



Town and Country Planning Association Bulletin

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Musings from the President's Chair

A note on stepping softly into the future

In Victoria, the Town and Country Planning Association traces its first steps to 1914. And the TCPA in 2004 aims to continue to take steps to reflect community expectations and values that support integrated land use and transport planning. Such an aim is always a challenge.

How much the 1997 TCPA Charter for Planning has influenced decisions on planning is arguable. However, the Charter is a key component in the thought provoking Miles Lewis book, "Suburban Backlash – The Battle for the World's Most Liveable City (1999) The wider acceptance of our Charter as a cornerstone in planning strategies is one of my objectives while president.

Our members and constituents cover a wide range of interests. Our overall aim is to bring net benefit to the community. The TCPA is more than a group of planning professionals. The TCPA aims to support the gaining of improved planning outcomes through being the voice for the many who believe they are disenfranchised and are not being heard on planning matters. The committee meets monthly to determine the direction and extent of TCPA participation in state and local government planning issues. The committee would welcome additional office bearers. Mindful of the limited resources available to decision makers we aim to focus on supporting state government initiatives, such as to manage metropolitan growth corridors. We strongly support 2030. However, there is much more planning worthy of our attention. We seek to bring additional skill, information and energy into the policy debate.

Resolutions of some land-use issues are complex, controversial and not clear-cut. Tracking outcomes of members' concerns on local planning and its implementation to the extent that the actual planning outcome on the ground appears, in the final analysis, to fall

outside federal, state and local government policies and guidelines is an area of research of interest to me personally. I welcome direct communication from members. There is a need for a greater degree of compliance with agreed to contractual obligations necessary for government, investors and community to co-operate in a spirit of trust. While president, I seek to facilitate the TCPA participation in supporting a climate leading to defined and agreed to outcomes in planning.

Specific steps.

The percentage of the population over sixty is increasing, and estimates exist that by 2030 the Australian population that will be more than 85 years of age will be approaching 1 million. In addition, epidemiological evidence exists to show that diseases attributable to obesity are dramatically increasing. Both these trends will have a dramatic effect on how we plan and use buildings, land and transport in the future. Advocacy groups such as the TCPA were originally spin offs of special interest groups arguing that improved public health would result from better town and country planning at the turn of the 19th century. In the UK, only in 1904 was legislation commenced to control land-use by zoning.

In many nations, including Australia, it is reasonable to say mechanisms are in place to handle road trauma reduction and sustainable environmental issues. Now is the time to bring planning policy as well as technology to focus on the most fundamental issue of public and personal health. There are many steps being taken to benefit community health. The choice on what one thinks about while taking each step in the recommended "10,000 step program", is personal. The main thought could be to take steps in the direction defined by our intrinsic values.

Integrated land-use and transport planning to facilitate healthy lifestyles are as crucial to sustainability as are decisions focused on

economic, environmental and equity outcomes. But in the final wash, the statement included in the 1997 Charter for Planning, “that planning decisions must accord with the objectives of long term strategy plans” encapsulates my attitude to planning policy, planning practice and its application.

I look forward to stepping into the future with the committee and members of the TCPA.

Eynesbury Estate Development in

Activity Centre Developments

The TCPA has been taking an interest in the recent controversy over proposals to develop around the Camberwell railway station and the implications for the M2030 activity centre development strategy, which is to locate medium density housing close to existing shops, community facilities and public transport. The association supports the activity centre strategy but shares community concern that without an integrated land use - public transport plan the opportunities for sustainable urban consolidation will be wasted and the result will be more traffic congestion.

Printed below are texts of two letters that were sent to the Progress Leader suburban newspaper over the name of the TCPA. Neither letter has yet been published, but we had a very positive response to the second letter, which led to an invitation to contribute to a general article on Melbourne 2030. We were then approached for a more detailed contribution about our public transport proposals to support the activity centre strategy in the eastern suburbs, for wider use in the Leader newspaper chain (see p3, below). This reflects the widespread community interest in the implementation of Melbourne 2030 as it affects local communities.

Dear Editor,

It is ironic that Liberal MP and Opposition planning spokesman, Ted Baillieu, is taking such a strong stand against the designation of Glenferrie Road as a major activity centre under Melbourne 2030 (PL April 19, p5), because it was a Liberal government that first mentioned Glenferrie Road as an activity centre in its policy “Living Suburbs”, published in 1995.

The policy states (p. 67):

“Particular attention will be paid to developing and promoting centres offering a range of activities, services and employment opportunities. It is expected that each of these centres – or activity clusters – will be integrated with medium-density housing and directly served by several forms of transport. While the city centre will retain its primacy as the focus for many cultural, entertainment, retail and commercial functions, it will be supported by other activity clusters, ranging from major regional centres to smaller neighbourhood ones. They could include the

Melton-Wyndham Green Wedge

This development, now comprising a hotel, two golf courses, an equestrian centre and a 2900 lot residential development, is a breach of the urban growth boundary, green wedge and growth corridor policies. The site was re-zoned by the State Government shortly before the release of Melbourne 2030. The TCPA is supporting the continuing opposition of Western Region Environment Centre to this development.

shopping strips – Puckle Street, Chapel Street, Lygon Street, Brunswick Street, Acland Street, Bridge Road, Hampton Street, Glenferrie Road and many others – which already contribute to Melbourne's livability and tourist appeal.”

