

Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

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Request to be heard?: No, but please email me th

Full Name: Matthew Hanrahan

Organisation: Knox City Council

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Knox_Council_Sub

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Refer to attachment

07 June 2019

North East Link Enquiry and Advisory Committee

Dear Committee

Knox Council submission – North East Link Environmental Effects Statement

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS for the North East Link project.

Comments general to the project

1. Council is generally supportive of the need for the project and given its location, is not directly impacted by much of the project, except at the interface of the Eastern Freeway enhancements and the Eastlink project, and the subsequent traffic impacts through the Mullum Mullum tunnels and adjacent interchanges.
2. Council's original submission in relation to the project when 4 alignment options were presented, was that dedicated public transport outcomes should be incorporated into the project, incorporating dedicated public transport infrastructure along both the North East Link and section of the Eastern Freeway and a dedicated bus rapid transit system along the Eastern Freeway.
3. The EIS indicates that a dedicated bus rapid transit has been provided along the section of the Eastern Freeway between Hoddle St and Doncaster Rd, and this is to be commended. Acknowledging that it provides a higher order of functionality than the existing use of the emergency lane for operational services, it does not represent any significant shift from the existing operational model.
4. A high functioning bus rapid transit corridor has the capacity to support in excess of 15,000-20,000 passengers per hour, significantly relieving private vehicle burden, and potentially the need for additional lanes in sections of the Eastern Freeway. However, this would only be possible if supporting infrastructure and operational management at the Hoddle St end were to be implemented. It remains quizzical as to why operational performance at the Hoddle St end was deemed to be out of the scope of the traffic modelling. (reference: Smedtech response to GTA peer modelling review, dated 24/09/18). This represents a significant flaw in the understanding of the performance of the project as a whole (and not just bus performance) and is a matter should be addressed immediately.
5. Only limited consideration appears to have been given to pursuing the road project as a city scale project delivered in the context of complementary public transport outcomes. Public transport opportunities which do not appear to have been considered include:
 - Modelling of a higher order rail-based public transport corridor along the freeway reservation and its impacts on private vehicle travel – it is noted that comment is made about preserving a future corridor for such an outcome;
 - Extension of the proposed dedicated bus rapid transit corridor beyond Doncaster Road, potentially to Springvale Road to connect with the Smartbus route;
 - Provision of quality high frequency bus services along the full length of the North-East Link.
 - Assessing modelling analysis in light of the State Government's proposed orbital rail line, which has been identified as servicing many key trip attractors in the broader region;

6. Acknowledging that the recent announcement of an orbital rail proposal may have come late in the EIS development process, it represents a significant risk not to consider its impacts for a road project such as this. The conceptual rail proposal seeks to service many of the key trip attractors in Melbourne's north and eastern suburbs including Latrobe Employment Cluster, Monash University, Deakin University, Doncaster Hill precinct, Box Hill Activity Centre and Austin/ Eastern Medical precincts, among others. As the project has budget funding allocated and a clear commitment for progress from the current Government, it would appear to be unwise not to consider its re-distribution and mode share impacts on the project. To some extent, it may reinforce the need for the dedicated bus corridor to be extended along the Eastern Freeway beyond the current Doncaster Road terminus.
7. The operational need for the additional traffic lanes and requisite management and control of lanes east of the proposed Bulleen Road tunnel is acknowledged, however the scale of their impact and resultant loss of amenity on surrounding areas, will rightly raise concerns in the community. The need for 6 and 7 general traffic lanes in each direction to make a road system work appears to be an extreme method to achieve an outcome. The Monash Freeway at its widest point has 5 lanes in each direction.
8. The question should be asked whether if more serious consideration and analysis were given to some of the public transport gaps in Melbourne's east, and modelled to be delivered as complementary measures to the road project, would the project still require such an extreme outcome.
9. The planning of roads and public transport projects needs to move away from a mentality of making it work from a traffic perspective and towards a higher order objective which recognises balancing the need for the movement of people and goods with the wider aspirations of creating strong and connected sustainable communities.

Comments specific to Knox City Council

Eastlink tunnel and surrounding intersections.

10. It is concerning to note that while the Traffic and Transport appendix makes reference to the study area incorporating Eastlink and the Mullum Mullum tunnels, the traffic projections presented in addenda Figures 9.15 - 9.35 provide no commentary on the additional traffic can subsequent operating impacts in this vicinity. This may have material impact on the operational performance of the Eastlink tunnels and key interchanges immediately to the north and south of the tunnels.
11. While it may be deemed to be commercial in confidence due to the operating franchise for Eastlink, more detailed assessment of the overall performance of the Eastlink project in proximity to the Mullum Mullum tunnels warranted.
12. There appears little difference in peak period traffic capacity in vicinity of the tunnels between the "no project case" and "with project case" scenarios, particularly for peak directional travel which implies that the tunnels are already operating at capacity, and yet the Level of Service is identified as "not applicable"
13. It would not be unreasonable to infer that an additional 20,000 – 30,000 vehicles will utilise the existing tunnels, based on expected traffic growth on the project route, immediately west of Springvale Rd, however it appears that none of this additional traffic can be borne by the tunnels during the peak periods.
14. Some level of clarity is required on the impacts of the project on the Mullum Mullum tunnels and the potential for wider breakdown of the traffic system in this vicinity.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment and input on this project. For further information, please feel free to contact myself on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

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