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OVGA Reference Number OVGA18/33

30 May 2018

Daniel Kollmorgen
Manager, Project Delivery
Metropolitan Projects - Eastern
VicRoads
168 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne, 3000

Dear Mr Kollmorgen,

Mordialloc Bypass - Design Review May 2018

Thank you for requesting a review of the Mordialloc Bypass by the Victorian Design Review Panel.

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect's views, which are based on a meeting with VicRoads on 3 May 2018, a site visit on 10 May 2018 and the Victorian Design Review Panel discussion are as per the following report.

If you require further clarification, please contact our office on 9651 6583 to discuss.

Yours sincerely,

Damian Collopy

Principal Adviser Landscape Architecture + Urban Design

cc: Lavan Nathan, VicRoads
Francis Dickinson, VicRoads
Ann Morgan Payler, VicRoads
Rob Watson, Rob Watson Architecture
Zinta Lazdins, Melbourne Water
Justin Kelly, City of Kingston
Anne Marie Pisani, Parks Victoria

Panel Members

The VDRP members who attended the design review session were Damian Collopy (Chair), Helen Day, Jon Shinkfield and Rob McGauran.

Confidentiality

The advice contained in this letter and attached report is offered in confidence, on the condition that the OVGA is kept informed of the progress of the project, including when it becomes the subject of a planning application.

The OVGA reserves the right to make its views known should the views contained in this letter be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). If you do not require the OVGA's views to be kept confidential, please contact the OVGA on 9651 6256. The OVGA request the report is issued in full in every instance.

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VICTORIAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Mordialloc Bypass

May 2018

Documentation

Information presented at review:

- Panels by VicRoads and Rob Watson Architecture

Information provided to panel ahead of review:

- CIV Alignment Plans, WSP and VicRoads, 3 May 2018
- Drawing SKD260, WSP and VicRoads, 20 April 2018
- EES Flora and Fauna Assessment, Preliminary Draft: Existing Conditions, WSP, 18 Nov 2011
- EES Technical Impact Assessment Report, WSP, Dec 2011
- Preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Report, Stage 1: Existing conditions analysis, Aspect, 21 Feb 2018
- Acoustics - Existing Conditions Report, WSP, Feb 2018
- EES Social Impact Assessment, WSP, April 2018

Mordialloc Bypass

Design Review Report – 16 May 2018

We thank VicRoads for requesting an independent design review of the Mordialloc Bypass Project and for their participation in the review process, Rob Watson Architecture for their presentation, the City of Kingston, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water for their contribution at the session. This is the first time this project has been reviewed by the Victorian Design Review Panel (VDRP).

The proposal is for a 7.5km freeway linking the end of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway at Springvale Road to the Dingley Bypass and a 2.2km road upgrade of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway. The project includes construction of a two-lane, two-way freeway, with divided median and a shared path for walking and cycling, with provision for the future upgrade of the freeway to six lanes, within the construction footprint. The proposed freeway aims to ease delays and improve safety in the rapidly growing south-east of Melbourne.

The road reservation has been in place since 1969 anticipating urban growth in the south-east of Melbourne. In May 2017, the Victorian Government committed \$300 million in funding to build the Mordialloc Bypass, as a nine kilometre arterial road. On the 9 April 2018, the Government announced a commitment to provide \$375 million in funding to build the Mordialloc Bypass as a freeway, rather than an arterial road with ramps at Thames Promenade. Four key principles guide the urban design and architectural response to the site:

- **Connection:** A continuous corridor for all users, road, pedestrian, cyclists. Providing a seamless transition from Dingley Bypass to the Mornington Peninsula Freeway.
- **Merger:** Significant habitats and landscapes are driving the response to project. Mordialloc Creek, Woodlands, Braeside Park. The potential for these spaces to merge across and into the right of way.
- **Protection:** The protection of flora, fauna, views and vistas.
- **Reciprocity:** A recognition of the unique landscape character of the environment that the Freeway connection is passing through.