The Town and Country Planning Association support this aspect of the Liberals’ policy. Glenferrie Road is Boroondara’s second largest shopping centre, larger than Kew Junction; we think its designation as a major activity centre is entirely appropriate.

Mr. Baillieu is playing politics with planning policy.

The Editor,

The current level of public criticism of land-use planning decisions suggests the state government’s management of Melbourne 2030 could be seriously flawed. Related metropolitan transport plans have again been deferred from the budget. These suggest government failure to commit to this major program.

The approved major office development at Burnley and the government’s proposed arm’s length sale of development air-rights at key rail stations through its VicTrack authority exemplify these flaws. Yes, there will be lots more floor space and car parks, but little extra public transport. Such centres *will* become car traffic magnets. Will VicTrack ensure that seeking dividends from the current proposal for Camberwell station won’t override achievement of the goals set out in “Melbourne 2030” for transport access to retail centres?

Examples of “town-centred” urban consolidation that minimises car use are widespread in Europe, and some (e.g. Manly and Parramatta) exist in Sydney and here at Box Hill. These show how intensified commercial and social activity can happen without becoming traffic congested, soul-less concrete canyons.

In its submissions to Melbourne 2030, the TCPA included proposals that would improve public transport access to Camberwell and other

activity centres, e.g.:

- Conversion of the Alamein railway to light rail from Camberwell station, extending beyond Alamein via Chadstone Shopping Centre, Oakleigh, Huntingdale, Monash University and Wellington Road to Rowville;
- Extending tram route 3 from East Caulfield to Chadstone with one kilometre of track to join this light railway;
- A “premium” bus route to run between Latrobe University and Brighton or Chadstone via Heidelberg Central and nearby hospitals, Burke Road and Caulfield station.

These, plus improvements to other transport services and modal coordination, would give these activity centres a good chance of growing in value but not in congestion.

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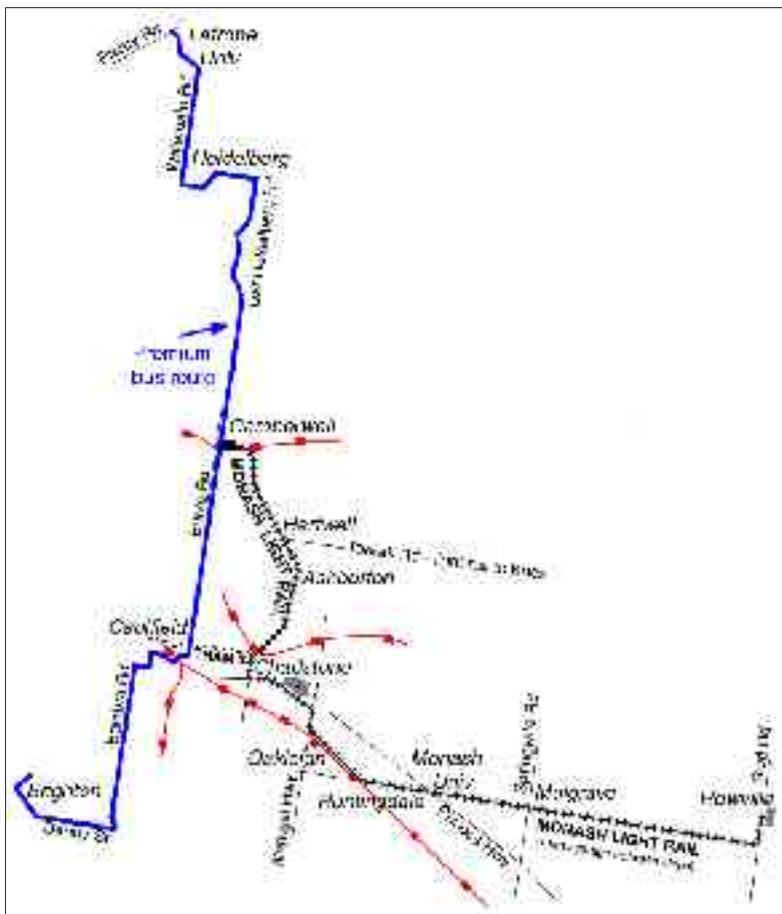
Putting Melbourne 2030 principles into practice – a current regional case

The current level of public criticism of land-use planning decisions suggests the state government's management of Melbourne 2030 could be seriously flawed. Related metropolitan transport plans have again been deferred from the budget. There are doubts about political commitment to this major program.

