

## **FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**



File no: SF18/4874  
Contact: Jeff Green  
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28 June 2021

The Hon Jacinta Allan  
Minister for Transport Infrastructure  
Level 20, 1 Spring Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Minister Allan

### **MONT ALBERT ROAD AND UNION ROAD LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL PROJECT**

Whitehorse City Council is pleased to be working with the Victorian Government on a number of major transport projects, including Suburban Rail Loop, North East Link, the Box Hill to Hawthorn shared use path and the removal of the Mont Albert Road and Union Road level crossing.

Council continues to support the removal of the two at grade crossings at Mont Albert Road and Union Road and to have them replaced with a safer alternative. Council also welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removal project.

Council is, however, concerned with the shortfalls in the latest proposed design, including the proposed concept plans released on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) team also presented to Council on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 on the latest proposed design and a series of questions from the Councillors remain unanswered. A list of these questions has been provided to the LXRP for response.

Some of the concerns I would like to raise with you, but not limited to, are:-

- 1. The lack of open and transparent communication with the local community**
- 2. The impacts on the MCC Baseball Club and the need for a solution to be found**
- 3. The proposed pedestrian bridge between Hamilton St and Beresford St**
- 4. The reduction of Public Open Space and removal of vegetation**

Timely and meaningful engagement with the many interested members in our community is extremely important and will help the local community embrace and support the project. This relates to both the design process and the constructed outcomes, to ensure this major piece of infrastructure is a positive part of the urban realm. Council's concern is that the voices of our community are not being heard by the State Government and the LXRP. Council continues to receive copies of correspondence sent to you from many members of the community and we trust that these will be followed up and addressed by the State Government.

Council has publicly stated its concern with the LXRП temporarily occupying sections of Surrey Park from as early as 2022. Although Council's concern is on the impact this will have to the general users of Surrey Park, our biggest concern is the profound impact this will have on the MCC Baseball Club. We urge the State Government to find an urgent solution to this matter and Council is willing to work closely with the State Government, the LXRП and the Club to try and find a viable solution which will enable the club to function unimpeded going forward.

Council was surprised to see the latest concept artist impressions still showing a pedestrian bridge between Hamilton Street and Beresford Street (approximately 6 metres wide), across the currently located Mont Albert Station. Council has continuously stated the significance and importance of the existing Mont Albert Station building.

The Mont Albert Railway Station is iconic to the local community - particularly to those who regularly visit the area and appreciate its presence and the history it holds. We strongly encourage that the station building be fully protected and reassembled in its current position, which will best service the needs of the local community in the future.

The station building must be fit for future use and developed to serve the community well for many years into the future. Not only is this important to Council, it is also important to the community. The only way the station building can be replaced in its current location is to build a wider deck/plaza area over the proposed cutting.

The decking needs to be sized to reflect future community use and to create a pedestrian friendly, useable and welcoming space – similar to what the local Architect and resident Pat Cutri has provided, by way of example, in his sketch design for the Mont Albert Station plaza. Our communities expect that a wider deck space (more than what is currently proposed by LXRП) will create a better quality outcome and be of longer-term benefit to them. Therefore, a 6m wide pedestrian bridge will not suffice and detract from the future use of the building and is not appropriate.

Lorne Parade Reserve is a much loved and required public open space which will now also include a connection to the new station. Council and the community is concerned that the station concourse, the staircase and ramps to the entrance of the new station will reduce the amount of green open space in Lorne Parade Reserve. Council and the community expect that there be no loss of canopy trees and no loss of open space.

These elements within the Lorne Parade Reserve landscape are an intrinsic part of the locality and cannot be replaced. Protection of this space and the vegetation within it will demonstrate that the State Government and LXRП are listening to the local community.

Vegetation removal is to be absolutely minimised. The soft landscapes that exist are an integral component that benefits our community –environmentally, functionally and aesthetically.

These are just a few of the issues which Council would like to bring to your attention at this stage. There are, however, other issues such as the possible removal of on-street car parking within surrounding residential streets and the proposed location of the Kiss n' Ride or drop off areas, to name a few.

I would greatly appreciate your comments on how these matters can be addressed and would welcome the opportunity to discuss further with you. Please contact me anytime on 0429138140 to discuss or should you require further details Jeff Green, Director City Development is available on 9262 6306 or [jeff.green@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:jeff.green@whitehorse.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Cr Andrew Munroe**  
Mayor