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Department of Planning & Infrastructure

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Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy

The current proposal to close the Newcastle rail line into the centre of Newcastle under the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy is an appallingly one-sided scheme aimed principally to benefit the property values of a handful of waterfront owners. Pitching it as anything else is dishonest and shameful to those involved in proposing it.

The value of the closure to the majority of people living in Newcastle is little to inconsequential and indeed represents a government less interested in the welfare of the City and more in answering the whims of their traditional voters.

The rail line provides a valuable service to working people, particularly those working outside 9am to 5pm. The response to this is to promise a bus interchange at Wickham and connecting train buses.

The people of Newcastle and the Hunter have experienced just this type of promise before after the closure of the Toronto rail line; adequate connecting services were provided for approximately a year until the service became a shoddy, high-priced, privatized affair with it would seem fewer and fewer connecting buses each year. The answer being: if you want to have any mobility in the Toronto area go and buy a car, if you can't afford a car make little to no trips into the centre of Newcastle.

With the CBD of Newcastle already a ghost-town most days, where is the genius in making it even harder and more complicated for people to reach? This it would seem to the most uninformed person is just basic common sense; common sense clearly does not seem to be part of the agenda of the proposal.

There is some suggestion that the land freed up by the rail corridor would be available for development, without any convincing research being put forward that the narrow corridor would be suitable for any type of building or dwelling. Again just plain common sense would indicate that the quite narrow strip of land will be virtually useless for any type of construction, other than maybe luxury parks for the same few waterfront properties.

The current proposal is to spend millions of dollars to fix something that is simply not broken. The money would be better spent on other projects that create employment in the CBD and revitalize Newcastle.

Yours Faithfully,

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