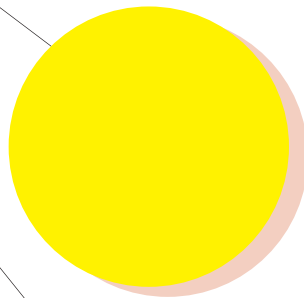
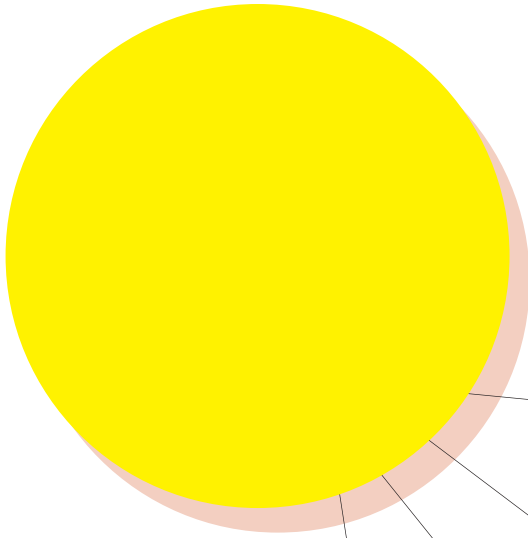


RAILWAY STATION USEABILITY PRINCIPLES

Prepared by the Station User Panel





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FOREWORD

The Station User Panel was set up in May 2011 to provide advice on how railway station development and redevelopment projects can better reflect the expectations of users and communities and enhance the places in which they are located.

The panel developed the *Railway Station Useability Principles* and recommends that the Victorian Government adopts them for all new and redeveloped station projects. The principles are a strong foundation for the government to improve its delivery of railway stations and better meet the expectations of the Victorian community.

The panel has identified the following areas for improvement:

- accessibility
- ease of navigation
- comfort and amenity
- information
- safety
- local area integration
- community ownership and activity.

The panel presents the principles to the Director of Public Transport to guide the development of new railway stations and redevelopment projects.

The principles are intended to be used in conjunction with legal, industry and best practice design standards, such as *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport*, *Victorian Rail Industry Operators' Group Standards*, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design guidelines and universal design principles. They can inform policy development and the creation of new requirements, such as the *Railway Station Client Design Requirements* which the Victorian Government is currently developing.

The panel includes members from Bicycle Network Victoria, Council on the Ageing, Public Transport Users Association, Victorian Council of Social Service, Victoria Police, Victoria Walks and Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. The Department of Transport is also represented and performs the secretariat function.

These recommendations are timely, given the Victorian Government has several new and refurbished railway stations under construction or in planning. Many of these railway stations have been referred to the Station User Panel for consideration.

It is a privilege to chair the Station User Panel, and as a regular public transport user, I commend the *Railway Station Useability Principles* to the Director of Public Transport for consideration by the Minister for Public Transport.



Lawrence Seyers
Chair, Station User Panel
December 2011



INTRODUCTION

The Station User Panel developed the *Railway Station Useability Principles* to improve people's experience of the rail system. The principles highlight a range of user requirements that must be incorporated into the construction and refurbishment of railway stations, and can be applied to existing stations as well.

The *Railway Station Useability Principles* (the principles) have been developed to inform Victorian Government policy on the operation and development of stations. They reflect community and user expectations for railway stations.

The principles are intended to enhance and complement existing operators' design and service delivery standards and other legal and discretionary requirements. The Station User Panel (the panel) recommends mandating these principles for all future station development and redevelopment projects, and also using the principles to inform policy development on use and operation of all existing stations.

The principles provide:

- a set of user requirements to inform the planning, design and operation of railway stations
- an outline of how to improve the quality of existing and proposed railway stations
- an approach to station design and operation that accounts for all forms of movement, local context and environmental issues.

Incorporating the principles into policy will ensure that user needs underpin the design and delivery of transport infrastructure. This is a central tenet in the *Transport Integration Act (2010)*, which requires transport agencies to take account of the 'user perspective.' The Act encourages transport agencies to understand and prioritise the views of transport system users and improve transport useability. By focusing on the quality of the users' experience, the government can ensure that the construction and refurbishment of stations meets the needs of the people who use them. Following the principles gives users a voice and enhances their experience of railway stations.



SUMMARY OF THE RAILWAY STATION USEABILITY PRINCIPLES

The panel has developed seven principles for railway station useability. Each principle includes a description of the key elements, user-identified issues, and how to address them.

