SUBMISSION FROM THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Introduction

1 SAPT is a strong supporter of GARL as part of plans for improving the quality of the public transport network and its integration in wider plans for transport, the economy, social access and the environment. In the past, strategy for major British airports has concentrated on road access, parking and taxi provision with inadequate attention to improving the quality of access for those without easily available cars. A higher quality and frequency of public transport can also make an important contribution to modal shift from cars – easing road congestion locally and on the M8 while reducing the need for parking provision on the restricted land available at the airport.

2 As the related SAPT Position Paper on Rail Bill procedures and the Scottish Rail Programme shows, SAPT considers that GARL must be part of a priority rail programme completed by 2010. The Promoter’s Memorandum recognises that work relating to GARL will offer added value by providing extra capacity and improved reliability for rail services from Glasgow to the Ayrshire coast (including Prestwick Airport) and to Inverclyde. There are also significant joint benefits in developing through services from Inverclyde, Ayrshire and Glasgow Airport across Glasgow to the east and north of Scotland in a subsequent Glasgow Crossrail phase of Scottish rail network expansion, lessening pressure on the M8 and other motorways and major roads.

3 An encouraging prospect is that the present review of procedures relating to Rail and Tram Bills may permit the GARL Bill process to be finished this year, allowing earlier contracts for the rail link which could ensure completion by December, 2009. Within this speeded-up approach, there are important opportunities for increasing the benefits offered by the GARL project. The rest of this submission deals with these opportunities. SAPT favours Transport Scotland or Network Rail as owner of the Airport Rail Spur and related airport station with any necessary compulsory powers exercised within two years of the passing of the Bill.

Crossing the Glasgow Gap

4 At present, the convenience of journeys (and prospects for modal shift from existing south-west to east and north car trips across Glasgow) is hampered by the need to cross from Glasgow Central to Glasgow Queen St. stations. The Promoter’s Memo (Para 14) does say that the airport rail link would allow 143 stations to be reached with only one rail interchange (mainly at Glasgow Central or Paisley Gilmour St) but this obscures the important fact that this excludes the network of services from Glasgow Queen St station.
5 SAPT accepts that the new network of ScotRail Express and regional rail services made possible by introducing passenger services on the existing rail lines from Shields Road to Bellgrove (plus the St Johns link to Queen St) would remedy this defect and transform network opportunities for both airport users and the many other users presently making cross-Glasgow trips by car. However, agreement on appropriate service patterns, related construction work and inner Glasgow stations is unlikely before 2008 or 2009, making it probable that the initial phases of Glasgow Crossrail could not be completed before 2012/13 (within the horizon required as part of Glasgow’s bid for the Commonwealth Games in 2014) (see also APPENDIX). To allow for future increases in capacity, **plans for adding a third track between Arkleston and Shields Rd should be compatible with a future quadrupling of most, or all, of this section of route**

6 SAPT would also **recommend that the initial pattern of 4 trains per hour for the Airport be amended so that every alternate train reversed at Glasgow Central and proceeded onwards to Edinburgh with intermediate stops in central Lanarkshire and at Livingston**. This would ensure direct trains from the Airport to central Lanarkshire, Livingston and Edinburgh from 2009 with Fife, Dundee and Aberdeen being reached through an easy interchange at either Edinburgh Haymarket or Waverley. An intermediate express (‘Caledonian Express’) on this route has already been under study by SPT and West Lothian Council and is capable of early delivery, complementing the Airport rail link. It would be desirable for this project to include electrification of the Carfin-Shotts-East Calder line and the related route from Whifflet to Rutherglen (allowing the present half-hourly diesel service between Glasgow Central High Level and Whifflet to be diverted to the Argyle line and extended to Carfin/Ravenscraig/Wishaw)

7 An alternative would be to arrange cross-platform interchange (involving no steps and a short walking distance) at Glasgow Central between Airport trains and the existing half-hourly Ayr-Prestwick Airport-Glasgow service, extended via Lanarkshire and Livingston through to Edinburgh. SAPT strongly urges that one or other of these options be included in initial phases of programmed delivery of the finalised National Transport Strategy due later this year.

**Changes within Glasgow Central Station**

8 The GARL proposal to lengthen Platform 11a involves the loss of 66 parking spaces within Central Station though 3 extra car spaces for the disabled would be added in the multi-storey Oswald St car park which has a direct pedestrian entrance to the station (Paras 100 & 101). This would be considerably less convenient than the disabled parking already available between Platforms 10 and 12. Though some passengers will change from train to train at Central, the majority are likely to wish to interchange with a taxi, bus or have a friend picking them up from, or taking then to, airport (and other) trains. Present arrangements
for taxi, car and bus interchange at Central can involve lengthy walks with luggage and fall below those required for a world-class interchange.

