



## Redefining Central Melbourne

The defeat in the Legislative Council in February of the State Government's bill to extend the urban growth boundary was a relief to those of us who would like to see an end to urban sprawl, although it isn't over yet. The bill is likely to be reintroduced in modified form later this year. For several years TCPA has advocated the development of high-density corridors along major roads that have trams in segregated rights of way, such as Dandenong Road, a model successfully pursued (using buses) by the Brazilian city, Curitiba.

As Melbourne's population grows inexorably from 4 to 7 million people, we need to think not only about how and where those extra 3 million people will be housed, but also about what constitutes the city centre. As more and more people are added to the suburbs, the numbers of people coming into the city centre for work, shopping, sports, entertainment and special events will also grow, adding to the demands on an overstretched public transport system and a congested road network.

Our city centre functions have mainly been confined to the two-kilometre stretch between Spring St and Spencer St, with minor intrusions into Carlton and East Melbourne, and an overspill of offices and apartments along St Kilda Road and into Docklands. Only five rail stations serve this area. Compare this with the centre of London, which stretches 10 kilometres from the City to Kensington and is served by about fifty underground stations and ten mainline stations. The underground network allows London's central city functions to be distributed over a much wider area than Melbourne's.

With the planned building of a new underground rail line from Footscray to Caulfield, servicing Parkville and St Kilda Road, is it time to revise our concept of central Melbourne? Could we envisage a central city area that stretches from Footscray to Burnley, Clifton Hill to St Kilda? This area contains 25 stations on the existing rail network, and there will be perhaps three or four new stations on the new line.

Such a widening of central Melbourne need not and should not replicate the modern very high-rise built-form of the present city centre. Instead, with a very large increase in the designated area, there would be the opportunity to develop foci of high rise around rail stations with the remainder of the land area

remaining at about its current use-density or slowly evolving into medium height, medium density as seen in many European cities and in Tokyo, with complex, varying and mutually-supporting classes of activities. This trend is already evident at South Yarra.

The new rail line is to be built in two stages; the first stage, dubbed Metro 1, is from Footscray to somewhere under St Kilda Road. We believe it should be continued to St Kilda Junction, the southern gateway to the central city area. This would restore a direct train service to St Kilda, and be a catalyst for urban renewal of the Junction. A number of design exercises have been carried out in recent years to turn the Junction into a pedestrian-friendly public space: e.g. <http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/news/3267/>. Extending Metro 1 to St Kilda Junction would help some of these design ideas to be realized.

Drawing a comparison with central Paris, Metro 1 is more like the RER (Regional Express Railway) than the Paris Metro: it will have relatively few, widely spaced stops, and will, when continued to Caulfield, extend far into the suburbs.

In terms of the function it performs, Melbourne's tram network is the equivalent of the Paris Metro. But to be as effective as the Metro it needs dedicated right of way (full-time tram lanes), signal priority and much higher capacity trams. To link all parts of the central area together, without funnelling all trams through the congested CBD, the tram network needs more direct routes around the periphery of the central area.

*Ray Walford & Peter Hill*

## The Case for High Speed Rail (HSR)

There are over 7 million people annually flying domestically between Sydney and Melbourne. Including flights to Canberra (from both Melbourne and Sydney combined) adds another 2 million passengers on the network<sup>1</sup>.

Sydney airport – the busiest Australian airport – handles over 22 million passengers per annum, followed by Melbourne just shy of 20 million<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics – Australian Airlines domestic Activities 2008 annual report, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Dito, p. 14.

Sydney is now contemplating the option of building a second airport to cater for the greater demand for air travel and the increased congestion at the existing infrastructure.

This would be a considerable investment in infrastructure and I would argue that, perhaps, the option of High Speed Rail (HSR) should be considered – or re-considered, as extensive studies have been done in the eighties stewarded by Dr Paul Wild, CSIRO Chairman at the time.

Some of the benefits of a modal shift from air travel to HSR would include a decongestion of the air corridor between Melbourne-Canberra-Sydney with only a marginally longer travel time. As an example, the current HSR line (“Train Grande Vitesse” or TGV) between Paris and Marseilles in France has a trip-duration of around 3 hours for approximately 700 kilometres. This would be comparable to the time and distance parameters for the Melbourne-Sydney trip. The travel time would be marginally longer than the total flight time when including the various waiting times at airport (check-in one hour prior to departure, luggage collection, etc), which is estimated at 2.5 hours at best.

Another advantage of rail commuting is the easier access to the departure/arrival infrastructure already located in the heart of the cities.

Furthermore, it can be argued that implementing HSR linking Melbourne and Sydney will decongest the road network (Hume Freeway) with passengers and potentially some “light” freight (such as the Mail service) shifting to rail.

With regards to the environmental impact, while it is not to be neglected, the long-term view has to prevail. HSR is electrically powered and can therefore use renewable energy. This is not the case for air travel, and recent figures quoted a potential annual emission reduction of half a million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year should HSR capture 50% of the existing market share between Melbourne and Sydney<sup>3</sup>

As an advocacy organization the TCPA supports comparable, sensible, sustainable and rational transport alternatives such as rail travel over air travel, which will result in a significantly lower ecological footprint for the same transport task.