Below is a summary of the key elements for each of the principles.

1.

Accessibility

- **equitable access** for all users, regardless of personal circumstances
- **seamless connections** between transport modes and with external routes and destinations
- **convenient station location** that is close to key local activities and destinations.

2.

Ease of navigation

- **simple station layout** that is intuitive and promotes ease of movement
- **effective wayfinding** to help people locate facilities and connect between transport modes and with external routes and destinations.

3.

Comfort and amenity

- **convenient facilities** that are available where and when users need them
- **pleasant station design** that attracts people and encourages them to use the station
- **ongoing maintenance** that ensures the station is clean and functional.

4.

Information

- **timely service information** that helps users to plan their trips and make informed decisions
- **accessible and comprehensive station information** that is easy to find and follow
- **customer service philosophy** that helps everyone using the station.



5.

Safety

- **safe access** to the station and within the station precinct
- **sense of security** that ensures users can see and be seen, adding to their sense of safety
- **help in an emergency** that is available through clear emergency procedures, information and assistance.

6.

Local area integration

- **connection with the surrounding area** that is clearly marked, including connections to and across the station
- **contribution to the sense of place** which improves the liveability of the local area.

7.

Community ownership and activity

- **active community engagement** that is sought during the design and delivery of the station
- **ongoing community involvement** once the station is operational.



OVERARCHING USEABILITY DIRECTIONS

The following overarching directions underpin the principles:

- improving railway station effectiveness
- making railway stations people focused
- adopting universal design for all railway station works
- ensuring integration between different modes, between authorities and with the community
- recognising stations are located in a community context.

Improving railway station effectiveness

Stations are a central part of the transport system, and in getting people from A to B. An effective railway station offers services that are reliable and punctual in peak and non-peak times, and respond to population growth and change.

Making railway stations people focused

Making railway stations people focused means recognising that their primary purpose is to assist people to access jobs, services and other activities. Stations must therefore reflect people's lifestyles and their expectations of the 'experience'. In addition, station design must be cognisant of the needs of the people who use, live and work in the general area around the station.

If there are conflicts and/or trade-offs in the design and operation of stations, passenger needs must come first over competing interests, such as freight. Negative effects on users and community members must be minimised during the construction and when the station is operational.

Adopting universal design for all railway station works

Universal design makes the built environment more useable for a broad range of people. Railway stations must include accessible solutions that promote inclusion and minimise segregation. This means that station design caters for all levels of mobility, demographics and cultures. Ideally, a station will offer unique and enjoyable experiences for everyone without separating people based on their level of ability. A transport system based on universal design creates opportunities for participation in social and economic activities for more people, and encourages interaction, rather than isolation.



Ensuring integration between different modes, between authorities and with the community

Users expect to simply and easily transfer between different modes of transport at a railway station. This requires timetables where services connect seamlessly, clear links from the station to other public transport services and good-quality walking and cycling paths, bicycle cages and car parking for smooth transition to non-public transport modes.

Transport users and other community members are often unaware of the administrative boundaries and land and infrastructure management responsibilities of different organisations. Yet, the collaboration between these parties is central to the success of a railway station. Different levels of government, land managers, residents and retailers associations, public transport and community groups, users and public transport operators all have an interest in the success of a station. These parties need to create a shared vision they can deliver. The principles will inform strategic land use, structural and precinct plan development around stations.

Recognising stations are located in a community context

Railway stations are important public spaces that are a gateway between communities and the public transport system. Many people in the community view stations as a community facility and, in some areas, take an active role in maintaining the station. Passengers also use stations as meeting places, somewhere to socialise or as a way to access local activities.

All railway stations exist in a broader social, economic and environmental context. In established areas, railway stations may already have housing, retail, offices, recreation and other types of land uses and services around them. In growth areas, the land may be relatively undeveloped and will take shape over a number of years.

As a relatively permanent and key transport point, stations provide a focus for development and have the potential to become a community hub where people shop, work, meet, relax and live. As a result, they play an important role in adding to the economic prosperity and social wellbeing of the community. By concentrating a range of activities in the station area, more people will use the public space and create a sense of vibrancy.



RAILWAY STATION ZONES

The best railway stations consider the wider geographic area. They recognise that stations are portals to accessing the public transport network, changing transport modes, and public thoroughfares. They also recognise that stations themselves can provide more than a transport function, they can be places for the community to gather; by including retail spaces or community gardens.

The principles in this document apply to a range of zones around the station, including:

- the railway station itself
- facilities within the railway station precinct
- access routes to, from, and within the railway station and across the railway line and precinct
- the local area surrounding the railway station.

