

Newsletter – 7th October 2018

Please refer to our newsletter dated 3rd August 2018.

1. Committee Meeting 6th July 2018

At this meeting we were advised that

- i. Mr Matarazzo from Sydney Trains would provide a copy of his detailed report, including costings, to the Committee. He later advised that this report would not be released.
- ii. Once Mr Matarazzo provided full costings and potential staging options for the walkway, Ms Wilson would organise a meeting with the Minister for Transport for funding consideration.
- iii. Ms Wilson would meet with Joan and me on 6th August. However, on arrival for the meeting we were advised by her staff that the meeting was cancelled.
- iv. Joan contacted Trent Zimmerman the same day and he met with Joan and me the following day. Mr Zimmerman suggested that, as the Committee had been established 12 months ago, that it request a meeting with the Minister for Transport. This request was raised at the Committee meeting on 29th August, but Ms Wilson declined to organise the requested meeting with the Minister.

2. Committee Meeting 29th August 2018

It had been agreed that the Committee should meet monthly. However, following several requests, the next Committee meeting was finally held on 29th August. The minutes of that meeting were released by Ms Wilson's office and are as follows:

- i. Action items from the last meeting discussed.*
- ii. Rino discussed the full project and the progress on that since our last discussion. He has since looked at other options to split the project into sections and these were discussed.*
- iii. Joan and David Bowman have also since met with Mr Matarazzo and discussed the costings. An outline of that meeting was provided by Mr Matarazzo including the discussion of a breakdown of each cost individually. Line item by line item break down was provided.*
- iv. Mr Matarazzo to provide Trent Zimmerman MP with these costings for consideration for Federal Government funding.*

- v. Ms Wilson discussed her meeting with Minister Constance and Howard Collins who had said they would take a couple of weeks to get back to us with where to next and the process going forward. Noted that Sydney Trains also have their own thresholds and gateway processes which trigger certain reviews on the cost and project.
- vi. I outlined his view that the project should proceed immediately.
- vii. Mr Matarazzo reiterated the ongoing operational use of the line, at a minimum of the next 5-6 years, with more use starting this September.
- viii. The various stages were discussed, and the merits of a staged approach also discussed.
- ix. Ken Gouldthorp outlined that the early stages and planning would be something that North Sydney Council could take a strong lead on. Jilly Gibson also queried funding for the ongoing maintenance of the project should it be built.
- x. Discussion continued around what else is needed from the Committee and what processes it has to go through from there.
- xi. Committee will seek advice from the Minister and Howard Collins to know what next steps there are.
- xii. Felicity advised that Howard Collins was eager to join the Committee for the next meeting, and a date would be organised with him.

ACTIONS

- i. Felicity Wilson to check with Howard when we can next meet.
- ii. Rino to send redacted presentation.

3. The past 15 months

Where have we come from and what have we achieved over the past 15 months?

March 2017: Premier's announcement.

The Premier and Ms Wilson made the following announcement.

LAVENDER BAY RAIL LINE TO REMAIN IN PUBLIC HANDS: INVESTIGATIONS TO BEGIN ON SCENIC WALKWAY

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Liberal Candidate for North Shore Felicity Wilson today guaranteed the Lavender Bay rail line will remain in public hands.

"Today I can give an iron clad guarantee that a NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will never sell off the land and ensure it remains a community asset in the event it is not needed for railway use," Ms Berejiklian said.

"Following strong advocacy from Felicity, I can also announce the NSW Government will establish a committee to investigate creating a scenic walking track along this unique stretch of railway land.

"We will invite representatives of the local community, the local council, along with Sydney Trains, Destination NSW and the Office of Environment and Heritage to participate in this committee.

June 2017: Minister for Transport and Sydney Trains agreement work can commence

After a meeting organised by Trent Zimmerman with the Chief of Staff for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in February 2017, we received advice from the Minister's office.

Dear Joan and David,

Trent sent me your email to him of 7 June. Please accept my apologies for the delay since then in following up.

