



**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Reshaping Brunswick

April 2023

The Merri-bek Council Position on getting the best out of the State Government's elevated rail project in Brunswick



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

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# Message from the Mayor



Mayor Cr Angelica  
Panopoulos

I am delighted to present Reshaping Brunswick: Merri-bek City Council's position paper on the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project.

This paper is the result of hundreds of community conversations throughout January, February and March of 2023, in face-to-face meetings, conversations with people along the Upfield Line, a well-attended public meeting, an online interactive map, in-depth community roundtable discussions, and more. Reshaping Brunswick translates the aspirations, concerns, ideas and views we heard during this process, and provides a framework for Council to be clear about what our community will view as a successful project.

The Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project means more to Brunswick and Merri-bek than just the removal of boom gates. It is an opportunity to transform people's relationship with the suburb for generations to come.

Whilst the project will be delivered by the Victorian State Government, we have an important role to play in understanding and advocating for what matters most to our community as the project is delivered.

This project is complex, but our main goals are simple. We want a project that puts people first, is authentic to Brunswick's unique character, and leads to a greener, safer, and fairer place.

Thank you to the many community members who took the time to contribute through the engagement process. The insights, stories, analysis and vision you shared with us are at the heart of Reshaping Brunswick.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angelica Panopoulos'.

Cr Angelica Panopoulos  
Merri-bek City Council Mayor

## Executive Summary

The State Government announced in September 2022 its intention to remove eight level crossings in Brunswick from Park Street, Parkville in the south to Albion Street, Brunswick in the north by elevating the train line on a new rail bridge which will meet up with the recently completed elevated section from Bell to Moreland Stations further north.

Following the State Government's announcement, Council expressed its support for the project. It is something Council has advocated for over many years.

There will be many challenges in carrying out a project of this scale and complexity in such an established and built-up area, and many people will be impacted. There are also enormous benefits that could be realised in the new open space created, the new connections, renewed walking and cycling paths, and opportunities to add to Brunswick's vibrant local character.

Much of the success of the project will be in the detail. Ensuring the project expresses Brunswick's unique sense of place, makes our city safer, more accessible and equitable, how useable the public open spaces are, how well the project responds to the climate emergency, will all be determined in the upcoming design phase.

In getting the details of the project right, Brunswick's knowledgeable, passionate and insightful local community are a valuable resource. Council has carried out extensive engagement on this project, despite it being a State Government funded and delivered one, to capture and share the aspirations, concerns and ideas of the people of Brunswick, and Merri-bek more broadly.

Reshaping Brunswick is not just about what the Level Crossing Removal Project will do to respond to this enormous change. It is also about how we as Council, along with State Government, respond to the challenges and opportunities the project will create, and work together to realise the best possible future for one of the most exciting and loved parts of our city.

## What We Know

From what we understand, the Level Crossing Removal Project is still at an early stage and is carrying out site investigations and other essential early works needed to feed in to their design process.

Public announcements about the project confirm that the Victorian State Government plans to:

- Complete the project by 2027.
- Deliver the project through the Level Crossing Removal Project team.
- Include a new bike and pedestrian path from Bell Street to Park Street in the design.
- Create “around four MCGs” worth of open space between Coburg and Parkville.
- Carry out community engagement on the project on the coming months. On previous projects, this has included a Stakeholder Liaison Group or Open Space Advisory Panel with a focus on informing the design of open space.

## What We Don't Know

We are at an early stage. There is still much that we don't know about the project design or the specifics of how it will be delivered. Important aspects of the project we don't know at this stage include the:

- Number or location of stations, or how the platforms will be accessed.
- Designs of the station precincts.
- Size, height, or engineering details of the concrete pylons.
- Exact form of the new elevated track and stations.
- Direct impacts and to residents and businesses, including what it will mean for the amenity of apartments next to the train line around the same height as the rail bridge.
- Ratio of different kinds of open space. Melbourne Cricket Ground is four hectares in size, so we calculate that this will create around 16 hectares of open space, although this will likely also include functions such as pathways, landscaped areas, swales that absorb stormwater, etc., as well as usable open space like sports courts, lawns, seating, etc. that the community can enjoy. The balance of these uses is not yet known.

## **The Community's Vision for the Brunswick Elevated Rail**

Reshaping Brunswick is the result of hundreds of conversations with the people of Brunswick. They shared their thoughts about this project that will reshape their place, and they had a very high degree of common ground in what they described.

The Brunswick community described a corridor of leafy, cool, green, biodiverse, usable spaces, precincts and paths that work for people of all ages, stages, backgrounds, abilities and interests. They want design that minimises concrete and built form and maximises trees and sunlight wherever possible.

They want to see people put first, and the needs of those who might be most disadvantaged or excluded prioritised. Especially where their homes, their livelihoods or their ability to safely access public transport are affected.

They want to see Brunswick's unique, rich character, its creative and progressive spirit, and its local history and stories, shine through in the design. They want the project to show leadership in environmental sustainability and an expression of shared responsibility for reconciliation.

They want to see the things they cherish, like existing mature trees, kept wherever possible, and see heritage elements like gatekeepers' cabins and stations protected, celebrated and imaginatively repurposed.

They want a delivery process characterised by good, clear, early information about the works and who will be affected and how, and safe diversion routes particularly for walkers, cyclists and people living with a disability. They want the works to be managed in a way that minimises noise, dust and other disruptions and support for those most impacted.

They also want this project to have a galvanising impact on broader revitalisation, to address longstanding local problems, and to create better connected, better managed and more equitable ways of moving around in the broader transport network. In short, a catalyst for a better Brunswick.

## Realising the Vision

The Brunswick rail elevation is taking place in a highly complex context. The density of people and buildings and the narrowness of the rail corridor create significant challenges. There are also opportunities that are particular to this project, especially in the level of understanding, engagement, and technical expertise of the Brunswick community. We therefore believe that realising the vision for this project will require a tailored approach.