The interaction between transport infrastructure, the characteristics of the area and the communities they service influence the role, function and 'look and feel' of railway station zones. As such, station design must be flexible and respond to the specific circumstances of the place where the station is located.

Railway station

Railway infrastructure where passengers board or alight from trains. Includes facilities, such as platforms, station buildings, ticket machines, toilets, waiting area, seats and passenger information displays.

Facilities within the railway station precinct

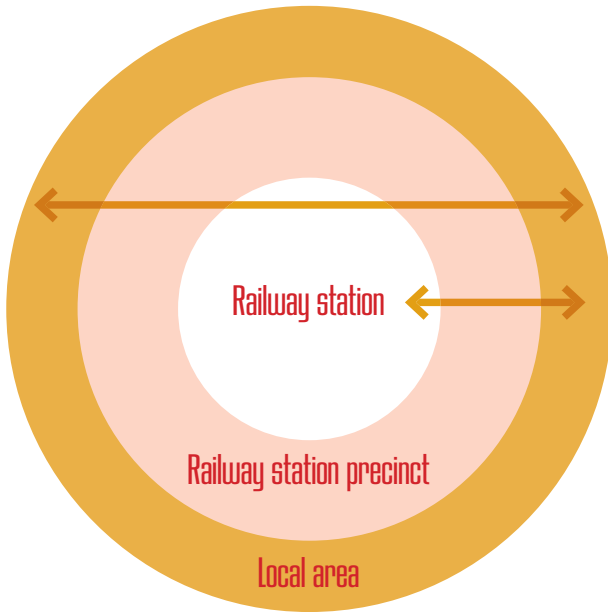
Includes cafes, retail entrances and displays, seating, toilets, vending machines, landscaping, artworks, bicycle cages, car parks, drop-off zones, taxi rank and bus bays.

Access routes to and from the railway station and across the railway line and precinct

Public access areas, including overpasses, underpasses, walking and cycling routes, roads and nearby public transport routes.

The local area surrounding the railway station

The area and facilities near the railway station. Includes local shops, parks, community facilities, offices and residences.



Access across the station

Access to, from and within the station



PRINCIPLE 1: ACCESSIBILITY

An accessible station is one that everyone can use, efficiently connects different transport modes and incorporates the idea of universal design. An accessible station is also one that is well positioned, in a place that is safe and secure and links to surrounding destinations.

The panel identified the following elements as central to creating an accessible station:

- **equitable access** for all users, regardless of personal circumstances
- **seamless connections** between transport modes and with external routes and destinations
- **convenient station location** that is close to key local activities and destinations.

User-identified issues

Equitable access

- When a lift breaks down and a ramp is not available, there is no access to the station for those unable to use the stairs.
- A small lift that only fits one pram/scooter/wheelchair at a time, causes delays.
- A small lift that cannot fit an ambulance trolley causes problems during a medical emergency.
- Access paths and ramps, including those going across the rail line, that are indirect are difficult to navigate and time consuming, particularly for the mobility impaired or those in a hurry.
- An underpass that is prone to flooding limits access to the station for users, and disconnects communities on either side of the rail corridor.
- A high overpass that caters for double-stacked freight trains necessitates long ramps that are time consuming and difficult to use, particularly for seniors and those in a hurry.
- Steps and gaps between the platform and train make boarding difficult and dangerous, particularly for seniors, mobility impaired and parents with prams or small children.

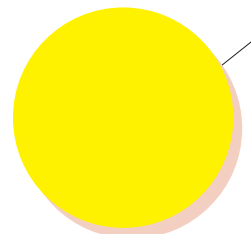
- A bicycle channel on the stairs that is too close to the handrail is unusable.
- Tactile ground surface indicators that are complex, inconsistent, missing or of poor quality are of little use and dangerous.
- Separate ticketed areas at an interchange station requiring users to touch off and on when moving between platforms are inconvenient.

Seamless connections

- Prioritising the location of the car park over pedestrian access and bicycle facilities creates an unfriendly and unsafe walking and cycling environment.
- Locating bus interchanges, bicycle cages and taxi bays a long way from the station discourages use of these modes and is dangerous for users who need to walk through a car park to access them.
- Access paths from the surrounding area that are not clearly marked or given priority over private vehicle access, discourage active transport and present hazards for users.
- Unclear and complicated connections between different transport modes are inconvenient and time consuming.

