

8 November 2005

PROPOSED TOURIST SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

Division Assets & Services

Presenter Geoff Robinson, Group Manager Engineering Services

Purpose

1. To seek Committee endorsement to trial a free bus shuttle service connecting many of Melbourne's major tourist attractions targeted by the tourist market.

Recommendation

2. That the Planning and Environment Committee approve the introduction of a Council funded free shuttle bus service connecting Carlton to Southbank via the CBD on a trial basis and provided funding is made available through the normal budget processes.

Key Issues

Proposed Shuttle Bus Service

3. The Council has been asked to consider a proposal to establish a free shuttle bus service. This service would be designed to encourage Melburnians, national and international tourists to our City to visit iconic attractions located in and near the CBD. In the late 1990's the City of Melbourne advocated the establishment of a north-south tram loop to complement the free City Circle tram service. Also Council's Carlton 2010 local area plan, approved in 2000, recommends that the feasibility of shuttle bus services in Carlton be examined. The proposed service is a variation on these earlier proposals.
4. To give effect to this proposal, a shuttle bus service has been investigated and a preferred route identified. The route is highlighted on the map at Attachment 1. The route connects Carlton to Southbank via the CBD and links many of the main tourist attractions the City has on offer. The proposed stops are listed at Attachment 2.
5. To be effective, the service should augment and not duplicate existing public transport services. There are numerous north-south tram and bus public transport services connecting Carlton and the CBD, and connecting Southbank to the CBD. Despite the number of services, there are few services that provide a direct link between important tourist attractions in and around the CBD.
6. Given the prevalence of services between the CBD and Carlton, and between the CBD and Southbank it was not possible to select roads that are currently not serviced by some form of public transport, be it tram or bus. The proposal avoids those roads that are well serviced by public transport. It should be noted that with the exception of King Street, all north-south CBD streets provide public transport services along at least part of their length.

7. The preferred route passes a number of tourist attractions, such as the Immigration Museum, National Gallery, Arts Centre, Queen Victoria Gardens, Melbourne Museum, Royal Exhibition Building and Lygon Street. Alternative routes would experience increased traffic congestion and delays, particularly if St Kilda Road/Swanston Street were included.
8. To be an attractive and reliable alternative service for passengers, the frequency of the service should be in the order of 15 minutes. The estimated travel time of the route is approximately 30-35 minutes. Allowing for 15 stops of 1 minute duration, a round passenger trip would take in the order of 45 minutes. This necessitates the use of 3 buses if a 15 minute schedule is to be met. Given that the buses would initially have a carrying capacity of 40 passengers, the shuttle bus service would provide a capacity of 160 passengers/hour (4 buses/ hour X 40 passengers/bus). Details of each of the proposed stops are provided at Attachment 2.
9. The commencement and final bus service of a day was influenced by the understanding that this service is not to compete with commuter demand. Essentially, this service is to meet occasional travel demands of people seeking to travel between Carlton and Southbank to visit places of significance. The service will need to avoid peak hour travel. The outcome of these considerations is that the proposed service be trailed between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm daily. Estimates of passenger usage has not been undertaken, but each of the stops is located at or near popular city attractions and a number of stops provide excellent interchange points with public transport and in particular the free City Circle tram service.
10. The preferred bus route intersects with the free City Circle tram service at four locations, namely William /La Trobe Streets, William/Flinders Streets, Exhibition/Flinders Streets and Exhibition/La Trobe Streets intersections. The north-south orientation of the proposed free bus shuttle complements the east-west CBD-Docklands orientation of the free City Circle tram service.
11. Only an accredited bus company can provide the Council funded free shuttle bus service. The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) has advised that there would be no impediment to one of their accredited operators providing the service, conditional upon the operator being able to maintain their existing commitments.
12. The recommendation is that this proposal be a twelve month trial, where the monitoring period would initially be open ended with a review being undertaken after an initial start up period of 3 to 6 months. A further report would be put to Committee approximately 12 months after the service commenced to ratify the service or make any necessary adjustments that may not have been implemented through the trial period.
13. A viable alternative to the free shuttle bus is an extension of the City Circle tram service. This could be achieved by a physical extension of the tram network to accommodate the network of tourist interests, or a well advertised ticketing based system where subsidised Metlink travel tickets are used to 'extend' the free network. Yarra Trams are currently exploring this option and expect to be able to discuss realistic changes to the city circle route in the near future.
14. The estimated cost of a 7 day a week, 15 minute, 40 seat bus service between 10.00am and 4.00pm is approximately \$600,000 per annum. Loss of revenue from parking meters removed to provide 15 bus stops along the route is estimated at \$150,000 per annum. The estimated cost of establishing the service's stops and painting the buses is \$30,000. The total cost of running the bus service is therefore estimated to be \$750,000 per year with an initial set up cost of approximately \$30,000. No estimate has been made for promoting or marketing the service.

