

**CITY OF MELBOURNE**

## **City of Melbourne Submission to High Speed Rail Phase Two report – released for comment 11 April 2013**

June 2013

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## Summary

[The Australian Government's High Speed Rail Phase Two report \(HSR2\)](#) long term case for High Speed Rail (HSR) through the east coast of Australia has sufficient merit for further government action to be taken. The City of Melbourne supports the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant governments to allow planning and development work for HSR to proceed including the important step of corridor protection. This would involve site investigations and the preparation of inter-governmental agreements to formalise a commitment to protecting the HSR corridor by rezoning land within the corridor

The City of Melbourne looks forward to continuing to work with the Australian Government and the Victorian State Government on this important option for providing for the long term future transport needs of the nation.

## City of Melbourne strategic position

### Municipal Strategic Statement

The *HSR2* proposes to strengthen the connections between the major urban centres along Australia's eastern seaboard – in particular between Melbourne and Sydney. Quick, convenient and low cost passenger travel between these two main centres is critical for the growth and productivity of Australia's knowledge economy. The *HSR2* seeks to secure the very long term growth of this connection and make it more robust.

City of Melbourne takes an integrated approach to transport and land-use planning. Its *Municipal Strategic Statement 2012 (MSS)* is a plan for the future growth of the municipality of Melbourne at the centre of metropolitan Melbourne. On average there are around 800,000 daily city users in the municipality during the working week. By 2030 this is projected to grow to 1.2 million.

The MSS envisages continued intensive growth in the municipality. This growth will be focused in the existing central city and in the municipality's identified urban renewal areas which provide for very long term central city growth. This long term plan for growth in inner and central city living and jobs is well aligned with the *HSR2* rationale of securing - for the long term - quick, convenient and low cost connections between Melbourne and Sydney.

### Transport Strategy 2012

The *MSS* and the City of Melbourne's *Transport Strategy 2012 (MTS)* support high speed rail links between major Australian cities and working with the Australian Government to investigate the benefits and feasibility of a CBD-CBD rail service between Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane.

The *MTS* also has several other transport priorities relevant to the High Speed Rail proposal. These are support for improving public transport performance, reach and mode share which will be important in linking passengers to High Speed Rail at Southern Cross Station, and support for improving the performance of the pedestrian network around stations to improve connections between the city and stations including connections from trams and buses.

## Comments on the HSR2 report

### Selection of Southern Cross Station

The *HSR2* identifies Southern Cross Station as the preferred HSR station location. This location was selected ahead of two possible stations in North Melbourne because of the better public transport and pedestrian access to Southern Cross, lower construction costs and better alignment with future growth plans. The City of Melbourne supports the selection of Southern Cross Station as the central Melbourne station for HSR.

### Need to provide for future transport requirements

The City of Melbourne recognises the need to secure the long term future transport requirements on the east coast of Australia. This is important for future prosperity. By 2065 travel through Australia's eastern seaboard will more than double to up to 355 million trips every year. This will place significant pressure on our transport infrastructure. Without High Speed Rail, this growth will have to be met by existing modes which already face capacity, cost and logistical constraints.

The economic, social and environmental analyses in the *HSR2* show that High Speed Rail would be an appropriate way to provide for the region's future travel needs. The proposed HSR would account for 84 million trips or 40% of the total east coast passenger kilometres in 2065. An electrically powered train linking capital cities through this region would make the transport connections more resilient should air services be disrupted temporarily or become more expensive through fuel price rises.

### Economic benefits including agglomeration

The *HSR2* proposed HSR would have a benefit cost ratio of 2.3. The Melbourne to Sydney leg has a benefit cost ratio of 2.5. Most of the benefits accrue from improving the efficiency of business travel between major centers, particularly between Sydney and Melbourne.

The report suggests the Melbourne to Sydney leg be the first section built (starting with Sydney to Canberra). City of Melbourne supports this given the projected volumes of traffic moving between Melbourne and Sydney. The Phase 2 report notes that having Melbourne's HSR station in the central city will deliver agglomeration benefits to the city. This supports current job growth trends in City of Melbourne's planning.

Terminating the train at Southern Cross is also expected to benefit Melbourne's growth areas in the inner west and northwest of the city. These include the western end of the Hoddle Grid, Docklands, Fishermans Bend and, E-Gate. The Southern Cross terminal is also expected to have a positive impact on the form of the city by encouraging development closer to the inner city.

