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Achieving Transit Orientated Design

While the achievement and desire to achieve 'transit orientated design' is to be encouraged, this is a definition that does need to be explained to the wider community:

The definition of transit orientated design refers in part to the integration of public transport and commercial/residential/community precincts.

For example, it is not clear how the construction of EastLink will assist in achieving this objective.

As mentioned at the CRG meeting on Tuesday the 20th of September there needs to be a modal shift from car based travel to public transport based travel comprising of both bus and train journeys. The construction or expansion of car parking areas in either Ringwood or Heatherdale is not aesthetically pleasing, is unsafe and furthermore reduces the availability of land that could be utilised for other more useful purposes such as additional residential, commercial or community facilities. As such increased car parking must be avoided.

In this regard the expansion of Clocktower Park to provide integration with Ringwood Station must be facilitated to connect the history and significant of this park to the wider public consciousness. Furthermore current shop frontages at Ringwood Station should consist of a retail/café mix to provide retail integration between the two sides of Maroondah Highway and to transform the so-called 'Station Superblock' into a liveable space.

Improved Passenger Experience

The experience of a passenger journey on public transport comprises of many factors including:

- Service reliability;
- Service frequency;
- Travel times;
- Safety;
- Ease of transfer.

While the factors of service reliability, frequencies and travel times are outside of the scope of the current study there must be a realisation that more frequent and more reliable services are required along the Belgrave and Lilydale rail lines. Travel times can be influenced by signalling and track work and as such must be designed to ensure a maximum and practical train travel speeds.

Passenger safety is paramount and safety including both perceived and actual safety. In this regard the design of Ringwood Station must ensure adequate lighting and an open plan to minimise dark or unmonitored areas of the facility. Likewise the creation of liveable open space and a vibrant retail/café

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precinct within the station super-block would enhance safety through minimising 'dead space' and ensuring a constant flow of people, thus providing residential monitoring and the enhancement of safety.

Improved Modal Transfer Opportunities

The ease of modal transfer impacts the potential and hence likelihood of passengers transferring between multiple different services. This comprises of factors such as service frequencies and coordination to minimise unnecessary waiting time.

While outside the scope of this study it is imperative that service frequencies are improved to ensure service coordination. The fact is the more frequent a service is the more likely it is able to coordinate with other frequent services.

Additionally it is imperative that the role of the current bus interchange is not usurped by the possible creation of a second bus/bus interchange at a second location. The creation of a second interchange will erode the possibility of bus/train interchange and will hamper the goal of improving modal coordination.

Current modal coordination consists of the following:

- Bus \leftrightarrow Train
- Bus \leftrightarrow Bus
- Walking/cycling \leftrightarrow Bus
- Walking/cycling \leftrightarrow Train
- Car \leftrightarrow Bus
- Car \leftrightarrow Train

Plans to construct a second bus only interchange will erode the importance of Ringwood Station as a centrepiece to the Transit City and will erode the potential to improve modal coordination.

Provide Integration with Urban Fabric

Integrating the Ringwood Station Precinct with the urban fabric requires the integration of the retail precinct and green open space of Clocktower Park.

To achieve this outcome the expansion of Clocktower Park needs to provide integration with the rail precinct and the retail precinct needs to 'bridge the gap' of Maroondah Highway. The achievement of this will depend on creating a café or entertainment precinct on the southern side of Maroondah Highway and allowing a greater length of time for pedestrians to cross Maroondah Highway.

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Furthermore while outside the scope of this study, bus and rail services need to be improved to ensure that the Maroondah community sees public transport as a viable alternative to car travel. This likewise provides the integration of the community with public transport hence strengthening the urban fabric around the centre of Ringwood.

Aid in development plans for Ringwood Centre

The redevelopment of the Ringwood Station Precinct will assist in spurring further development within Ringwood. It is imperative however that this development is consistent with the vision shared by the community.

