NOTE: 1. Paragraph 31(c) of the IAC’s Terms of Reference directs that the IAC’s report include recommendations in respect of any ‘feasible modifications to the alignment or design of the Project that would offer beneficial outcomes’.

2. In March 2019, NELP released an alternate design for the Watsonia Station precinct, which would provide a more direct local connection from Elder Street for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists to both sides of Greensborough Road and Watsonia Station car park, as depicted in the fact sheet and artists impressions in Attachment A.

3. In response to submissions, NELP has further updated the March 2019 alternate design, as depicted in Figure 1 and described in Attachment B (updated alternate design).

4. This technical note has been prepared to assist the IAC to consider the updated alternate design option at Watsonia Road, having regard to its Terms of Reference. The technical note adopts the approach described by NELP in its Part A Submissions to the IAC (at paragraphs 27 – 32) and specifically addresses the five matters specified at paragraph 29(b).

REQUEST: N/A

RESPONSE: Description

1. The reference project assessed in the EES involved permanently removing the existing vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist access from Elder Street to the Watsonia railway station car park. The design included a new shared use overpass from the Frensham SEC Reserve to the station, with vehicles accessing the station car park via Greensborough Road.

2. Through community and stakeholder feedback, Elder Street was identified as providing an important local connection to Watsonia Station as well as to Greensborough Road for north and southbound trips and to access local businesses, shopping precincts and centres, community facilities and bus services.

3. In response to that feedback, it was determined that an alternate design, which maintains the existing level of connectivity at Elder
4. The March 2019 alternate design would include a land bridge from Elder Street providing two-way vehicle access to both sides of Greensborough Road and the station carpark, a shared use path, and areas for planting and other landscape treatments. This was achieved via a three-lane roadway connecting Elder Street with Greensborough Road and the station carpark on the land bridge. Further feedback on the alternate design received through EES submissions raised concerns with the performance of this roadway and the intersections at each end. The main concern was the potential lack of capacity at these intersections, particularly the Elder Street approach.

5. To address the concerns raised after release of the alternate design, NELP has produced an update to the alternate design for the Elder Street connection. This provides a four-lane roadway on the land bridge, with additional capacity on the Elder Street approach. The updated alternate design option is presented in Figure 1 and described in Attachment B, which is a memo from SmedTech to GTA dated 11 July 2019 that was included in Annexure D to the expert witness statement of John Kiriakidis.
Feasibility

6. The updated alternate design option would be facilitated by extending the trench further north compared to the reference project. This allowed for the introduction of the land bridge in order to directly connect Elder Street to Greensborough Rd and the station car park over North East Link.
Functionality

7. Section 9.2.4 of EES Technical report A – Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment evaluates the impacts of the reference project, which changes the existing eastern access to the Watsonia Station carpark. In the reference project, traffic destined for the station from Elder Street would need to perform a left turn onto the rebuilt Greensborough Road on the eastern side of North East Link, continue to Watsonia Road to travel north to the entry of the Watsonia Station carpark.

8. The updated alternative design for Elder Street would significantly reduce the additional travel time associated with the reference project. Local westbound traffic from Elder Street would have the same level of road access to the Watsonia Station carpark and the east side of Greensborough Road as existing arrangements.

9. The additional set of traffic lights at Elder Street could slightly delay vehicles travelling north/south along Greensborough Road. However, the signals would be coordinated to minimise any potential increases in travel time.

10. The updated alternative design option removes the grade-separated pedestrian bridge across North East Link and Greensborough Road to Watsonia Station in the reference project. Instead, pedestrians and cyclists would use the new land bridge and cross North East Link and Greensborough Road at two sets of signalised crossing points.

11. Microsimulation modelling results of the refined alternate design has been undertaken and is set out in Attachment B.

Project boundary

12. The updated alternative design would not involve any amendment to the Project boundary.

Beneficial and Detrimental Environmental Effects by Comparison to the Reference Project

13. The updated alternate design improves vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist access to Watsonia Station and associated car park compared to the reference project. As noted above, the updated alternate design would significantly reduce the additional travel time associated with the reference project, although the additional set of traffic lights at Elder Street is likely to slightly delay vehicles travelling north/south along Greensborough Road.

14. The potential air quality, noise, landscape, visual and social impacts of the updated alternate design have not been assessed and so cannot be compared with the reference project at this stage.

Consideration in the final design

15. Based on the current information, NELP considers that this modification could be considered in the final design of North East Link.
NORTH EAST LINK PROJECT ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT
INQUIRY AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:
A – March 2019 alternate design
B – Memorandum from SmedTech to GTA dated 11 July 2019