### Environmental impacts

The *HSR2* shows that a shift from existing modes to High Speed Rail will have a positive environmental impact. The benefit in terms of greenhouse gases would be about \$2 billion over the life of the project. However, this is offset by an increase in greenhouse gases due to predicted continued growth in air travel to Sydney as the HSR frees up capacity at Sydney Airport. Overall, the City of Melbourne supports the provision of HSR as a lower-carbon travel mode than the alternatives.

### Environmental Assessment

The *HSR2* notes that the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Intergovernmental Agreement should allow for and endorse the scoping of a strategic assessment under the

*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The City of Melbourne supports a thorough environmental assessment process under this act.

### Safety benefits of train travel

Train travel is generally safer than road travel. The *HSR2* shows the project will deliver a reduction in accidents by increasing the mode share of rail travel throughout the region. It refers to recent UK studies on HSR that assume a zero accident rate based on the excellent safety performance of these systems. It values the improved safety at \$560 million over the life of the project. The City of Melbourne, through its draft Road Safety Plan, supports improving the safety of travel in the city.

### North Melbourne Construction Area

The *HSR2* maps indicate a construction area occupying McAlister Oval in Royal Park. The City of Melbourne would require further discussion with a future High Speed Rail Development Authority as to the appropriateness of this location and to minimize community impacts of construction there.

Given the City of Melbourne's current lack of capacity to adequately provide sports fields for active recreation, the occupation of McAlister Oval would be unlikely to be supported. The City of Melbourne suggests the investigation of purchasing commercial or industrial land holdings adjacent to the Upfield line in Brunswick. This land could be purchased and then re-sold or developed at the conclusion of the project.

### Dudley Street Construction Area

The *HSR2* maps indicate that HSR would pass under Dudley Street immediately to the east of Festival Hall and enter a tunnel with a construction area occupying a site to the northeast of Festival Hall running from Dudley Street to Stanley Street. The City of Melbourne would require further discussion with a future High Speed Rail Development Authority as to the appropriateness of this location and to minimize community impacts of construction there.

## Further investigation.

A proposal of this magnitude will throw up a significant number of issues that will require further investigation. The following is a preliminary list of these issues. No doubt more will arise as HSR planning continues.

### Access to Southern Cross Station

Significant future patronage growth is expected at Southern Cross station as a result of the completion of the Regional Rail Link and continued strong growth on the metropolitan public transport network. The construction of an HSR station at Southern Cross would further increase the numbers of pedestrians using the public areas around the station. Peak volumes of pedestrians in this location already overcrowd footpaths in the area with people sometimes forced to walk on the road carriageway to access the station. Extensive tram movements here would be crucial to providing access to and from the station.

The *HSR2* suggests that of the peak demand of 8,100 passengers per hour when the system is complete, 39% will arrive by taxi and 9% will be dropped off/picked up while 51% will arrive by public transport. This could amount to more than 3000 taxis and more than 700 private vehicle movements per hour. Accommodating these movements in a busy central city location will be challenging.

It is likely that of the 51% (more than 4,100 per peak hour) who will access HSR from the public transport system, many will do so via trams to/from central city locations as well as other origins/destinations on the tram network. The tram system will need to provide safe and efficient

access to the station and this needs to be part of designing the station precinct. It is likely that Spencer Street's current designation as an arterial road providing for motor vehicle traffic moving through the city would need to change.

Great cities around the world frequently take the opportunity to create magnificent civic spaces around public transport interchanges. The arrival of HSR at Southern Cross Station would provide the opportunity to pursue this for Melbourne.

While the *HSR2* identifies mode shares for public transport, taxi and drop-off/pickup as the main modes of access to HSR, it does not include a share for walking as a mode of access. It does, however, use pedestrian access to the CBD from Southern Cross as one of the criteria for deciding on the station location. In 2009, walking accounted for 86 per cent of all trips within Melbourne's capital city zone and the median walking trip time was 10 minutes. Given the dominance of walking as a mode of transport in central Melbourne and the number of jobs and residents located within a reasonable walking distance of the station, it is likely that walking could have a significant mode share for accessing HSR.

### Development at Southern Cross Station

A new HSR terminus at Southern Cross Station will involve constructing a variety of facilities to service the large numbers of passengers, manage trains and integrate with existing public transport services. There may also be the opportunity for commercial development in and around the station.

