

# Call for Metro urban planning

Lisa Carapiet

Property developers have warned that the NSW government's \$12 billion North West Metro development could become another botched public transport operation if there is a lack of urban planning around the designated train stations.

Comparing the new North West transport corridor to the troubled Liverpool Parramatta T-way, Aaron Gadiel, chief executive of property developer industry group Urban Taskforce, said the NSW government's urban planning policies should be reviewed and areas rezoned for density.

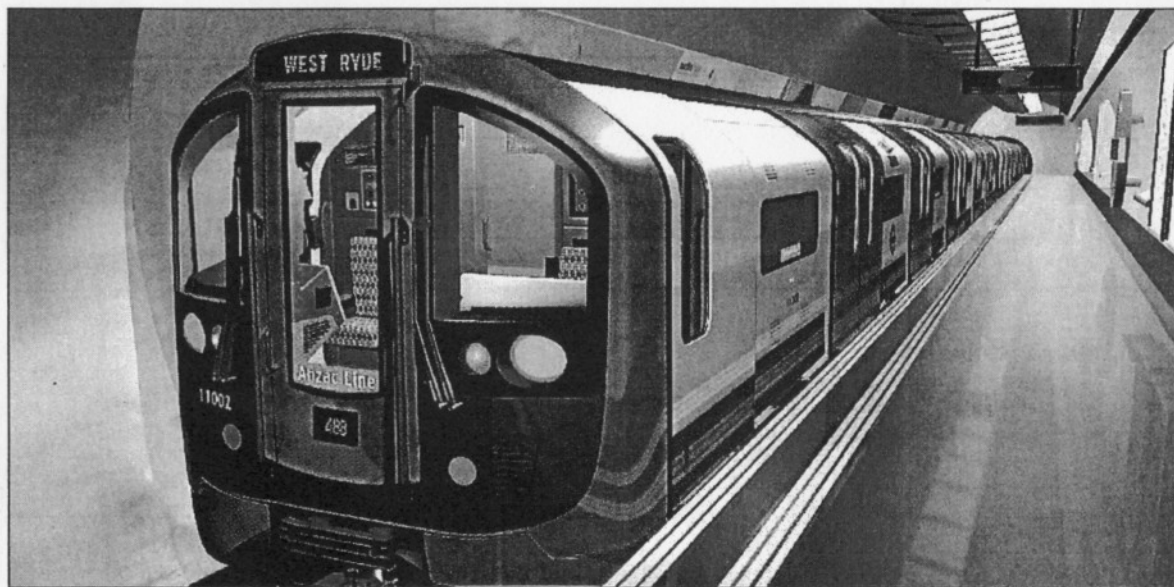
New, compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighbourhoods would provide an essential boost to patronage, he said.

Urban planning along the metro line could also help tackle the shortage of affordable housing, he said, pointing to the \$260 million project to develop 700 new affordable, social and private housing units in the Glebe-Ultimo precinct.

"The NSW government and the relevant local councils should move to prepare significant changes to local zoning in parallel with the planning for the metro site.

"A deferral of rezoning decisions may mean the necessary changes never happen," Mr Gadiel said.

"The single reason [the T-way attracted low levels of patronage] is there was no parallel changes to urban development policies. Broadly speaking, densities are not any higher than they had been at the time the T-way was conceived."



All aboard . . . the entire North West Metro in Sydney, from Rouse Hill to the city, will be open by 2017.

## KEY POINTS

- Urban planning must address the zonings for density.
- Cheaper transport costs, in turn, make housing more affordable.

Stephen Moore, principal of urban design firm Robert Day, said: "Transit-oriented development increases people's lifestyle choices while addressing environmental impacts and providing real alternatives to private motor vehicles."

Reducing transportation costs would, in turn, make housing more

affordable. "This is difficult in the first instance, because the planning rules which exist are outdated," Mr Moore said.

Conventional zoning and parking standards lead to areas becoming "transit-adjacent rather than transit oriented".

A spokesman for the NSW Department of Planning said that Urban Taskforce's submission was in line with the NSW government's planning approach to existing and future town centres along the proposed metro line.

"The Department of Planning will take the lead role in planning for strategic centres at Norwest,

Castle Hill and Rouse Hill — all proposed stations on the North West Metro line," he said.

The North West Metro is a 38 kilometre rail line from Rouse Hill through Norwest, Castle Hill, Epping, Top Ryde, Gladesville, Drummoyne, Rozelle and Pyrmont before reaching Wynyard, Martin Place and St James.

Construction is expected to commence in 2010, with the first section of the metro, between the Hills Centre and Epping, open by 2015.

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