9 SAPT would wish the Committee to investigate improved arrangements before plans within Central Station are finalised. SAPT can expand on possibilities and would suggest that the views of the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland should also be sought.

10 Without interchange improvements at Central Station, passengers may continue to use taxis and cars to and from the Airport rather than the Airport Rail Link. The highest standards of access and interchange must be seen to apply.

**Improving Usage and the Ratio of Benefits to Costs**

11 The Promoter’s Memo (Para 28) expects relatively low usage at 1.4 million passengers in the opening year of the Airport rail link. The benefit to cost ratio, at the mid-range aviation growth forecast, is also low at 1.28 though continuing annual subsidy required would compare well with other First ScotRail routes (Promoter’s Memo – Para 115). Usage includes travel by employees and surface visitors at and around the Airport plus some transfers from overcrowded trains at Paisley Gilmour St travelling to and from Glasgow. Actual usage by airport passengers is not stated but is likely to be some 1m a year, less than 10% of expected airport usage in 2009/10.

12 This usage gives an average of 20 passengers per 3 coach train (with maximum capacity, including standing, of 300 passengers). Though usage would be higher at peak periods, it would compare unfavourably with other services – such as to the Ayrshire coast and to East Kilbride -where there is an acute need for additional rolling stock to ease severe overcrowding. SAPT considers that these problems can be tackled in three ways:-

1) the introduction of fully integrated ticketing and road demand management
2) modification of the airport rail service to include a stop at Paisley St James as part of much-needed regeneration of this area and to give increased opportunities for bus-feeders and car park and ride in relation to travel to and across Glasgow from the area served by the western M8
3) higher allowances within cost benefit analysis for schemes encouraging modal shift from cars, easing airport parking problems and improving reliability on the road network

**Ticketing and Road Demand Management**

13 Airport rail services, introduced without integrated ticketing and new measures for road demand management on the M8, are unlikely to have much impact on road congestion and unreliability. Worsened congestion (especially on the already busy section of the M8 west from the planned junction with the urban M74 to the Airport) would tend to increase rail use but at a high cost to business and other road users hit by increased delays and unreliability on the road.
14 It is therefore very important that airport rail link plans should be integrated with:-

a) a **Scottish Executive lead, in collaboration with the new Statutory Regional Transport Partnerships, in introducing stronger measures of road demand management no later than the opening date for the Airport Rail Link.** Measures introducing peak charging for use of critical parts of the regional and trunk road network (including motorways) in the Scottish Central Belt would have a high benefit to cost ratio in themselves while also improving benefit to cost ratios for public transport improvements helping to encourage modal shift from cars

b) **an inter-operator agreement, assisted by Scottish Executive funding for the first three years, ensuring that air travel tickets gave the right to buy rail travel tickets for a series of zones within Scotland at prices providing strong incentives for rail use** (this would expand on practices already applied at Prestwick Airport)

**Paisley St James Interchange**

15 SAPT considers that **a considerable boost both to rail usage and to local regeneration would be provided by relocating St James Station some 200 metres to the south-east so that it could be served by Airport trains.** St James would secure 8 trains per hour into Glasgow and is well-sited to be served by quarter-hourly bus feeders from Bridge of Weir-Houston-Linwood to Paisley and from Erskine to Paisley making high-quality rail connections at St James.

16 In addition, St James has good road access from the western M8, the A737 and Strathclyde and could be a valuable new site for expanded park and ride into and across Glasgow reducing the need to use the congested M8. This proposal should receive detailed assessment and could more than double the average usage of airport trains with related impacts on modal shift from car to train. Action on this topic is urgent since existing station car parking close to the M8 west of Glasgow is limited with spaces often completely filled before 9 am.

17 Extra capital cost would be involved in the relocation and improvement of St James station while Airport-Glasgow Central rail trip times would rise from 16 to 17 minutes. This increased time would not affect rail usage from the airport, given the positive impact of integrated fares and of rail times being significantly below the best road times at peak periods.

