

Submission on the City of Hobart
Transport Strategy 2018-30
Consultation Paper 3



31 May 2017

Submission on the City of Hobart Transport Strategy 2018-30 Consultation Paper 3: Public Transport

This submission on Consultation Paper 3 adds to the Heart Foundation's earlier submission on Consultation Paper 2¹.

Our submission on Consultation Paper 2 welcomed the principles it canvassed on active living and active travel within a health and wellbeing perspective. The Heart Foundation contend that these principles have merit and should form the guiding principles in preparing the Transport Strategy.

Context

The Heart Foundation's position on public transport is quite simply expressed:

Public transport is fundamental to travel equity, and in turn, health and wellbeing.

Public transport along with walking and cycling is fundamental to health and wellbeing through facilitating access to where we live, work, shop, learn and play. Public transport also offers affordable and sustainable solutions to traffic congestion.²

Measures to increase the use of public transport

Consultation Paper 3 (Page 76) considers the potential measures to increase the use of public transport. The measures are listed in the context of reducing road congestion and related negative impacts of private motor vehicle dependence. This submission examines each of the potential measures from a travel equity for health and wellbeing perspective.

Potential public transport measures:

1. Provision of bus priority lanes.

Bus only lanes for all or part of the day are a potent means of giving bus travel priority.

The extension of bus only lanes on CBD streets eg inbound Macquarie Street for peak traffic periods would relieve buses of the queuing now evident for certain times of the day.

Where bus transport is the sole or principal means of public transport (as in the Hobart metropolitan area) then bus priority lanes will become an increasing necessity.

2. Providing bus priority measures on key routes within the Hobart city centre.

Extensions to the spread and frequency of transit corridors that favour public transport are supported.

¹ See

[Heart Foundation submission on the City of Hobart Transport Strategy 2018-30, Consultation Paper 2](#)

² Consultation Paper 3 page 98 provides a succinct position on 'Health and Mobility' see also: <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/Blueprint-for-an-active-Australia-second-edition.pdf> for the evidence on public transport and health and links to the primary research.

3. Making it easier to change buses.

Consultation Paper 3 identifies the need to consolidate intraregional and intrastate private bus services along with Metro services. Consultation Paper 3 also refers to the loss of sites to other uses that were once used as bus layover areas.

A priority of the Transport Strategy should be to identify site(s) for consolidating the interchange of passenger services and to layover buses when not in service. The observation that Macquarie Point provides possibly the last easily developable opportunity for the creation of a public passenger transport hub, with bus stabling and staging areas should be considered in the allocation of land uses for the redevelopment area. This is despite the aspirations for major high-end uses for the site. The efficient provision of public transport is too important to not have the required facilities in places strategic to service provision.

4. Improving the quality of supporting infrastructure such as bus waiting areas.

Consultation Paper 3 (page 20) refers to key measures for true transit corridors; these being: high frequency services; high quality passenger waiting facilities; shelter and bus information (real-time information) facilities.

The University of Tasmania investment in through-CBD services to the Sandy Bay campus and better bus shelters demonstrate some of the required measures for improving public transport.

Attractive supporting infrastructure is essential to improving the public transport experience. On most measures the bus fleets are modern and comfortable. In contrast, the waiting areas (particularly away from the CBD) are generally minimal and not supportive for increasing the attractiveness of public transport.

5. Providing more high frequency services and additional capacity on key routes.

The split between increased frequency on key routes but with a reduced service catchment needs full consideration of the public transport dependent traveller.

The data shows an increase in passengers on public transport with the beginning of frequent service transit corridors. Nevertheless a more frequent service over a smaller catchment can result in people most dependent on public transport close to their homes being most adversely affected. The public transport dependent passenger is the young, elderly and those with disabilities. A public transport service that fails the neediest is not consistent with health and wellbeing principles.

6. Investigating other public transport modes (i.e. ferries) to assist with peak hour passenger movement.

Consultation Paper 3 refers briefly to ferry and metro type rail services and the importance of the destination for encouraging passengers. The importance of destination has been amply demonstrated with the popularity of the Mona ferry service.

As noted in Consultation Paper 3³ public transport needs considerably higher population densities than is the current case around potential ferry terminals or along rail routes.

³ Population and housing density is raised in several places in the Paper, but particularly on page 64.

