

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 7.3

**Post travel report by Councillor Ken Ong:
7th Annual City Development Conference: Envisioning Cities of the
Future, Singapore, 19 to 21 November 2014**

10 February 2015

Presenter: Councillor Ken Ong

Purpose and background

1. To report to the Future Melbourne Committee on the travel undertaken by Councillor Ken Ong to Singapore as a presenter at the 7th Annual City Development Conference: Envisioning Cities of the Future from 19 to 21 November 2014 (approved by Council on 30 September 2014).

Key issues

2. The conference brought together leaders in key sectors from around the world including government and business organisations.
3. Councillor Ong presented at the conference on 'Tackling the Challenges of Increased Densification and Stresses on Infrastructure', and also 'Exploring the Mitigation Actions Strategies for the Future to Enhance Liveability: A Case Study on the City of Melbourne.' This is the second time that Councillor Ong has presented at this conference.
4. Councillor Ong was also invited by the conference organiser, the Marcus Evans Group, to address a Plenary Session explaining the City of Melbourne's approach and strategies to sustainable city development.
5. The City of Melbourne's participation in the conference was well received and provided an opportunity to present the City of Melbourne strategies and achievements. Attendees at the conference showed strong interest in looking at opportunities to learn about the challenges of cities in the future and what actions and initiatives can be taken on board to address their individual cities' challenges.
6. Included in Attachment 2 is a summary of the key observations and outcomes. It also provides an overview of the presentations and case studies discussed at the conference.
7. As a result of the conference, the Mayor of Kuala Lumpur requested an opportunity to visit Melbourne in early 2015. The Future Melbourne Committee previously endorsed the *Melbourne – doing business globally* report which identifies Kuala Lumpur as one of the three Business Partner City Network cities, that present potential future business opportunities. If an invitation is issued, the program focus of such a visit may be the exploration of opportunities in Melbourne's internationally recognised industry sectors.

Recommendation

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 8.1. notes the report and the attached summary of key observations and outcomes
 - 8.2. requests that management, following confirmation from the Consulate-General of Malaysia in Melbourne, prepare a letter of invitation to YBhg. Datuk Seri Hj. Ahmad Phesal Hj. Talib, Mayor of Kuala Lumpur who requested an opportunity to visit Melbourne in early 2015.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment
2. Key Observations and Outcomes
3. City of Melbourne presentation

Supporting attachment

Finance

1. Councillor Ong's travel was partially funded by the conference organisers, the Marcus Evans Group, which offered \$US700 towards costs. At the time of seeking approval to travel, this was estimated at \$775 based on the exchange rate at that period. At the time of preparation of this report the transfer of funds to the City of Melbourne was being finalised.
2. Based on receipt of an amount of \$775, the cost to Council is estimated at \$4165.89 which covers airfare (\$2766.42), accommodation (\$1036.26) and incidentals (\$363.21).
3. The confirmed cost, which will vary due to exchange rates, will be published in the travel register available on Council's web site at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Conflict of interest

4. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Relation to Council policy

5. The Manager Governance Services has confirmed that the travel costs accord with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Councillor Expenses and Resources Guidelines.

Environmental sustainability

6. The carbon emissions resulting from air travel were offset with the purchase of credits.

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The following summarises the key observations and outcomes from the conference:

1. The conference included speakers from Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, India, Australia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea and South Korea as well as representatives from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program. The conference was also attended by representatives from Kenya, Nigeria and Cambodia with a total number of approximately 140 people in attendance.
2. Presentations from Melbourne and Vancouver were focused on what has already been developed as well as what else we need to be focussing on to prepare our cities for the future to ensure liveability, sustainability and be able to cope with growth and densification. The City of Melbourne's presentation has been included in Attachment 3.
3. Vancouver's presentation had the theme: 'To be the World's Greenest City by 2020'. Vancouver has 2.5 million people in the Metropolitan area with 700,000 in the City itself. 40 per cent of the population has another language as their first language. Vancouver's Green Plan started in 2011.
4. It has aspirational goals of zero carbon, zero waste and healthy ecosystems. Its main greenhouse gas emissions are due to buildings (55 per cent), vehicles (31 per cent) and solid waste (8 per cent). The 2020 target is set from 2007 levels and progress to date in 2014 is lagging behind. The key initiatives include:
 - reduce community based greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent
 - green transportation: through reaching 50 per cent on foot, bicycle or transit
 - reduce energy in existing buildings by 20 per cent through insulation and retrofits
 - 50 per cent waste reduction from landfill through reducing waste collection, more recycling, and banning wood products from construction activities to landfill by 2015
 - land acquisitions of four new parks in the city (although acknowledged this is costly)
 - more local food production by increasing neighbourhood gardens by 50 per cent and 4000 plots of community garden on public land. Have completed its local Vancouver Food Plan.
 - all new developments must have electric vehicle chargers
 - build public vehicle chargers in the future.

