

VILLAGE PARK, MONA VALE & THE IMPACT OF A B-LINE BUS STOP

– COMMENTS BY MARK HORTON

It is hard not to be cynical about the plans to place B-Line bus stop or interchange in Village Park at Mona Vale.

The push appears to have come from Pittwater Council staff in their development of the Mona Vale Place Plan but the interchange concept may go back further than the Place Plan back perhaps to the time Pittwater Place was being developed between Park and Darley Street, Mona Vale. While it is difficult to prove, it is likely that the Pittwater Place developers would have preferred to attract as much extra people traffic from passengers exiting from buses at Mona Vale. The best location for such a venture would be to have passengers alighting at Village Park and walking through the park on a series of paths leading to Park Street and Pittwater Place. Such a path system can be seen in the Mona Vale Place Plan documentation.



What has not been properly canvassed by Transport for NSW or the former Pittwater Council staff was the impact on businesses in the busy area centred on Waratah Street. Up to December 2015, I spent 40 plus years working in the City and every afternoon I alighted from my bus at the bus stop on Pittwater Road near Waratah Street. This stop is convenient for shoppers accessing the many food outlets including Aldi (previously Franklins) and Woolworths as well as numerous take away businesses that have thrived in Waratah Street and nearby Bungan Street for decades in some cases. I have interviewed many shop keepers and all confirmed that neither Pittwater Council or Transport for NSW undertook any consultation. I believe that the only consultation undertaken was with the Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce which does not represent these businesses. In fact, few if any shopkeepers see value in this organisation. The Mona Vale Chamber mainly comprises real estate, finance, accounting and law businesses.

Apart from the impact on businesses there is also the loss of visual amenity with the destruction of the existing trees and mounds along the Barrenjoey Road section of Village Park. These trees provide screening, shade and a buffer from the busy passing traffic. Their removal will open up the park leaving a yawning gap. Once gone it will take decades for any newly planted trees to take hold. As the bus stop will bite into the park it will also mean less green space in the Mona Vale CBD. Take a look at a photo of the park in the 1920s to get an idea how valuable this space once was and

what it has now been reduced to through road expansion and the construction of buildings including the library, a café, council offices and the Memorial Hall. Over the years Village Park has undergone considerable change. It has been whittled away with road widening, construction of the Memorial hall, baby health centre, library and Pittwater Council offices. Under the Mona Vale Place Plan the Village Park is now targeted to house two 4 storey buildings. A bus interchange is also proposed to accommodate the B-Line bus service.

Gone are all but one of the Norfolk pines, gone is the rugby field, cricket pitch and tennis courts, the old horse trough, the tall gum trees, the big swings, see saw and slippery dip, all memories past. Gone is this once large park, similar in size to Kitchener Park (across the road). We have to save Village Park from further invasion, from over development and save Mona Vale from inappropriate 6 storey high rise. Who is really behind the Mona Vale Place Plan?



The Village Park bus stop even rates a mention in the Greater Sydney Commission, Draft North District Plan, November 2016, under the title “Mona Vale Proposed priorities” where one of the priorities is to

“leverage the Mona Vale B-Line stop to facilitate intensification of uses in the centre, with an emphasis on the provision of housing affordability to retain 18 to 35 year olds”. Apparently 18 to 35 year olds may not be able to afford a car so they will have to catch a bus to their affordable housing in Mona Vale close by the bus stop.

See link:

http://gsc-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/dp_north_amends_access_2016_12_21.pdf?LWLWQs2kS75D5tAyUKEDvybGwq59UVbX

See also my separate article on the B-Line dated September 2016.

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