For the State Government, this will mean looking at the project in an integrated way, so that longstanding problems that this project will exacerbate can be addressed, especially around local traffic.

For the Level Crossing Removal Project, it will mean inviting a significant community voice in the design process, considering a broader project area, and taking a proactive needs-based approach to community and business support.

For Council, it will mean developing an integrated set of new or revised policy responses such as a new Urban Design Framework (considering the interface of Council owned land with the elevated rail project), review of our streetscape upgrade program, and localised traffic changes. It will also feed into reviews of key local policies such as our planning settings that consider ways that the planning scheme can support the community's aspirations for local jobs, services, entertainment and shopping into the future, through the Vibrant Brunswick project.

It will take all of us working together in a focussed and integrated way, and with the community, to realise the potential of this project and leave the legacy that Brunswick deserves.

Council will review the impacts of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project through two key new pieces of work:

- An Upfield Corridor Urban Design Framework.
- A localised Brunswick Traffic Impact Assessment.

We are also coordinating with teams across Council to feed the results of this work, and of the engagement program, into ongoing strategy and policy work, with particular emphasis on:

- The refresh of Council's Open Space Strategy, which is underway.
- Updates to Council's Transport Strategy.
- The Vibrant Brunswick strategic planning work.
- The long-term Capital Works Program in relation to streetscape upgrades.
- Joint working between Council, RMIT and Creative Victoria through the Brunswick Design District partnership.

# The Brunswick Context

The Brunswick level crossing removals will take place in a particularly complex context. Brunswick is a dense, highly urban area with many homes, especially apartment buildings, directly abutting the rail line. There are also many businesses that operate immediately next to the rail line, some of which have a direct relationship with the Upfield Shared User Path. There are also other important community places along the corridor, such as the Council-owned Brunswick Baths and areas of highly valued open space and mature trees.

The corridor is extremely narrow in places, particularly around Anstey Station, where individual windows and balconies will potentially sit alongside newly created platforms, columns or track. The quality of these households' amenity, their privacy, views, peace and quiet, and sunlight, could all be negatively impacted by the elevated rail infrastructure. They will also be directly impacted by the noise, dust and vibrations of the build process, as will people who live within a broader radius of the construction site.

Many of the apartment buildings adjacent to the rail line are intentional communities, where residents are choosing a more collective way of living together, so the impact of temporary or permanent displacement is not just an individual one but a more far-reaching one.

## Homes Next to the Rail Line

**Within 50m there are buildings containing (measured from centre of the rail corridor):**

- 940 dwellings:
  - » 88 detached houses
  - » 61 townhouses
  - » 780 apartments
  - » 11 other classifications

**Within 100m there are buildings containing:**

- 1609 dwellings:
  - » 204 detached houses
  - » 71 townhouses
  - » 1327 apartments
  - » 7 other classifications



Upfield Shared User Path

The Upfield Shared User Path is an important route that is often crowded with people. It is a key local connector for many community members including commuters, schoolchildren getting to Brunswick Secondary College, parents taking their children to childcare, cyclists of all ages, abilities and confidence levels, people using local cafes, shops, parks and community and cultural facilities, and more.

The rail corridor is not separate or hidden as it is in some other parts of the network. In Brunswick elements of the existing rail corridor play an important role in daily life and some are particularly valued, including community plantings gifted to the community by the Upfield Urban Forest community group, the many charming heritage elements such as gatekeepers' cabins, mature trees like those at Jewell Station, public artworks, local cafes and other businesses that significantly contribute to the life of Brunswick that interact with the corridor.

At the south of the line, at Park Street, there are challenges around how, where and at what gradient the rail line emerges from the existing cutting and how this impacts part of Royal Park and the heritage terraces of Park Street.

Brunswick is a place that is growing and changing. The population is increasing, and projected to continue to grow. This is putting pressure on existing usable green open space and other local facilities and amenities, as well as increasing the unaffordability of homes, creative spaces and small business premises, which leads to displacement and erodes sense of place. In this context, it is important that this major project enhances and protects local character and the local community, and stays true to Brunswick's unique spirit.

## Council's Involvement in This Project

Level Crossing Removal Projects are funded, planned and delivered by the State Government, via the Level Crossing Removal Project team.

### Role of Council

Council has obligations under the Local Government Act 2020, to collaborate with other governments, engage with the community on strategic matters, and prioritise achieving the best outcomes for the community and future generations. Therefore an important role for Merri-bek Council on this project is to understand what matters most to our community, and act as an advocate for those outcomes.

On level crossing removal projects, Councils are typically asked to take over the management and maintenance of open space assets such as playgrounds, sports and recreation areas, landscaping areas, etc. so there is a particular role for Council to play in ensuring these assets meet our standards.

Council also works with the Level Crossing Removal Project team throughout the project to facilitate how it intersects with the surrounding city fabric, such as streets, drains, property holdings, etc., and how it knits in with local planning frameworks.

The engagement program has enabled Council to understand the community's priorities and to advocate for these throughout the design and delivery of this project.

# The Community Conversation

## Intent of Engagement Program

Council decided to carry out its own extensive engagement program on this State Government infrastructure delivery, because of the significant impact this project will have on Brunswick, and the high level of local interest.

The program was designed to:

- Identify who was likely to be most impacted and ensure that they were invited to share their views.
- Give everyone who wanted the chance to express their views the opportunity to do so, with a wide variety of types of engagement.
- Hear from those who don't traditionally engage in Council processes, as well as those who do.
- Move quickly, to maximise opportunities to influence the design process at this early stage.