A number of other presentations from the plenary sessions are summarised below:

5. William Lay from the Singapore Institute of Planners discussed Smart City initiatives and focused on availability and quality of information for the public. Also discussed the importance of this for social infrastructure and building intellectual capital. They measure their progress using their Smart City Wheel. He acknowledged that not all cities are the same.
6. He referred to case study cities like Sangdo in South Korea and Masdar City in Abu Dhabi which are totally new townships; high targets for environment, smart transportation with easy public information systems.
7. In Singapore, the Government has now made open and accessible data to the public through One Map.
8. Singapore has achieved great progress. As its current population of about 5.1 million heads to an expected 8 million by 2030, it faces challenges on transport and housing. It has a very prescriptive planning regime but it may have to change in the future. Most housing for its citizens is provided by its Housing Development Board (HDB) which decides where to build, build it and then sell it. Its great achievement is keeping housing affordable to purchase. The Government introduced a 15 per cent tax on ownership of a second property and above in Singapore in a bid to keep housing available for new owner occupiers and the price at affordable levels.
9. David Singleton from Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia presented on several items including sustainable infrastructure, driverless vehicles and energy use strategies. He quoted examples of some city initiatives in San Francisco and Bosco Verticale project in Milan.

10. Frven Lim (Singapore) spoke about master planning mixed used developments and the concept of utilising air space due to density challenges and having high rise open space and high rise forests. Questions were raised about the comfort levels of these high rise open spaces due to wind factors. Some considered these ideas as not practical.
11. Stephen Ashford from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), a Government property development agency (similar to Places Victoria), spoke about Kuala Lumpur's ambitions. Currently ranked 45 on competitiveness index, they want to be in the top 10. Kuala Lumpur is 250 square kilometres with a population of 1.7 million. Malaysia's urban population is 7 million. It has numerous urban deficits and will need many actions to solve them. They are taking an approach from a planning and economic perspective and 1MDB is tasked with some. 1MDB is working on a new Kuala Lumpur Southern Gateway which is a new district with a financial services/centre focus and it is of national importance. It will have the MRT as part of its redevelopment. It is 70 acres and will house 21 buildings of high rise offices, residential and hotel with a four-level retail mall. Early site works have started but there are many challenges including the financial costs as well as areas which have heritage issues. 1MDB has many critics in terms of its high debt levels.
12. Mark Moseley from World Bank spoke about public-private partnership and financing alternatives for infrastructure which are mostly relevant to the developing countries and cities. He described the criteria for selecting projects which must be on a best success basis to ensure better use of public funds. The threshold they consider is the availability of public funds in those countries/ cities.
13. Eli Kovitz and Jason Hutchings from Atkins, Hong Kong, a consulting company in Planning, Architecture and Urban Design, presented on Transport Oriented Developments (TOD). Historically, cities were built around transport access (e.g. rivers and ports such as Paris, New York, Shanghai and London). There was clear interaction between land use and transport links and later around railway hubs (e.g. Kings Cross station in London). Today it is not always the case. The comment was 'we need very strong policies, with strong vision and political leadership with "teeth" to integrate land use and transport planning and a single shared timeline not separate delivery times'. In addition, any finance and contributions for such strategies and plans will need to be "fenced".
14. In addition, for any city to act, it will have to look at the barriers and any finance issues to overcome. In Hong Kong, the MTR derives 33 per cent of its revenues from non-fare sources to enable it to develop infrastructure around its MTR sites (e.g. rental, advertising, etc.). For TOD, there are many dimensions to consider such as Government policy and support, market/private players and the coordination role which require both Government and private agencies.
15. David Hashim from Veritas Malaysia (architect) presented the concept of "vertical cities" which are fully integrated high rise communities which included housing, businesses, shopping, schools, sports and recreation and services which is all components of city living organised in a vertical manner and are secured like a gated community. The debate was why do we need these? The response was that it gave a safe living environment due to many safety issues encountered in cities in Malaysia and other developing countries. There was discussion around addressing the root causes and whether governments should address safety and security in the cities. There was some inference that the governments do not have the capacity or will or the governance to address them.
16. David Klingberg (David Lock associates, Australia) and Luong Minh Phuc (Ho Chi Minh City Authority) presented a case study of transforming Ho Chi Minh City through integrated land use and transport planning. Ho Chi Minh City has 10 million people which have 6 million motorcycles, 0.9 million cars and only 5 per cent use public bus system. The presentation covered their Green Transport Project which is their Bus Rapid Transport plans and the challenges of building the infrastructure and educating the people to utilise them and reducing congestion. From their perspective, the challenge is that their current laws and rules are not strong enough to encourage reducing motorcycles or cars as well as the current culture. The best approach they indicated was for totally new areas of development to integrate place making, create new urban spaces and establishing a transport network which can be more effective using new and existing infrastructure.