Southern Cross Station is well placed for this being located in the heart of Melbourne between the Hoddle Grid and Docklands, two of the most intensely developed parts of the city. It is zoned capital city zone. Beyond this, there are no specific planning controls or proposals pertaining to its development. Should specific planning scheme changes be needed, the City of Melbourne will work with the State and Federal Governments and others to deliver planning outcomes that meet the needs of the broader city and the station's role as a transport interchange.

### Economic impacts

Given the ever stronger role that cities are playing in the nation's economy, it would be beneficial to investigate in greater detail than has been possible in the *HSR2* report the city agglomeration benefits to Melbourne and Australia of High Speed Rail.

### Noise

Noise from transport operations is a significant problem for inner city communities. It is expected that this will become more of an issue as new infrastructure such as Regional Rail Link is constructed and mixed use development – including residential development – continues in inner Melbourne.

It is expected that noise impacts in central Melbourne would be less than in country areas as the trains would be travelling relatively slowly approaching or leaving Southern Cross Station. However, managing noise impacts will be an important part of planning High Speed Rail in Melbourne.

### Construction impacts

It is expected that there will be significant construction impact when HSR is built especially at Southern Cross Station. Given the current strong growth in public transport patronage and the dependence of the city's economy on the access provided by the public transport network, it will be important to ensure public transport services continue to provide the necessary capacity during this time.

## Local Government involvement in planning for High Speed Rail

The main reason for constructing HSR is to link population centers with an efficient transport system to cater for future growth. The two largest population centers are Sydney and Melbourne. By around 2030 the City of Melbourne will have a daily city user population of around 1.2 million. The City of Sydney will be similar. The further development of the HSR proposal will benefit from support and expertise from the two capital city local governments and from the other local governments through which HSR will pass.

The Minister for Infrastructure has established a High Speed Rail Advisory Group which includes the Mayor of Lismore (NSW), Jenny Dowell, who is also president of the Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils, and a member of the Australian Council of Local Government. The Minister also noted that he may appoint more members to this group.

The City of Melbourne will contact the Minister to discuss appropriate ways for the city to have input to planning decisions relating to High Speed Rail. The City of Melbourne will also discuss with other key local governments an appropriate forum or group for further discussion of High Speed Rail.

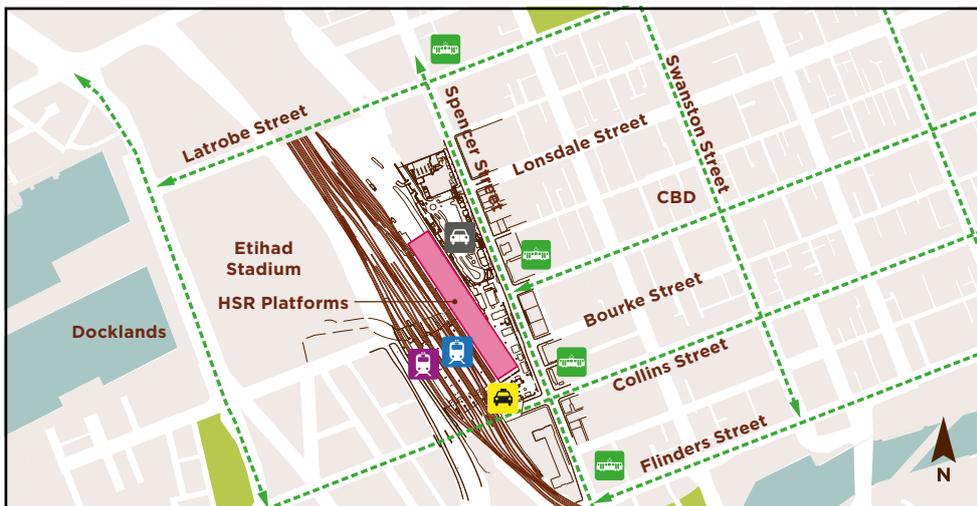
# High Speed Rail Study Preferred Alignment

Attachment 3  
Agenda Item 6.4  
Future Melbourne  
Committee  
17 June 2013



KEY — State border      ○ Station locations

Not to scale



KEY

- Suburban rail
- Regional rail
- Tram/light rail
- HSR station
- Taxi rank
- Carparking

Not to scale