Convenient station location

- Locating a station away from an activity centre and existing transport routes makes the station and train network more difficult to access and use.
- A station that is located inside a commercial development that uses circuitous access routes is difficult to find and unsafe, particularly after hours.





Addressing the accessibility principle

Equitable access

Requires:

- multiple options to get to and move within the station:
 - ramps (overpass or underpass) that are wide, with handrails, which offer safe and easy access both to and across the station
 - stairs or lifts that are safe and reliable, with enough space for a diverse range of users
- platforms that are level with the floor of trains to minimise boarding steps and gaps
- direct, clear and short routes between platforms at interchange stations, within ticketed areas, with more than one route at busy stations
- station entry and ticketing barriers to help users going against the flow access the station
- going beyond the requirements set out in the *Disability Standards For Accessible Public Transport 2002*
- consistent, robust, properly placed and simple tactile ground surface indicators.

Seamless connections

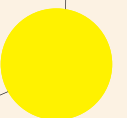
Requires:

- direct and clear access between the station and the wider transport network; prioritising connections to walking, cycling and public transport routes
- secure and casual bicycle parking facilities in the station precinct, such as bike cages and hoops
- coordination of timetables for quick transition to other public transport services, to reduce reliance on car travel and the need to build large-scale station car parks
- simple, well-signed connections between different transport modes, preferably within the ticketed area.

Convenient station location

Requires:

- new stations that maximise access to community activity centres and other transport routes
- access between the street and station to be direct, obvious and easily accessible when co-located with a commercial development.



PRINCIPLE 2: EASE OF NAVIGATION

Station navigation must be intuitive for first-time users. Good navigation promotes a constant flow in and around the precinct and includes signage to connecting transport services and external routes.

The panel identified the following elements as central to ease of navigation at a station:

- **simple station layout** that is intuitive and promotes ease of movement
- **effective wayfinding** to help people locate facilities and connect between transport modes and with external routes and destinations.

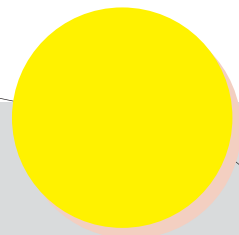
User-identified issues

Simple station layout

- A station layout that is confusing or counter intuitive is hard to navigate and disorienting.
- Narrow, indirect and cluttered access paths and platforms create bottlenecks and slow people down in the station precinct.
- A concentration of station facilities and furniture in part of the station can create a flurry of activity and movement, causing overcrowding and delays.

Effective wayfinding

- Poor signage between transport modes within the station precinct makes it difficult for users to navigate.
- Station facilities that are poorly signed make them difficult to find and use.
- A lack of maps or signs to and from the surrounding area makes it difficult for anyone unfamiliar with the area.
- Stations that do not refer to the local area or services, such as medical facilities or retail outlets, create difficulties for anyone that is unfamiliar with the area.



Addressing the ease of navigation principle

Simple station layout

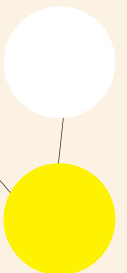
Requires:

- consistent navigational cues across different stations to create familiarity
- locating station facilities and furniture, such as ticket machines and barriers, seating, retail outlets and community facilities so they are easy to find and allow for good passenger flow
- access between the station entry and the platform to be clear, direct and as short as possible
- access paths and platforms that are direct, wide and unobstructed to accommodate peak passenger flows without congestion
- multiple access/exit points on the platform to reduce passenger congestion at peak times and reduce travel distances to and from the station.

Effective wayfinding

Requires:

- simple, well-signed connections between different transport modes, including signage for bicycle cages, located on both sides of the station and at platform entryways
- good signage to facilities within the station precinct
- maps of the local area in the station precinct, at both broad (context) and micro (detail) levels, including information on key local destinations
- signs with directions to the station in the area around it.



PRINCIPLE 3: COMFORT AND AMENITY

A comfortable station is a place where people want to be. To be comfortable, a station needs to offer a range of facilities that are durable, functional and well kept. A station must be attractive, require minimal physical effort to move around in and support the needs of as many different users as possible. Maintaining the station and its facilities shows consideration for its users.

The panel identified the following elements as central to creating a comfortable and amenable station:

- **convenient facilities** that are available where and when users need them
- **pleasant station design** that attracts people and encourages them to use the station
- **ongoing maintenance** that ensures the station is clean and functional.