We are grateful to the many local groups and individuals who gave their time to share their thoughts and ideas. This has included:

- Residents' groups
- Cycle groups
- Walking groups
- Residents who live in the apartment buildings next to the rail line
- Individual local business owners and business groups
- Disability agencies, individuals living with mental health conditions and individuals living with physical disabilities
- Local history groups
- Community planting groups
- Seniors' groups
- School children

## Outline of activities

### Roaming Conversations

Eight, 90-minute roaming conversations were held around the Upfield line in Brunswick from Park Street up to Moreland Road. Locations were selected to specifically capture people that may not normally engage with Council, visiting local parks, shopping areas, stations, community facilities, residential areas, and along the Shared User Path. 144 people shared their thoughts through these conversations.

**“... we want to work with the Level Crossing Removal Project on creative design and engineering to build something that will respect our existing character and improve connectivity. But the key to this is that in co-designing, we must not only meet the needs of us here and now; we must also remember that we are all stewards of this place for future generations. We must all consider the needs and respect the rights of the communities that are yet to come; the Brunswick that will be made up of our children, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren.”**

### Stakeholder Conversations

Face to face meetings and phone calls with key well-networked local stakeholders took place to promote the engagement program as well as to gain specific perspectives, for example members of Brunswick Residents Network, Merri-bek BUG, Council's First Nations Advisory Group, Sydney Road Brunswick Association, Brunswick Community History Group., etc. Individuals from these groups shared insights about what was most important to them, and supported Council in getting the word out about the engagement program, which was very valuable given the tight timelines of the program.

### Roundtables

Three sessions were held with locals interested in taking a deeper dive into key issues such as transport, culture, design, or disruptions during construction. 80 people took part in these sessions, which were characterised by a willingness to see from diverse perspectives and find common ground on what mattered most.

### Public Meeting

On 2nd March a Public Meeting was held at Brunswick Town Hall attended by over 200 people to share the outcomes of the wider engagement program and form a collective view on what was most important to include in Council's advocacy position.

## Social Mapping

An interactive map on the Conversation Merri-Bek Project Page invited community members to tell us what they loved and what isn't working within the rail corridor, and to share their ideas for specific locations. Over 120 people shared their thoughts through this method.

## Community Connectors

We used Council's Community Connectors to speak to local communities about the Brunswick Elevated Rail in their own language. Communities that were engaged with represented our three most frequently spoken languages other than English in Brunswick – Italian, Greek and Arabic.

## Future Engagement

We are at a very early stage of this project, with much still unknown about the design or how it will be delivered.

Reshaping Brunswick is therefore intended to be a position that can evolve over time as more is known.

It is intended that further engagement is carried out once key details are known, for example further roundtables with interested locals, so that positions can be strengthened or clarified as these are tested with the community.

## A Human Centred Approach

Five groups are recognised as priority groups in Merri-bek's Human Rights Policy, due to their being at greatest risk of exclusion from social, economic and political life because of access barriers and discrimination:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities
- Migrant and Refugee Communities
- People with Disability
- Women
- LGBTQI+ Communities

As part of this project, the project team carried out an assessment of which groups would be most impacted by the Brunswick Elevated Rail, and sought out their perspectives through the engagement program, with a particular emphasis on people with a disability as one of the most impacted groups. This perspective will be carried through Council's dealings with the Level Crossing Removal Project team throughout the design and delivery of the project.

The Merri-bek Human Rights Policy also provides flexibility for Council to consider future needs of priority area, groups and issues and the framework of an age and lifespan lens. Older people also constitute a group whose perspective will be included in Council dealings with level Crossing Removal Project team throughout the design and delivery of the project.


## Outcomes of Engagement Program

There was a very high level of agreement between different groups about what was most important to consider on this project on most issues. Examples of sentiments that recurred throughout included the need for good, clear, early information on the project, transparency of decision making, a desire for community involvement in the design process, the level of support given to those who will be most impacted through delivery of the project, especially those living next to the rail line and those with mobility issues, an aspiration that pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised, and concerns about the potential bulk of new infrastructure and its impact on homes, businesses, trees, heritage, and sunlight.

## Where There's a Difference of Views

There were a small number of points of difference between groups taking part in the engagement program. These mostly centre around how Sydney Road is considered, and the perceived trade-offs between making it a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and the potential impact on Sydney Road businesses if parking spaces were affected by this. These views related to both temporary changes during the construction phase, and to permanent changes brought during the project.

Another point of variance between groups was the number of stations that are delivered as part of this project. Some community members were concerned about the idea of there being fewer new stations in the rebuilding of the rail line, and that people would have further to walk to catch a train if there were not as many stations as there are now. Conversely, others were concerned that rebuilding the existing stations within such a narrow corridor would mean more infrastructure and therefore more homes could become unliveable, or there could be greater loss of heritage elements, trees or sunlight. Concern about the bulk of new infrastructure was commonly expressed throughout the engagement.



**“I’m concerned about the structure and how it will contribute to the character of the local community.”**

# Council's Position - Delivering the Best Possible Project

Council has identified 15 key opportunities that need to be prioritised and implemented to ensure the best possible project is delivered to the Brunswick community, and people of Merri-bek more broadly.

These 15 key opportunities have been grouped into three categories – Construction and Disruption; Place, Culture and Country; and Moving Around.

## Construction and Disruption

1. Design That Minimises Negative Impacts
2. A Revitalised Sydney Road
3. A Strong Voice for the Community
4. Support for Those Who Need It Most
5. Safe, Accessible Diversion Routes
6. Support for Impacted Local Businesses

