

Submission to the  
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
on the proposed  
BEDFORD PARK TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

**Option 1** – BUS : RAIL Interchange Development Application No.  
49/100/0010/01

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## Introduction

This submission expresses support for the development of a public transport interchange at Bedford Park. We would like to outline what features we believe to be essential to the success of the proposal, some of which seem to have been taken into account in the proposal. In addition we would also raise questions about matters that we feel have not been as yet adequately covered in the information released.

Our comments relate to three broad categories:

- 1) provision of services
- 2) the interchange site
- 3) use of the Tonsley rail line

## Provision of Services

The tender document for the construction of the interchange states that:

"There are currently only limited cross town bus services between major trip generators in the general vicinity of Bedford Park, such as Flinders University, Flinders Medical Centre and the Westfield Marion Shopping Centre."

p 5. Expression of Interest, The Design and construction of Bedford Park Public Transport Interchange, Contract No. 164C0, Department for Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts

To this list we would add the Science Park precinct, the Warriparinga Wetlands as well as the Marion Council Chambers and all the other offices immediately surrounding the Council.

We believe the interchange provides an excellent opportunity to review and improve public transport services in the southern region as a whole. The interchange will not of itself greatly improve matters without a better integration of public transport services in the surrounding area and in areas further south. This would require several things;

- An increased frequency of services for all buses that travel in the relevant region. This would include South Rd, Sturt Rd and Southern Expressway services in the immediate area. Further afield an improved link to the Blackwood Railway Station, for instance, would allow residents further east to access facilities in the Tonsley and Marion area.
- An increase in the frequency of rail services along the Tonsley Line (whether or not it is extended) and preferably improved train scheduling in the other nearby rail lines.
- Improved night time and week end services. People should be able to get to the Medical Centre at any time. There are entertainment facilities at Flinders University that are barely used because it is very inconvenient to get there and the cinemas at the Marion Shopping Centre would certainly benefit from a larger catchment area.
- The "high level of daytime activity" mentioned in the brochure is a good objective. What is the attitude towards encouraging a high level of night time activity? Are night time & week end travellers going to be second class citizens (as with the rest of the city) or is some improvement likely that we have not heard about?
- Timetabling that would allow as many buses as possible to meet all trains on all the nearby rail lines.
- A dedicated local bus loop (make it a Go Zone) that would transport passengers to the "trip generators in the general vicinity", e.g. a bus that begins at the interchange, travels along Sturt Rd to the Marion Council, to the Marion Shopping Centre and then to the Oaklands Park Railway Station.

- A second local loop that would take in the Flinders Medical Centre and more importantly the Flinders University campus. The feeder bus services mentioned in the proposal seem to address this need. These services should of course to meet all scheduled rail services at or next to the interchange.

Would the improved regional services include routes, destinations along the Southern Expressway or are better bus or *rail* services somehow not appropriate for anyone living south of Sturt Rd ? Should not the Southern Expressway be converted into a rail corridor as well?

Although the hilly terrain inland and south of Darlington might in some places present problems for heavy rail (need for tunnels etc), light rail would not present the same difficulties and could use a narrower corridor, including along the route of the Southern Expressway.

We also believe that the train route should serve people living in the area who may want to use stations between Ascot Park and Tonsley. The proposal offers these people a half hourly service (every third train). We are glad that these trains will stop at all stations (except the old Tonsley Station) along the section of line peculiar to the Tonsley Train. Great care should be taken in choosing an interchange station between the Tonsley and Noarlunga lines. We believe that consideration should be given to using Ascot Park, although Woodlands Park has been favoured as a station with higher patronage, and this idea may have merit. The possibility of adding a stop at Goodwood to allow interchange between all three southern train lines could be considered in addition, though this would lead to longer journeys.

We would be concerned if the only purpose of the interchange were to provide a convenience for car users in the far southern suburbs, i.e. the interchange acting as a feeder for *increased private car use* from the Southern Expressway.

The interchange should be more than mass radial transport between the south and the City of Adelaide, significant as this is. We believe that cross suburban links are just as important.

We would acquaint you with the "network effect" Briefly, this involves a public transport **grid** with extensive radial **and** cross connecting routes, with very frequent services (Go Zone or better time intervals) along **all** the routes. This would allow ready passenger transfers at any point and time anywhere on the grid. The cumulative effect of convenient transfers anytime, anywhere can increase patronage significantly more than on the radial/desultory feeder service model we are accustomed to.

