
Request to be heard?: Yes

Precinct: Lorimer

Full Name: Bryce Paterson

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1:

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Submission uploaded as a separate document.

Submission to Fishermans Bend Planning Review Panel

15 December 2017

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Introduction

I would like to thank the Fishermans Bend Taskforce (the "**Taskforce**") for the invitation to submit a written suggestion to the Fishermans Bend Planning Review Panel (the "**Panel**") in relation to the Draft Fishermans Bend Framework ("**Draft Framework**") and associated draft Planning Scheme Amendment GC81 ("**Draft Amendment**").

I am resident of the precinct known as Yarra's Edge. As someone that lives, travels, socialises and utilises community infrastructure within all of the proposed precincts of Fishermans Bend I believe I am able to offer an educated opinion on the impact of the transportation proposals suggested under the Draft Framework and catered for in the Draft Amendment.

In particular I am strongly in favour of the creation of a direct public transport, cycling and pedestrian link across the Yarra River from Collins Street in Docklands to Lorimer Street in the Yarra's Edge precinct ("**Tram Extension**"). This submission will detail the rationale for my support of such a proposal and outline why it should be prioritised by the Taskforce and the Victorian Government.

Support for Tram Link across the Yarra River

In advancing the objective of delivering public transport services for Fishermans Bend that connect to the existing Melbourne network the Draft Framework "seeks to extend the tram network to Fishermans Bend, including two new dedicated tram routes connecting north and south of the freeway to Docklands, Southern Cross Station and Hoddle Grid¹. The extension of the Collins Street tram across the Yarra River is further analysed and discussed by the Fishermans Bend – Integrated Transport Plan produced by Transport Victoria ("**Transport Plan**"). Taken together, these documents detail the proposal for the Tram Extension. Such detailed analysis already offers considerable objective support for this project.

Below I outline my constitutions to this analysis and highlight my support of the Tram Extension.

Strong Demand for Pubic Transport

There is considerable existing demand for a public transport link to the CBD within the Lorimer/Yarra Edge precinct. In 2016 the population of Yarra Edge was estimated to be 2,102, a 37% increase on the precinct's 2011 population.² The area continues to see strong population growth with a number of apartment towers and townhouses either under construction or in development. This population growth has led to a dramatic increase in demand for public transport connections to the CBD and Southern Cross Station. The morning and evening peaks are typified by hundreds of residents moving between Yarra's Edge and the closest tram stop on the corner of Collins Street and Harbour Esplanade. This crush has led to congestion on Webb Bridge and overcrowding on tram platforms as residents compete with commuters and cyclists for a limited amount of space.

¹ Strategy 1.1.1, page 30

² <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/Census?OpenDocument&ref=topBar>

This strain on infrastructure will further deteriorate as the Draft Framework projects that the Lorimer Precinct will house 3,440 people in 2025 and 12,000 in 2050.³ Due to the strong employment opportunities in the CBD and the professional demographic which characterises the apartment developments in Yarra Edge (and soon to be developed Lorimer) the stress on the current public transport infrastructure will be overwhelming. Webb Bridge itself is likely to become unworkable due to overcrowding in the near term and at a standstill if the populations projected for Lorimer eventuate.

The Tram Extension proposal will address this current and projected demand. The proposal would provide direct public transport access to thousands of current residents and reduce overcrowding on Webb Bridge. In particular the proposed alignment at the centre of the precinct will assist in dispersing commuters and facilitate multi-modal transport from the Yarra's Edge/Lorimer precinct to the CBD.

Uniting Communities

The Lorimer/Yarra Edge precinct is currently isolated and disconnected from the rest of Docklands and the CBD. Presently, the Yarra River forms an impenetrable barrier for residents to access basic services and interact as a community. Essential community infrastructure such as a supermarket, post office, library and community hub are all located in Victoria Harbour on the northern bank of the Yarra River. While this infrastructure is intended to service the entire docklands community the distance and lack of direct link to the Lorimer/Yarra Edge precinct isolates and disenfranchises its residents. The newest development in Yarra's Edge, the Forge apartment building, is a 2 kilometre walk from the closest supermarket and 2.2km from the community hub and library in Victoria Harbour. These distances are unworkable for many in this community including those with disabilities, young families and older residents.

