

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.6

Independent transport review to assist COVID-19 recovery

15 June 2021

Presenter: Alison Leighton, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Future Melbourne Committee's endorsement for an independent review of transport activity and trends in the city.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating health, economic and social impacts on Melbourne's businesses and communities. Prior to the most recent lockdown, which began on 28 May 2021, office worker numbers in the City of Melbourne were at 41 per cent of pre-COVID-19 levels. According to the Department of Transport public transport patronage was at 57 per cent; arterial traffic volumes were at 94 per cent; commuter bicycle volumes at 77 per cent and pedestrian volumes at 64 per cent. On-street parking demand was similar to pre-COVID-19 levels.
3. An independent review is proposed to assess the current levels of transport activity and trends and to recommend cost-effective actions which support city recovery.

Key issues

4. The intended scope of the independent review is outlined in Attachment 2.
5. The review would be delivered by an independent transport and economics consultant. It would assess in as much detail as possible the current levels of activity and trends, spare capacity, pricing, trip purposes and demographic features of the key transport modes in the city. It would compare trends in the City of Melbourne with those in other Australian capital cities and key international comparator cities and investigate current sentiment and attitudes towards each mode including community concerns.
6. The review would make recommendations about appropriate transport actions to support the city's recovery. These could include (but are not limited to): changes to pricing and incentives; reallocation of road space; operational changes; marketing and promotion; behaviour change programs; employer travel planning; any other interventions. At a high level, the review would compare the costs and benefits of proposed actions in the transport sector with other initiatives which could support the city's recovery. The review would also assess proposed actions against Council's powers and the delivery of Council's commitments including adopted strategies and plans such as the *Transport Strategy 2030*.
7. It is anticipated that the findings will be available in August 2021 and it is proposed management presents the findings to a future Future Melbourne Committee.

Recommendation from management

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 8.1. Endorses management to undertake an independent transport review to assess transport activity and trends in the city and identify actions that could be taken to support city recovery and achieve policy outcomes of the *Transport Strategy 2030*.
 - 8.2. Requests management to present a report at a future meeting of the committee, detailing the conclusions of the review and subsequent actions arising.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 4)
2. Scope of Review (Page 3 of 4)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no specific legal implications of this review.

Finance

2. Consultants will be sought through standard procurement processes.
3. The cost of the review can be supported within existing budget provisions.
4. The review is likely to recommend actions which may have financial implications and these would be subject to budget considerations.

Conflict of interest

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

Health and Safety

6. In developing this proposal, no occupational health and safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

7. External stakeholder consultation may be required as part of the review and will be determined once the consultant has been procured.

Relation to Council policy

8. This recommendation is consistent with the COVID-19 Reactivation and Recovery Plan and the draft Economic Development Strategy.
9. Recommendations in the review will be cognisant of the *Transport Strategy 2030*.

Environmental sustainability

10. Any proposals which arise from the review will be considered in light of existing council policy including environmental sustainability.

INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT REVIEW TO ASSIST COVID-19 RECOVERY

Scope of review

1. The independent review is proposed to include the following parameters:
 - 1.1. Assess current levels of activity and trends, spare capacity, pricing, trip purposes and demographic features of all transport modes in the city including:
 - 1.1.1. Walking as transport, an indicator of city activity and its relationship to other modes
 - 1.1.2. Private motor vehicles, including on and off-street parking
 - 1.1.3. Commercial passenger vehicles (including Taxi and app-booked services)
 - 1.1.4. All modes of public transport
 - 1.1.5. Bicycle riding
 - 1.1.6. Micro-mobility services
 - 1.1.7. Last kilometre freight.
 - 1.2. Assess current sentiment and trends in attitudes towards each mode including key community concerns.
 - 1.3. Compare trends in the City of Melbourne with those in other Victorian local government areas, Australian capital cities and key international comparator cities. Document and assess any interventions in the transport network (proposed or delivered) in other cities designed to aid city recovery in those cities post Covid-19. Comment on their relevance to Melbourne and likelihood of success in the Melbourne context.
 - 1.4. Assess the potential for each travel mode to bring more people into central Melbourne as well as the barriers to increasing the use of each travel mode.
 - 1.5. Make recommendations as to appropriate transport actions which could assist city recovery. These recommendations could include (but are not limited to):
 - 1.5.1. changes to pricing (including a range of incentives and price changes which would encourage the use of different modes)
 - 1.5.2. reallocation of road space to support different modes
 - 1.5.3. operational changes
 - 1.5.4. marketing and promotion;
 - 1.5.5. behaviour change programs and employer travel planning
 - 1.5.6. other actions.
 - 1.6. Compare the costs and benefits of these actions, especially in the short to medium term.
 - 1.7. At a high level, compare the effectiveness of interventions in the transport sector with other initiatives which could aid city recovery.
2. The review would seek to use the most up-to-date mobility data collection, analysis and presentation tools including app-based, mobile phone and GPS data where possible as well as Victorian Government and City of Melbourne data sources.

3. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, transport activity has changed significantly. For example, public transport use has reduced while the use of bicycles has increased. The review would take account of the latest thinking and forecasting on the best approaches for Melbourne's recovery from COVID-19 and propose how the transport system can align with these approaches.
4. As part of the COVID-19 recovery and the response to the climate emergency, City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government have accelerated changes to the city's road network including introducing dining parklets, shared zones in Little Streets, protected bicycle lanes and new tram barriers. Some of these changes brought forward longer term plans from the City of Melbourne's *Transport Strategy 2030*. They included changes to parking, loading zones and traffic lanes. The review will assess whether adjustments to these initiatives are required to assist in the city's economic recovery.
5. Most off-street parking in the central city is not operated by City of Melbourne. The review will consider whether there are opportunities to work with off-street parking providers to improve access to car parking facilities.