropolitan Transport Plan must be addressed before its integration with the Metropolitan Strategy:

- Whilst the Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Metropolitan Strategy Review have been released by the NSW Government concurrently for comment, with a view to integrating transport and land use planning, the timeframes for the implementation of the two plans significantly differ. It is intended that the Metropolitan Strategy Review will deliver a 25 year plan for Sydney to 2036, whereas the Metropolitan Transport Plan proposes a 10 year funded program of transport infrastructure. In addition, there does not appear to be much integration between the two plans. This is particularly evident in the ‘brownfields’ areas where there appears to be a deficit of new transport projects proposed to support the growth that will result from the Metropolitan Strategy.

- The 10 year funding guarantee appears to be limited in scope, and does not include sufficient funds to unlock the time and environmental savings from reducing road and public transport congestion (see Independent Public Inquiry Preliminary Report, 5 February 2010). The funding plan should account for these savings in an explicit way so the true cost of the plan is publicised. Furthermore, the funding plan is conservative in that it fails to realise the opportunities from land value capture when rezoning occurs around transport nodes. These additional potential funding mechanisms must be explored to broaden the funding base for major infrastructure projects without relying on Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) or privatisation of infrastructure.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan’s major failing is the inability to nominate a location for a Second Sydney Airport, or discuss this issue in the context of the forthcoming inquiry, and the potentially airport-related issues of a fast train or very fast train, associated housing supply and employment growth. Of all the transport projects under consideration for Sydney, the location of the Second Airport is expected to have the
The greatest single impact on the siting of new transport corridors and nodes, new growth areas and arrangements for cooperation between the Federal and State Government to deliver a new air hub for the Asia Pacific Region.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan lacks detail and a clear direction to address the issue of road freight from the ports through inner Sydney. The location of appropriate corridors for freight movement is essential to support existing port operations, distribution centres as well as new business start ups in the right locations to serve growth areas in the metropolitan area. A blueprint for freight movements is also required to protect the amenity of inner city residential areas where freight movements battle for space on roads that do not have the capacity for journey to work and freight. This is inefficient, adds to the cost of business and reduces the quality of those areas. The Metropolitan Transport Plan must identify the intermodal connections for freight, (especially making better use of rail services out of Chullora) and nomination of key distribution nodes. An Industry Working Party should be convened to provide advice on the current and future freight requirements for Sydney to be incorporated in the Metropolitan Strategy / Transport Plan identifying corridors, nodes, infrastructure and intercity linkages.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan must give clear announcements on proposals, including routes, funding, and timing for the M4 East and F3-M2 motorway links.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan shows a City Relief Line that is not yet proven feasible and does not continue north to provide the essential second harbour crossing in the heavy rail network. The existing harbour crossing for rail is a major bottleneck for future enhancements to the rail network. The capacity of the North Shore Line to bring workers from the northern suburbs, North West Growth Area and the Central Coast to employment in the Global City is inadequate and will ultimately fail to deliver the transport improvements needed for business and economic growth.

- The failure to include the Epping to Parramatta rail link in the Metropolitan Transport Plan is short sighted and ignores the value of the link to unlock the employment and business potential of Parramatta’s acknowledged CBD role to connect to Macquarie Park, Chatswood, North Sydney and Sydney CBD. The latter centres represent the key elements of the Global Arc for business and productivity in the metropolitan area. The Epping –Parramatta link would, among other benefits, directly connect Parramatta to the Global Arc.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan provides no substantial detail on how the $21.85 billion (p.40) spent on roads (including ‘State Wide Road Upgrades’) over the next 10 years will be allocated. The absence of detail undermines confidence in the State Government’s Strategy to deliver on the program and to enable a proper cost benefit analysis of the expenditure against other priorities.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan will deliver a large range of road, rail, ferry and other transport projects. PIA NSW considers that the Plan also needs to contain an explicit process through a Design Advisory Panel or similar to review and advise on the urban design outcomes of every project.

- With a few exceptions, the Metropolitan Transport Plan does not include proposals, or at least set out a process for planning, designating, reserving and purchasing transport corridor land reservations for all modes of transport and interchanges that will be needed into the future. NSW has benefitted from the reservations set aside by previous generations, and we have an obligation to do our part for the future. This includes reservations for all modes of transport in plan and stratum, without which retrofitting of heavy rail, metro rail, freight and road tunnels, transit-ways, stations, airports, VFT etc
becomes prohibitively difficult and unnecessarily expensive. This is particularly relevant to the consideration of radial connections to centres and regional connections.

- The Metropolitan Transport Plan fails to acknowledge the importance of addressing improved regional transport connections within the metropolitan area to regional cities such as Newcastle and Wollongong. These transport connections should be at intermodal and nodal change locations.

- A major issue missing and very central to many issues of land-use/transport integration is the need for a metropolitan car parking policy that aims to influence travel behaviour and support the planning and investment in public transport modes.

- The integration of the Metropolitan Transport Plan with the Metropolitan Strategy must not miss the opportunity to review the role of urban centres across the Sydney metropolitan area in respect to each centre’s defined transport role and where they sit in a transport typology in the plan. This is essential to provide greater certainty for infrastructure investment and for planning development growth linked to a centres transport role within the network. The analysis should assess the demand and role of each Major Centre and transport node centre for passenger services by bus/ferry/rail and for cycle/pedestrian/commuter parking interchanges (with targets for modes split).

- PIA NSW considers that the governance of the implementation of the Transport Plan is just as important as that which will be required to deliver the Metropolitan Strategy. Accordingly, the Institute believes that the proposed Metropolitan Development Authority should include, as one of its functions, overlaying the Transport Plan delivery program with the Metropolitan Strategy in order to coordinate funding, timing, public consultation, decision making, advice from Government agencies, liaison with Federal and Local Government and determining the most appropriate approval process for projects through the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

PIA NSW welcomes the opportunity to make this submission and would be pleased discuss any aspect of the points raised in the Submission with the relevant Officers.

Tony McNamara
NSW President