



TCPA Submission to Melbourne 2030 Audit

Melbourne 2030 is undergoing a review (or “audit”) after five years of application. Public submissions to the Audit Expert Group were invited from interested parties. TCPA’s submission follows.

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

Melbourne 2030 Workshop

Peter Hill and Ray Walford represented the TCPA at a workshop for submitters to the Melbourne 2030 Audit, on 20th October. The Audit Expert Group posed three questions to the participants:

1. What are the implementation priorities for the next 5 years?
2. How can resident and business communities be involved?
3. Funding implementation: how should we pay for services to maintain liveability?

Our key high-density corridor concept along with other points of the TCPA submission to the Audit was picked up in the workshop process. Other groups are critical of the narrowly-specified activity centre focus of consolidation, e.g. VPELA has argued for identification and selection of precincts that are best suited for sustainable consolidation. Another point made was that the transport plans need to be hypothecated to the overall spatial land-use strategy and plan, which is not the case with current transport planning.

Much of Vancouver's success has been in the assertion of the overall land-use social

development strategy as the prime pillar of its urban plan, which in turn drives the transport infrastructure planning. A canon of Vancouver's strategy is to minimize the most common individual personal travel links between land-uses, e.g. between homes and places of work, study and personal services. This is something we should argue for in Victoria.

Vancouver planners have also included and engaged the public throughout the urban planning processes. Thus, the Minister's decision to engage the public in its audit of Melbourne 2030 is most welcome.

The notes of the findings and recommendations of the participants' roundtable sessions will soon be shown at audit.submissions@dpcd.vic.gov.au

Melbourne's Bus Plan and SmartBus

SmartBus is a joint venture project between the Department of Infrastructure (DoI) and VicRoads. Its priority is to link designated Activity Centres (shops, community centres, employment areas, schools, etc) in (predominantly) cross-town directions, in the absence of rail transport.

SmartBus is intended to be the "core" framework of premium top-quality routes for Melbourne's future bus network. Regional reviews – with public consultation - of the bus network during 2007 and 2009 will comprehend and be subordinate to this 'SmartBus' framework.

The Bus Plan is part of the Metropolitan Transport Plan ("Melbourne 2020"), boldly launched in 2004, with the goal of catering for 20% (an arbitrary fraction?) of all personal trips by 2020. Melbourne 2020 was to support the sustainability goals of Melbourne 2030, especially of settlement consolidation. Now rehabbed as 'Meeting Our Transport Challenge', its patronage goal seems to have slipped.

In determining service development priorities, the current bus program management makes the useful and valid distinction between:

- Mass Transit (MT): Efficiency measures are logistical efficiency in moving a given quantity of people, catering for significant to large patronage markets, reduced externalities; and
- Social Transit (ST): Provision of socially

fair access to valuable activities for personal well-being;

which leads to a "working" policy for Mass Transit: "Travel is a good thing which helps the economy, but some types of travel – like cars – impose costs on the environment and create congestion. Cars are okay, but in some markets, public transport imposes lower external costs and reduces congestion. The trick is to get Melburnians to use it";

and a "working" policy for Social Transit: "Mobility is a good thing and in an equitable society everyone should have reasonable access to transport options. As Melbourne has grown, public transport has failed to grow with it. In many outlying areas, people without access to cars are deprived of travel options. This is unfair."

These translate into policy outcomes, such as:

Mass Transit:

- Improve reliability of trains & trams
- Reduce overcrowding (e.g., Dandenong line)
- Create new services for emerging mass transit markets (e.g., SmartBus)
- Promote the availability & convenience of public transport to the people who are most likely to switch over to it

Social Transit:

- Improve service levels in areas of Melbourne which are "transport poor"
- Ensure that people in regional Victoria have access to decent public transport
- Provide travel options for people who are mobility impaired

Stage 2 of SmartBus involves:

- Red Orbital rollout in 2006-07
- Green Orbital rollout in 2007-08
- Yellow Orbital rollout in 2008-09
- Blue Orbital funding allocation in 2010-11, and rollout in 2012-13.

In selecting routes or corridors for SmartBus conversion, DoI models trip generation to select areas or corridors that are likely to generate major or best patronage growth. Key points of

SmartBus strategy include:

- Connectivity with other buses and trains
- Maximize integration with activity centres and nodes to maximize patronage (switch from cars)

However, there are no specific patronage targets.

SmartBus route 700 (Warrigal Road, between Box Hill and Mordialloc) has a weekly average of about 40,000 trips (+13% since conversion to SmartBus). SmartBus route 703 (Middle Brighton – Monash Uni, via Clayton) has a weekly patronage averaging about 25,000 - 30,000 trips

The initial SmartBus patronage growth target was to look for 20% increase in bus corridor patronage. Now, the target is 50% increases, as in Springvale Road. 30% of the existing SmartBus passengers are discretionary travelers.

A criticism of the SmartBus concept is that it deliberately seeks to create first, second and lower classes of public transport services. In other words, the DoI will continue to class Melburnians into transport winners and losers, which isn't fair. The marketing projection of the SmartBus emphasizes the deficiencies of the complementary "local" and "neighbourhood" bus services that are slated for half-hourly or hourly headways!

The problem with a SmartBus route with 10 to 15 minute headways that connects with local neighbourhood "lower class routes" of hourly or half-hourly headways is that few people will choose to travel by public transport when such service interconnections are obligatory.

Q: Shouldn't all bus routes be "smart"?

By comparison, Los Angeles' Orange County Transportation Authority (<http://www.octa.net/>) runs an extensive bus network where 20 and 30 minute headways are common, and many timetables have 10 or 15 minute gaps. The OCTA network shows no less service quality or consistency between route headways than will Melbourne's, even after the SmartBus rollout.

A second criticism is that the "mass" and "social" transit policy objectives are not consistently followed in the proposed SmartBus network. For example, the absurd over-servicing implied in the five proposed SmartBus routes to

thread through exclusive, wealthy Brighton Beach, a low-medium density residential precinct lacking any concentrated trip generators such as activity centres, and with no prospect for intensive land-use redevelopment. Another example is the "Burke Road gap", the lack of a continuous transit service along Burke Road between Caulfield, Heidelberg and Latrobe University.

These two anomalies in the DoI's premium bus network show that the SmartBus program is not consistently aligned with the Melbourne 2030 strategy of maximizing non-car travel to activity centres.

A third criticism is that the regional reviews of bus services exclude the proposed premium and SmartBus network from public input. This limits the scope for restructuring bus routes to meet local as well as regional travel needs. In effect, the planning managers have decided, in "top-down" manner, the basic structure of the network without consultation with community stakeholders.

The DoI should instead adopt transport planning management practices in Vancouver and San Francisco ("MUNI") in actively seeking public input at the outset in the reviews of all services.

AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the TCPA will be held Monday 26th November, at 6.30 pm. A separate formal notice of meeting will be sent to members.