

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

**OBJECTION TO AMENDMENT TO PLANNING SCHEME
AND GRANTING OF PLANNING PERMIT**

AMENDMENT C32
APPLICATION 0873/02

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AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02
Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Recommendation to Council.....	3
Overview	4
Impact of Development.....	4
Urban Planning Framework.....	5
Access and Equity.....	5
Car Dependence and Road Congestion.....	6
Public Transport Access	7
Basic Service Standards for Public Transport	9
Hours of Operation.....	9
Minimum Service Frequencies.....	9
About the PTUA	10
Conclusion	11

AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02
Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

Executive Summary

The PTUA opposes the expansion of Chadstone Shopping Centre on the following grounds

1. Chadstone is a Principal Activity Centre under Melbourne 2030, which is isolated from the major public transport networks.
2. Major upgrades to public transport are required to bring access to Chadstone up to standard.
3. It is counter-productive to permit large-scale increase in area at Chadstone *before* any public transport improvements are in place.

The PTUA accepts that public transport provision is not the responsibility of the City of Stonnington. However, Stonnington can make a major contribution to the problem of car dependence by

1. Opposing inappropriate (car dependent) development.
2. Adopting pro-public transport planning policies (including desired minimum service standards)
3. Independently, and in conjunction with other local councils, making representations to state government to ensure that appropriate public transport is provided as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation to Council

1. City of Stonnington refuse planning permission for expansion of Chadstone Shopping Centre as detrimental to good urban form and contrary to extant State planning policies
2. City of Stonnington enter into extensive negotiations with the State government to ensure that Chadstone is provided with adequate public transport to surrounding areas and fixed transport nodes during *all hours of centre operation* (including late night cinema/bookshop/restaurant opening) and encourage other local governments to do likewise
3. Council, in conjunction with Gandel and the Department of Infrastructure commence an extensive investigation into the present and future public transport needs of the Chadstone Shopping Centre and consequent implications for present and future service and infrastructure requirements.
4. City of Stonnington adopt the PTUA's recommendations for minimum public transport provision for Chadstone

AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02
Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

Overview

The City of Stonnington has invited submissions from affected individuals on Stonnington Planning Scheme Amendment C32, Application 0973/02. This details proposals by Gandel Project Management Pty Ltd (as agents for owners of the land) to make extensions to Chadstone Shopping Centre, situated at 1341 Dandenong Rd, East Malvern.

Inter-alia, the proposal seeks to increase the retail space of Chadstone Shopping Centre by nearly 40 percent (from 106 000 to 146 000 square metres), eliminate restrictions on non-retail uses, and increase the number of car parking spaces from approximately 8 000 to 9 494.

Impact of Development

The PTUA of the view that the proposal in its current form will lead to excessive vehicular traffic and loss of amenity for residents in the immediate vicinity of Chadstone Shopping Centre, as well as the wider South-eastern suburbs. We also consider that the adoption of this amendment without modification is contrary to the spirit and substance of the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy that the City of Stonnington is required to uphold when making planning decisions.

In order for an expanded Chadstone not to have a deleterious impact on both surrounding residents and Melbourne as a whole, this submission argues that a much stronger role for public transport must accompany any expansion proposal for Chadstone Shopping Centre. Given that this position is fully consistent with the Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy (which mandates a twenty percent share for public transport in 2030), we conclude that it is appropriate that the City of Stonnington require public transport improvements before Chadstone's expansion proposals are approved.

The fact that Chadstone is a Principal Activity Centre does not give automatic right to further development. Rather, it is essential the development be carefully balanced with the improved infrastructure and service requirements of the area.

In the case of Chadstone Shopping Centre, this balance has not been reached, and no further expansions to the Centre should be approved until and unless this balance has been reached.

Urban Planning Framework

The current primary document for Urban Planning in Melbourne is *Melbourne 2030*, released in 2002 by the state government. Integration of land use with transport planning, together with significant increases in public transport patronage are key elements of *Melbourne 2030*:

Improved integration of transport

Activity centres and their future planning will play an important role in achieving the Government's target of 20 per cent of motorised trips on public transport by 2020. It will not be enough to focus on a small number of larger trip-generating activity centres, because even the top 100 activity centres (in terms of floor space) in metropolitan Melbourne account for less than 28 per cent of all trips. Our approach will need to cover the whole network of centres.

The transport-related benefits of concentrating activities and providing a mix of uses in activity centres include reduced reliance on private motoring and higher use of more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. An important social outcome is improved accessibility to activities (and employment) by public transport. A good mix of uses also leads to more efficient design of public transport services and a spread of travel demand throughout the day.