15. The funding for this project would be subjected to Council's normal budget process, notwithstanding the opportunity of Council using some of the revenue promised by the State Government, a consequence of the State Government's announcement to establish a car parking levy within the City.

Time Frame

16. Following Committee's consideration of this report and if resolved to proceed, the Administration will commence preparing documentation to call for tenders from accredited public transport companies to provide this service.

Relation to Council Policy

17. Council's actions to date are consistent with

17.1. Section 47 of the *Transport Program 2003-2006* by:

"...continuing to provide the best possible access to and from the Central City and other key locations", and

17.2. Action 4.5.11 of *Carlton A Vision to 2010* to:

"Investigate the viability of a local shuttle bus service for Carlton."

Consultation

18. VicRoads, Department of Infrastructure and Transurban have been consulted. Discussions have also involved Yarra Trams and Metlink. Yarra Trams have indicated that they prefer a revised tram service, rather than a free bus service. Yarra Trams are investigating an alternative tram shuttle service using an extension of the existing City Circle Tram network or via a subsidised ticketing system.
19. Currently, Council has received 19 submissions on the free shuttle bus service as part of the consultation process being undertaken through the Melbourne Transport Committee submission process. 7 of the 19 submissions support the proposal.
20. The strongest support coming from Tourism Victoria, which highlighted the benefits of interstate and overseas tourism on Melbourne's economy.
21. Most of the submissions received considered that the proposal was not targeted and did not service an identified public transport shortfall. The Bus Association of Victoria is strongly opposed to the proposal as they consider the proposal duplicated existing services and does not complement the Central City Car Parking Levy as it could encourage commuters to park outside the parking levy zone and the use the free bus. Metlink has expressed a desire to make better use of existing arrangements, rather than a free shuttle bus service. The Public Transport Users Association provided a lengthy submission recommending Council abandon the proposed free bus shuttle service.
22. Members of the Melbourne Transport Committee have been presented with the proposal and have been given an opportunity to comment.

