



Town and Country Planning Association Bulletin

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Chadstone Redevelopment

The TCPA attempted to make some contribution to the debate about the proposal to expand the Chadstone complex. Public opposition from the affected council and residents appeared to have focussed on the impact of increased car traffic. The TCPA considers there are wider issues which relate directly to the objectives of Melbourne 2030.

The following letter to the editor was **not** published by The Age.

“Dear Editor,

The proposal to expand the car-dependent Chadstone shopping centre should be of concern to the State Government (The Age, 21/1). It is inconsistent with the objectives of the State Government’s strategic plan for Melbourne (Melbourne 2030) to reduce our dependence on the car, to increase the patronage of public transport, and encourage more walking and cycling.

The plans to increase parking by 1400 spaces in step with the retail expansion sends the worst signal and justifiably raises the concerns of adjacent residents and their Council.

Under Melbourne 2030 activity centres like Chadstone are expected to have public transport stops and to be on or connected to the Principal Public Transport Network. The site formerly occupied by the Australian Catholic University presents the government with an opportunity to develop a major public transport interchange at Chadstone.

While the provision of public transport as part of the redevelopment of Chadstone would be a major step in sustainable planning, the scale of any expansion needs to be considered for its effect on local shopping centres. The proposed retail floor space expansion of 40,000 square metres is the equivalent of a medium-sized suburban shopping centre.

A key element in Melbourne 2030 is the role of smaller Neighbourhood Activity Centres which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The viability of smaller shopping centres can only be threatened by the further expansion of massive centres like Chadstone.

The Town and Country Planning Association has submitted that if smaller local shopping centres are to be sustained, upper limits should be placed on the size of regional shopping centres like Chadstone.”

Parkville Site

The State Government has finalised a consultation process for the redevelopment of the Parkville site. Beginning in mid-March 2003, the plans will be on public display for four weeks, with an opportunity for submissions until mid-April 2003. An “Independent Advisory Committee” is to be appointed to oversee the consultation process and will report back to the government with recommendations. Public hearings before the committee will commence in May 2003.

The contact details for information and getting on the mailing list for the community update are: tel. 1800 158 850; email games.village@discg.vic.gov.au. The website is www.discg.vic.gov.au.

Whatever the merits of the site itself, the TCPA sees this redevelopment of prime inner-city land as the first litmus test of the State Government’s commitment to the Neighbourhood Principles of Melbourne 2030 and to reducing dependence on the private car. It is also an opportunity to address the serious issue of affordable and social housing. The details of just what will be built on the Parkville site is a matter that the community should be monitoring.

The redevelopment can be an exemplar of appropriate densities for similar developments in both the inner city and the outer fringe growth areas. The TCPA submission to Melbourne 2030 has questioned the conservative indicative density target of 15 dwellings per hectare for the outer fringe growth areas as a wasteful use of increasingly scarce land and as insufficient to justify the investment in public transport.

Density figures are difficult to interpret unless it is clear whether the figures relate to the footprint area alone, that is it does not include areas of open space, roads and so on. The proposed 900 dwellings on the 20 hectare Parkville site is a density of 45. Allowing for the planned open space, roads etc, the DOI is estimating densities of 85-100 dwellings per ha.

TCPA Committee for 2003

As the previous Bulletin noted, the present committee constitutes a bare quorum and leaves no room for the inevitable absences and sickness. The Committee remains very keen to hear from any member interested in joining the committee..

RMIT Transport Research Centre Data

Members interested in the State Government's public transport target to effectively double public transport's share of motorised trips by 2020 are referred to the recent paper presented to the 25th Australasian Transport Research Forum by researchers from the RMIT Transport Research Centre

Drawing on the Victorian Activity and Travel Survey for 1994-1999, the paper paints a fairly grim picture of public transport just holding its own over the six-year period, and of socio-demographic, economic and physical changes that could work against public transport in the future.

While there has been an increase in public transport usage for work journeys, and a marked increase in train travel among outer suburban residents, the number of these trips remains relatively small. At 1999, only 6% of trips on weekdays and 2% at weekends are made by public transport. Significantly, buses appeared to have lost patronage overall.

The general conclusion is that a modal shift of the scale contemplated by Melbourne 2030 will need to be accompanied by radical intervention in the form of a massive injection of funds into public transport and changes in transport policy (eg pricing car travel and parking provisions). The good news is that walking accounted for 24% of all trips when multi-modal travel is taken into account.

Any member interested in receiving an electronic copy of the paper (*Planning for Public Transport in the Future: Challenges of a Changing Metropolitan Melbourne*) can contact the Secretary of the TCPA.

Census data on metropolitan Melbourne journeys to work over the 15 years 1976-2001 shows clearly the unsustainability of present trends. There has been a steady decline in the number of passenger trips, and at the same time a continuous and almost fourfold increase in the number of female driver trips, reflecting socioeconomic trends since 1976. Driver trips now form 75.6% of trips; passenger trips in 2001 were a mere 6.3%.

While public transport trips have started to rise since 1996, after a steady decline from 1976 to 1996, they still constituted only 6.7% of all trips in 2001. The overall picture for sustainable transport is mixed. The number of journeys to work by foot (37,486) well exceeded journeys by bus (14,737) and walking formed part of 16.3% of all journeys to work. Journeys to work by bicycle or multi-modal transport including cycling remain a marginal and male dominated mode (1.02% and 0.3% of journeys respectively). Melbourne 2030 needs to promote the bicycle as a mode of transport and set some targets.

It is important to recognise that the majority of trips are not work-related.

Address for Correspondence

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Melbourne 2030

The committee would like thank members who forwarded comments on the Melbourne 2030 and to the two member associations (K.R.A.M.M.E.D. and Mordialloc Beaumaris Conservation League) for sending us their submissions. Both focus on the City of Kingston which has been subject to considerable residential expansion and loss of green wedge land in recent years. They address specifically the issue of further densification in a flood-prone municipality, with its implications for stormwater management, infrastructure capacity and permeability requirements for developments. They also point to the need to provide for public open space as part of any densification strategy, and the potential consequences of higher densities around activity centres if increased usage of public transport is not forthcoming.

The TCPA submission, which includes attachments on the *Hydrogen Economy, Global Oil Vulnerability and the Australian Situation, and Transport Planning and Sustainability in Melbourne* by Peter Hill, will be posted on our website by mid-March.

Members interested in the implementation of Melbourne 2030 are urged to monitor responses by local government. The TCPA is encouraged to see a number of councils taking a collaborative regional approach to developing strategies and priorities for public transport.

The London Congestion Charging Scheme

The TCPA will be monitoring the results of London's introduction of a congestion tax of 5 pound sterling for any trip within a 21 sq km zone of central London between 7.00 am and 6.30 pm. Revenues are to be channelled into public transport. The International Union of Public Transport has endorsed the congestion charging scheme as a means of managing demand, and to improve conditions for car-users, the operational efficiency of buses and trams as well as the attractiveness of PT. The Association's Secretary-General noted that if PT is to provide an attractive alternative to the car, it is critical that congestion be contained and separate rights of way be provided for PT services. "If we are really to convince motorists to stop using their cars in favour of collective forms of transport, funds derived from road-pricing must be ring-fenced for developing quality public transport."

Several other British and European cities, and Singapore, have introduced road pricing schemes for the city-centre. Ironically, the Sunday Times cited Melbourne's CityLink as an example of urban road charging. Many would see CityLink as a means to attract cars into central Melbourne, and a charging scheme that generates no funds for PT.