While the Draft Framework proposes community infrastructure for the Lorimer precinct, these developments are over ten years away and do not address the community disconnect that currently exists with the Yarra Edge/Lorimer precinct. Furthermore, the initial developments within Lorimer will suffer the same isolation and lack of services currently experienced by Yarra Edge residents.

The Tram Extension will ameliorate this disconnect and become a catalyst for greater community interaction. The proposed alignment of the Tram Extension, travelling from the western edge of Point Park to the western side of the ANZ building on Collins Street, facilitates use by the greatest number of residents in the area. Lying between Yarra's Edge, the new development of Wharfs Edge and the proposed development zone of the Lorimer Precinct the Tram Extension will be a vital community corridor for all those who (and will live) in this precinct. Additionally, the proposed alignment will also maximise active commuting (walking/cycling) as well as encouraging tourists and workers to spend time in all of the Dockland precincts – benefitting hospitality and retail establishments in Yarra's Edge and Lorimer.

Benefits far outweigh the costs

The considerable benefits discussed above far outweigh the spurious arguments against the Tram Extension. Below I address some of the illusory arguments that have been offered against the Tram Extension.

1. Boat access

It has been suggested that construction of a bridge across the Yarra will prevent some boatowners from sailing upstream to Webb Bridge. It is accepted that any new bridge will prevent some boat owners from accessing the Yarra Edge marina. However, the severity of this impact is grossly overstated. The recommendation from Transport Victoria under the Transport Plan is for a bridge with 6 meter clearance.⁴ This height clearance will allow the vast majority of users of the Yarra Edge marina to pass beneath the Tram Extension bridge and access the marina. In fact, the Transport Plan notes that in its survey of boats in the Yarra Edge marina that the 6m clearance height would only impact 9 boats.⁵ On the date of this submission I note that this number was 8 boats. As this impact is confined to such a small number of people it must be weighed against the substantial positives (some of which are highlighted above) that are associated with the Tram Extension.

³ Draft Framework page 18.

⁴ Transport Plan page 30.

⁵ Transport Plan page. 30.

2. Property values

One of the more creative arguments offered against the construction of the Tram Extension has been an adverse impact on property prices in the area. Such a proposition is contrary to preponderance of peer-reviewed research on the impact of light rail on property prices. One of the most comprehensive studies undertaken by consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton in the United States of 12 cities with new rail investments found that property value premiums increased between “3% and 40%” with access to a rail stop/station.⁶ Closer to home the newest Australian light rail developments in Canberra⁷ and Sydney⁸ has resulted in dramatic increases in property prices around new stops. The Tram Extension is highly likely to bring such increased in value to property owners on the southern bank of the Yarra. Any suggestion that downward pressure would be placed on properties in proximity to the Tram Extension is not grounded in evidence.

Conclusion

As a resident of an area that will experience considerable challenges and benefits from the development of Fishermans Bend I believe I am well placed to comment on the impact of Draft Framework and proposals contained therein. The Tram Extension proposal represents a piece of desperately needed infrastructure in an area that is projected to quadruple in population over the next 30 years.

This investment in the Tram Extension needs to be prioritised by the Victoria Government. Substantial demand and enthusiasm exists for the Tram Extension and will only compound as the Draft Framework is turned into reality.

Contact

If you wish to make further enquiries regarding my submission please contact me at Bryce.paterson@hotmail.com

⁶ P. 8 <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2492/9cf9d1e8b5c8d8dc363535872596dd2ecf7e.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.domain.com.au/news/canberras-light-rail-could-drive-up-property-values-along-tram-line-20160617-gowyke/>

⁸ <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/light-rail-to-push-up-house-prices-20100312-q469.html>