Access and Equity

To ensure long-term economic growth and improvements in environment quality and social equity, we need to progressively decouple economic growth from increase in the use of private cars.

-- *Melbourne 2030 Strategy – Integrated Transport (draft) – p3*

Despite it being within three kilometres of three suburban railway lines and being located in an established suburban area, we are concerned that Chadstone remains one of Melbourne's only major activity centres without good quality public transport access.

As the centre expanded and extended its operating hours, transport services have fallen behind. Despite a three-fold increase in retail floor size, bus services to Chadstone are less frequent now than they were in 1984. The introduction of Sunday trading was not matched by an improvement to public transport; despite Sunday being one of the centre's busiest trading days. Six years on from the introduction of Sunday trading, just two bus routes operate on Sundays, with typical waits up to 70 or 80 minutes. The result is that public transport services are at their poorest when

AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02

Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

Chadstone is at its busiest, and most Chadstone patrons have no practical choice but to drive.

The lack of public transport results in two major sets of problems.

1. Serious traffic problems, both local and wider. Of specific concern are

- Warrigal Road
- Chadstone Road
- Malvern Road
- Dandenong Road (Princes Highway)
- Poath Road

2. Accessibility problems as facilities become only available by car. Although all members of society are affected, lack of accessibility particularly affects older people (who may not wish or be able to drive) and younger people (who may not have reached driving age, not have a car or have a 0% blood-alcohol limit). The types of services that are affected may include

- Government services (such as Medicare)
- Other health services (doctor, dentist)
- Other services (post office, banks, insurance)
- Recreational facilities (cinema, bowling alley, gym)
- Cafes, bars and restaurants

It is notable that the proposed expansion of the centre will include a greater proportion of bulk-goods and similar retail that is not particularly suited to public transport access. Thus, it is essential that a significantly greater proportion of users of the leisure facilities, office and discretionary retail (such as fashion shopping) are transferred to public transport.

Car Dependence and Road Congestion

Most weekends, and particularly at peak times such as before Christmas and during post-Christmas sales, car parking at Chadstone is at a premium, and traffic congestion within the centre – almost to gridlock levels – is not uncommon. This leads on to congestion on Warrigal and Dandenong Roads, which can have a major impact on travel times both on local trips in the vicinity of Chadstone, and for those passing through the area.

At Chadstone, the car park capital, some people waited 30 minutes for a space. Many were impatient and parked on the nature strip on Dandenong Road, while getting there proved the biggest obstacle for others stuck in traffic on Warrigal Road.

-- The Age, "Shoppers hold up their end of the bargain" 27/12/2002

AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02

Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

The proposed expansion of the centre by some 30% (retail space) will also involve increasing car parking by almost 20%. With no expansion of public transport services, the current problems will be exacerbated, with more and more people arriving by car.

This in itself flies in the face of the state government’s Melbourne 2030 strategy, which aims to reduce, not increase car dependence. In fact it implies that the expansion of shopping centres should *not* be linked to expansion of car parks:

Public Transport Access

Upgrade and develop the Principal Public Transport Network and local public transport services to connect activity centres and link Melbourne to the regional cities

-- Melbourne 2030. Policy 8.1

To decrease car dependence, better public transport needs to be provided, to allow consumers to have a choice about how they reach the centre. Because of its distance from train and tram routes, this relates primarily to bus services.

The quality of bus services currently serving Chadstone is not sufficient to attract patrons who have a choice. While the area covered by Chadstone’s bus services is large, almost all the services are far too infrequent to be useable. Most run at 30-minute frequencies on weekdays, and hourly or worse on Saturdays. The waiting time between buses alone is much longer than the travel time to the centre by car, even if the time taken to find a car space is added.

At many times during centre operations (including Sunday, one of the two busiest days of trading), most bus routes are not running at all.

Chadstone opening hours	Weekday daytime 0900 to 1730	Thu-Fri evenings to 2100	Saturday 0900 to 1700	Sunday 1000 to 1700
Bus routes operating	12	1	10	2
Typical service: Bus 623 – St Kilda to Glen Waverley via Chadstone	Every 30 minutes	None	Hourly	None

By contrast, many of the older suburban shopping strip centres elsewhere in Stonnington have public transport services running 7 days a week from various directions. Frequencies are much higher, allowing significant numbers of people use these services to reach the centre.

Malvern Central, for instance, is a smaller centre within the Glenferrie Road strip shopping centre, and has four full time transport routes within a few minutes’ walk.

