

Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 (2016 Review) and State Significant Precincts SEPP Amendments

Feedback on selected elements from the Master Plan 2030.

I want to make a comment on a few aspects of the proposed redevelopment of Homebush Olympic Park

1. Building Design, Height and Amenity
2. Transport
3. The Brick Pit
4. Integrated Cycle Paths
5. Preservation of Green spaces
6. Schools

Overall

Overall I am very supportive of the proposal as it is being presented. It seems eminently sensible to make use of given infrastructure and transform what is an occasionally used site to a place for a significant population of residents. I make some comments on the following areas that I believe should be addressed in the proposal:

1. Height, design and amenity of residential buildings

There are a few points on residential buildings. These should

- be acoustically private. You should be able to have a party with loud music till 3am and provided doors are closed neighbours should not be able to hear you unless they step out into the corridor.
- have safe balconies. In the case of balcony rails, these should be far more secure than the current apartment balcony death traps that are being built in Sydney at the time of writing, with balcony rails set below the centre of gravity of a normal adult. Balconies should have heights above 1300mm and preferably a double barrier set back from the edge. In addition balconies, while cantilevered, should have additional structural supports.
- not just be towers. There is a trend for slim high rise buildings at the present, but there is also a place for step down “Aztec pyramid” style high rise, which has less shadowing into internal

spaces. These have safer balconies, where it is only possible to fall one storey to the balcony below.

- include iconic designs, and not just be cookie cutter style. Curvilinear forms should be included.
- be not necessarily confined to a height restriction. I don't think a height limit is a guarantee of quality, and therefore the idea of an upper limit of 45 storeys on the towers should not be rigid. If an architect comes up with an aesthetic and workable proposal for higher than this then this should be considered, not rejected just on the basis of height. In terms of the shadow profile, the area of SOP is large enough to prevent that from ever becoming a problem. I honestly think we are a long way from ever becoming like New York. And in such a hot country as Australia, is shade actually a bad thing? You will often find people making use of high rise buildings' shadow profile as shade in summer from the sun. So the notion that shadow is always or necessarily a bad thing is flawed, and needs to be taken in context.

I would favour ecologically integrated buildings, following on from the stylistic idea of the Bosco Verticale in Milan. That means bushes and small trees incorporated into the design, as well as on rooftops.

Apartment sizes should be mandated to be competitive with house size internal spaces, if not larger. 150m² – 250m² (+ 25m² minimum balconies) apartments should be the norm not the exception. The recent consultation from the NSW planning department was far too tentative about this. It is a matter of importance that the image of apartments as shoeboxes is put to bed once and for all. This cannot happen unless there is strong mandatory guidelines about apartment sizes. (Not restricting height will help developers in this regard.) The layout also needs to explore different forms of configuration, without being too extreme.

In addition to residential buildings, the incorporation of artistic and cultural spaces for artistic and creative pursuits – theatre spaces (interior and exterior), music performance areas, art galleries and so on, should be an integral part of the design.

2. Transport – total absence of North-South lines as any concrete part of the proposal

(referring to the document: Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 (2016 Review) Traffic and Transport Strategy (2016 Review) currently located at https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com/public/ae76a688bb6e0f67da1f3437296e854f/Traffic%20and%20Transport%20Strategy_3.pdf)

After an attempt to take in the information set out in this 157 page document my thoughts were that transport must be very detailed or very confused. There are some simple basic principles that seem to be getting lost from the detail of this document, but are hinted at in the larger maps of the Sydney Metropolitan area attempting to show how the Sydney Olympic Park development will fit in with the rest of the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

My main question is that unless you want to build another silo disconnected from the rest of Sydney, you really need to be thinking about transport matrix as a grid, and when we boil down the “non-car” (the choice of language unfortunately implying this is an irregular form of travel) transport proposals we get lots of parallel east-west lines into the city and out to Parramatta (with light rail, rapid rail and the Western lines all duplicating one another), and no north-south lines. These are optioned in for possible consideration in 2030 but this is speculative, and there is no real or concrete consideration given to people who may want to travel north-south, or visit someone living on any of the other east west lines that will remain disconnected under this proposal.