## Place, Culture and Country

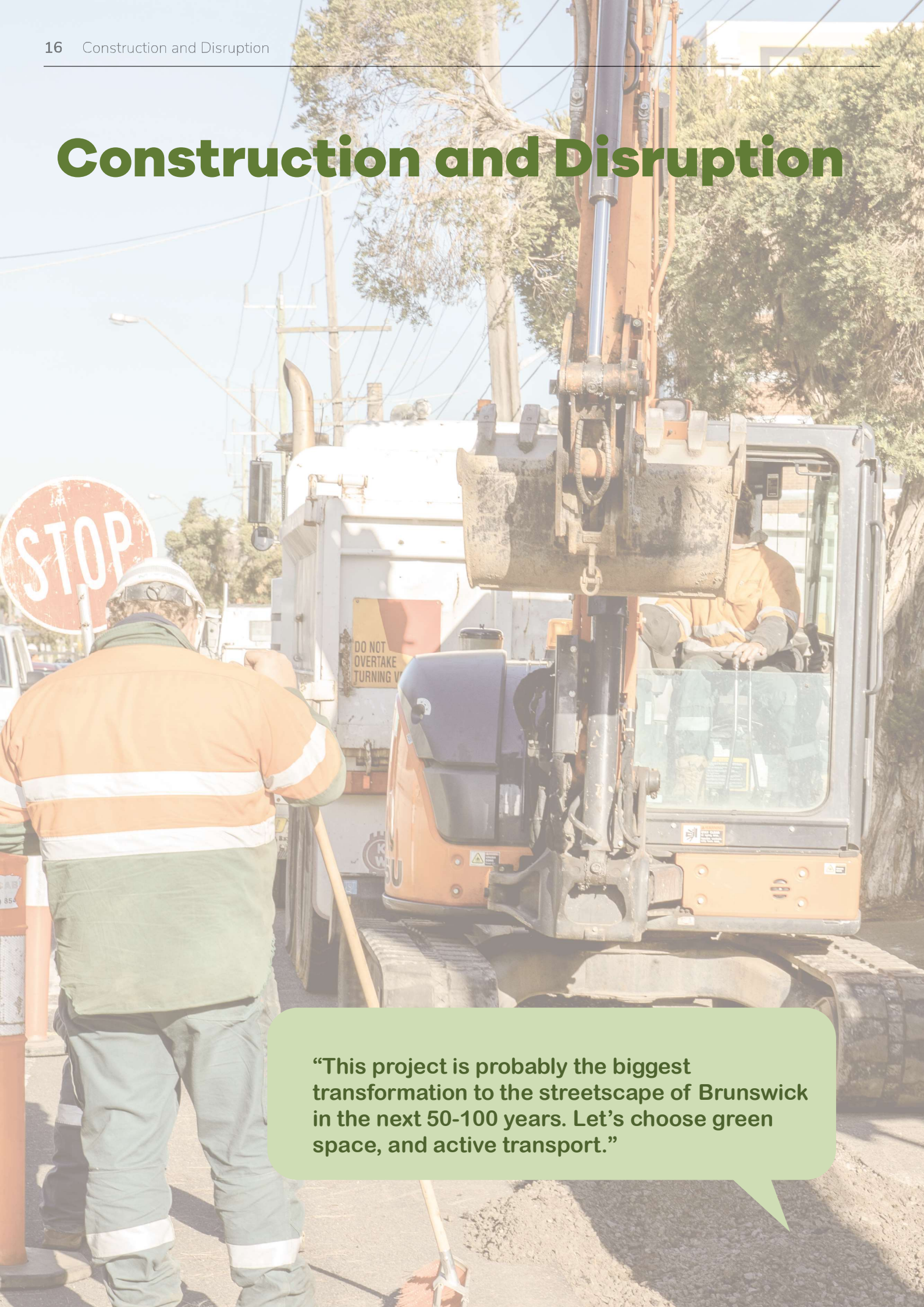
7. A Sustainable Cool, Green Corridor
8. Usable, Characterful, Green, Open Space
9. As Little Tree Loss as Possible and Many New Trees Planted
10. Co-design with the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung
11. Interwoven with local history and local stories
12. Supportive of Brunswick's Vibrant Creative Ecosystem
13. Design That Reflects Local Character and Inspires Community Activity

## Moving Around

14. A People Project not a Car Project
15. Safe and Dignified for All

Read about Council's position on these 15 opportunity areas below.

# Construction and Disruption



**“This project is probably the biggest transformation to the streetscape of Brunswick in the next 50-100 years. Let’s choose green space, and active transport.”**

## 1

## Design That Minimises Negative Impacts

There is much we don't know at this point in time about the exact form of the infrastructure of the new station precincts, entries and platforms. Whatever the final form, the potential impacts for apartment dwellers, people accessing the train, mature trees, heritage and sunlight will be significant.

It is proposed that as more becomes known, and especially as more is understood about who is impacted and how, that the position set out in Reshaping Brunswick is updated to reflect this.

An important aspect of the final design that is unknown is where or how many new stations will be built.

### Existing Station Buildings

Currently, there are three stations in the project zone – at Jewell, Brunswick, and Anstey. It is likely that none of the existing station buildings will perform the same function once the level crossing removal project in Brunswick is complete.

The Moreland Station building and the Coburg Station building, both of which have heritage significance, were incorporated into the design of the recently completed Bell to Moreland level crossing removal project, but they no longer have the same use. In other similar level crossing removal projects, when these types of existing buildings have been kept, they have been used for community cafes, public toilets, offices for Police Community Support Officers, or some other community use.

Two of the existing stations in the Brunswick Level Crossing Project area are on the Victorian State Government Heritage Register: Jewell Station and Brunswick Station. Anstey Station was built later and does not have the same heritage status so would not be subject to the same protections. Despite not having this same formal heritage designation, Anstey Station is still considered by local history groups to have value and Council believes it should be considered in a similar way to the other two station buildings.

## Future Station Buildings

We understand that the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project's final project design may propose to change the location and/or number of new stations, but at this early stage this aspect of the design is not known.