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In its submissions to Melbourne 2030, the TCPA included proposals that would improve public transport access to Camberwell and other activity centres, e.g.:



- Conversion of the Alamein railway to a 25 km light railway ("Monash Railway") from Camberwell station, extending beyond Alamein via Chadstone Shopping Centre, Oakleigh, Huntingdale, Monash University and Wellington Road to Rowville.
- The Burwood Highway tram route 75 could also be diverted along it to Camberwell, and converted to true light rail mode for a quicker transit to central Melbourne. A new streetcar service would then be created to substitute the no. 75 along its current route between Melbourne and Station Street Burwood.
- Restructure train services on the Ringwood corridor into (i) an inner regional stop-all-stations service between city loop and Box Hill, and (ii) an outer regional service stopping all stations between Lilydale or Belgrave and Box Hill thence express to the city stopping only at Camberwell, Glenferrie and Richmond. The existing Alamein train fleet would be operated between Melbourne CBD and Box Hill to bolster (i) the inner regional service. Without the

heavy rail branch line to Alamein, the train park siding at Camberwell station could be relocated further out on the Ringwood line, creating room for the new light rail interchange at Camberwell with trains and Burke Road public transport. Our advocacy of the light rail corridor is timely, given the current station air-space overdevelopment proposal received by VicTrack.

- Extending tram route 3 from East Caulfield to Chadstone with one kilometre of conventional streetcar track to join this light railway;
- A "premium" bus route to run between Latrobe University and Brighton or Chadstone via Heidelberg Central and nearby hospitals, Burke Road and Caulfield station.

These, plus improvements to other transport services and modal coordination, would give these activity centres a good chance of growing in value but not in congestion.

Urban strategic background to these public transport proposals

Melbourne 2030 seeks further urban growth in metropolitan Melbourne that increases the well being of its citizens

on a triple bottom-line basis: increased social harmony and personal well-being, increase in economic wealth, and minimum adverse impact on the physical environment.

The overwhelming evidence from around the world is that more compact cities where car and truck movement is minimised and where citizens make most of their personal travel on foot, on bicycle or in public transport are those cities with highest per capita wealth, ambience and best sustainability. Thus in Melbourne's case, government policy is right in discouraging population growth at or beyond the urban fringe, and fostering growth in established urban activity centres, or in "brownfields" sites connected or connectable to public transport.

Of course, such strategies involve large investments and pose the chicken-and-egg dilemma: which comes first? Experience in many cities has shown that government-private collaboration in both the strategic planning and funding of large scale precinct land re-structuring and the associated supporting infrastructure simultaneously creates both the greatest increase in both public (social) and economic (private owners and the public) value of such precincts and the greatest chance of success in such programs. Strategic intervention is essential to give leadership and to reduce risk to private investors.

The land being restructured can be "greenfields" (essentially virgin or agricultural land), "brownfields" (land already intensively built-over for intended purposes, but whose uses have now ceased) or "yellowfields" (built-over land still used for the purposes for which it was developed, but whose intensity and value of use have declined). These colour connotations evoke the life cycle of tree leaves.

Prominent examples of urban brownfield developments in Melbourne are the former Victoria Docklands, Dandenong livestock saleyards and the Broadmeadows army camp. Canary Wharf made London's Docklands world-famous as an example of urban renewal.

Yellowfields are not always easy to identify and they are certainly harder to restructure and redevelop than brownfields precincts. South Melbourne's industrial zone along the Yarra's south bank was an obvious case. Along the proposed Monash Railway, there are considerable areas of yellowfields residential and commercial land stocks, particularly surrounding Oakleigh's central business district, and in Huntingdale and Clayton. A large area of brownfield land lies adjacent to Oakleigh station and along the north side of the railway to Huntingdale. Functioning activity centres along the Monash rail route include Camberwell district centre, Hartwell commercial precinct, Ashburton shopping centre, Chadstone shopping centre, Oakleigh district centre, Huntingdale industrial zone, Monash Medical Centre (Clayton), Monash University, Monash-Mulgrave business & industry zone and Rowville Shopping Centre. Several of these precincts and their surrounding residential areas are tired yellowfields, and light rail and coordinated bus networks would help underpin their revival and major growth as residential and non-residential activity precincts whilst reducing growth in car traffic.

The Monash railway answers three separate planning challenges, and a unifying goal:

1. to provide the long-advocated rail link from Huntingdale to Monash University and Rowville.
2. to increase regional rail patronage on the poorly patronised short spur rail line to Alamein that, in all three official reviews of metropolitan rail services since 1978, has been recommended for closure.
3. to radically improve public transport links to Chadstone Shopping Centre to reduce car traffic.

Indeed, the Monash railway benefits exceed the sum of benefits of the three separate areas of transport strategy. It supports the unifying goal of Melbourne 2030 by improving the prospects for increasing public transport patronage to these connected middle suburban centres, instead of car travel and settlement at the suburban fringe. Similarly, the proposed premium bus route will allow people to ride between (say) Brighton and Latrobe University via Thomas Street, Bambra Road and Burke Road, to visit activity centres like Monash Caulfield campus, major schools (Sacre Coeur, Korowa, etc), central Camberwell, Heidelberg central and its major hospitals. Tram route 72 would be retained as now.