User-identified issues

Convenient facilities

- A lack of proper shelter and comfortable seating both on the platform and elsewhere in the station precinct exposes users to weather extremes.
- Shelter that allows rain, cold wind or harsh sunlight to come in provides inadequate protection from the elements for people waiting at a station.
- A station with toilets that are closed during operating hours, is inconvenient for users.
- Locating facilities, such as bicycle cages, ticket machines or waiting areas only on one side of the rail corridor is inconvenient and prohibits use.

Pleasant station design

- A station that looks unattractive or cold does not foster feelings of comfort or safety and is unlikely to be a place that people will want to revisit.
- A lot of noise within the station, or from nearby locations, impacts on users' overall experience.
- A lack of landscaping can make a station precinct look uninviting, affecting people's overall enjoyment of the station.
- Poor design also affects people's station experience. A sloping platform with poor drainage creates puddles in inconvenient places, such as around a ticket machine or under a sheltered area.

Ongoing maintenance

- Low-quality fixtures that are ineffective or poorly maintained create an air of neglect and encourage vandalism.
- Station facilities, such as lifts that constantly break down and require maintenance call-outs cause considerable inconvenience.
- Toilets that are not regularly cleaned are uninviting and unpleasant to use.
- Litter and poor maintenance create an unwelcoming environment and encourage anti-social behaviour.
- Graffiti and etchings in the station precinct are uninviting and make users feel unsafe.





Addressing the comfort and amenity principle

Convenient facilities

Requires:

- comfortable seating designed for a range of users, located at several points along the platform and in other waiting areas in the station precinct
- vertical screens and canopies providing shelter and good natural light at several points along the platform, including where wheelchair and bicycle passengers board
- sheltered waiting areas at bus and taxi interchanges that offer good visibility
- toilets that are accessible to all and open during all hours of station operation
- rubbish and recycling bins located at several points along the platform and elsewhere in the station precinct
- provision and convenient location of other facilities and services that people may wish to use – these are likely to vary between stations but could include water fountains, payphones, wifi access or luggage facilities.

Pleasant station design

Requires:

- design that feels inviting and warm and encourages regular use
- design that engages people's senses, and considers how sightlines, colour, lighting, acoustics and spatial dimensions impact on the useability and enjoyment of a place
- landscaping in the station precinct that looks attractive and is well kept
- design that supports the needs of a diverse range of people for a variety of purposes
- construction and servicing of the station that is sustainable and reduces environmental impact.

Ongoing maintenance

Requires:

- attractive, durable and high-quality finishes that are well kept
- an ability to fix broken down lifts and escalators from a remote location, minimising the need for maintenance call-outs and associated delays
- regular cleaning of station facilities, including toilets, and station precinct
- regular removal of graffiti and etchings throughout the station precinct
- method for reporting maintenance needs identified by station staff or users
- access paths engineered to withstand heavy downpours, high winds and heatwaves.

PRINCIPLE 4: INFORMATION

A good station has accessible, clear, timely and accurate information about public transport services, station facilities and the surrounding area. A variety of audio, visual and tactile methods of communication is important, as is face-to-face contact with staff. Staff should be knowledgeable on all aspects of the station precinct, and therefore able to provide good customer service, even if their own role is only to do with a particular part of the station operations.

The panel identified the following elements as central when providing information at a station:

- **timely service information** that helps users to plan their trips and make informed decisions
- **accessible and comprehensive station information** that is easy to find and follow
- **customer service philosophy** that helps everyone using the station.

User-identified issues

Timely service information

- Information on transport services that is inaccurate, inconsistent or out-of-date does not allow users to properly plan their journey.
- A lack of communication about delays, alterations or cancellations frustrates users.
- Lack of clarity about how to change platforms, access bus or tram services, or catch bus replacement services is a problem for users who are unfamiliar with the transport system.

Accessible and comprehensive station information

- Information on transport services or station facilities that is not accessible to specific user groups, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – affects these people's experience of the station.
- Information on transport services and station facilities that is hard to find, confusing or outdated makes a station difficult to use.
- Users who cannot read or do not understand the alternative arrangements will not know what to do when a lift breaks down.
- Unclear and illegible signage makes finding the ticket machine, toilets, waiting area, lift or ticket office difficult, particularly for first-time users.
- Users will not see or understand signs that are too high, too small, not written in plain English or with poor colour contrast.
- Information about station facilities directed at specific users, such as the location of bicycle cages or accessible toilets, that is hard to find is unhelpful.

Customer service philosophy

- Station staff who are unfriendly or can only provide limited help can create an unpleasant experience, particularly for first-time users.
- A lack of consideration for station users who are vulnerable or unwell may perpetuate the problems they are experiencing and miss an opportunity for early intervention.