Council believes that two key outcomes should be achieved in the final design:

- Three stations should be maintained to ensure the existing level of access to the train for surrounding residents, improving station accessibility and connections to local destinations and other modes of transport, particularly for those with mobility issues
- The infrastructure itself should be carefully designed to minimise bulk and any negative impact on homes adjacent to the rail line, or amenity such as mature trees, heritage fabric and sunlight to open spaces

## What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

That the design of the new station precincts, the length of platforms and the entry/exit points are designed in a way that ensures:

- Retention of 3 stations on this section of the Upfield Line
- Minimisation of visual bulk of station and platforms
- As few homes as possible are negatively impacted by the new infrastructure
- No one's journey to take the train is harder than it is now, particularly for those with mobility issues
- As few mature trees and as little heritage fabric is negatively impacted as possible

Local journeys should be mapped against any new project design to determine how new stations and their entry and exit points:

- Minimise the distance to get on the train by providing multiple entry and exit points
- Minimise the difficulty of journeys to entry and exit points, for example how many roads need to be crossed to get to the entry to the train and how flat, shaded or otherwise pleasant the pedestrian environment is
- Maximise the ease of access from east-west streets which have high pedestrian traffic

Local trees and heritage fabric should be assessed and, where deemed to have either formal significance or value to the local community, protected wherever possible, including the Anstey Station building.

There should be accessible lifts (and if possible also escalators) north and south, and east and west of all entry and exit points, meaning four ways to access each station.

## What we ask of the Department of Transport and Planning

A commitment to the retention of the current number of 3 stations.



Jewell Station



## 2 A Revitalised Sydney Road

While Sydney Road is not in the immediate project area, the disruption caused by the project will exacerbate longstanding problems, especially the volume of traffic using the road and the conflict between different transport users.

With the train line closed for periods to allow works to take place, as well as the closure of roads and the Upfield Shared User Path, more pressure will be placed on an already busy road network. It is expected that more cyclists will use Sydney Road while the Upfield Shared User Path is closed due to it providing a direct north-south route, even if other diversion routes are provided on smaller local roads.

In addition, the closure of the train line removes an accessible form of public transport, leaving those with mobility issues without a suitable alternative, because Sydney Road's tram stops are not currently accessible.

Some cyclists report that they do not feel safe cycling on Sydney Road, and there have been near misses, injuries and even deaths of cyclists in the past, which is clearly a very significant issue that needs to be addressed.

The State Government has confirmed that the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal project will include the creation of a separated bike path as part of the renewal of the Upfield Shared User Path. But this does not resolve the problem of lack of safety for cyclists on Sydney Road. The sheer volume of cyclists in Brunswick means that Sydney Road will continue to be an important cycling route and it therefore needs to be safe for this purpose.

Meanwhile, local businesses – particularly those represented by the Sydney Road Brunswick Association – report that ease of car parking (Sydney Road contains around 450 on-street, plus an additional 600+ off-street spaces in shared public parking areas) is important to the viability of their businesses. Destination businesses, for example the bridal precinct, recycled fashion stores, live music venues, destination restaurants, etc. report their concern that if people cannot park nearby they may simply choose other businesses and precincts instead.

Some customers may be deterred from shopping on Sydney Road if it is harder to find a car parking space, and the potential removal of on-street parking spaces to accommodate improved safety for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users without other interventions to mitigate this and support local business could result in the failure of some existing businesses along the road.

In addition, the community regularly reports dissatisfaction with the overall amenity of Sydney Road. It is a harsh urban environment due to its being car dominated, subject to graffiti (particularly on private buildings), has a high vacancy rate of local shops and few trees or other forms of shade.

This lack of amenity is having a detrimental impact on local businesses. Anecdotally, the precinct suffers from escape expenditure as people within its catchment area elect to travel to other retail precincts that have better streetscape amenity and retail/hospitality offerings, for example Lygon Street, East Brunswick; Rathdowne Street, North Carlton; Puckle Street, Moonee Ponds; and High Street, Northcote.

Further, the unappealing and unsafe pedestrian and cycle access to and within the precinct, as well as the lack of shade and greening, results in fewer customers using Sydney Road businesses, and customers spending less time using Sydney Road than they otherwise would.

Sydney Road is a complex environment because it is owned by multiple parties – the State Government's Department of Transport and Planning owns the road and kerbs, Council owns the footpaths, and there are multiple private owners of the shops. There are also services such as Melbourne to Sydney fibre optic cable running underneath the pavements which limit possible improvements and makes the planting of large trees in the pavements extremely challenging.

In addition, we don't yet know whether Sydney Road will be needed by the Level Crossing Removal Project as a route for transporting large, heavy equipment, cranes, etc. to site, and what space needs this would require.

The way forward to solve these interrelated problems – to provide better protection to cyclists, make public transport options fully accessible, improve local amenity, and allow local businesses to better compete with other retail centres - is a large-scale revitalisation of Sydney Road, delivered in partnership between Department of Transport and Planning, local businesses, local community and active transport groups, and Merri-bek Council, and supported by the Level Crossing Removal Project.

In order to prevent further deterioration of amenity, safety or business success on Sydney Road, Council proposes that the way forward is to work in partnership to overcome these challenges, using a staged approach.



Sydney Road

**“MCC’s advocacy paper should be broad enough to incorporate all concerns raised by the community, rather than focused simply on issues within the Level Crossing Removal Project’s mandate and their priorities in the immediate elevated rail zone.”**

## **Timing and Staging Considerations**

A clear understanding of timing and staging of the program for the level crossing removals and any other large developments in the public and private realm in the precinct will be needed to understand when and how the revitalisation of Sydney Road will be possible.

A plan with short-term initiatives and long-term permanent upgrades could be considered as a dynamic and collaborative program between agencies. Short-term interventions should spearhead priority mobility projects contributing to safety and connectivity during the construction period, ideally put in place before construction starts, as well as support for local businesses.

Short term works should reflect the long-term permanent vision for the spatial layout of the street and take into consideration timing challenges.

Long-term initiatives could focus on permanent instalment of wider and upgraded footpath with street trees where possible, permanent separated bike lanes etc.

A program could look something like this:

### **Step 1: Over the next 12 months**

The Department of Transport and Planning, Merri-bek Council, the Sydney Road Brunswick Association, along with interested local cycling, pedestrian, disability, seniors, and residents’ groups, will work together to develop a shared vision and describe key moves for the revitalisation of Sydney Road.

