



PO Box 89, Elwood, VIC 3184
incorporation number: A0034315X ABN: 18 683 397 905
Contact: mtf@mtf.org.au MTF website: www.mtf.org.au

Mr Andrew Lund,
Australia Pacific Airport (Melbourne)
Melbourne Airport
Tullamarine

May 2022

Dear Sir,

Submission to Melbourne Airport concerning the 2022 Master Plan

The Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF) is a transport interest group for Melbourne metropolitan local governments. The MTF has been established for 25 years and has a membership of 26 (of 31) metropolitan councils and meets regularly to discuss transport topics of interest and relevance to local governments and their communities. The MTF also acts to liaise between local and state governments, and advocates on behalf of member councils on key transport issues of metropolitan significance. The MTF works closely with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

The MTF informs, researches and debates transport issues with metropolitan local governments throughout the year. Our strategic plan identifies three main areas of attention within the Victorian transport planning agenda:

- Active – to achieve more funding for cycling infrastructure and projects that improve rider safety;
- Buses – to increase patronage on buses; and
- Choice – to provide alternatives to private cars for the wider Melbourne community to move around Melbourne for recreation, employment and education.

The MTF greatly appreciated the presentation made by your team to members at our April meeting and we thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Please refer below for the MTF submission, noting that this is made on behalf of our members.

Following are suggested amendments to the objectives of the master plan, suggested deletions are shown as red strike-through; suggested additions are shown in green.

1. Public Transport Connectivity:

The master plan web site says: “In the next five years, Melbourne Airport will work with the Department of Transport to investigate opportunities to improve local public transport connectivity, either in terms of improved service provision of existing routes or expanded network coverage”

The MTF has long held the position that Melbourne needs more public transport; especially to major employment and activity centres such as Melbourne Airport.

The MTF considers improved bus services to be a vital part of transport considerations, and a real opportunity to get much better value from current infrastructure. Broadly speaking, the current network is limited by low frequency and reliability, short service day, circuitous routes and poor rollout in response to urban development. Service to the airport suffers from similar issues. While the programming of public transport services may not be within the scope of the MAC, it is essential that provisions be made for responsive and frequent bus connections, prioritising mass transport options over less dense transport solutions. The master plan should detail public bus infrastructure improvements as an attractive element of the transport option not a poorly funded after thought to private transport solutions. This infrastructure may also include electric charging provision for buses.

The stated ambition is insufficient to meet the projected expansion of passenger demand; investigation of opportunities must be followed by funding and delivery of the recommendations of such investigations. Failing to put a delivery objective in the plan means that no additional services will be provided within the next five years.

The 2018 master plan states “Melbourne Airport encourages a shift towards mass transit”. This objective should be restated in the 2022 update, and be improved with clear targets for a proposed proportion of mass transit trips.

The MTF considers that multiple solutions to transport connectivity must be investigated, and that transport solutions must not be restricted to a single mode.

As been evidenced over recent years, as with the rest of the Australian economy, the airport is a 24/7 business and has grown considerably, resulting in increased spread of workforce and passenger hours. Any transport system schedule must mirror the demands of the airports and must provide attractive and frequent services. A workforce of 26,000 must have viable transport options to reach their place of employment.

The Covid19 pandemic has resulted in many people moving from Melbourne to regional centres, which is likely to result in an increased demand for regional public bus transport infrastructure. Bus facilities should be flexible, and attractively located to encourage their use.

While much of the larger transport focus has been on the value of a rail service to the airport from the CBD; there is also a need to ensure that public transport services can approach this major employment hub directly, not relying on a radial system that does not meet the commuter requirements of all employees, effectively encouraging them to use inefficient private vehicles.

The plan must allow for PTV services to achieve the same level of customer comfort and access as the privately run bus services.

The MTF proposes the following amendment to the Master Plan:

In the next five years, Melbourne Airport will work with the Department of Transport to investigate, fund, and deliver opportunities to improve local public transport connectivity including more direct services to the airport, ~~either in terms of~~ with improved service provision ~~of~~ on existing routes ~~or~~ and expanded network coverage, and provision of the necessary infrastructure at the airport to support a high quality and sustainable bus service.

2. **Bicycle Access:**

The master plan web site says: “Melbourne Airport is interested in enabling safe bicycle access to the terminals and employment areas. This could be achieved by ensuring that bicycle riding infrastructure is provided on key routes within 10km of the airport”.