Malvern Central opening	Weekday	Thu-Fri	Saturday	Sunday
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AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02
Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

hours	daytime 0900 to 1730	evenings to 2100	0900 to 1700	1000 to 1700
Routes operating	Train: 2 Tram: 2	Train: 2 Tram: 2	Train: 2 Tram: 2	Train: 2 Tram: 2
Typical service: Tram 69 – St Kilda to Kew via Malvern	Every 12 minutes	Every 20 minutes	Every 12 minutes	Every 12 minutes

Stonnington, as the local council presiding over this planning application, has a role to play in reaching a more positive outcome in relation to transport. To allow this expansion of Chadstone without looking properly at the transport implications is to increase car congestion and dependency.

Of particular importance for local government will be the approach taken to planning and development applications –ensuring that land-use decisions support transport outcomes. Melbourne 2030 requires development to consider the principles of sustainability and integrating social, environmental and economic aspirations. In practical terms, this will mean clustering a range of activities and ensuring priority access for public transport vehicles, walkers and cyclists.

-- Melbourne 2030 Strategy – Integrated Transport (draft) – p11

As part of the Chadstone expansion, bus services to the centre should be reviewed, with the aim of dramatically increasing the operating hours and frequency of services to allow more centre users the choice of travelling to Chadstone without their cars. This would reduce the impact of increased traffic congestion within the centre, on nearby arterial roads, and in surrounding local streets.

Melbourne 2030 anticipates that public transport will need to be improved, particularly to Activity Centres such as Chadstone. However, major improvements of the type required have not yet occurred and do not appear to be planned for the near future.

Basic Service Standards for Public Transport

If Public Transport is to make a major contribution to the Centre's transport needs, it is necessary that services be provided at all hours that the Centre is operating, as well as at frequencies that will attract those people who would otherwise use a car.

Based on international standards, the PTUA presents the following as recommended minimum hours of operation and service frequencies:

Hours of Operation

Full service to be provided during *retail hours* and lesser service may be provided during other (*leisure*) hours. However, it should be noted that the service that is required in leisure hours is significantly greater than the peak hour service provided to the centre presently.

Retail hours

Monday - Wednesday	8am to 6.30 pm (to allow for workers)
Thursday and Friday	8 am - 9.30 pm
Saturday	8 am - 6 pm
Sunday	8 am - 6 pm

Leisure Hours

Monday - Thursday	6.30 pm - Midnight
Friday	9.30 pm - 2 am
Saturday	6 pm - 2 am
Sunday	6 pm - Midnight

Minimum Service Frequencies

Retail hours: 10 minutes preferable, 15 minutes minimum

Leisure hours: 15 minutes preferable, 20 minutes minimum

Service Integration

It is clear that all areas of Melbourne cannot be directly linked to Chadstone Shopping Centre by bus. For this reason, it is essential that bus services be integrated to the wider public transport network.

In the case of Chadstone, this means providing services to local railway stations at frequencies that are compatible with the rail service.

AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02
Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

About the PTUA

The Public Transport Users Association Inc. is Victoria's leading consumer-based Public Transport advocacy group. Its mission states that:

The PTUA is committed to

- *An equitable society*
- *A healthy ecology*
- *A sustainable economy*

where Victorians can go anywhere, anytime, using a community controlled public transport system that is convenient, effective and safe.

The strategic nature of Chadstone as a Principal Activity Centre for Melbourne together with concerns raised by its membership in the Southeastern suburbs has prompted it to produce this submission.

In this submission, we can only briefly outline our concerns and briefly suggest some remedies. We look forward to being given the opportunity to present further to Council.

AMENDMENT C32 APPLICATION 0873/02
Objection by the Public Transport Users Association Inc.

Conclusion

The PTUA believes that further development of the Chadstone Shopping Centre in line with Application 0873/02 will lead to excessive vehicular traffic and loss of amenity for local residents and others in the Southeastern suburbs, and should be rejected.

Chadstone Shopping Centre suffers from some of the poorest public transport services of any of the Principal Activity Centres throughout Melbourne. A significant improvement to public transport services are urgently required to service the existing shopping centre and further expansions will be required at the Centre grows.

We believe that it is both inappropriate and contrary to the spirit of State Government's Metropolitan Strategy that further development be allowed before significant improvements to public transport are put in place. For this reason Amendment C32 should also be rejected.

The fact that Chadstone is a Principal Activity Centre does not give automatic right to further development. Rather, it is essential the development be carefully balanced with the improved infrastructure and service requirements of the area.

In the case of Chadstone Shopping Centre, this balance has not been reached, and no further expansions to the Centre should be approved until and unless this balance has been reached.