However, at the very least the Transport Strategy and the planning scheme should do something to identify the requirements in land and infrastructure for future ferry services and future light rail services. Although outside the Hobart City Council area, yet of city and regional importance is the proposed high level Bridgewater Bridge replacement. The Council should advocate for this major piece of infrastructure to have the capacity and suitability for rail at a future time. Similarly, in the context of future proofing, the future bridge air clearance above the river must retain the option for river travel.

7. Improving park-and-ride facilities.

Related to measures 5 and 6, above, unless there is a density of travellers in walking distance of transport corridors or ferry terminals, then park and ride facilities (eg as appears at the Algona Road, Channel Highway intersection in Kingborough) will increasingly be required. As noted under measure 6 (above) the Transport Strategy and the planning scheme should do something to identify the requirements in land area and infrastructure.

8. Having real-time data on bus arrivals and departures.

This measure is supported. Perhaps the major issue with public transport is wait times and not knowing whether the transport has been missed, is still coming or whether it is coming at all.

9. Making system data more easily available, such as bus routes on google maps.

This measure is supported. As noted under measure 8 above there is the issue with wait times. With the coming of almost universal smart phone use, dissemination of time tables and routes becomes an opportunity for improving traveller information.

10. Making it easier for people to use public transport as part of a multi-modal journey; for example, providing on-bus facilities for the storage of bicycles.

This measure is supported. As noted above the more through-CBD services (with the example of services to the University) and all measures to reduce wait times and complexity in changing mode, the more attractive public transport services will be.

Additional Measures

The bus stop and getting to the bus stop

The frequently poor, unsafe or non-existent footpaths to walk to a bus stop does much to discourage public transport use and walkability generally. Consultation Paper 3 refers to improved crossings at bus stops. Crossings are just one measure to improve walkability. Other issues such as traffic signs, access to inground and above ground services and similar paraphernalia, footpaths that are too narrow, too exposed to fast moving vehicles and with poor surface treatment, all add to the reasons that lead to travellers avoiding public transport. Bus stops that provide minimal weather protection (if any) and expose potential passengers to fast moving traffic, similarly deter potential passengers. Councils need to ensure that pedestrian access is not hindered by avoidable issues such as these.

Research

Whilst considerable research supports the health and mobility benefits of public transport (Consultation Paper 3 page 98), to improve services and relevance to passengers, Council should advocate for and support local research and community consultation on the active travel requirements of Hobart residents.

Conclusion

Please review this submission on Consultation Paper 3 as additional to, and in conjunction with our submission on Consultation Paper 2.

Although Consultation Paper 3, in part, examines public transport in the context of reducing road congestion and related negative impacts of private motor vehicle dependence, the Heart Foundation submissions on Consultation Papers 2 and 3 are directed at the fundamental position of travel equity for health and wellbeing.

Consultation Paper 3 has raised a range of measures to improve public transport. Appropriately those measures are not entirely related to public transport but provide the context in which public transport must operate.

Similarly, in formulating the Transport Strategy 2018-30, the strategy must not confine its reach to solely being a transport strategy, but should include the domains of the planning scheme, matters relevant to the assessment for permits, the provision of public spaces and other areas of Council activity. In addition, the Transport Strategy 2018-30 should detail the matters for Council to influence other Councils and the State Government for the travel related activities they are responsible for, and the service levels of public transport providers.

Recommendations

The Heart Foundation recommends that the Transport Strategy 2018-2030 incorporates strategies that:

1. Focus on improving the operational environment of bus services, including bus only lanes, accommodation of all providers in a centralised interchange, and appropriately located depots (layover areas).
2. Focus on improving the public transport passenger experience including comfortable waiting areas at bus stops with real time information.
3. Focus on improving walkability including suitable footpaths to reach bus stops.
4. Focus on the long-term improvement of public transport and encouraging other public transport modes including identifying and protecting potential sites for ferry wharfs, and identifying and protecting opportunities for light rail.
5. Focus on planning for public transport services or access to public transport on all subdivision applications that involve the construction of streets.
6. Focus on increasing residential densities particularly in areas with good public transport services or potential public transport services, including along prospective rail and ferry service areas.

And that the Transport Strategy 2018-2030 defines:

- The measures relevant to public transport for the planning scheme, the assessment for permits, the provision of public spaces and other areas of Council activity to address.
- The matters for Council to influence other Councils and the State Government for the travel related activities they are responsible for, and the service levels of public transport providers.
- The importance of local research and community consultation on the active travel requirements of Hobart residents.

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