17. Ed Baker (Broadway Malyan – Landscape, an urban design consultancy in Singapore working with Government) presented Green Master Planning which focus not on sustainability but on green spaces, place making and creating a balance of ecology and biodiversity. Case studies included London Riverfront Redevelopment which combined high end and social housing, public spaces, promenade, tidal planting and educational signage about the local habitat.
18. Case Study 2 covered Calgary in Canada on the regeneration of the East Village using a Green Masterplan, connecting this area to the CBD and creating a vibrant mixed use community, including a river walk, public art and useable open space. It included using existing heritage building to develop a creative hub to activate it as well as a library, residential including affordable housing and hotel.
19. Case Study 3 covered Abu Dhabi's Yas Island which also has the F1 circuit. This project is in early stages. Mainly low rise but has challenges to interface water and plant drought tolerant plantings. It is a 20 year project they believe.
20. Case Study 4 covered a new township in the Iskandar city area in Malaysia which is a new greenfield development for 70,000 residents. It is a centre township supported by a university, mid-rise and high-rise residential housing with waterfront to the river. This development is being done by Sunway Properties which is a partner to Monash University in Malaysia in Bandar Sunway outside Kuala Lumpur. This master plan looks very well thought out. However, they do not have clear public transport infrastructure to connect it to other parts of Iskandar, which is a very fast developing new area, across from Singapore. Being close to the second crossing to Singapore, it will be attractive for people working in Singapore as housing in Malaysia is more affordable.
21. Case Study 5 covered a Singapore Government project called Aospital which covers ground level activation, Eco trails, community parks and creation of bio-diversity environments. It has very clear guidelines on green roofs, green walls and planning controls. Looking at this project, Singapore seems to be leading in Green Roofs and Green Walls which Melbourne could potentially learn from.
22. Scott Dunn, Vice President, South East Asia, AECOM, presented on Human Scale interaction in high density urban environments. Asian cities have very high growth since early 2000s. Cities have 80 per cent of their countries' GDP. They need \$57 trillion USD for infrastructure to 2020 and the challenge is to develop and use physical assets to enhance social outcomes.
23. He cited Singapore as a good example. Singapore has a 50 year plan, underpinned by five-year plans which are regularly updated. They have "white" sites which retains total GFA but changes use according to changing needs. The plan supports diversity of cultures for their public housing strategy. When an owner of HDB housing wants to sell, they can only do so to another of same background. This prevents concentration of specific racial groups. Mixed used developments are to be around transport infrastructure. Public spaces are designed for multiple functions - working harder to deliver maximum use. The plan sets priority on green transportation such as its mass rail network. Mixed use developments must have a mix of facilities and types using "checkerboard" planning and have "green boundaries". All active public space must create a safe environment through passive surveillance. Usage of land should be innovative including vertical manufacturing and underground use. The plan also encourages public-private partnership approaches. The plan is to achieve a job-housing balance and targets a 22 minutes home to work city.
24. Mohd Azharuddin from the Malaysian Prime Minister's Department (PEMANDU) presented the Malaysian Government's plans covering its Economic Transformation Program to improve its competitiveness. There are six strategic reform initiatives and will focus on twelve National Key Economic Areas and seven Key Result Areas. These are driven from the Prime Minister's office, set commitments and set KPIs for Cabinet and all Ministries must provide six month reports publicly. The target is the Kuala Lumpur and Greater Klang Valley. The objectives include being among the top most liveable cities (79 in 2013), top economic growth, 30 per cent of national GDP and global competitiveness (24 in 2013) and World Bank Ranking on ease of doing business (18 in 2012). Much of the presentation focussed about what the Government wants to do.