18 One difficulty with the St James proposal is that the park and ride facility might be filled up with long-stay airport users rather than taken up by those shifting from the M8 for trips into, and through, Glasgow. This problem could be overcome by prohibiting overnight car parking and imposing a £1 or £2 entry charge refunded if the holder bought rail tickets with an average daily value above £4 (these charges being revised yearly).
Allowance for Modal Shift from Cars in Cost Benefit Analysis

19 The Promoter’s Memo does not make clear what allowance is made for modal shift from cars in cost benefit analysis. SAPT suggests that this should be an explicit allowance also used in the evaluation of cutting road congestion and reducing road unreliability through demand management. Full assessment of the package suggested is expected to give an appreciable improvement in the benefit to cost ratio while also bringing airport rail usage closer to levels already found on other Glasgow area rail services. The wider area economic benefits of GARL, which are not included in conventional cost benefit analysis, would remain intact or be enhanced.

Impacts from Future Energy and Climate Change Scenarios

20 SAPT recognises that, in linking transport with the implications of higher energy costs (notably for aviation fuel) and targets for absolute Scottish cuts in CO2 emissions from transport (including what has been the fast-growing aviation sector), the finalised National Transport Strategy for Scotland is likely to cast doubt on the levels of aviation growth suggested in the 2003 White Paper and on the scale of the importance of such growth for the economy.

21 Influenced by further study of future relationships between aviation, the economy and climate change, growth at Glasgow Airport is likely to be less than the mid-range forecast used in GARL – particularly so if high-speed rail is developed on a Scottish Central Belt to England corridor over the next 15 years. However, this adverse impact on GARL usage can be countered by adopting a total package which will increase the proportion of air passengers (and of local travellers) attracted to public transport over the next 5 to 15 years. The APPENDIX mentions projects which could be adopted for completion after 2010 but it is important that these should not detract from early and positive decisions on GARL with completion by December, 2009, or early 2010.

APPENDIX Possible Strategies beyond 2010

Before 2010, SAPT expects that the airport rail link will be complemented by bus improvements. These could include:-

1) quality bus route from Buchanan Bus Station and Queen St Rail station to the Airport and Paisley town centre via the SECC, Finnieston Bridge, Govan, Southern General Hospital, Braehead and Renfrew
2) quality bus route from East Kilbride to Braehead and Bearsden via Newton Mearns, Paisley Town Centre and Glasgow Airport
3) quality bus routes from Dumbarton and Clydebank to Paisley town centre via Erskine Bridge, Erskine and Glasgow Airport.
After 2010, usage levels may justify conversion of Quality Bus Route 1 to a **modern tram route**, returning to Glasgow via the Paisley Canal line converted to higher-frequency operation and integrated with tram network development to give high frequency services on key urban routes. This could also include conversion of the Bridge-of Weir-Paisley St James bus link, as suggested by SAPT, to a tram link extending to Kilmacolm and using sections of former rail route.

With respect to **heavy rail** operations, SAPT anticipates:-

a) completion of the **Glasgow Crossrail** route via St Enoch Bridge in the early years after 2010 including a Garngad chord (giving direct access from the St Enoch Bridge and Queen St Low Level lines to the Stepps line) and through services to Stirling (possibly also Perth, Inverness, Dundee and Aberdeen), Falkirk and Edinburgh via Edinburgh Airport and via Airdrie and Bathgate

b) **quadrupling of most of the route east from Paisley Arkleston**, allowing separate provision of express services and of freight and more frequent stopping services with additional and relocated stations e.g at Arkleston/Gallowhill and Ibrox. The latter services might eventually run to central Glasgow via an Ibrox-SECC tunnel link, providing direct and faster access to SECC and Pacific Quay than would be possible with the suggested bus and tram route via Braehead and the Finnieston Bridge

c) close integration of airport rail services with **high-speed rail services from Glasgow Central via Edinburgh to London** in around 3 hours (also giving improved links to other cities in England and to Channel Tunnel services with a 30 minute timing between Glasgow and Edinburgh)

**DRAFT POSITION PAPER**
April 2006

**Scottish Rail Bills and the Rail Programme in an Integrated Transport Strategy**

SAPT welcomes the start of consultation by the Scottish Executive on proposals for speeding up procedures for rail, tram and busway schemes – easing the log-jam of present Bills. However, there is continuing doubt about the total funds likely to be available for Scottish transport and a particular fear that a focus on major projects (requiring Bills and substantial finance) rather than integrated programmes could affect funding for smaller projects able to be implemented quickly and offering good value – a point already made in the SAPT response to the Rail Priority consultation. The principle of increased rail investment is welcomed and SAPT would prefer not to make formal objections to Rail Bills (unless there was a very strong committee view that objections should be made). However, in view of the importance of a well-integrated strategy taking account of funding issues and the impact on transport of future energy and climate change
requirements, SAPT wishes to make this general submission of evidence to the relevant Parliament Committees and to the media while submitting more detailed, yet constructive, views to particular Bills. Such views are likely to form the basis for further SAPT responses to the delayed, but imminent, draft National Transport Strategy for Scotland.

