



Town and Country Planning Association

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Town and Country Planning Association

Submission to the Melbourne 2030 Audit Expert Group

About the TCPA

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) was founded in Victoria in 1914. TCPA is a non-profit organisation funded by members' subscriptions; it is not affiliated with, or supported by, any party political organisation. Amongst the objectives of the TCPA are:

- To promote the application of principles of ecological sustainability to existing and new settlements and urban regeneration;
- To encourage the practice of environmental planning;
- To advocate the establishment of an effective strategic planning framework.

Scope of Submission

This submission addresses the following issue raised in the Terms of Reference.

“Further actions to increase residential development opportunities including the potential of corridors / boulevards along the Principal Public Transport Network”

Problems With The Present Strategy

Although Melbourne 2030 is widely supported by the planning profession, it lacks the support of the general public. Intensification of development around activity centres identified in Melbourne 2030 is meeting substantial community opposition. Local governments are reflecting the strength of community opposition in their handling of development applications.

The potential for development of rail-based activity centres is limited by several factors.

- The amount of land available for re-development within reasonable walking distance of the railway station is limited and the land is highly priced.
- Building height is a particularly sensitive issue for development proposals in suburban activity centres, where existing buildings are generally no more than two storeys. For example, the proposed 15-storey development of the Henley Honda site at Camberwell Junction was vigorously opposed because of its height.

- The present overcrowding of trains limits the capacity for additional rail traffic generated by developments in activity centres.

To overcome these limitations, additional sites are needed for medium- or high-density development.

TCPA Proposed Alternative Development Model

A significant part of Melbourne's Principal Public Transport Network is provided by tram and bus services. The TCPA believes that there is considerable potential for the development of high-density, mixed-use corridors along certain major arterial roads in Melbourne that are served by tram or bus.

The pre-eminent example of this form of city development is Curitiba, in southern Brazil, where it has been an outstanding success (see references below). In Curitiba high-rise, high-density development is restricted to such corridors and the city centre, and the public transport services are provided entirely by buses. St Kilda Road serves as a prototype for this form of development in Melbourne.

TCPA has identified many potential high-density re-development corridors in metropolitan Melbourne. Of these, four potential high-density re-development corridors in the east and south east of Melbourne represent exemplary candidates for the TCPA's proposed model of corridor-based consolidation. These are:

- Maroondah Highway, between Box Hill and Ringwood
- Burwood Highway, between Warrigal Road and Knox City (Stud Road)
- Dandenong Road, between St Kilda Junction and Dandenong
- St Kilda Road-Brighton Road-Nepean Highway, between St Kilda Junction and Mordialloc

By broadening the mix of land uses from the primarily commercial and residential use that exists in St Kilda Road to include retail, services and community facilities, these major roads could be developed over time to become new linear activity centres.

Linear activity centres already exist in most inner suburbs served by the tram network. Examples include:

- Armadale/Malvern: High Street
- Brunswick/Coburg: Sydney Road
- Fitzroy: Brunswick Street
- Hawthorn/Malvern: Glenferrie Road
- Richmond: Bridge Road
- South Yarra/Prahran/Windsor: Chapel Street
- South Yarra/Toorak: Toorak Road

Unlike the standard four-lane roads found in these inner suburban activity centres, wide roads such as St Kilda Road and Dandenong Road can accommodate relatively tall buildings without creating a canyon effect. Wide roads also allow trams and buses to run in dedicated lanes, thus reducing delays caused by other vehicles. Overshadowing of nearby low-rise housing can be avoided by building high-rise development only on the northern side of the road, so that shadows are cast on the road surface, having a lower height limit on the southern side and reducing the height limit with distance from the road frontage.

Benefits

We believe there are a number of benefits with this form of development.

- The land fronting arterial roads tends to cost less than land in rail-based activity centres, making it a more attractive investment proposition.
- These development corridors would reduce the development pressure on existing rail-based activity centres.
- Light rail (tram) and bus capacity can be expanded relatively cheaply by means of longer vehicles and higher frequency services.
- Three of the four proposed development corridors run parallel to, and in large part close to, railway lines, and can thus serve as back-up and complementary public transport services, taking some local traffic away from the trains, but also serving as feeders to the train services. By operating the rail and bus/tram services in a coordinated way, the expensive expansion of train line capacity can be delayed or avoided altogether.
- The TCPA proposal would integrate the car-based shopping centres of Chadstone, Knox City and Southland with high capacity public transport and high-density housing.

Curitiba References

<http://www3.iclei.org/localstrategies/summary/curitiba2.html>

http://www.solutions-site.org/artman/publish/article_62.shtml

http://www.fta.dot.gov/assistance/technology/research_4391.html