

TRAIN STATION — SOUTH PERTH

Grievance

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [9.27 am]: My grievance this morning is to the Minister for Transport; Planning about the state government's position on the construction of a train station in South Perth. It is no secret that, as member for South Perth and a long-time resident of Como, I have been a strong supporter of the plan to revitalise the area around the South Perth peninsula, with a train station linking to a redeveloped precinct for a commercial and residential area between Richardson Park and Judd Street, which is near the overpass from Mill Point Road, over to the freeway and onto the Narrows Bridge, and also a revitalised Mends Street precinct, which we are already seeing happening.

The minister would be aware that the concept of a South Perth train station was flagged by the Gallop government as part of the planning for the Perth–Mandurah rail project in 2002. A South Perth station concept design report that was commissioned by the Perth urban rail development project stated that at the time the low user number estimated for a South Perth train station did not provide sufficient justification for the project. However, the report stated —

If the picture of substantial growth/change can be presented as an inevitable and real phenomenon for the precinct—then there is a justification for setting up the infrastructure that is proposed in order to meet this need in the long term.

I have to say that the then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, agreed to realign the freeway to provide a footprint for the station when it happens and that realignment has taken place.

On 15 August 2017, *The West Australian* printed quite a positive article about the future of South Perth. It stated that over the next decade or so South Perth is estimated to have around 55 000 residents, 680 apartments and 190 short-stay apartments. It is evident that there has been strong development interest and activity within the South Perth station precinct, which demonstrates a high level of confidence in the market for medium to high-density residential development. If we look at the level of development and construction activity being undertaken so far, the City of South Perth has estimated that a South Perth train station could achieve boarding numbers of 4 500 to 5 500 passengers per day by 2026; that is only eight years away. I do not expect development in the South Perth station precinct to end here. There are likely to be further residential and commercial developments in the coming years that would further increase the vibrancy of the area.

The article in *The West Australian* follows a comprehensive document titled, “South Perth Station Precinct Plan”, which was released in 2011 and commissioned by the Western Australian Planning Commission and the City of South Perth. Nine years after the release of the South Perth station concept design report that I mentioned earlier, things have substantially changed in South Perth, and the 2011 “South Perth Station Precinct Plan” presents a brighter picture. This study was conducted with an extensive stakeholder engagement program involving government agencies, key stakeholders and members of the public. Among other things, the study stated that its purpose was —

... to develop a framework to guide development in the Precinct surrounding the planned South Perth railway station on the Perth/Mandurah line.

The study included a Public Transport Authority station design of an unmanned station with an island platform, a pedestrian overpass above the Kwinana Freeway, and a station entry building at the north-western corner of Richardson Park. It also included an alternative design by a consultant team involving the development of a building complex on the corner of Richardson Park to include major office, community and civic facilities. This was eventually agreed to by the South Perth Cricket Club, which uses Richardson Park. It was happy for that corner of the park to be used. The study recommended the following implementation actions and categorised them, among others, as “immediate”, which is defined in the document as one year: the development of the train station business case; a review of the utility upgrade requirements for the precinct; and a review of the public transport strategy for the precinct. This study was published in 2011 and, as we know, the City of South Perth has since done a lot of work in trying to achieve this goal. It has been slow progress but that has been its goal. In May this year, the City of South Perth further engaged a number of planning and design consultants and produced the document titled, “South Perth Peninsula Place + Design Report”. The recommendations of this report also reflect the strategic direction of the City of South Perth and the state government. It recognises that the station precinct will continue to play a major role in accommodating a fair share of South Perth's anticipated population growth as the wider city of Perth moves towards a population of 3.5 million people by 2050, whilst also ensuring that its special qualities are respected and enhanced.

I would be happy to invite the minister to come to my electorate one day and look at what is happening in the peninsula, and there is a lot happening. If the minister drives through there, she can see the new buildings and the plans for the Mends Street precinct. I think the minister would be quite excited by what we are doing down there.

Admittedly, there has been some issues with development at Mill Point Road north of Mends Street, because some locals are concerned about high-rise buildings encroaching into where they live. But in government, the Minister for Planning of the day, Hon Donna Faragher, made some amendments to the town planning scheme in order to placate some of the issues raised by residents.

