

Kewdale-Hazelmere region integrated masterplan

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Implications for the Kewdale-Hazelmere region from the Plan

Kewdale-Hazelmere Plan History

The Kewdale-Hazelmere plan is not a new plan as suggested by the Government. It comprises a number of initiatives dating from as long ago as the late 1970s.

The Kewdale-Hazelmere plan is basically an industrial land grab and road building exercise. Page 1 of the Kewdale-Hazelmere plan sets the tone of the plan's aim, 'infrastructure service provision in the region should support industrial expansion'.

Eliminating Urban-Industrial Buffers

Page 1 also notes that future development should mitigate or avoid potential land use conflicts. However, one of the major recommendations of this plan is to rezone large areas of rural land, which currently serve as a buffer between the existing urban and industrial zones in Forrestfield and Hazelmere. As Page 68 of the Kewdale-Hazelmere report shows, this rezoning would eliminate the rural buffers that currently exist between urban and industrial areas and would thereby lead to increased industry/urban zone conflict.

Road Building Proposals

Lloyd Street Extension

To emphasise the influence of the road lobby in the Kewdale-Hazelmere plan the report proposes a number of significant road and highway projects. One of the major road construction recommendations of the report is to extend Lloyd Street in Midland to Abernethy Rd. It was proposed in the 1970s before the Roe Highway extension was constructed past Midland. The report recommends the extension despite the report identifying that the extra traffic that this extension would induce along Abernethy Road would negatively impact on efficiency and safety along Abernethy Road and the adjacent industrial sites (Page 46,47).

The Lloyd Street extension would become a duplicate 'Roe Highway' running through the centre of Midland with heavy trucks using it to access south. Page 40 of the report notes that the Lloyd Street extension would result in much higher road traffic along the road through Midland and that a grade separation and significant land acquisition at the northern side of the Midland rail line would be required.

The supporting arguments for the Lloyd Street extension (page 46) closely resemble supporting arguments for the now deleted Fremantle Eastern Bypass

FEB (excluding the fact that the FEB was to be bulldozed through an existing suburb). It needs to be pointed out that the WA Planning Commission's final report supporting the deletion of the FEB rejected arguments now being put forward for the Lloyd Street extension. It is a double standard from the State Government. Similar road projects that are in one case not acceptable for the Government in the western suburbs seem to be acceptable in the eastern suburbs.

Tonkin & Roe Highway Widening

As for the extent of road building in the area, the report also identifies (page 24) that Tonkin and Roe Highways would be widened to 6 lanes for Double Road Trains while Orrong Road would be widened to 6 lanes and take 'long vehicles'.

Tonkin Highway/Abernethy Road on-ramp

Another controversial road proposal in this plan is the Tonkin Highway/Abernethy Road on-ramp. Proposed in the late 1990s, it ignores the target area Bush Forever and Conservation Wetlands protection classification. The Kewdale-Hazelmere report details the Bush Forever policy as a whole-of-government bushland protection policy. Bush Forever seeks to protect and manage sites of regional bushland significance while accommodating development that is compatible with bushland protection objectives. A road does not fulfil the protection objectives and the EPA recognised this when it rejected the proposal.

Despite other on-ramp designs which would have avoided the Bush Forever Wetland site (designs ignored by Main Roads WA) Main Roads WA with the Planning Minister's support (the Planning Minister administers Bush Forever) appealed the EPA's decision to stop the on-ramp through the bush wetland.

For more information on this proposal see,
<http://www.mp.wa.gov.au/jscott/trac/TonkinSummary.pdf>

Traffic Predictions

Projected increases in traffic are used to justify these road capacity increases. Typically, the traffic analyses use limited information and ignore in-depth sustainability analysis. They especially ignore such things as future fuel pricing and resource depletion factors.

Freight Network Review Principles

To suggest, as the report does, that the masterplan was prepared within the Freight Network Review (FNR) requirements is spurious. Community organisations played a key role in the FNR, they had no direct input with this plan. Road building proposals in the Kewdale-Hazelmere report did not receive the sustainability analysis that roads proposed for the South Metropolitan received in the public FNR process.