### **Step 2: Before major train line, path and road closures**

Implement a series of temporary interventions using a tactical urbanism approach, including:

- Upgrade signage directing vehicles to parking spots in areas surrounding Sydney Road.
- Carry out visual merchandising and other marketing and promotional pushes to Sydney Road shops.

- Graffiti removal and street cleansing blitz on both public and private property (in conjunction with Sydney Road Brunswick Association).
- Install temporary separated bike lanes.
- Upgrade tram stops at strategic locations to be fully accessible.
- Extend the 'Good Access is Good Business' pilot and actively market Sydney Road as a disability friendly shopping area.
- Install new temporary shade structures.
- Work with businesses to green the front of shops with planters that they maintain.
- Set up evaluation processes to track the impacts of these changes on local shopping habits, transport habits and customer perceptions of Sydney Road.

### **Step 3: After major works are complete**

Evaluation of Stage 1 and finalisation of Streetscape Masterplan.

### **Step 4: Over the next 10 years**

Deliver Streetscape Masterplan, including upgrading all tram stops to be fully accessible, and any other interventions suggested by the shared vision and outcomes of evaluation.

This stage could also include:

#### **Greening**

- Identify opportunities for additional street planting, including in side streets as close as possible to intersections, (existing examples of mature trees in side streets with canopy cover that extends above Sydney Road footpaths can be seen at the intersections of Sydney Road and: (i) Michael Street, Brunswick; (ii) Mitchell Street, Brunswick; and (iii) The Grove, Coburg).
- Identify potential partnership opportunities and/or financial support/incentives for large tree planting within the grounds of churches, former churches and schools.

#### **Improved Precinct, Amenity and Node Delineation**

Landscape, public art, or other physical markers in the public realm to visually denote the Bridal Precinct, Mediterranean grocers and produce providers, and live music and night time economy precincts. Examples could include:

- Public Art Installations at key intervals along the full length of the street.
- Improve wayfinding.
- Improve street furniture.

- Engage local artists to design bespoke items of common street furniture (e.g. bench seats, shade sail structures, tram shelters, etc., in a Sydney Road style).
- Develop bespoke signage and infrastructure audit.

## **Parking Infrastructure**

Any further enhancements suggested by the evaluation of temporary interventions in Stage 1

## **Business Support and Enablement**

Retail Business Support, e.g.

- Visual merchandising training and support for businesses
  - » Vacant shop activation programs (e.g. potentially extend MoreSpace, Vacant Shop Grant, etc.)
- Shopfront improvement program support, e.g.:
  - » Develop shopfront improvement standards to assist businesses
  - » Development guidelines for upgrading shopfronts in heritage overlay
  - » Remove old signage, paint building facades, clean graffiti, etc., implement new signage)
  - » Heritage shopfront restoration grants

Sydney Road is not functioning to its full potential as a successful, welcoming, safe, equitable place. The works of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project will make it even less so. Therefore all agencies should come together to put in place now a revitalisation program that can:

- Improve the attractiveness and appeal of Sydney Road as a retail, hospitality and entertainment destination through a series of interventions in the public realm, landscaping, and supporting property owners to improve the appearance of private buildings and businesses.
- Improve accessibility to the precinct by sustainable travel modes (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport - especially bus and tram).
- Improve vehicular circulation and driver wayfinding to off-street car parking spaces.
- Improve accessibility, including for people of all abilities, to businesses themselves - e.g. extending Council's 'Good Access is Good Business' pilot program.

## What we ask of the Department of Transport and Planning

- Work with us to develop a long-term shared vision for the revitalisation of Sydney Road, with short-term and long-term actions, with key priorities as below:
- Upgrade key Sydney Road tram stops now before the works start so that they are accessible to people with a disability before the only other form of accessible public transport is disrupted.
- Install temporary separated bike lanes prior to the Upfield Shared Path being closed for construction. There is no safe or practical north/south alternative, therefore making temporary separated bike lanes a priority for the safety of all cyclists displaced from the Upfield line including school age and younger children in childcare and kindergarten. A higher risk Sydney Rd or backstreets of construction and congestion is not a safe alternative. Separated bike lanes means that solutions will need to be found for delivery for premises without rear access, assessment of needs and strategy for people with restricted mobility reliant on parking access along Sydney Rd, and stops for replacement buses.

## What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Recognise the project's impact on Sydney Road, and find ways to support its improvement.

## What we commit to

- Working in partnership with the State Government, local businesses and local community to develop a masterplan for Sydney Road.
- Considering streetscape upgrades, business support programs, greening of key nodes where there is space for trees, changes to parking arrangements in broader network. This would be a major investment by Council and would be considered in the context of their long-term planning, budgeting, work planning and resourcing.

### Make Sydney Road Tram Stops Accessible

Whether or not a partnership approach to the revitalisation of Sydney Road is achievable in advance of the disruptions of the level crossing removal implementation, the following should be implemented before the closure of the train line and Upfield Shared User Path:

- Tram stops at strategic locations along Sydney Road to be upgraded to be fully accessible
- Fully separated, safe diversion routes for cyclists informed by the Merri-bek BUG (Bicycle Users Group)
- Support given to local businesses



## 3 Significant Community Participation

The Brunswick community is a strongly engaged and knowledgeable one. Throughout the engagement program, we were struck by the depth of technical understanding, the positive and constructive approach, and the ability and willingness to consider the needs of the whole community, demonstrated by those who took part.

The insight of the Brunswick community should be viewed as a valuable resource to the Level Crossing Removal Project in delivering the project, and one that will improve the quality, character and usability of all of its elements.

Due to the complexity of the Brunswick project, this deep local knowledge will be important in getting the details right, and there should be opportunities to enable the community to see and provide feedback at key stages of the project design.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

Release design concepts at a point in the process where the community can provide meaningful feedback.