The matters which are about the Highline corridor proper, I propose to provide to Felicity Wilson. This is because Felicity is leading a committee for the NSW Government to bring all the Government and local stakeholders together and co-ordinate planning. Sydney Trains will be part of this work.

*To assure you of this process, **I can confirm that the Minister and Sydney Trains have agreed that work to create a walking path along the Lavender Bar Spur can commence** on the side where tracks have been removed, before the active rail line is closed on the other side of the spur.*

*Best wishes
Chris*

Chris Muir
*Chief of Staff
Office of the Hon Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport and Infrastructure*

August 2017 to date: Committee discussions

- The first Committee meeting chaired by Ms Wilson was held on 28th August 2017. At that meeting Ms Wilson advised that the Premier stated that the land would never be sold off, would remain a community asset and that a committee would be formed to investigate creating a walkway. She however stated that the Premier never agreed that they would pay for it.
- In August 2017 Mr Collins appointed Mr Rino Matarazzo from Sydney Trains as the 'liaison' person to work with the Sydney Harbour HighLine Association to develop the design of the project and estimate its costs.
- The initial concept plans from Sydney Trains were dated 15th August 2017.
- The August plans were finally released to the HighLine Association on 22nd December 2017 and no further work on design and costing was undertaken until mid to late February 2018 when Mr Matarazzo advised that his team was starting on the work.
- In March 2018, The Sydney Harbour HighLine Association presented its proposal which was very well received by the Committee.
- Sydney Trains finally completed their report and presented it to the Committee on 3rd April 2018. However the plans presented were very similar to those first produced on 15th August 2017.

- In July Sydney Trains presented their detailed plan and costings but declined to give the report to the Sydney Harbour HighLine Association. Following request through Ms Wilson, Mr Matarazzo did provide a copy of his report. However, the copy is heavily redacted and does not provide the Sydney Harbour HighLine Association with the information it requires to fully understand Sydney Trains' plans and costings of the project.
- Meantime Sydney Trains stopped using the line altogether. When questioned about this at the Committee meeting in July 2018, Mr Matarazzo advised that use of the line would recommence in September 2018 with instruction of new drivers. For members who can view the rail line you are aware that apart from use on a Sunday several weeks ago, the line has been unused for several months until the beginning of October when 3 trains have been stabled at Lavender Bay between approx. 10.00am and 4.00pm. each weekday.

4. Committee Meeting 12 October 2018

We have been advised that the next committee meeting will be held on 12th October 2018 at the offices of Sydney Trains in order that the Chief Executive, Mr Howard Collins may attend.

This meeting will be extremely interesting as we should be advised:

- What Sydney Trains' position is on the construction and operation of the Sydney Harbour HighLine walkway in conjunction with the continued use by Sydney Trains, as agreed with the Minister for Transport in 2017.
- Whether Mr Collins intends to pursue his goal of building a platform and train storage sheds in Lavender Bay for some of the heritage trains currently stored at Everleigh.
- Whether Ms Wilson has received a positive response from the Minister for funding of the HighLine project. (To date we understand that Ms Wilson has not yet received a response from the Minister to her funding submission of 28th August.)

5. What can we do over the coming months to achieve a successful outcome?

- We need to continue to increase the numbers of our members/friends of the Sydney Harbour HighLine Association and make our local representatives very aware that this will be an election issue at both the State and Federal elections. Non-delivery could indicate it was an empty election promise and could result in political pain.
- We need to continue to raise awareness of the Sydney Harbour HighLine project through
 - media coverage;
 - recent coverage included SilverKris Magazine (Singapore Airlines), Government News and Radio2SER 107.3 <https://2ser.com/sydney-harbour-may-get-a-pedestrian-highline/>
 - resident briefings;

- we intend to brief the local Precincts at the end of October on the Association's Proposal for the SHHL (presented to the Committee in March 2018) and update residents on the status of the project.

David Bowman



Vice President

Sydney Harbour High Line Association

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