This piecemeal, leave-that-till-later approach is not how we should be thinking if this venture is to be a success. A north-south route, interconnecting Sydney Olympic Park with the rest of the metropolis is essential if the project is to succeed and we are to make a significant impact on the amenity and efficiency of the city as a whole. It is only when you travel overseas to cities that have full grid matrix lines that it becomes apparent just how disconnected our rail configuration is. 30,000 residents cannot be expected to only want to travel east and west, and asking them to wait for some future time to be able to travel north and south without using their cars is just not feasible. Essentially the current design wants 30,000 people to live here, but only wants them to travel east and west. If they want to travel north or south they will need a car. This is a transport gridlock waiting to happen.

The unfortunate subtext of even the language of this document is still that the car is the major transport method favoured in urban planning in Sydney. This represents a very unfortunate state of affairs.

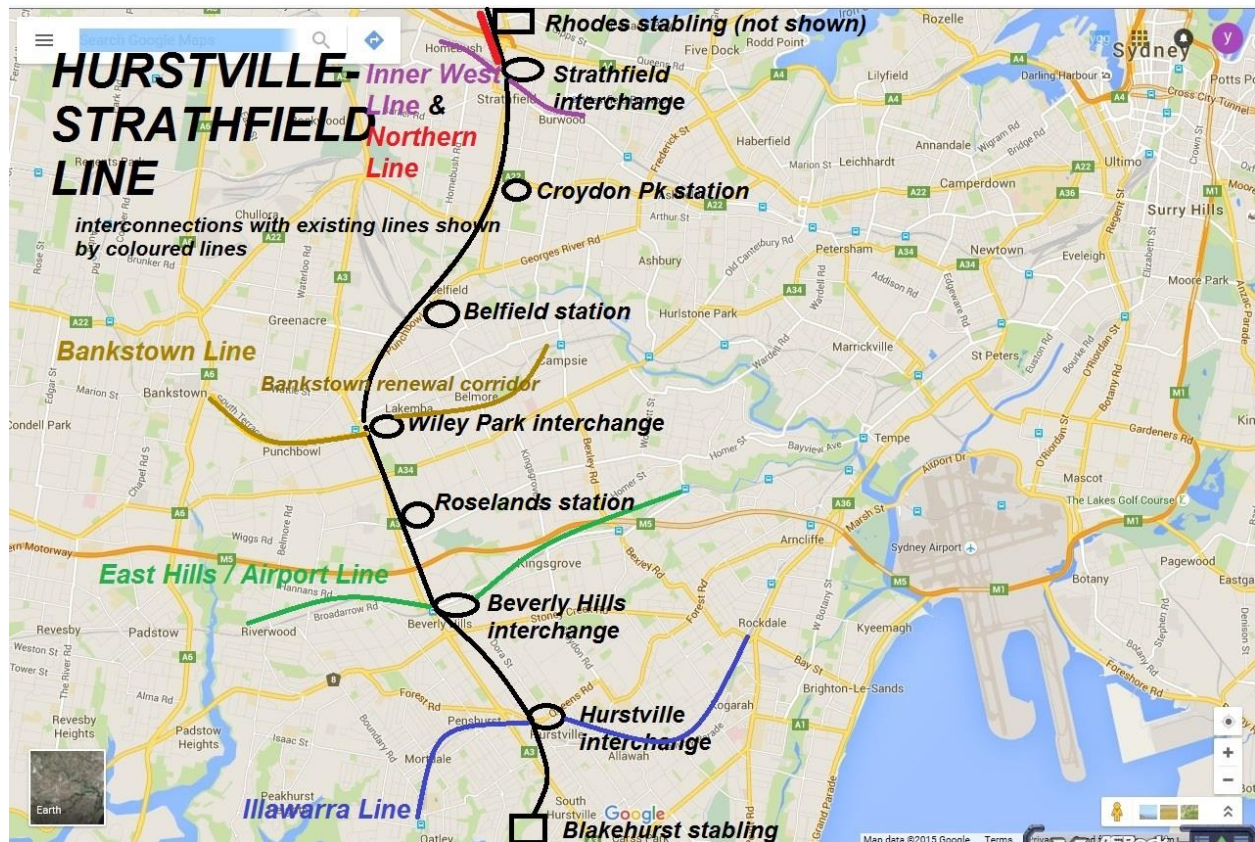
Hurstville - Strathfield

The remedy is to take the bull by the horns. North-south lines (more than one) need to be built across the 4 existing east-west lines that fan out from Central. That means building Hurstville – Strathfield (which could be done at low cost with value capture), a line which is essentially an extension of the Northern line south, and connecting the Illawarra, East Hills, Bankstown and Western Lines. This would also remove Northern Line trains from the intercity tracks heading into Central, thereby freeing these up for more East-West trains on the Western lines, currently close to capacity.

This means that residents in Olympic Park would be able to board the Sprint to Lidcombe, change and arrive at Strathfield where they could then proceed South directly. With a light rail linking SOP directly to Strathfield, a change over to the Hurstville-Strathfield line means that they could be at the Airport within 20 minutes, or in Bankstown, or Hurstville, or the South Coast / Illawarra in a very short period of time.

This would also avoid the disaster of having 30,000 people piling into Central/Redfern as the sole possible transition point in the network. It is asking too much of those already crowded stations to take on this number of people transitioning, and is a risky proposition to put all transitions across the network funnelled through a single point. If that point fails, the whole network fails. There is no redundancy built into such a system.

It is for that reason that Hurstville-Strathfield is an integral part of the Sydney Olympic proposal, given the understanding that residents will not only want to travel north and south, but also east and west on different parallel lines currently only accessible via Central / Redfern.