Addressing the information principle

Timely service information

Requires:

- reliable, real-time information about the next two train services, connecting transport services and platforms for different destinations
- service information at several locations along the platform and outside the ticketed area that is visible from a distance (for example, timetables, maps and platform details)
- timely information about delays, cancellations, service disruptions and alternative arrangements in a variety of formats.

- good signage about the location of station facilities, including toilet, ticket office and waiting area
- a large digital clock on each platform that is visible to passengers
- information targeted at specific users, such as the train access point for wheelchair users or cyclists that is centrally located, visible and easy to read
- signage on each platform showing the direction of travel and the next station so that passengers already on the train can read it without confusing it with the station name.

Accessible and comprehensive station information

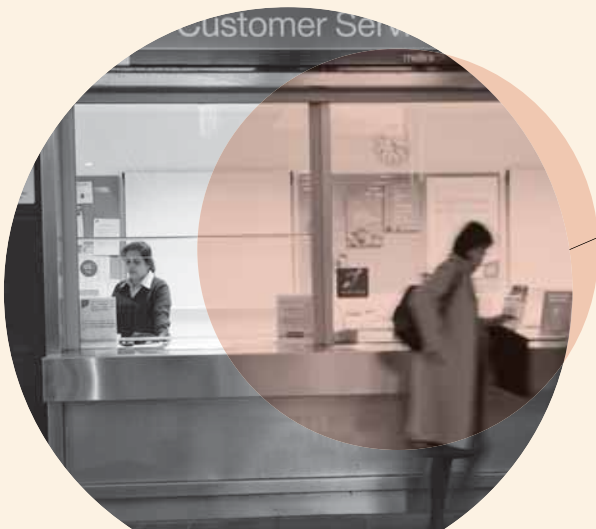
Requires:

- service and station information in several languages and formats, including pictorial, symbols, audio announcements, tactile indicators and video
- information about transport services and station facilities that is up-to-date, accurate and easy to find

Customer service philosophy

Requires:

- trained and knowledgeable staff ready to help with any issues around the station precinct
- space for future staffing of station, even if not immediately envisaged
- that staff treat vulnerable people who use the station with dignity and are mindful of their personal circumstances.



PRINCIPLE 5: SAFETY

In a safe station, people know that they can use any part of the station without fear of injury, incident, threat or mistreatment; and feel assured of protection in an emergency.

Promoting a safe environment is more than trying to reduce hazards, it is also about creating a place that people enjoy – where they can feel calm, comfortable and anxiety-free.

The panel identified the following elements as central in creating a safe station:

- **safe access** to the station and within the station precinct
- **sense of security** that ensures users can see and be seen, adding to their sense of safety
- **help in an emergency** that is available through clear emergency procedures, information and assistance.

User-identified issues

Safe access

- Station access that requires crossing hazardous roads, such as double lane highways, slip lanes, or roads with high speed limits (relative to the area) are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- A station precinct that does not clearly separate private motor vehicles and pedestrians increases the risk of accidents, makes people feel unsafe and discourages users from walking to the station.
- Bus and taxi interchanges that require users to walk through the station car park are dangerous and inconvenient.
- Platforms and paths that are narrow, cluttered or prone to bottlenecks cause accidents and increase anxiety, particularly for older or mobility impaired people.
- Stairs that are steep, shallow or slippery are dangerous and difficult to use.

Sense of security

- Blind corners and hidden areas make station users less visible and less aware of others and create opportunities for anti-social behaviour.
- A high and confined overpass reduces visibility and feels isolating for those that use it.
- Poor lighting in and around a station makes it difficult for people to identify potential hazards and causes increased anxiety.
- Lifts that provide little natural light and are in secluded locations are prone to vandalism and feel unsafe for those who rely on them.
- A station without a visible staff presence makes users feel isolated, particularly during off-peak times and when there is minimal activity in the area.
- Closed circuit television (CCTV) is important for crime prevention and prosecution, however a station dominated by CCTV can make some users feel more anxious.

Help in an emergency

- Emergency procedure information that is difficult to access or understand, particularly at un-staffed stations, is potentially dangerous and makes people feel unsafe.
- An un-staffed station is alienating for station users wanting information or needing help.
- A station that does not provide emergency exit options for those with mobility impairments may have serious consequences during an evacuation or medical emergency.
- Emergency buttons located next to timetable information buttons can be confusing or hard to find.