Consult with specific groups on key strategies and get their feedback before decisions are made, namely:

- The Upfield Urban Forest community gardening group on a Tree Study and a Planting Palette.
- Merri-bek BUG and Walk on Merri-bek on separated pathway design, and the design of diversion routes during road and path closures.
- Brunswick Community History Group and the Coburg Historical Society on a Heritage Study.
- The Brunswick Design District Steering Committee and Merri-bek's Arts and Culture team on the Creative Strategy.
- Merri-bek's Disability Advisory Committee, Merri-bek Age Friendly Reference Group, Brunswick Residents Network and other community, disability, aged and residents groups on station precinct design and diversion routes.
- The Wurundjeri Council on a codesign process.

Establish a Community Design Review Panel made up of those with technical expertise in architecture, landscape architecture or other relevant disciplines, who live near the rail line, to review and provide feedback on designs as they are developed, and used in a similar way as the Victorian Review Design Panel run by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect

Release key local studies and background work that is informing the project, such as arborist reports or traffic modelling.

## What we commit to

Tapping into the rich local knowledge, insights, and passion of the Brunswick community through ongoing engagement throughout the project, particularly when key concepts become public, for example future roundtables to feed back on designs.



Community participation events



## 4 Support for Those Who Need It Most

The level of disruption on this project will be substantial, with more people directly affected than on similar projects such as the Bell to Moreland level crossing removal project that has recently been completed which had a less densely populated rail corridor.

The rail line has multiple apartment buildings next to it, with some apartments directly next to where the new rail bridge, columns or platforms might be situated.

On other level crossing removal projects, some households have had their amenity impacted to the extent that they are not able to continue living there, and this is likely to be the case in the Brunswick project too. For others, it may mean relocating for a long period as the works are carried out. Even those who are not directly next to the site may be impacted by noise, dust and vibrations to the point where they are unable to continue living in their home during construction.

Residents who live along the rail corridor told us that they are concerned about what it will mean for their home, their lives, and the communities they are part of. The apartment buildings that make up this part of Brunswick are unusual for the high numbers living as part of 'intentional communities', where people choose to live amongst others in a more communal setting and develop strong ties to their neighbours.

We are also aware that individuals experience this kind of disruption differently. Those with sensitivity to noise or dust, with young children at home, those with caring responsibilities, renters, people who have to cope with mental or physical health issues, or shift workers will have extra pressures and need extra support.

The Level Crossing Removal Project should assess the needs of those who will be impacted, and tailor the packages of support they give.

The closure of roads, train lines, the shared user path, and other kinds of disruptions should be designed and managed in a way that causes as little disruption as possible to the daily lives of those who live, work, visit and move through and around Brunswick. The works should be staged to allow this to happen in as smooth a way as possible.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Clear communication about disruptions well ahead of time.
- Clear communication around the level of noise and what support that triggers.
- Early and regular communication with affected people, including a hotline to respond to issues as they arise.

- Consider the relocation eligibility zone and tailor relocation around individual circumstances.
- Carry out needs assessments for households within a wide radius to understand their individual circumstances and how they might be affected.
- Generous compensation and relocation packages for those affected.
- Proactively engage with impacted residents about:
  - » When they will be relocated
  - » How long they will be relocated for
  - » Their choices in the relocation venue and
  - » What other forms of support they will need during construction
- Provide similar guidelines available to the public as used for other major projects i.e. Metro Tunnel.
- Enact best practise dust, noise and vibration management.
- Provide Council with Works Alerts and other communications in a timely manner.
- Meaningfully consult with Council on traffic management plans before decisions are made.
- Stage works so that the entire site is not closed down for one long period and impose noise quarantines to allow residents to sleep peacefully.
- Guarantee that work with higher levels of noise does not occur between 10pm and 7am.

### **What we don't want to see**

- Closing off roads without consultation.
- Sending trucks down local roads.
- Blocking pedestrian access across the rail corridor.

### **What we commit to**

- Provide temporary parking permits if a street is impacted during construction.
- Review car parking arrangements within the project area to ensure there is as much space available as possible for residents and business owners and customers.
- Work with the Level Crossing Removal Project to create comprehensive Works Agreements to cover:
  - » Haulage Strategies and the impacts to residents and local roads
  - » Approved Council Traffic Management Plans
  - » Pre-construction condition surveys which assess the standard Council assets need to be reinstated to post-construction

“What is not known is how our health and wellbeing will be impacted by the extension of the Skyrail, including by the noise and other pollution the Skyrail would create, by the light that it would block, by the materials that would be used to build it.”

Potential health impacts of the Level Crossing Removal Project

Community members involved in the public meeting raised the issue of the impacts on local people’s health. Due to the density of homes and businesses surrounding the project area, the health impacts are an important consideration. The following table explores what these impacts might be (based on evidence sourced from literature reviews and community consultation), and how they have been considered in Council’s advocacy position.

Noise during construction			
Relevant determinants of health	Potential health impact	Groups, communities or populations experiencing differential impacts	Council’s Position on How These Impacts Should be Mitigated
Environmental and physical influences	Increased stress from noise	People living close to the rail line	Noise quarantines at certain times during the night
	Impacts on cardiovascular health	People with businesses close to the rail line	Clear communication about disruptions well ahead of time
	Disrupted home learning / study	People working/ studying from home	Clear communication around the level of noise and what support that triggers for residents
	Disturbed sleep	People experiencing mental health issues	Early and regular communication with affected people, including a hotline to respond to issues as they arise
Social factors: income and social protection, working life conditions, housing, basic amenities and the environment	Impact on mental health	Shift workers	Generous compensation and relocation packages for those affected that is needs based
		Children	
		People renting their homes	
Personal health practices and coping skills			

