

Can Plan Melbourne Create Better Suburbs?

Save Our Suburbs AGM

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What is Liveability?

Melbourne is regularly ranked the world's most liveable city' according to The Economist – why?

What is Liveability? (Herald Sun)

The Economist: A good place for international business

- Safety/Security: personal safety from violence and crime, little threat of terrorism, government is stable
- Healthcare: access to good healthcare, low incidence of infectious diseases
- Culture and environment: in central city, lots of parkland, good arts and culture scene', heritage conservation
- Education: access to good schools and universities
- Infrastructure: in central city, good public transport and roads, healthy water and sewer system

But... Melbourne has a high ecological 'footprint' (The Age, Peter Newton, 2010)

Outside central city, public transport and job/education access is very poor... problems with environmental sustainability and social equity

'Liveability', the East West Link, and Plan Melbourne

- Jennifer Kunich, Property Council: "Melbourne's communities and industries should stand behind the East West Link, our gateway to state-wide productivity, competitiveness and greater liveability." (Melbourne Review Oct. 2013)
- Roadtraffic-technology.com: "The East West Link freeway will improve public transport services and liveability."
- RACV media release: "East West Link Critical for Victoria's Economy and Liveability"

What is liveability?

Australian Major Cities Unit (2010): 'Liveable cities are socially inclusive, affordable, accessible, healthy, safe and resilient to the impacts of climate change. They have attractive built and natural environments. Liveable cities provide choice and opportunity for people to live their lives, and raise their families, to their fullest potential.'

Socially Inclusive?

(Grattan Institute – youth 15-24 out of work and school, 2013)

Affordable? (Median Household income: \$64,000/yr)

Map 9: Housing Affordability for families across Melbourne (DPCD)

Resilient to Climate Change?

Access to jobs within a 60 minute public transport trip (Grattan Institute, 2013, based on SGS data)

Vulnerability to increases in mortgage and petrol (Dodson and Sipe, 2008)

Healthy? Safe? (

WHO 2001, Centre for Disease Control, 2001)

Disability adjusted life years – global and Australia

3 big threats to health

- Heart disease (3rd internationally, 1st Australia)
- Depression (2nd internationally, 4th? Australia)
- Road Traffic Accidents (4th internationally, 10th Australia)

Planning for Health Planning for Health

- To reduce heart disease, plan for easy access to healthy food (community gardens, local fruit and veg shops) and active travel (walking, cycling, public transport)
- To reduce depression, plan for better social services, employment and places for casual encounter (cafes, parks, local shops)
- To reduce road traffic accidents, slow down speeds and reduce car traffic!

State Government can promote liveability State Government can promote liveability

- Integrated Planning: more affordable housing near jobs and services, more jobs and services where there is housing
- Prioritize active transport (walking, cycling, public transport) over freeways – especially in outer suburbs – to access jobs and services
- Make the link between jobs and services

How Does Plan Melbourne stack up? How Does Plan Melbourne stack up?

- Integrated planning: talks about it (20 minute neighbourhood, Metropolitan Planning Authority) but no concrete commitments
- Active Transport: talks about it, but highway investment the only clear transport commitment
- Linking jobs and services: but does little to address the social infrastructure gap

20 Minute Neighbourhoods in Portland, US

- Portland has neighbourhood level infrastructure plans to promote 'complete neighbourhoods':
- a variety of housing options, grocery stores and other commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, affordable achievable transportation options, and civic amenities. An important element of a complete neighbourhood is that it is built at a walkable and bikeable human scale and meets the needs of all ages and abilities.' (Portland Plan 2012)
- From 45% of residents now to 80% in 2035

20 Minute neighbourhood concept in Melbourne (Melbourne Review)

- Part of Plan Melbourne, but no linked infrastructure investment and no specific goals like Portland

Metropolitan Planning Authority

- Unlike Municipal Association of Victoria proposal, no local government involvement and not Melbourne-based
- Very vague – planning for regional cities and rural areas as well as Melbourne – isn't that the planning department's job?
- No specifics on how social infrastructure investment will be linked to housing increases

Social infrastructure

- "community facilities, services and networks which help individuals, families, group and communities meet their

social needs, maximize their potential for development, and enhance community wellbeing” (SEQ Regional Plan 2007)

- Places to learn: childcare centres, kindergartens, schools, higher education, libraries, adult literacy centres, museums
- Places to stay healthy: hospitals and health clinics, parks and open spaces, sports and recreation centres
- Places that bring people together: community gardens, parent-child drop-ins, theatres, seniors’ centres, laundromats, ‘men’s sheds’, even corner stores
- Places to live/ social safety net: emergency shelters, aged care, social housing

Why is Social Infrastructure Important?

- Social Inclusion: equal access to education, social/ health services, local jobs
- Help individuals and families in stress: prevent unemployment, social isolation, depression, violence
- Provide jobs: 2001-2011: 51% growth in community sector jobs in Australia (double other job growth, including mining and trucking) – . million jobs (ABS Sept. 2011)

Social Infrastructure Gap in Melbourne

- Outer Suburb growth areas/ greenfields: pace of population growth rapidly stripping capacity to provide public transport, social infrastructure and jobs – even developer contributions (\$ and infrastructure) will leave maintenance gap in long term... built for young families
- Middle suburbs/ greyfields: declining and inadequate services, ‘under the radar’ with planning focus on greenfields... older and poor people live there
- Inner suburbs/ brownfields: denial that new apartments will require more infrastructure, especially public transport, schools, senior centres + affordable housing near services..Built for young singles and foreign investors
- We are building age/lifecycle segregated, income segregated communities – a recipe for social, economic and environmental dysfunction

Problem: growing gap between rhetoric and reality of planning

- National, state and local governments talk about the importance of liveability to economic prosperity, health and environmental sustainability
- But Melbourne is now in its 5th 30-40 year strategic planning exercise in 5 decades (1971, 1984, 1995, 2002, 2013?)
- Major infrastructure funding is not following any vision or plan

East West Link impact on ‘A Global City of Choice and Opportunity’

- The first and most concrete initiative (1.1) of Plan Melbourne is an “Integrated Economic Triangle” that includes:
 - East West Link
 - North East Link (‘completing’ ring road)
 - New Outer Ring Road, joining Geelong and Hume
- Total cost? Priorities? It would cost \$200 million to achieve basic bus service across Metropolitan Melbourne (VAGO, 2013) as opposed to \$12 billion for EWL
- Impact on health (heart disease, depression, road traffic accidents), liveability, ‘a global city of health and opportunity?’

What Next?

- To promote liveability, Plan Melbourne needs to prioritize:

1. Active transport investment over a new freeway plan
2. Integrated planning that delivers accessible education and health services to every suburb as housing is built
3. A governance structure that is transparent, evidence-based and includes the public voice

Make sure your local council, MPs, business groups, service organizations ALL speak out against the East West Link and for a liveable Melbourne and a better Plan Melbourne