In principle, SAPT supports all current Rail Bills (and their faster progress through Committee stages) but, to ensure good value and progress on smaller improvements, there is a need to consider changes in the detail of Bills which could improve outcomes and help release funding for smaller projects in the period to 2010. Within integrated budgets, SAPT supports faster action on relatively cheap and easily delivered schemes which can influence modal shift from cars and aid accessibility, reduce CO2 emissions and aid road traffic stabilisation. These schemes and suggested revisions in the phasing and content of major projects are listed below.

Broad SAPT priorities coming ahead of ‘major schemes’ should include:-

- fully integrated multi-modal fares at levels lower than cost of single occupant car use plus added discount for families and groups
- some increase in total bus support tied to integrated fares, more effective bus priorities and specification of minimum service levels including use of Demand Responsive Transport
- expansion of bus quality partnerships and contracts
- priority expansion of strategic sites for bus feeders and park and ride.
- arrangements to secure extra rail rolling stock
- minimum Scottish Executive and RTP budget provision of extra £50m a year for interchange improvements, bus route development schemes, extra rail halts and meeting targets related to the Disability Discrimination Act

Suggested specific priorities to 2010 are:-

- modified Caledonian Express (providing a half-hourly Glasgow Central to Edinburgh service and including Carfin-Shotts-East Calder electrification)
- Whifflet line electrification and extension of service to Ravenscraig/Wishaw (integrated with Caledonian Express and diverting Whifflet trains to Argyle Line)
- enhanced rail capacity to Ayrshire coast and half-hourly to Kilmarnock
- revised Stranraer, Far North, and West Highland timetables including integrated bus/rail ticketing and Action Plans to encourage usage
- extension of all Cumbernauld trains to Falkirk Grahamston with park and ride/bus feeders at (new) Bonnybridge station east of Allandale
- 20 to 30 minute cuts in rail travel times from Aberdeen and Inverness to Edinburgh within 5 years (including hourly Inverness-Perth-Edinburgh service)
• Edinburgh-Dundee and Stirling-Perth-Dundee raised to half-hourly with new Dundee West station (for Ninewells Hospital and west Dundee employment zone)
• timetable amended to give half-hourly service between Stonehaven and Inverurie with 3/4 extra halts plus Laurencekirk (south of Stonehaven)
• Inverurie-Elgin-Inverness raised to hourly plus extra commuter train Elgin-Inverness
• extra signals on Forth Bridge, Rosyth park and ride/taxibus feeders, higher rail frequency into Edinburgh and tram/rail interchange at Gyle/Gogar part financed from differential charging on Forth Road Bridge and on congested motorways
• enhanced freight capacity on Nith Valley route (also aiding reliability of passenger service) and improved passenger services from Scotland to Manchester, Birmingham & Leeds

Most of the above should be deliverable by 2010 along with the schemes already contracted for Stirling-Alloa-Longannet, Waverley Station and the newly announced priority for Ratho Jc-Bathgate track doubling. In addition, there needs to be more work on bus priorities, fares reform, parking charges and road charging.

Other larger schemes with SAPT preference for completion by 2010 are:-
1) the Ocean Terminal-Edinburgh Airport tram route (preferably with a rail/tram Gyle interchange and a Haymarket-Granton branch if costs can be controlled by tie)
2) the Newcraighall-Tweedbank route
3) the Glasgow Airport-Central link (associated with a St James park and ride/bus feeder interchange and some services proceeding through to Edinburgh (giving 4 quality trains per hour on Central-Shotts-Edinburgh route)
4) Airdrie-Bathgate completed but without electrification and with a half-hourly rather than quarter-hourly evening frequency west of Bathgate

2011-15 Preferred SAPT Major Projects
a) An Edinburgh Airport rail link and direct railway (alongside M90) from North Queensferry to Halbeath (giving 45 ms Edinburgh-Dundee/Perth times)
b) initial phase of Glasgow-Edinburgh high-speed rail
c) Glasgow Crossrail (St Enoch Bridge) route electrification with related Garngad chord and electrification via and via Cumbernauld to Edinburgh, Falkirk and Dunblane
d) initial Glasgow tram routes (partly converted from heavy rail)
e) further trip time cuts south from Inverness and Aberdeen (also aided by (a) above)
f) Anglo-Scottish high-speed rail works in England (also of benefit to English cities and offering London-Edinburgh times of 3 hours 30 ms and 4 hours to Glasgow).