The comments in this report provide an overview of the VDRP response to the proposal and a summary of issues raised in the review. Key issues include:

- Anchoring principles are supported, there is scope for a principle of identity.
- Opportunities to maintain community connections should be developed.
- Underpasses are connection points for the community and should be expressed emphatically as safe crossings with high quality amenity.
- An integrated structural design approach is fundamental for elevated structures. They should stand on their own.
- Noise attenuation barriers should be designed in the round, provide visual connection to the interface environment and extend to Braeside Park.
- The principle of protection could be elevated to enhancement with the aim to go beyond legislative requirements in addressing ecological considerations.
- A sensitive design approach is required for the Waterways wetlands, which may allow for a more pragmatic approach in other parts of the road corridor.
- Tree planting is the most significant contribution to what can be an urban forest connector.

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Anchoring principles

We commend the broad, clear anchoring principles for the project. We strongly support the design principles of connection, merger, protection and reciprocity. The outcome and application of the principles across the project is generally too timid and needs to impact the design more meaningfully.

We consider that identity should be a principle in its own right, to highlight the network of distinctive places in the project corridor. The corridor has incredible natural assets, the project should address how they can be celebrated. The nature of the ecosystems or places which span the corridor should be explored more convincingly and will inform linkages and connections.

Connected communities

While a road easement has been in place for the Mordialloc Bypass since 1969, the construction of a Freeway will create a formal barrier between communities and places. This was seen along the Dingley Bypass, where informal pedestrian movement across the road corridor was rationalised since the Bypass was constructed to a lesser number of formal crossings. There is a need to look at the project through the lens of the local community and users of the spaces at the side of the easement. We need to more strongly identify the needs of these groups and connection between land uses such as schools.

We must future proof this area by planning for the changing nature of work and changing land use. The need for access becomes more prominent as areas densify. A current need for community, may become something more significant that requires more connection. It is likely that the 40-year old industrial estates and business parks will change in the future. These areas will transition to mix use with warehouses becoming more intense commercial enterprises. We can see the potential for uses such as commercial spaces and short-term accommodation in integrating with Braeside Park. Pedestrian underpasses and bridges present value creation opportunities with all users benefiting from greater connectivity particularly in the vicinity of adjacent open space. Investment in this infrastructure will provide far greater value in the long term.

We recommend analysing broader regional cycle loops and movement to better understand current routes and how the freeway can protect existing links. There is potential for Braeside Park to connect in with other stops or special moments along a cycle route such as Beach Road and Jells Park.

The pedestrian experience and idea of connecting landscapes is clear in the broad principles but is not coming through in responses. We are not comfortable with only one dedicated mid-point pedestrian connection over a nine kilometre stretch of freeway. We need to invest in the ambition for connected communities. The focus of the budget should be on ramping up the quality of connectivity between one side and the other. We consider that as a general rule, at least one high quality, safe pedestrian link provided between interchanges would be appropriate where there is existing and potential future residential zones. Furthermore, shared links at road interchanges should also be high quality pedestrian links. There may be a shared link at Old Dandenong Road but we haven't seen drawings to confirm this. We need to ensure obvious synergies between community assets on either side of the road corridor are not lost. There are key opportunities at:

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- Chadwick Reserve in Dingley which is a hub of activity with a widely used goat track connection to the business park.
- Further links to Braeside Park should be considered such as the connection from Mills Road in Woodlands Industrial Estate. This is the regional park for the broader area of Parkdale and Mordialloc.
- Smaller connections from Jackie Court, Bangalow Court and Ferntree Grove in Aspendale Gardens should be not be truncated.
- The southern green wedge is an amazing community asset and significant land holding. The opportunity to keep it connected to Aspendale Gardens and broader regional networks should be planned for in the short term.

Underpass design

The design of the underpass between Park Way and Braeside Park is narrow, long, unsafe and perfunctory as a pedestrian experience. It is a space that would be impossible to embed with great city making aspirations in the future. When you compare this underpass with the connections across Eastlink, with their combination of art and architecture, it becomes very inadequate. The community will be looking for integrity in these points of the project design. The design needs to reflect the ambition of reciprocity, particularly around Braeside Park, ramping up civic ambition and connecting landscapes. Underpasses are the public streets and connection points for the community and they should be expressed emphatically as safe crossing points. The pedestrian underpass could be an inviting design, it needs to be more generous and wider than on plan, it needs to open up and breathe.