25. Zachary Wilson from Greenpower Singapore presented on the topic of green buildings and cost savings benefits. In Singapore, they use the BCA Green Mark rating. The government objective is to have 80 per cent green buildings by 2030. Many of the buildings in Singapore are owned by a Government Sovereign Fund so it may be possible. But privately owned buildings are harder as there's a mentality of short term pay backs.
26. The Singapore Government provide fact sheets and case studies. An example quoted was the Elithis Tower. There were discussions about whether the Singapore government will legislate targets and take a carrot and stick approach.
27. The presentation also covered the measurement of Power Usage Efficiency and how using latest green technology will achieve results. This could be used to educate and encourage private building owners to upgrade and retrofit. (This is similar to the City of Melbourne's City Switch and 1200 buildings programs which are voluntary).
28. Dr Cho Im Sik from National University Singapore presented on Singapore's Public Housing Estates and the matter of community bonding. Singapore has 5.18 million people across 714 square kilometres giving an average density of 7260 persons per square kilometre. All public housing are developed by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) and is of a high standard and are owned by eligible residents. These are not social housing.
29. The concern has been about a lack of community in these HDB estates. The National University of Singapore took on research to understand the reason and targeted a number of housing estates and focussing on several "precincts" of up to 800 residents each within the larger HDB areas. They surveyed local residents in those precincts and conducted research on patterns of use or non-use of the spaces and did many consultations (which was difficult as engagement was initially difficult).
30. The results included people wanting a village feel with social sustainability which said "get the built environment correct" so there can be community bonding. Also wanted better balance of human interaction versus place interaction. There was a need for good thought out "hardware", "software - programming" and "orgware" which was having institution and management support. The feedback also found people want flexible open spaces at ground level not on rooftops e.g. not safe, no toilets, windy.
31. The research concluded that public spaces must be planned and designed to facilitate social interactions and strengthen residents' belonging to the neighbourhood. Dr Cho commented that good design is not accidental.
32. From Melbourne's perspective there can be some learning's from this about government taking on a role in providing housing at an affordable level for ownership and creating strong communities in housing estates if there is a mix of housing types.
33. Dr Sujata Govada of UDP Hong Kong and President of American Institute of Architects in Hong Kong spoke about Hong Kong strategies in making walking better and integrating TOD (Transport Oriented Developments) to make it more liveable as it has a density of over 17,000 people per square kilometre and up to 27,000 per square kilometre in Mong Kok District. In the past the MRT was just built by the authority without any public input. The new Kowloon Station development has now considered a street level human scale consideration which all pedestrian walkways are elevated. A similar approach is being taken for the Western Line extension. However, due to the density of the population, they are facing more congestion in the streets for walking comfort.
34. The level of density in Hong Kong cannot be imagined in Melbourne. However, some of the plans, actions and strategies which Melbourne is putting in place could be an interest to Hong Kong. Cars are not a problem in Hong Kong. Walking is becoming one.