Addressing the safety principle

Safe access

Requires:

- prioritised walking, cycling and public transport access to, and within, the station precinct, ensuring that pedestrians are not in danger from motor vehicles
- clear, continuous and wide access paths to, and within, the station precinct that allow for ease of movement without unnecessary steps or hazards
- station platforms with minimal obstacles, barriers, trip hazards or gaps
- that unavoidable obstacles are highlighted using high-contrast materials, signs or tactile ground surface indicators
- that when stairs are needed, they have a safe and useable gradient, with proper tread.

Sense of security

Requires:

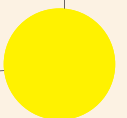
- enough lighting to see and be seen by other people, read signs and identify potential hazards in all areas accessible to passengers
- open and transparent station layout and materials that allow for natural light in enclosed spaces and clear sightlines throughout the station precinct and with the local area
- a range of staff who offer a visible and reassuring presence

- provision for commercial and other uses in the station precinct and locating the station near existing activity to activate the area and provide passive surveillance
- CCTV streamed live to a police station, if one is nearby
- integrated CCTV coverage across the public transport network to complement and coordinate existing and new security camera infrastructure.

Help in an emergency

Requires:

- information on emergency procedures that is easy to find and understand for all users
- emergency information and announcements that can be understood by all users, including those with vision and hearing impairments
- easily accessible help provided, preferably through face-to-face contact
- emergency exit options for all users, including those with mobility impairments
- accommodation and access for a range of staff.



PRINCIPLE 6: LOCAL AREA INTEGRATION

An integrated station connects with its surrounds and reflects the character and identity of the community. A station is part of the community it services, not just a place that people travel through; so the station should contribute to and enhance the local area. Local people and businesses should benefit from the station and its facilities. The character of the local area should influence station design, keeping it consistent with shopping precincts, or any local heritage building features.

The panel identified the following elements as central to the local area integration of a station:

- **connection with the surrounding area** that is clearly marked, including connections to and across the station
- **contribution to the sense of place** which improves the liveability of the local area.

User-identified issues

Connection with the surrounding area

- Prioritisation of car access in a station precinct discourages access via other travel methods (public transport, walking and cycling) which detracts from how the station integrates with its surrounds.
- Poor quality or inaccessible access paths and a lack of seating, shelter and shade discourage people from walking to a station.
- Poor quality or a lack of pedestrian crossings over rail lines restricts connectivity to and across the station.
- Poor access via a high overpass with steep stairs for anyone wanting to cross a station creates a sense of dislocation for the communities on either side.

- When a lift breaks down and a ramp is not available, access across the station for those who either cannot use, or have difficulty using the stairs, results in a complex and time consuming detour.
- An impermeable fence running along the length of the platform isolates people using the station and disconnects the station from the surrounding local area.
- A lack of information about local places of interest, such as a shopping centres or swimming pools, makes it difficult for people to find their way or know that the places exist.

Contribution to the sense of place

- A station that is uninviting and does not blend in with the local area will be unpopular with the local community.
- Station design without facilities for other activities, such as a coffee shop, is a missed opportunity to activate the station and create a link with the local community.
- Station design that does not consider possible co-location of services, or future uses of the surrounding area, limits the chance of community or economic renewal.
- A station that is poorly integrated with nearby parks or other public spaces is disconnected from its surrounds.
- A station precinct without public meeting spaces is a missed opportunity to link with the community and foster a sense of local ownership.





Addressing the local area integration principle

Connection with the surrounding area

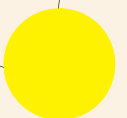
Requires:

- direct, clear links from the station to key local destinations, and to walking and cycling paths
- access paths to the station that are wide, with enough shade, shelter and seating, and that support passive surveillance (for example windows and doors facing the paths)
- creating and/or maintaining good access across the rail corridor via an accessible, inviting and attractive overpass or underpass
- integration with surrounding facilities, such as shops, parks and future land-use development opportunities
- information on key local destinations and activities of interest
- opportunities for residential or economic development linked with a station project, to increase activity in the area and improve perceptions of safety.

Contribution to the sense of place

Requires:

- station design that reflects and enhances the character of the area through incorporation of local, natural or built environment features that blend in with the heritage features of local buildings
- compatible commercial spaces within the station precinct to make the location more vibrant and offer services to users and the broader community, such as shops, kiosks and community facilities
- station design that allows integration with possible future residential or economic development in the surrounding area.



PRINCIPLE 7: COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND ACTIVITY

Community ownership can be achieved by actively involving the local community in the design and development of the station and, where possible, providing opportunities for community activities at the station. A station that the local community values, is more likely to be maintained and attract diverse activity which, in turn, helps generate a more vibrant area.