The reason for this grievance today is to ask the minister, as the Minister for Planning, and, more importantly, the Minister for Transport, where she sees this development going and what the government's position is on the future of a train station in South Perth. With 650 000 to 700 000 people visiting Perth Zoo every year, it is inevitable that the station will be built. However, I would like to hear from the minister about the future for this precinct and the train station in particular.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.34 am]: I thank the member for South Perth for the grievance. We know why he has made this grievance today. A number of public buildings throughout South Perth have now been renamed. Is it the John McGrath Pavilion? The secret plan is to have the new station called the "John McGrath train station", as I understand it. The real reason for this grievance today is the success of having public buildings named after the local member. Normally a person has to die first, but I am glad the member for South Perth is still alive and gets to see his name on those public buildings throughout South Perth. How did that happen? I am still not sure about it.

Mr I.C. Blayney: You want one named after you!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I might name it the "Saffioti South Perth train station". I was going to name all our new train stations "Saffioti 1", "Saffioti 2" et cetera, but I thought that was a little bit —

Mr I.C. Blayney: What about calling the Ellenbrook line the "Rita Saffioti line"?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Potentially, I could.

This is a good issue and it has been discussed for many years since the reservation was made as part of the planning and delivery of the Perth–Mandurah rail line through that area.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Which I supported.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, and it was good futureproofing, to use a utopian word, when the Perth–Mandurah line created that space in South Perth. Last year, as I recall—I do not remember the exact date—the Mayor of South Perth came to discuss these issues, in particular the work that is underway. What I have seen so far is very proactive in trying to get the numbers and a business case proposal developed. As I understand it, there was a business case proposal and they are doing further work on the business case development. I am very keen to engage on this, and the Public Transport Authority is currently providing some level of support and technical expertise for the development of the business case in particular. Our Metronet team is pretty stretched at the moment with a lot of planning and delivery for the other rail lines, but I see better engagement with South Perth over the next year or so. I believe that South Perth provides an incredible opportunity to have sensible infill and an opportunity to have that linked to public transport infrastructure. I believe that its future is inevitable. It is going to happen sometime and the question is how we can make it financially affordable.

The proposal for Richardson Park is ambitious. Whenever I see councils trying to give a bit of their park away, it has never worked. It is ambitious, but if the council thinks it can get the community on board, that is a positive thing. There is also the concept of the developer contribution process. As part of Metronet more generally, we are looking at revising developer contribution processes and also linking that into the train station development. That may be a model that South Perth can use to not only supplement the proceeds it believes it can get from the sale of the park, but also get further developer contributions through the development of further density throughout South Perth.

As I said, I am not closed to the idea. It is something that I think would be well utilised. It provides a link of course to Perth Zoo, a major tourism attraction, and it would also take a lot of pressure off the line further down and at Canning Bridge as well.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: There are all the punters who want to go to the John McGrath footy oval.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We might get a Johnny McGrath shuttle service to link the Johnny McGrath station to the Johnny McGrath pavilion! We might do that.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Why don't you change South Perth to "John McGrath"?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member is right. South Perth is an outdated name. It should be called the "John McGrath council".

Mr D.C. Nalder: Minister, would you consider the development over the freeway railway line like at the Subiaco development?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course. To be honest, everyone is very excited about all these ideas. We are just trying to work out the framework for implementing them and, in particular, the development over and adjacent to the area. The member probably also found that sometimes a development adjacent to something with a really strong connectivity will deliver the same benefits without the cost or the impact on the existing infrastructure. So we have all those ideas. Like I said, the case is strong and it is really just about getting the financials from our perspective.

We are keen to participate. As I said, we are stretched with resources in trying to plan all the other election commitment projects. The density debate has raged in South Perth for many years and will continue, but the idea of significant density without improved public transport is an issue, in particular with the existing infrastructure constraints heading onto the freeway in South Perth. It is an extremely fantastic location that needs better connectivity. That is pretty much what we are looking at. With all that extra density, we want improved public transport. It is something we are very keen on and, as I said, I was very open to the Mayor of South Perth. The City of South Perth is doing the right thing in getting the work done. We are developing business cases, of course, making sure they are as rigorous as possible. That is also very important. Member for South Perth, the John McGrath train station is a possibility.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Just call it South Perth!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay, then.

I thank the member for the grievance. I could be political and say that the previous government did not do it. I will do that: the previous government did not do it!

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I was just working into it.

Mr D.C. Nalder: You got the planning side; that is the benefit.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As the member for Bateman said, having the planning side and the concept of value capture I note is something that the opposition sometimes supports and sometimes not. However, the concept of developer contributions linked to new public transport infrastructure is very important.