*JFD*

### **Planning for Land and Time Use - Your Opinions Sought**

This article aims to elicit a response from its readers on which issues the TCPA and friends should focus their advocacy. Many of the words, phrases and

<sup>3</sup> David George, CEO CRC Rail Innovation Brisbane on ABC Radio National Science Show – 20 March 2010

concepts in our TCPA Charter (1997) <http://www.tcpa.org.au/> have now become part of main stream legislation and media coverage. In 2010 the TCPA will continue to advocate town and country planning to benefit the health and wellbeing of the community.

Your opinion is sought as to where the TCPA should prioritize applying the blowtorch of advocacy to melt away the congealed and encrusted thinking that on many planning occasions prevents sustainable community benefiting outcomes in our urban region.

Let us take a moment to reflect while choosing our advocacy role, and be mindful of the town planning movement’s recent history. Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) are often credited with being the founding fathers of the town planning movement. Are their thoughts still relevant today?

Owen was an enlightened mill owner of his time and was described as a social planning reformer. In a philanthropic sense he piloted urban land use to support investment in social capital that reduced inequality in the community.

He was a pamphleteer. Pamphleteering was a primary form of advocacy in his time. Of related interest is that Owen also campaigned in the eight-hour movement, coining the slogan, “Eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest” in 1817. The balanced allocation of time budgets by the work force was as important to Owen in the early 1800s as land use planning for safe, secure and healthy working space and living space. His historic influence of time-budget philosophy was even felt in Melbourne, and manifested itself in the world’s first Eight Hour Act being proclaimed in the then independent colony of Victoria in 1856.

In 1899 Ebenezer Howard founded the Garden City Association, now known as the Town and Country Planning Association. The TCPA is the first environmental charity in England: so much for two initial influences on the present TCPA.

What are the consequences and issues arising from the ever-accelerating increase in use of cyber space for urban planning advocates – the advocates who seek sensible and sustainable development outcomes for their communities?

We should see our world as more than only the geography of the physical world that we occupy. One world may focus on fairness of outcomes from land use ramifications. Another world may be that of a creative city. These additional worlds may be described as attitudes of the mind: worlds that are dynamic, not static. Charles Landry argues the case for a culture of creativity to be embedded in the places in which people live, explained in <http://www.urbanecology.org.au/library/cities/creative>

[cities/landrycreativecities.html](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/property/mark-of-success-is-all-in-the-mind/story-e6frg9gx-1225836715893).

Bernard Salt offers a different view in <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/property/mark-of-success-is-all-in-the-mind/story-e6frg9gx-1225836715893>.

There are people who believe the world may be described by the concept of time geography. For these people there is more to geography than only land use. Hagerstrand is credited with developing the time geography model of society in 1970. We should be asking what are the benefits from the possible interchange of cyber space (virtual space), mind space, urban space (physical space) and time-space?

According to some, there are two spaces of individual human activity. The spaces comprise physical activities and virtual activities, which take place in the same unique space-time context or available time budget: the daily 24-hour diurnal cycle. I believe that constraint modelling for sustainable town and country planning should at first focus on the use of the most consistent and valuable of the non-renewable resources - our available time-space.

We should always consider the health benefits to the individual and the community from the time-space setting of a physical activity. Land-use zoning and developments that maximize active transport time use opportunities, such as walking and cycling, will facilitate a safer, securer and healthier community.

In summary, I believe the TCPA should facilitate the paradigm shift to integrate time use and land use planning.

I would very much appreciate your views on what basis (if any) the modelling of time and land use planning should be a single integrated concept. Please email me on this subject at: [ok.kayak@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ok.kayak@rmit.edu.au) or phone me on 0419350299 and we can arrange to discuss the topic further over a coffee, Skype, a land-line or what ever is convenient.

*H Kayak*

### **TCPA to Join MTF**

Continuing our transport theme, TCPA is applying to join the Metropolitan Transport Forum as an associate member. This will entitle TCPA members to attend (usually free) events organized by MTF throughout the year. The following is a quotation from MTF website.

"The Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF) is an advocacy group comprising members from Melbourne metropolitan local government, associate members representing transport companies, and participants from the State Government and environment groups.

"The MTF endeavours to promote effective, efficient

and equitable transport in metropolitan Melbourne by providing a forum for debate, research and policy development, and by disseminating information to improve transport choices."

### **TCPA and Potential Alliances**

Our TCPA membership is open to all. There are no professional or other prerequisites

Some believe that we would be more effective when we participate in advocacy in the planning system by being in alliances with organizations having similar objectives to the TCPA. How the TCPA best reflects its members and friends' needs and aspirations, as well as influencing sensible and sustainable development outcomes, requires a policy position to be agreed to by the TCPA Executive. Discussions on how to be most effective are underway on several fronts and the Executive would appreciate input from members and friends.

The first steps in the process of forming alliances have been taken. The TCPA now hold joint Executive meetings with AIUS, Vic Division, and we have applied to become associate members of the Melbourne Transport Forum (MTF) <http://www.mtf.org.au/>.

Earlier in the year we discussed the possible basis of formalized co-operation between Save Our Suburbs (SOS) Vic and the TCPA. The SOS membership is also open to all, but its cohort and emphasis of activity is similar while being different to the TCPA's. It was agreed that the basis of joint approaches to planning issues and development projects is not to be investigated further at this time. However, Ian Wood, the current SOS President, circulates items of interest to some TCPA members. To check whether SOS Vic can assist you, visit their web site: <http://www.saveoursuburbs.org.au/>.

*H Kayak*