Finance

23. No allocation for the estimated costs associated with this service has been made in the current budgets.

Legal

24. Legal advice will be provided as required to implement the new initiative.

Sustainability

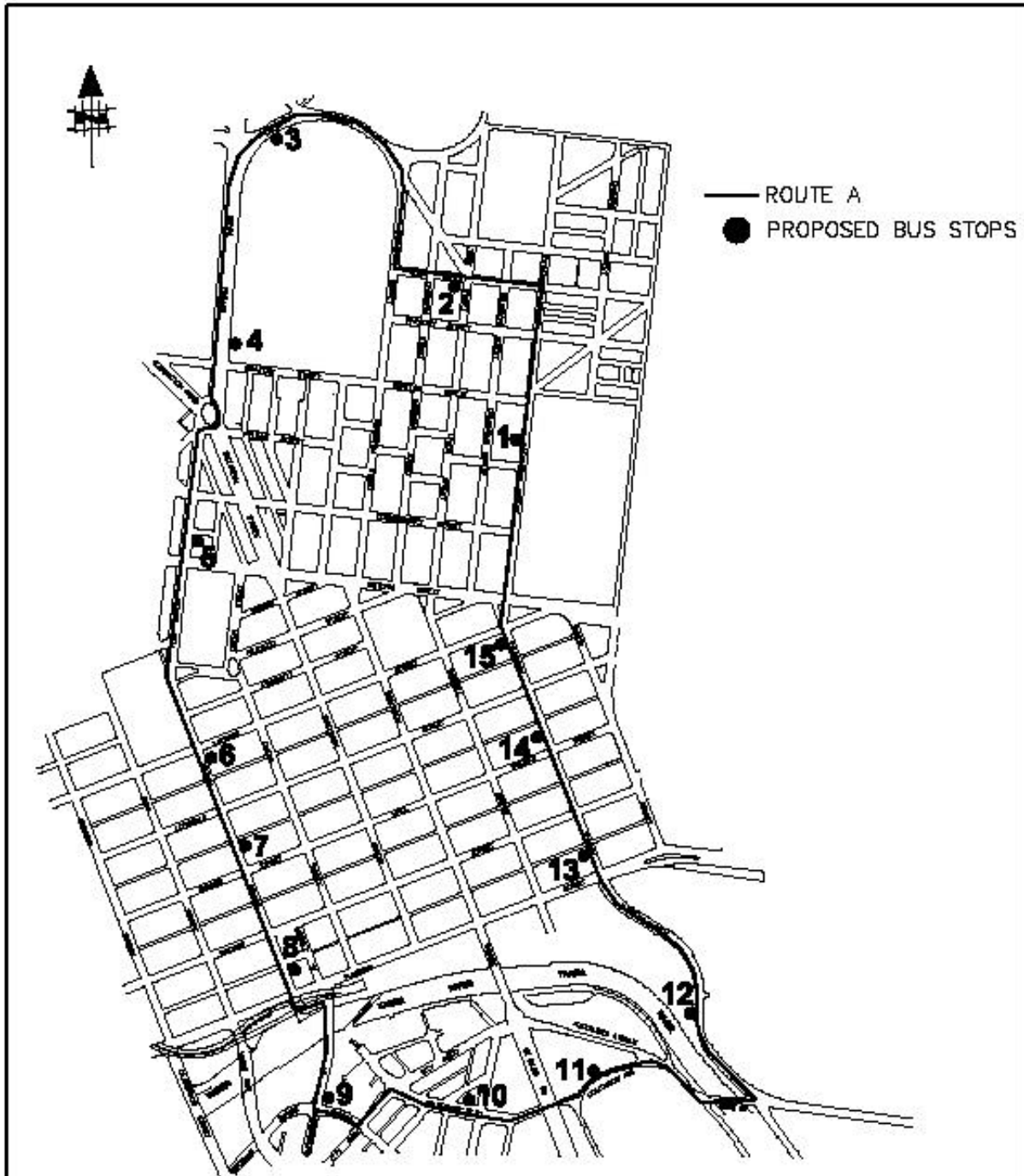
23. The impact of a well used shuttle bus service by visitors will enhance the social and community wellbeing attributes of the City. The success of this service is expected to enhance the global attraction of Melbourne to all visitors.
23. The environmental impact will depend upon the level of patronage and the assumption that usage of this service potentially negates the use of other forms of transport required by visitors to the city. Should the shuttle bus service not be well patronised then the environmental impact of running three buses on a continuous basis will be a detrimental impact on the environment.
23. The expected economic return of a successful shuttle service linking Melbourne's tourist attractions could be significant. Should a free service not be successful the impact on Melbourne's economic circumstances would be negligible.


Background

24. Council's Planning and Environment Committee, on 4 October 2005 resolved to:
 - 24.1. seek opinion on the proposed North/South Bus Shuttle from all members of Council's Melbourne Transport Committee;
 - 24.2. convey these responses from members of Council's Melbourne Transport Committee to Council during consideration of Council's Transport Strategy;
 - 24.3. note that this decision is being made by the Committee under delegation from the Council and is subject to the referral notice process.
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Attachments:

1. North/South Shuttle Bus Service Proposed Routes
2. Proposed Stop Locations



PROJECT NO.		DESIGNED BY		SURVEY REF.		LS COORDS.	
DOCS NUMBER		CONCEPT PLAN		DATE		SCALE	NTS
	STATUS		ENGINEERING SERVICES				
	JOB LOCATION		APPROVED BY		DRAWING NUMBER DOCS#3315156		
	NORTH-SOUTH SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE PROPOSED ROUTES		Principal Engineer	Group Manager	NUMBER OF SHEETS		SERVISION
			Date	Date	1	B	
		FORMER ENG. NO.					