For further information on this concept, and examples of its effectiveness, please refer to the book by Paul Mees "A Very Public Solution: Transport in the Dispersed City", Melbourne University Press, 2000.

## The Interchange Site

In general the facilities proposed for the interchange are to be commended. A few immediately obvious concerns are raised below.

### Pedestrian Overpass

Certainly a good idea in that it separates pedestrians from South Rd traffic. Will it also extend over Sturt Rd so that people don't get run over on that side of the world?

We presume that it would at the very least allow wheelchair access. However a pedestrian facility is only really suitable for the fit and healthy and does little to improve access further up the hill. Try walking around Flinders University in extreme weather conditions. You either get fit & healthy or you become a candidate for treatment at the medical centre.

The improved bus linkages should help. Are night time and weekend services to be part of this improvement? Alternatively install well lit and secure undercover escalators and travelators throughout the immediate hills.

### **Kiosk & Toilet Facilities**

"Kiosk to be staffed during the day." This is inadequate. If we assume the existence of night time and weekend services, what will these passengers do for the services that a kiosk will provide? Perhaps this kiosk could be upgraded into a full delicatessen / pizzeria and operated by persons who would be prepared to open for extended hours.

Will the toilets have a full time attendant?

### **Bicycle Lockers**

There is no indication of the number of lockers that will be provided. Are we talking about 10, 20, 50 or 100? Is the plan to provide a large scale structure similar to the bicycle facilities that may be found in European cities? We should also expect increased numbers of rail passengers travelling with bicycles and so their needs should be met too.

Additionally how many secure motorcycle parking spots will there be? After all motorcycles are more easily stolen than cars.

### **Landscaping**

Native Australian trees, grasses and shrubs should be used. There should be plenty of shading in the entire facility, including the car parking areas. The car park should not become an asphalt desert, too hot in summer and without wind breaks in winter.

### **Other Structures ?**

Will there be provision for adding other public facilities at a later stage, e.g. instead of adding more car parking spaces alone? Will there be an option for having a private developer add both car parking and a small shopping centre and/or cafes & bistros? The former Lone Star Restaurant site could be used for this.

Some of these other shops or services could also sell tickets, at least at any time when they are not available from a ticket office at the Interchange.

In other words give people a reason to go there other than to leave again straight away. The right mix of shops would also encourage people to go there at night and weekends and hence improve security and safety.

## **Preferred Model -- Bus : Rail Interchange**

Given that the Tonsley railway station is only a few hundred metres away from the interchange site it makes a good deal of sense to extend the line. The use of rail has a number of advantages over buses.

- Trains carry more passengers per carriage than buses. A larger number of buses is needed to carry the same number of passengers that a single train can manage.
- For an equivalent or lesser cost in fuel, drivers and pollution, trains, with their greater load capacity, provide a more efficient and economical solution than buses.
- Buses need to share their route with private motor vehicles, cars & trucks, and can therefore be caught up in traffic jams, delays and any other road congestion. Trains by contrast do not need to stop for any other traffic and can travel at higher speeds than buses. No bus could possibly be as "express" as a rail line.

If the purpose is to rapidly move as many people as possible to the city centre then rail is the best option.

We feel that it would be a false economy to forego this opportunity to extend the rail line. To extend the Tonsley rail line at a later date would more than likely cost more than it would now. It would also cause disruptions to an existing bus facility when upgrading works took place.

Another consideration includes the residents living north of the interchange site on the Tonsley line and any others that would be able to reach a railway station on this line. Direct access to the interchange would improve their access to all the facilities in the Marion and Tonsley area.

## **In The Longer Term**

We should not forget that the interchange, however welcome, is only part of the solution to public transport in the wider southern region. It looks to address the problems of the immediate vicinity but we should also be concerned about larger and longer term improvements to public transport in general. A few suggestions for later developments are listed below.

- The Tonsley Rail line at the moment is only a single track. An improvement that will allow more frequent scheduling is to double track the line.
- The electrification of the rail line (this should apply to the entire metropolitan rail network.)
- With electrification it would be possible to run trams on the line instead of heavy rail carriages. A tram service could then be extended to further routes in the region. Along Sturt Rd to the Marion Shopping Centre is an obvious example ( possibly extending up Oaklands Rd to meet the Glenelg Tram line), or a tram line connecting to the Brighton Railway Station Station and also further south, inland from the Noarlunga line (See above **Provision of Services**)

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