

Public Transport Users Association

Submission on Draft Market Square Quarter Masterplan

City of Greater Geelong

February 8th 2024



**PUBLIC TRANSPORT
USERS ASSOCIATION**

The Geelong Branch of the Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) supports the City of Greater Geelong's efforts to improve the Market Square precinct, through a master planning process.

The Market Square precinct provides a unique opportunity for urban renewal being already well served by the adjoining Moorabool Street Bus Interchange, unfortunately, many years of neglect, car-centric policy and a lack of cross-authority collaboration have allowed the precinct to deteriorate into a dilapidated state that many feel unsafe using, including potential bus passengers passing through to other CBD precincts.

Moorabool Street Bus Interchange

Attention must be given to the Moorabool Street Bus Interchange. The current implementation was welcomed by the branch at the time as it allowed cross-route interchange as opposed to the previous arrangement where each route terminated at a different location across the CBD. The accompanying infrastructure however, could have been designed better and has created a space that is less than ideal for bus passengers, residents and shoppers alike.

The master plan proposes to move the bus stops into the centre of the road in a design similar to tram superstores in Melbourne whilst restricting vehicle traffic on Moorabool Street.

The PTUA supports this plan and would like it further developed to ensure it serves passengers well into the future. Features such as an end-to-end shelter, ample seating, passenger information displays (PIDs), help points and drinking fountains will greatly improve the amenity and attractiveness of the interchange and should all be included.

Bus interchange facilities should not be restricted to Moorabool Street, Installation of PIDs within Little Moorabool Street would allow passengers to spend more time in the space moving closer to the stop when their bus is closer.

Currently, all inbound bus routes (except Route 1) that pass through the interchange terminate at the nearby Geelong station. This means that the stop on the eastern side of Moorabool Street has a much larger number of waiting passengers who require seating, shelter and other amenities. The western side is mostly used for drop-offs where clear wide walkways are most important. If budget constraints pose a challenge, the branch would prefer to see a high level of amenities provided on the eastern side rather than a mediocre level of amenities provided on both sides.

The City of Greater Geelong has told the branch that further work on the Moorabool Street Interchange will occur in collaboration with the Department of Transport and Planning through a Streetscape masterplan for Moorabool Street pending future council budget allocation.

Vehicle Access

The branch is supportive of the prioritisation of pedestrians throughout the precinct and endorses the reduction of vehicle traffic through Little Malop and Union Streets. Currently, it is proposed to fully restrict vehicle access between Moorabool and Rock O'Cashel Lane, converting it into a plaza space. The remaining section of Little Malop Street between Rock O'Cashel Lane and Yarra Street and the entirety of Union Street will become a slow zone similar to what is currently in place on the western side of Little Malop Street between Gheringhap and James Street.

However, more can be done to greatly improve the space for pedestrians and allow for more alfresco retail and hospitality opportunities within the space. A breakthrough of Banks Place to Yarra Street, at 88 Yarra St would allow Banks Place to be serviced via Yarra Street and create an additional fully restricted plaza space on Little Malop Street between Union and Yarra Streets. This breakthrough should be relatively easy as there is no structure on the property in question.

Built Form

The PTUA is highly supportive of all three options presented for the precinct and prefers Option 3 - Market Village. This is due to the increased opportunity for residential development. We believe it to be essential to expand the high to medium density residential populations within the Geelong CBD. Currently, the city is over-reliant on car-centric outer suburban greenfield developments to increase the housing stock and foster population growth.

The recommended Option 1 - Malop Heart promotes residential development towards the western Yarra Street side of the precinct. Pedestrian access from residential buildings to the precinct is essential to ensuring active and public transport are considered the primary transport mode of residents. Buildings with Pedestrian entrances only on Yarra Street will reduce this opportunity greatly as Yarra Street will become a primary road thoroughfare to access basement car parking and loading bays detouring residents from walking.

The success of any developments in this precinct will rely on the council being willing to work at a close level with developers and the state government to provide office, retail and residential spaces that work for both visitors and residents of Geelong.