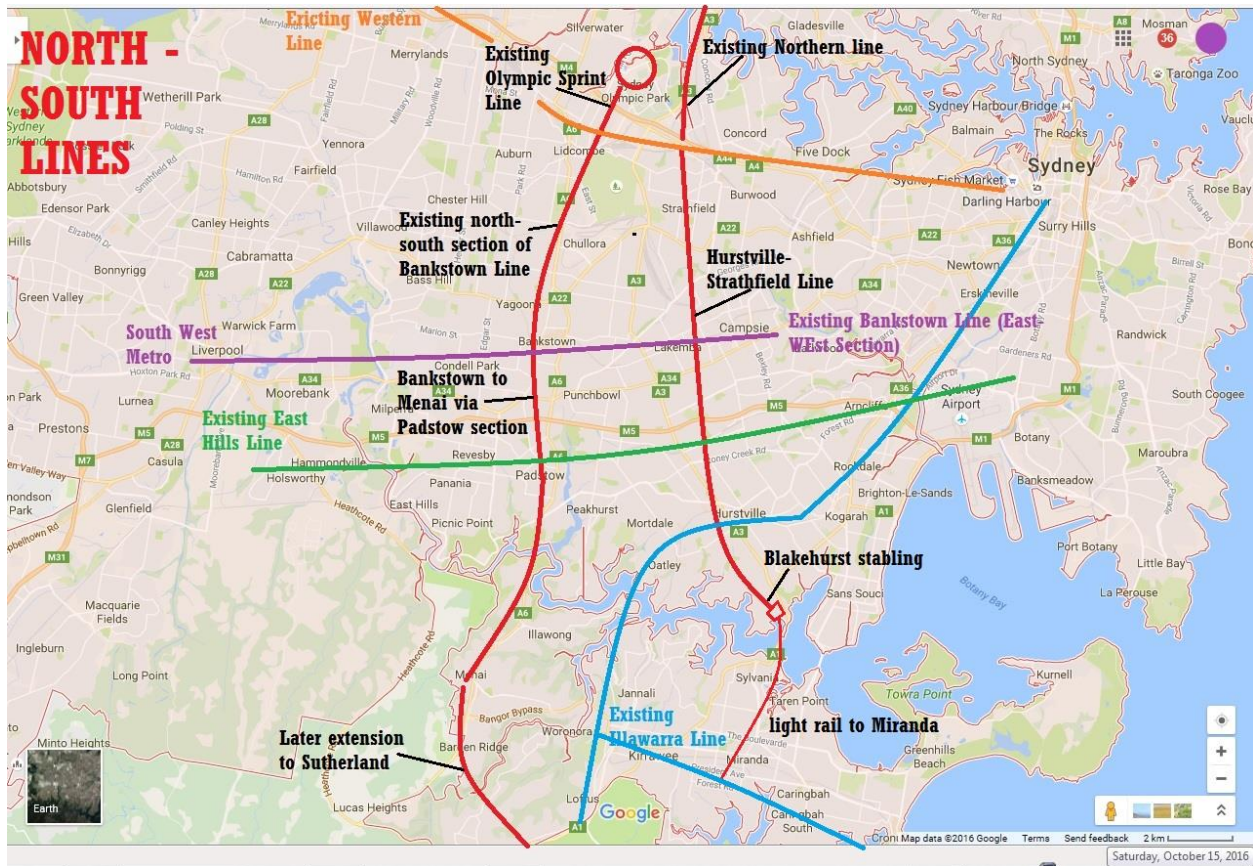


North-South Line 1: Hurstville-Strathfield

Sydney Olympic Park – Padstow – Menai (-Sutherland)

Another line could be built by connecting the existing Olympic Park Line with the north-south length of the Bankstown line, and then extending that further south to Padstow. This would then make a cross-link at the following passenger changeover nodes:

- the existing Western line at Lidcombe
- with the line at Chester Hill-Sefton-Regents Park (which itself could continue through Potts Hill eastwards) and
- with the new south west Metro that should then head to Liverpool and be a second line to the new Western Sydney Airport
- with the East Hills line at Padstow



North-South Line 2: Olympic Park – Padstow - Menai

The line could continue the line south towards Padstow, Padstow Heights, crossing the Georges River (over or under) to Menai, with a possible extension through to Sutherland. This should be a metro line.

The Hurstville – Strathfield and Olympic Park – Menai line would not only service Sydney Olympic Park, allowing masses of people to travel across the network without having to all pile in via Redfern and Central (a dangerous reliance upon a single node to carry the entire network) and create a game changer for the middle ring of Sydney out to 20km from the CBD, forming a genuine ‘network’ or grid formation of east-west lines junctioning with north-south lines, that permitted travel across the entire metropolis. This would result in the removal of massive amounts of traffic off the roads – particularly the gridlocked A3 and A6, for which Westconnex will not be a solution - and allowing for a corresponding increase in density along all rail corridors while retaining all green spaces in the suburbs concerned.

3. The Brick Pit

The circular steel platform should be removed. The Brick pit should allow more direct access so that residents can explore it more directly and in a more tactile way. Perhaps the area could become a recreational lake with walks of some kind, with steps cut into the rock and a safe passageway up and down. The circular structure is an ugly imposition on the landscape of the brick pit: it cuts you off from the texture of the site and turns the whole into a purely visual spectacle to be viewed voyeuristically from a distance.

4. Integrated cycle paths

Those within the site should branch out of the area and connect more broadly to a larger context of cycle paths.

5. Overall net gain in green spaces.

There should be no net loss of green spaces. If anything, there should be a net gain.

6. Local schools

These would need to be built to accommodate the children of 30,000 people.