The panel identified the following elements as central to community ownership of and activity at a station:

- **active community engagement** that is sought during the design and delivery of the station
- **ongoing community involvement** once the station is operational.

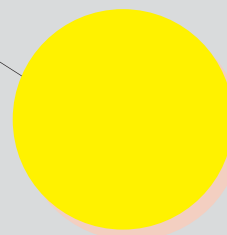
User-identified issues

Active community engagement

- A design process that does not actively involve the community can produce a station that does not reflect the local area and is unlikely to become a well-used public space.
- Locals are unlikely to respect station artwork that does not reflect local identity or is commissioned without community consultation, increasing the likelihood of vandalism.
- Communities that are poorly informed during station construction, particularly about service changes and site detours, feel neglected and put out.

Ongoing community involvement

- A lack of space for community activities in a station limits opportunities to make a station busy and vibrant, which in turn, affects people's sense of safety.
- A lack of ongoing community involvement in the operation and upkeep of a station is likely to affect the value and sense of ownership that locals place on a station.



Addressing the community activity principle

Active community engagement

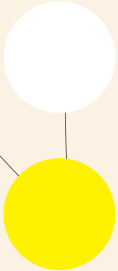
Requires:

- opportunities for local users and the community to influence the station, from the beginning of a station design project, to a new or existing station's ongoing use
- community updates during station construction, including details on service alterations and detours
- explanations to the community about the when and why of decision-making.

Ongoing community involvement

Requires:

- spaces that allow for community activity or public amenity improvements
- finding opportunities to involve the community in ongoing improvements and upkeep of the station precinct
- promoting community contributions to station development, for example, commissioning a local youth art project or setting up a community garden as part of the landscaping.



CONCLUSION

The Station User Panel recommends the *Railway Station Useability Principles* to the Victorian Government, to improve the design and operation of railway stations, from a user and community perspective. There are no simple and easy solutions that can address all the issues that users have raised. The panel has tried to ensure that its recommendations are meaningful and sensible for improving railway stations.

The principles will help the Victorian Government meet public expectations around train stations, delivering a better public transport system. The panel emphasises that the principles must be continually improved, based on evidence and feedback from users and the community.

APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAILWAY STATION USEABILITY PRINCIPLES

The Station User Panel was established in May 2011 and met monthly thereafter to consider and discuss how railway station development and redevelopment projects can better reflect user and community expectations, and enhance the surrounding areas.

In line with the terms of reference, the panel focused first on improving the useability of railway stations. It identified what needs improving and why, before creating a plan for successful station design and service delivery.

The panel's deliberations were informed through site visits of recently developed Victorian railway stations, reviews of the designs for Victorian railway station projects in the 'pipeline', best-practice case studies from other jurisdictions, a review of available literature and discussions with relevant experts.

Consultation

Panel members consulted with their constituents to find out what their main concerns with station design were, and to validate the panel's conclusions and the literature reviewed. The panel also consulted with a variety of organisations representing the interests of railway station users and community groups, including some not represented on the panel.

In the development of the *Railway Station Useability Principles*, views were sought from a number of organisations, including:

- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Metro Trains
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Office for Disability, Department of Human Services
- Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Public Transport Ombudsman
- Regional Development Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development
- Regional Offices, Department of Transport
- Sport and Recreation Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development
- Transport Safety Victoria, Department of Transport
- Travellers Aid.

In addition, the Office of the Victorian Government Architect reviewed the principles for their relevance to station designers and policy-makers.



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- Lawrence Seyers, Chair, Sunbury Place Manager, Hume City Council
- Jason den Hollander, Facilities Development, Bicycle Network Victoria
- Georgie Ferrari, Chief Executive Officer, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
- Inspector Philip Green, Transit Safety Division, Victoria Police
- Debra Parnell, Manager Policy, Council on the Ageing
- Llewellyn Reynders, Transport and Disadvantage Policy Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service
- Ben Rossiter, Executive Officer, Victoria Walks
- Cath Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service
- Kerryn Wilmot, Treasurer, Public Transport Users Association
- Robert Abboud, Manager Public Transport Policy and Planning.

A secretariat from the Department of Transport also helped the panel, including:

- Damian Ferrie, Executive Director, Community and Place
- Rachel Davis, Manager, Transport Social Policy, Community and Place
- Andrew Bartlett, Policy Officer, Transport Social Policy, Community and Place.

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