NorthEastLink IAC

Presentation to the Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC)
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Submission 804

• Four areas of concern
  • Watsonia Station Precinct – mostly resolved if the April 2019 alternative proposal has been presented at panel by NELP (Technical Note R32 Attachment A)….but still issues with the realigned bus routes and CPTED outcomes
  • Trail connectivity across the project
    • Optimal bridge and underpass infrastructure
  • Noise Walls and amenity - massing and landscape vegetation
    • (re-iterating Allan Wyatt’s expert recommendations to IAC and NELP)
  • Impacts on and opportunities for nearby Powerline Infrastructure
    • Sub-Transmission relocation opportunity from the Yarra River corridor
    • Requirements to future Proof future infrastructure provision and upgrades
Long genesis to a long future

- 1840s Survey and subdivision
- 1902 Eltham Railway – electrified 1923, Watsonia station 1924
- 1914 Country Roads Board - Heidelberg-Kinglake Road diversion to avoid railway crossings – Greensborough Rd
- 1929 MTPC plan – Morwell ( & Yarra River) Parkways - edge of metropolis
- 1954 CRB/MMBW future road reservation – impacts on subdivision & further disconnects E-W communities
- 1978 – Watsonia Road Level crossing removal
- Greensborough “Freeway” from Watsonia Road to Grimshaw St with Elder St signalisation
- 1985 to now – Watsonia Station car park expansions (ex-Greensborough road and road reserves)
Watsonia Station Precinct
Simplify traffic flows to increase land use (Banyule CC) ...and manage pinchpoints
Watsonia – existing (Yellow) and future (Blue) bus routes & stops
Watsonia station and Bus Route connectivity

• 513 (E and S) and 566 (N and W) bus routes
  • both currently have stops close to the station
  • Evolved out of local route bus consolidation

• Connects Greensborough to Latrobe, Northland and Bell St

• Central bus stop sounds good but results in circuitous routes and lengthens PT trips

• Opportunity to connect and realign E-W and N-S cross routes

• Management of bus disruption during project?

• Elder St bus stop on Greensborough Road intersection?
  • 150m walk from platform vs.
  • ~900m bus ride to the central bus-stop through 2 signalised intersections and 1-2 (often congested) roundabouts

• Watsonia Road South bus stop?
  • To support the disconnected commercial strip south of the railway line
• How to safely cross the blighted wasteland?
• More direct pedestrian crossing? Follow desire lines or accidents will follow.
• Active frontages and increased access into or from Watsonia station car park?
• Commercial opportunities for displaced businesses and revitalised Watsonia Sth business area
• Visual greenery island (& path to nowhere)? Design is about use more than looks
Watsonia CPTED – design and optimal land use

• Urban isolation – overcoming E/W community separation
• Blank wall Syndrome – don’t design dead spaces
• Anti-social locations – don’t design dangerous places
• Greenery helps amenity but active frontages make places work.
• Car parking is valid but a low-value use of high value land
  • Support Banyule CC requirement for future proofing of changed land use
• Opportunities to cover cut in part? Design structural supports for future above trench development options
  • Or limit development to 60m width to avoid “tunnel ventilation requirements”
• Activate Watsonia Rd - Greensborough Rd intersection with active frontage social/commercial activity
Bridge and trail crossings

• Don’t chase slopes – work with topography
• Reference design has improved significantly since 2018
• Focus on clear sight lines, visibility and navigability

Avoid goat track creation – likely if poor design does not provide adequate trail connection – e.g. connect Eastern Freeway Trail bridge to Yarra Boulevard in trail construction zone
Noise Walls and vegetated landscaping

- Noise walls are meeting acoustic engineering requirements
- Need vegetation and landscaping to:
  - Avoid visual bulk reducing amenity
  - Minimise anti-social abuse of noise wall structures – graffiti
  - Minimise heat island impacts, particularly west face to residential communities
- Allan Wyatt’s IAC requested expert recommendations for alternative vegetation requirements on noise walls should be considered

Bulleen’s Estelle Street before and after images in a government document showing the 10-metre noise wall that would be built. VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT
Future proofing for other (Non-road) infrastructure

• 220kV lines are not proposed to be undergrounded at Watsonia
  • New poles are proposed to free land for the widened 12-14 lanes of road
  • Cost prohibitive to achieve 100-200m undergrounding (overhead deviation) for the NEL project
  • No obvious location for western transition enclosures – not detailed

• However, land bridge design must factor for future infrastructure
  • NEL Land bridges must not make future infrastructure deviation works cost prohibitive through poor design and lack of future proofing
  • This is particularly relevant to Elder Street Land bridge which is parallel to major electricity transmission lines and gas
  • If proposed upgrades occur at Todman St substation for NEL, the project scope should future proof future undergrounding with transition locations
Bulleen precinct sub-transmission (66kV) powerlines

- The 66kV powerlines from Templestowe to Kew are more local in nature than the Watsonia 220kV powerlines that were investigated for undergrounding in detail by NELP.
- Starting on streetpoles at Templestowe Terminal station, consolidating onto towers that were built in 1967 across farmland to Heidelberg and Kew.
- 1960s - SECV planned to upgrade powerline voltages and built towers in advance. This is now strategically redundant.
- These powerlines can be undergrounded directly from existing towers – no transition enclosures or substations are required for 66kV lines.
- The powerlines currently feed directly onto street poles:
  - at Banksia St from Yarra Flats to Heidelberg substation
  - across Burke Road to Melbourne Water’s Kew Pumping Station
  - Undergrounded (1974) under the Eastern Freeway from Burke Road to The Boulevard in North Balwyn
  - through North Balwyn residential areas through canopies in tree-lined streets
Revegetation Opportunities at Bulleen

• The local 66 kV sub-transmission powerlines parallel the road project from Templestowe Rd to the Eastern Freeway at Burke Road.

• The inclusion of powerlines in the Templestowe & Bulleen Road projects (~4.6km) would release a 4.2km 40m-wide corridor (10-15Ha) where canopy is currently cleared.

• This could also provide an opportunity to locally offset NEL canopy removal (~26,000 trees) and also achieve a number of required objectives to improve the Yarra River Valley.

• Investigating opportunities to underground or relocate the powerlines that are a dominant visual feature in this reach of the Yarra River is consistent with government policy to improve Yarra River environmental values and amenity.