In addition, a number of key proposals in this masterplan predate the FNR of 2002. Those proposals have not been given a FNR similar assessment but instead are given unquestioned approval. Furthermore, no studies, in particular transport studies, have considered the region from an integrated and strategic perspective as was carried out in the FNR for the south metropolitan region.

Rail Infrastructure

The masterplan proposes to increase road infrastructure while there are no proposals to improve rail infrastructure. Strangely, there are actually proposals to remove and limit rail infrastructure.

The Kewdale-Hazelmere report rejects the proposal to realign the Midland freight rail line away from Midland on economic grounds. The rail realignment is recognised in the report as important to the 'vision' for Midland ie, the creation of an urban village, but apparently not that important.

It is interesting that while a rail realignment cost/benefit analysis is presented, the road building proposals in this report do not receive the same scrutiny.

There is also a proposal to delete a portion of the rail reserve in the Kewdale area. This should be viewed with concern, as loss of rail infrastructure will limit rail service in the future. This is especially of concern in view of the future uncertainties of fossil fuel supplies/cost/vulnerability and the negative impacts of road freight.

The report (page 48) suggests that this rail line could have a use for shunting operations in the future.

However, the necessary Rail Discontinuance Bill will need to be assessed when presented to Parliament. Interestingly, a similar Bill presented in 1999 by the previous Government failed to pass.

The Government's aim to improve the rail freight task will be further compromised by the proposed large-scale expansion and further subsidisation of road freight infrastructure contained in this report. The Kewdale-Hazelmere plan has no whole-of-government approach, no application of sustainable transport concepts nor the indepth community consultation promised by the government.

Integrated Transport Strategy

Unfortunately, what should be an essential part of this report, an integrated transport strategy for the East Metropolitan Region, has not yet been initiated.

Consultation

The report suggests the Kewdale-Hazelmere masterplan underwent extensive stakeholder consultation. However, the Kewdale-Hazelmere report reveals that the Committee, Reference and Working groups that developed the plan comprised only departmental and freight industry representatives. No resident or community based transport and conservation organisations were present on these committees. This is a major oversight given the significant interest the public has displayed on transport and planning issues, of which the Government is fully aware.

Sustainability Issues

Despite continuous reference to sustainable development in the Kewdale-Hazelmere report, little sustainability analysis has been carried out in the document as to whether the Kewdale-Hazelmere area is the best place to increase industrialisation. Sustainability issues are not considered in this plan, despite the State Government promising it would be an important part of all decision-making and major development proposals.

As page 11 of the report explains, "...there is a need to ensure that the region continues to develop in a way that meets the requirements of the freight industry and operators and allows efficient and safe operations." The fact that there are homes and communities within this region seems to have been missed by the committees. This is not surprising given the exclusion of community and resident groups from the committees.

Recommendations

The Kewdale-Hazelmere plan contains 47 recommendations, many of them useful studies or investigations. However, a number of major rezoning and construction proposals should be opposed, or restructured, due to questions about their long-term sustainability and lack of supporting information.

These recommendations are;

Recommendations 6, 7 & 8. Extension of Lloyd Street.

Recommendation 12. Welshpool Rail Discontinuance Bill.

Recommendation 13. Construction of Tonkin Hwy/Abernethy Rd on-ramp (the concept of an on-ramp is not opposed just the current design which targets conservation wetlands and bushland).

Recommendations 35 to 42. These deal with rezoning rural land in Hazelmere and Forrestfield to industrial and urban. The government plan will increase urban/industrial conflict, as the proposal is to bring the two land uses adjacent to each other by eliminating the rural buffer. There is scope for limited rezoning, about half of what is proposed. A limited rezoning will enable a rural buffer strip to remain between the new urban and industrial zones. Government promises of a new 'light industry transition zone' between the proposed urban-industry zones lacks detail. Retaining a remnant rural zone would ensure a proper buffer.

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