Proposed Stop Locations

Stop Number 1:

**Museum of Victoria:
visitors 680,000 in 2004,
in '05 growing at 16%**

Proposed Stop Location:

**Rathdowne Street:
Next to pedestrian
crossing**



Nearby Attractions:

**Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens, Lygon
Street, Brunswick Street**

Proposed Stop Locations

Stop Number 2:

Lygon Street

**Proposed Stop
Location: Elgin Street:
in front of vacant
property**



**Nearby Attractions:
Italian Precinct**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 3:
Princes Park &
Royal Park**

**Proposed Stop Location:
College Crescent:
Near Ormond College**



**Nearby Attractions: Melbourne General
Cemetery, Royal Parade, Melbourne University**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 4:
Medical & Bio Tech
Precinct**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Royal Parade: Near
Howard Florey Institute**



**Nearby Attractions: Lygon
Street**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 5:
Queen Victoria Market**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Peel Street: Between
Princess St & Victoria St**



Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 6:
Flagstaff Gardens**

**Proposed Stop Location:
William St: in front of
Royal Mint, near corner
of La Trobe St**



**Nearby Attractions: Flagstaff Station, former
Royal Mint, City Circle Tram**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 7:
Legal Precinct**

**Proposed Stop Location:
William St: Between
Lt Bourke & Bourke Sts**



Nearby Attractions: Family Court, Supreme Court, County Court, Magistrates Court

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 8:
Immigration Museum
(growing at 20% for last 2 yrs)**

**Proposed Stop Location:
William St: Between
Flinders Lane & Flinders
St**



Nearby Attractions: Rialto, Northbank, Enterprize Wharf, Melbourne Aquarium, Banana Alley, City Circle Tram

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 9:
Freshwater Place &
Southbank**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Queens Bridge St: Near
corner of Power St**



**Nearby Attractions: Melbourne Exhibition
Centre**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 10:
Arts Precinct**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Southbank Boulevard:
Near corner of Sturt St**



**Nearby Attractions:
Victorian College of the Arts, The Australian Ballet
Centre, National Gallery, Arts Centre, Melbourne
Symphony, Malthouse, Grimwade Gardens, ABC
Radio/TV News**

Proposed Stop Locations

Stop Number 11:

Parks & Gardens

**Proposed Stop Location:
Linlithgow Ave: Near Lady
Janet Russell Clarke Rotunda**



Nearby Attractions:

Kings Domain, Sydney Myer Music Bowl, Victoria Gardens, Alexandra Gardens, Boatsheds & Yarra River, Botanic Gardens, Shrine of Remembrance, Government House

Proposed Stop Locations

Stop Number 12:

**Sports & Entertainment
Precinct**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Batman Ave: In front of
Speakers Corner,
opposite Show Court Two**



Nearby Attractions: Melbourne Park, Olympic Park, Lexus Centre, Vodafone Arena, MCG, Yarra Park, Birrarung Marr

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 13:
Rag Trade Precinct**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Exhibition St: Near
corner of Flinders Lane**



**Nearby Attractions: Treasury Gardens,
Federation Square, Old Treasury & Gold
Museum, City Circle Tram**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 14:
Chinatown & Theatre
Precinct**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Exhibition St: Between
Bourke & Little Bourke Sts**



**Nearby Attractions: Her Majesty's Theatre, Comedy
Theatre, Princess Theatre, Parliament**

Proposed Stop Locations

**Stop Number 15:
Opposite Carlton Gardens**

**Proposed Stop Location:
Exhibition St: Near corner
of La Trobe St, in front of
Australia Post**



**Nearby Attractions: Royal Society
of Victoria, City Circle Tram**

FINANCE ATTACHMENT

PROPOSED TOURIST SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

No funding has been provided in the 2005/06 budget for the trial of the free bus shuttle.

The total cost of running the bus service is estimated to be \$750,000 per year including the cost of the service and loss of parking fees and an additional initial set up cost of approximately \$30,000.

Future funding will be subject to the normal budget processes.

Joe Groher
Manager Financial Services

LEGAL ATTACHMENT

PROPOSED TOURIST SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

Legal advice will be provided as required to implement the new initiative.

Alison Lyon
Manager Legal & Governance