While current cycling levels to and from the airport are understood to be modest, it is considered that this reflects the extremely poor quality of the current infrastructure to service both workforce and customer needs.

The costs of delivery of excellent facilities, if incorporated from the initiation of any road access project is marginal, but the cost to retrofit excellent bicycle facilities once the infrastructure has been commissioned is much greater. Therefore this mode of transport must be included in all future access considerations.

Cyclist facilities must be provided for the airport workforce as well as passengers/clients/patrons. These should include end of trip, secure bicycle storage facilities and electric charging. Bikes should be given premium locations in parking facilities.

The MTF proposes the following amendment to the Master Plan:

Melbourne Airport ~~is interested in enabling~~ deliver safe bicycle access to the terminals and employment areas. ~~This could be achieved~~ by ensuring that high standard bicycle riding infrastructure is provided on key routes within 10km of the airport, and that Melbourne Airport provides high quality end of trip facilities, secure bicycle storage and electric charging.

3. **Road Projects:**

The master plan web site says: “Melbourne Airport is working to alleviate traffic congestion within the airport estate by investing in several road projects. Stage 1 and 2 Elevated Roads (both subject to MDPs and approved by the Commonwealth Minister) and the widening of Airport Drive to six lanes between Sharps Rd and Mercer Drive”.

As stated above, the MTF has long held the position that Melbourne needs more public transport. While pressures on limited road space are significant and rising congestion a drain on the economy, the MTF cautions against making any investment in major road space, particularly when largely catering to low occupancy vehicles, as the additional road space capacity will encourage car dependent land uses and travel patterns, and the congestion will build again.

Furthermore, private car based transport infrastructure is inelastic; once saturation is reached on roads, there is little room to move. By contrast public transport systems add greater and more enduring capacity than road building with significantly less infrastructure investment. Hence public transport better suits a major city under such growth pressures as Melbourne, and a major employment precinct such as the airport.

The MTF proposes the following amendment to the Master Plan:

Melbourne Airport is working to alleviate traffic congestion within the airport estate by investing in ~~several road projects~~ a number of modes of transport, including rail bus and active transport. Stage 1 and 2 Elevated Roads (both subject to MDPs and approved by the Commonwealth Minister) and the widening of Airport Drive to six lanes between Sharps Rd and Mercer Drive will be amended to prioritise non car access to the terminals.

4. New Access

The master plan web site says: “During construction of Melbourne’s third runway two access points will be established – from the north off Sunbury Rd and from the south via Operations Rd or McNabs Rd”.

The MTF notes that freight activity has increased significantly over time, reflecting the globalisation of supply lines and the increasing rapid transport export economy; and recognises the importance that the airport plays in Australia’s exports. Recent challenges which have been demonstrated in global supply lines during the pandemic, and in response to changing global political climate again illustrate that relying on a single mechanism or pathway is short-sighted. Any new access points, and the connecting infrastructure must be conceived to work well for multiple transport modes, and be adaptable.

The MTF proposes the following amendment to the Master Plan:

During construction of Melbourne’s third runway two access points will be established – from the north off Sunbury Rd and from the south via Operations Rd or McNabs Rd. **These access points will provide safe access for cyclists.**

5. Melbourne Airport Rail

The master plan web site says: “Connecting the airport to the Melbourne CBD via Sunshine. This project is subject to a separate Major Development Plan”.

The 2018 master plan states “Melbourne Airport strongly supports the proposed Airport Rail Link to provide reliable travel times to existing public transport users, encourage a mode shift and facilitate future growth”

The masterplan does not provide any clarity of the MAC’s view on this infrastructure project.

The MTF proposes the following amendment to the Master Plan:

Connecting the airport to the Melbourne CBD via Sunshine. This project is subject to a separate Major Development Plan **and will be actively supported and pursued to allow delivery by 2030.**

MTF representatives would be most pleased to discuss further, please contact myself, Chair Cr Jonathon Marsden at jmarsden@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au or the MTF Executive Officer, Jane Waldock, mtf@mtf.org.au or 0428 369 048

Yours sincerely,

Cr Jonathon Marsden, Chair, Metropolitan Transport Forum
PO Box 89, Elwood, VIC 3184
mtf@mtf.org.au

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