Mount Wellington: Sustainable Transport System

1 December 2009

Wellington Park
Management Trust

1. Aim

The Trust is seeking to identify a sustainable transport system (STS) for access to Mount Wellington. The system will offer transport options that maintain existing visitor numbers, and provide opportunities for sustainable growth of visitation over the longer term.

2. Background

The Trust has sought to involve the community in determining a system of transport for access to Mount Wellington that incorporates a range of transport options (or modes). The system is required to meet the *Criteria for a Sustainable Transport System* developed by the Centre for Sustainable Transport, Canada, and adopted both nationally and internationally. Broadly, a sustainable transport system is one that provides a range of safe, efficient and affordable transport options (or modes), with minimal consumption of energy and resources (refer section 5).

In May 2009, the Trust released an *Invitation for Ideas*, seeking to promote community discussion on what transport options may be acceptable. The Trust received 69 submissions in response to the call for ideas.

The ideas put forward were reviewed in light of the strengths and weaknesses of individual options, including a review of social, environmental and economic issues, and the sustainable transport criteria. Importantly, the modes were also reviewed in light of the particular constraints of the local environment of the Mountain, and also the planning and policy controls established by the Trust to manage the broader Park.

In November 2009, the Trust released a draft STS based upon the above review, and received 13 submissions. Following consideration of the submissions, the Trust endorsed the STS on 1 December 2009.

3. Limitations

The STS has particular limitations, including:

- a focus on high visitation areas and routes rather than general access areas;
- a focus on transport options achievable in the next five years;
- the need for the proposed visitor centre at the Springs, as a key visitor attraction and potential transport hub, to play a role in any future STS; and
- the desirability, for the foreseeable future, for the STS to incorporate an independent form of transport for the community e.g. private vehicle access via Pinnacle Road.

As noted above, a further key limitation is the physical environment of the Mountain, and the potential impacts of adverse weather on transport availability and public safety.

Further, it is noted that the review of the *Wellington Park Management Plan 2005* (scheduled to commence in late 2010) may have implications for the provision of transport options within the Park. The STS will be reviewed following the finalisation of any new Management Plan.

4. Sustainable Transport Criteria

The following criteria, prepared by the Centre for Sustainable Transportation, Canada, has been adopted locally (Australian Local Government Association) and internationally (European Council of Ministers for Transport, Transport Canada).

A sustainable transport system is one that:

- Allows the basic access needs of individuals and societies to be met safely and in a manner consistent with human and ecosystem health, and with equity within and between generations;
- Is affordable, operates efficiently, offers choice of transport mode, and supports a vibrant economy;
- Limits emissions and waste within the planet's ability to absorb them;
- Minimizes consumption of non-renewable resources, limits consumption of renewable resources to the sustainable yield level; and
- Reuses and recycles its components, and minimizes the use of land and the production of noise.

5. Endorsed Sustainable Transport System

The Trust has endorsed an STS consisting of:

PRIMARY MODES

- *Individual access by private car*

  This mode takes account of the ready availability of private cars for a great majority of the Park's visitors, particularly during snow periods. The mode is relatively cheap (putting aside the capital cost of buying a car), and accessible to the general community. It requires on-ground resourcing during peak visitation periods however has an established network of roads and carparks which serve the purpose for the majority of the year, and requires minimal increase in infrastructure.

- *A shuttle-bus service provided by licensed private operators.*

  This mode is complementary to private cars, however would assist in reducing congestion, and provides an alternative for those without easy access to private cars. The mode could be run all-year-round, with commencement from the Springs or from the city, but importantly is relatively flexible allowing alterations to capacity and frequency.

  The mode also offers potential access during snow periods, depending upon the technical features of the buses. A service could operate from the Springs either on an opportunity basis or as a permanent winter feature.

  Buses could be required to have bike carriage capability, and could deliver an interpretive experience during the journey. A variety of additional incentives may be possible to encourage usage.

- *Walking*

  This mode would continue as per existing, with walking access from outside or from within the Park. The mode would be complementary to any shuttle-bus service, allowing for travel to various locations within the Park.

SECONDARY MODES

- *Bike riding*
- *Other private operators and services e.g. taxi services operating from outside of the Park*

  These modes are presumed to continue complementary to the Primary Modes. Links between the Mountain and the surrounding areas will continue to be enhanced to maximise walking and cycling opportunities.

POTENTIAL MODES

- Future modes will be required to build upon the above modes to enhance the overall sustainable transport system. Any future mode should be either complementary to an existing mode, or provide a suitable replacement. Any future mode will be required to meet:
  - The needs of the community and visitors to the Park;
  - The sustainable transport criteria;
  - The management policies and objectives of the Wellington Park planning framework; and
  - The vision of the Trust for the ongoing management of the Park.

6. Assessment of the System Against Criteria

The system is made up of the individual transport modes. It is important that the Trust provide for a range of transport modes given the differing needs of Park visitors. In relation to the criteria provided by the Centre for Sustainable Transportation (Canada), it is considered that the system provides:

- The best use of existing infrastructure and desires of the community, thereby reducing the reliance on construction of new facilities and use of land.
- For no net-increase in emissions beyond existing levels, especially noise, and minimises any aesthetic impacts.
- A primary mode that is generally safe and readily available to a wide cross-section of the local and tourist communities.
- A primary mode that provides an option for those not able to obtain private vehicle access.
- A choice of secondary modes that provide for low impact, low cost options for the physically capable.
- A primary mode (buses) that may create opportunities to enhance the local economy.