35. Wahyu Mulyana of URDI Indonesia presented on their plans for achieving UNESCO World Heritage classification for their historic town of Kota Tua (Old Town) in Jakarta. Their Heritage Plans have taken over 10 years to get local government sign off and did not happen until Jokowi become Governor of Jakarta (now President of Indonesia). They now have clear classifications. They have plans to address transport problems. However, their planning laws have hindered restorations due to its inflexibility and lack of incentives for privately owned heritage properties. They are now working on alternative use planning rules as a means to speed up restoration and allow developments for lower graded building.
36. Their objective to create a tourism destination still has some way to go, especially in terms of walkability due to its main road being an arterial truck route.
37. There are proposals to reroute the transport traffic around the core part of Kota Tua with a new road. Melbourne could potentially assist in the areas providing advice in creating a more walkable town, for a walking tour program development and also in way finding ideas through our tourism activities in IMAP. Jakarta is part of the Business Partner Cities network of which Melbourne is a member.
38. Joseph D'Cruz from the United Nations Development Program spoke about different innovations happening among countries in the Asia Pacific region. It is clear that today in this region, development challenges are occurring in the cities, not like the the past which were concentrated in rural areas. The key issues due to quickening urban migration from rural areas include poverty in urban and semi-urban areas, health and diseases, increase greenhouse gases from the increased density and governance issues in the large cities. There seem to be a great challenge to manage the balance between growth and inequality. There are major challenges facing cities for the predicted growth to 2030 with the urban spaces and infrastructure not yet built and unlikely to meet the timeline. (Source: UN Habitat: State of the World's Cities 2012-2103). There is a need to get things right from the beginning to avoid a worse situation in the future.
39. The prediction is that with more mega-cities, there will be even greater service demands which are harder to manage or deliver. The United Nations Development Program believes that there is a need to decentralise and have smaller cities of up to 1 million population to deliver better outcomes.
40. A case study about innovative service delivery discussed was the elderly-focused services in the Chao Yang district in Beijing, a city of over 18 million in population, where an entire city block has been set up as a cluster of all types of services for the elderly. This enables all the elderly residents of Beijing to come to Chao Yang to obtain services and to engage with other members of their age groups. Many programs are arranged and managed by the Government agencies. This can be seen as an innovative way to efficiently deliver services with supporting infrastructure.
41. There was a discussion about how such ideas can be done in other countries like Bangladesh. Lack of infrastructure, services as well as the mindset, old ways and customs, etc. could have a different expectation level of improvement and development pace. There was discussion as to whether United Nations Development Program initiatives be on a needs based or should the development programs drag them into the 21st century?
42. The final session which was attended by Councillor Ong was the panel discussions about the "Major Factors that make your city the Destination of Choice". Attachment 3 outlines the key items presented by Councillor Ong under the coverage of the destination for Investment, Tourism, Education, Employment and Living.
43. Coupled with the first plenary session presentation, many questions were directed back towards Melbourne. It is very clear that Melbourne's progress and success as well as the strategies we have in place has many cities interested in how Melbourne achieved its status. In response, Councillor Ong stated that sustainability is an underlying requirement for our future liveability and resilience. Councillor Ong spoke about the City of Melbourne's community engagement approach to identifying needs and that our key strategies and plans go through an extensive consultation process before they are accepted for implementation. Councillor Ong also spoke about the People's Panel, the development of the City of Melbourne's next 10-year Financial Strategy.
44. Councillor Ong also discussed how the City of Melbourne's plans always consider Human Scale design because a great city is about its people, not buildings.

45. On the question of safety, Councillor Ong covered our previous situation and the work in partnership with State Governments, the police, the supporting agencies and the entertainment/hospitality industry to address the root causes and jointly agreed series of actions by all parties. Councillor Ong spoke about the City's Safe City Plan and city funded programs with agencies, looking at urban design issues to ensure better street lighting, active surveillance and passive surveillance as well as greater police presence and powers.
46. Councillor Ong also spoke about the creation of the Committee for Melbourne many years ago by business and community leaders as a think tank, looking at strategic issues and putting together long term strategies for State Governments to take up for the betterment of Melbourne. Councillor Ong advised that the Committee for Melbourne today has over one hundred member organisations including Government departments, key industry players as well as key non-profit organisations. Councillor Ong suggested that other cities could look at something similar if they want a non-political input into their strategic thinking and to influence and achieve better outcomes for their cities.

Outcomes:

47. This conference is a very good forum to present Melbourne's achievements and all the strategies, plans and actions which have been undertaken over the last 20-plus years and especially in the last six years leading to our current standing as the World's Most Liveable City according to EIU.
48. Many of the attendees are from cities in the developing world or the developed cities of Asia which are facing major challenges due to rapid densification and urbanisation. Many of the attendees were very interested in learning more from Melbourne.
49. As a global city, Melbourne can share a lot of its experience, knowledge, expertise as well as its plans. In discussions with many attendees, there is a great desire to seek more information about our MSS and other supporting action plans such Plan Melbourne. The Mayor of Kuala Lumpur has requested a visit to Melbourne in early 2015.
50. On the issue of housing affordability, we could look at some of the work done in Singapore through its HDB role, and how they have implanted their schemes which seem to ensure that their citizens can afford to buy into housing ownership. It may be possible to discover some ideas from their model which we can use to deliver better outcomes in Melbourne without creating other social and community disruptions. The "benevolent autocracy" system there has delivered some great results for Singapore.
51. In terms of Planning and Urban Design, Melbourne could provide great assistance to many of the other cities, including Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, HCMC and even Hong Kong. Singapore's prescriptive planning rules could find that it is limiting its urban design outcomes and the lack of community engagement may cause future community dissatisfaction.
52. In conclusion, this conference is a useful forum to be involved with as it provides an opportunity to showcase Melbourne's leadership to many other countries and cities. While the number of attendees was not overly large, it had a good representation of senior city government officials and it was of a right size to have more detailed engagements with specific representatives of the cities and to discuss topics presented.
53. Several of the attendees have advised that they will be contacting the City of Melbourne further for additional information on the topics discussed.