Reciprocity – architectural interventions and experience of place

We acknowledge that the architectural investigation is at an early stage. We note the compelling design work and legacy of VicRoads engineered bridges such as those along the Eastern Freeway. These are not application design work but innovative structurally integrated design solutions that offer value to the community and meet engineering requirements. With the road elevated in the landscape at the Waterways Estate, the design of the underside of the bridge is an important consideration. This is apparent for the Swan Street bridge in Melbourne whose form is shaped to be mindful of the river flow. The interface (adjacent) communities will look up to the structure and the noise attenuation walls. We would not advocate for a green wash of planting to conceal bulk, the structure needs to stand on its own. Noise attenuation walls should not be plugged onto bridges but integrated into the design. We see a placemaking opportunity with art moving beyond expression and integrating into the structure of bridges, interchanges and pedestrian links. This would allow the opportunity for collaboration and provide powerful moments along the corridor.

We consider that the experience of landscape continuity is what is special about this corridor, not the road itself. The interfaces here are distinctive in having pedestrian and community zones. The design of noise attenuation barriers should allow a degree of transparency in order to provide visual connection to the environment on both sides. This will provide some response to the ecology of the place and may also address the provision of light access to habitat zones. We consider that the best noise attenuation walls are three dimensional and that their end point does not finish abruptly but are carefully integrated with the ground plane. It is critical to design both the front and back of the sound wall. There are two conditions: the driver experience and

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also the experience for pedestrians, cyclists and interface communities. It is difficult to see how the proposed design will address the ambitions of connection and reciprocity without protecting Braeside park from road noise.

Protection/ enhancement – ecological considerations

It is evident that careful consideration has been given to ecological aspects of the project, particularly around water quality. We consider that the design principle of protection could be more ambitious and could be elevated to enhancement. There is an opportunity to go above and beyond legislation requirements to improve the quality of water and address ecological considerations. We consider that there is further work in identifying guiding principles in terms of ecology and resilience. There is an opportunity for ideas about communities living with ecology that could come through in this space.

We note the importance of fauna crossings and commend the team on the number of proposed crossings. We recommend that the Vic Roads Fauna Sensitive Road Design Guidelines are strongly embedded within the project design.

We support the idea of touching the earth lightly through the nationally awarded Waterways wetlands by increasing bridge spans, reducing bridge piers, minimising the footprint and rationalising structure. A sensitive design approach is appropriate here which may allow for a more pragmatic approach in other parts of the road corridor.

Reciprocity – landscape

The landscape is a distinctive aspect of Victorian and Australian Roads, benchmarked internationally. Tree planting along road corridors has a big impact and there are benefits beyond the driver experience for the interface communities and ecologically. Roads are ecological corridors and we consider that tree planting is the most significant contribution to what can be an urban forest connector. Given the scale of the Freeway and the speed at which the space will be experienced, we consider that there is scope for further tree planting. This planting could have significant uplift in terms of the amenity for cycling and walking community, providing a shaded and cooler environment. We see that the potential for further planting is particularly apparent in the northern section of road near the Dingley Bypass. A simpler design is possible here, that responds to place such as an urban food piece, intensive farming or a public art piece that celebrates the adjacent land uses.

Process

The commentary and requirements of agencies should be addressed and integrated where possible by VicRoads in the project brief stage. We consider the more integrated urban design considerations dealt with on client side the more successful the project outcomes. For instance, Parks Victoria may require an additional fence line at Braeside Park, this may be an opportunity to bring in other parties. These are elements that should be resolved at a strategic level prior to awarding the contract. Certain elements should be mandated in the contract such as the height and length of the structure above Mordialloc Creek and the number and size of pedestrian/ cycle crossings between road interchanges.

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This advice is to supplement advice provided by the Responsible Authority in their negotiations with all parties. There may be both strategic and technical issues not raised in this letter that will require resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project for VicRoads. We wish the project well through the next stage of development. We offer our support in review of the final draft reference design prior to advertising for the design and construct tender.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian Collopy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Damian Collopy

Principal Adviser Landscape Architecture + Urban Design