It is unwise to correlate community satisfaction with the Ringwood Transit City on the number of objections received as this alone could simply demonstrate a lack of understanding of the planning process or ineffective elected local representation. It is imperative that the community becomes an active part of this process, through the facilitation of workshops and the enabling of community input.

The community must share and enrich the vision of the Ringwood Transit City.

Address urban amenity and wider urban design objectives in the most effective manner

Urban amenity will be strengthened through the creation of a vibrant retail and entertainment precinct south of Maroondah Highway in close proximity to the rail station.

Urban amenity will be further enhanced by providing traffic priority for buses and providing pedestrian crossings that provide ample time for pedestrians. Unless the pedestrian crossings connecting the Station to its surrounds are improved the Maroondah Highway will remain an obstacle towards improving urban amenity.

The narrowing of Maroondah Highway to two lanes with a bus or HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lane must be implemented to provide faster bus travel times and a pedestrian friendly environment. Station Street to the south of Ringwood Station should not be widened (unless bus movements are required) as this will further isolate Ringwood Station from its surrounds and hamper pedestrian access.

Support Council / VicUrban / stakeholder plans for wider redevelopment of Ringwood

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A whole of government approach must be implemented to ensure the advancement towards mutual objectives. This includes the need for the Department of Infrastructure to secure funding for the redevelopment of Ringwood Station from the Department of Treasury and Finance.

The community must be seen as more than just another stakeholder. It is imperative that the community is included as part of the process towards the redevelopment of Ringwood. Mechanisms for handling community feedback must be developed including the facilitation of community workshops and voting on appropriate designs.

Improve access and activity to key nodes in Ringwood

The improvement of access to key nodes within Ringwood will be provided through increased integration of the retail/public transport/green open space areas of Ringwood.

This includes the need for improved pedestrian crossings to ensure adequate time to cross roads (in particular Maroondah Highway and Station Street) and increased funding to allow for more frequent and longer running bus services to ensure that public transport becomes a mode of choice for residents.

A pedestrian friendly environment reinforced through vibrant open space areas will maximise the ability to walk throughout Ringwood and provide flow-on effects for retail street trade. This has been evidenced in Box Hill where the redevelopment of the Market Street Mall has provided pedestrian volumes of 8000 – 1000 people per day. The amenity of this area has been maximised through the provisioning of cafes and outside dining.

Provide a safer interchange environment (incl. DDA)

The safety of the interchange is reliant of lighting, staff presence, security monitoring and the elimination of dark areas to provide a perceptually safe environment.

The Ringwood Interchange and surrounding areas must be DDA compliant but also adhere to standards greater than the minimum. There is a need to future-proof infrastructure and as such the interchange must be able to meet the needs of all residents, including residents with mobility aids or health difficulties. Current DDA standards are barely adequate for the growing number of motorised scooters and the aging population.

Improve bus / rail operational efficiency

Bus operational efficiency will be improved through the creation of more than one entrance and exit point at the bus interchange. This will allow buses to enter and exit the interchange from more than

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one direction and hence allow for the streamlining of bus routes, such as removing the need for unnecessary loops through Station Street.

It is imperative that only one bus interchange is provided for Ringwood to ensure that modal connectivity between bus/bus and bus/train (as well as walking and cycling) are maximized and as such ensure operational efficiencies across multiple modes. The creation of a second interchange will diminish such efficiencies and will increase the 'penalty cost' of transferring between modes.

Bus operational efficiency will be maximised through providing traffic light priority particularly between Maroondah Highway and Ringwood Station which will result in higher asset utilisation. Likewise bus or HOV lanes along major roads such as Maroondah Highway and Canterbury Road will ensure priority for buses providing the benefit of faster journey times and ensuring higher asset utilisation. Longer operating hours for buses will allow for a greater usage of bus assets strengthening asset utilisation.

The construction of the third track between Box Hill and Ringwood as has been promised since 1999 will allow for additional express services and cater for increased passenger numbers.