### Dust and environmental pollution during construction

Environmental and physical influences	Impact on respiratory health	People with chronic respiratory disease or allergies	Use best practice dust minimisation techniques
		People who are immunocompromised	Clear communication about disruptions well ahead of time
		Older people	Early and regular communication with affected people, including a hotline to respond to issues as they arise
		Children	

### Disruption to regular modes of transport

Social factors: Income and social protection	Perceived or actual lack of safety of alternate routes and the impact of this on independent and active travel, including after dark	People living with a disability	Continuous separated diversion bike paths, with route determined with input/co-design with local cyclist groups such as Merri-bek Bicycle User Group
Employment and working conditions		People with mobility issues	
Gender	Lack of direct route to reach destination leading to increased travel time and impact on daily life	Migrant and refugee communities	Alternate forms of transport for people with a disability
Social inclusion and non-discrimination		School children / students	Support the establishment of a 'Bike Bus' to encourage local cyclists to use diversion routes
Social Support Networks	Potential reduction in social support due to inability to easily travel to meet family / friends	Young people	Wayfinding to alternate transport routes should be clear, accessible and obvious
Personal health practices and coping skills	Potential impact on accessing health services	People with young children at home	
Environmental and physical influences	Increased stress due to lack of familiarity with detours / different mode of transport	People with caring responsibilities	Detours and alternate travel routes should meet best practice in safety ensuring adequate lighting, signage
	Possibility of improved confidence / sense of independence by mastering new travel routes	Women, girls and gender diverse communities	Consult with Council about traffic management plans before decisions are made
	Possibility of creating new social encounters by using different modes of transport / routes	LGBTIQA+ communities	
		Older people	
		Cyclists	

Relevant determinants of health	Potential health impact	Groups, communities or populations experiencing differential impacts	Council's Position on How These Impacts Should be Mitigated
<b>Uncertainty and lack of information</b>			
Social factors: Personal health practices and coping skills	Increased levels of stress and impact on existing mental health conditions	People living with mental illness	Clear communication about disruptions well ahead of time
Social Support Networks	Increased stress from uncertainty / lack of communication around timing of works, acquisition of properties, details of the structure, etc.	People living with a disability	Early and regular communication with affected people, including a hotline to respond to issues as they arise
Employment and working conditions	Loss of established communities and community support for people living close to the rail line	People with mobility issues	Liaise with local mental health organisations to ensure that people can easily access free, needs based support during the construction process
		Migrant and refugee communities	
		People living in apartments close to the rail line	Liaise with local community groups to connect affected residents from adjoining properties in Brunswick with people in Coburg who were affected during the Bell to Moreland phase of elevated rail construction, to share strategies and information on how they coped.
<b>Loss of access to amenity and services during closure of the rail line</b>			
Social factors: Personal health practices and coping skills	Loss of quiet spaces	People living with a disability	Work with residents to create innovative solutions for disruption (e.g. creating spaces in Council facilities for those who cannot work at home due to noise and other amenity issues).
	Potential changes in access to local health services	People with mobility issues	
Social Support Networks	Short term impact on social connection opportunities through reduction of public open space and local facilities during construction – good access to community cultural and leisure facilities is associated with higher perceived health, lower anxiety and depression	Migrant and refugee communities	
Employment and working conditions		School children / students	
Income and social protection		Women, girls and gender diverse communities	
Social environment		Older people	
Environmental and physical influences			



## 5 Safe, Accessible Diversion Routes

The train line, local roads and the Upfield Shared User Path will all experience closures for unknown periods during the construction of this project, forcing users onto other forms of transport or other routes. Pedestrian, cycling, public transport and vehicle diversion routes during the construction phase of the project should be safe, practical, convenient and universally accessible. It is important that people with limited mobility are not further disadvantaged by the design of diversion routes or cyclists or pedestrian made less safe.

The temporary closure of the train line will reduce the transport options for people with limited mobility traveling from the north of the municipality, through Brunswick and onwards to Melbourne CBD.

The East Brunswick shimmy and West Brunswick shimmy provide existing north-south cycling routes, but they are too far from the Upfield Shared User Path to be a practical alternative for everyone. Diversion routes in streets surrounding the Upfield Shared User Path will be required.

Heavy vehicle routes used during the construction of the level crossing removals will also be a factor in determining safe diversion routes and are unknown at this early stage of the project.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Ensure an understanding of local movements and destinations to inform safe and convenient diversion routes during construction by consulting with Council, Merri-bek Bicycle User Group, Walk on Merri-bek and local people living with disabilities.
- Ensure alternative pedestrian routes during the construction phase are accessible to all members of the community, with upgraded pram crossings and tactile ground surface indicators at intersections to comply with DDA requirements.
- All diversion routes should have clear direction signage and intersections should be signalised where required to ensure safety.
- Connect diversion routes to the existing walking and cycling network, with connections to the Capital City Trail south of Park Street and the Upfield Shared User Path north of Moreland Road.
- Sponsor local community groups to develop a 'Bike Bus' along the diversion routes to support less confident cyclists get familiar with new routes by riding in a group with more experienced cyclists.

- Enact Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles on diversion routes, including installing adequate lighting along the routes.
- Provide good early information to commuters north of the project zone to use alternative routes to Sydney Road while the construction of the project causes diversions.
- Ensure lifts, and all other accessibility features, are operational on opening day.
- Consult the council's Disability Reference Group about public transport access during the construction phase, and access to the new stations as part of the design phase.

### **What we ask of the Department of Transport and Planning**

- Provide flexible and accommodating alternative transport arrangements while the project is being constructed, for example:
  - » Ensure replacement buses are universally accessible
  - » Allow bikes to be carried on replacement buses, as they are on train services
  - » Provide a Disability Access Plan and advertise this via disability, seniors groups and State Government and Council media
  - » Provision of free taxi vouchers for those with a disability who are impacted.

### **What we Ask of Public Transport Victoria**

- Ensure that trams and buses run throughout the train shut down period to ensure minimum additional impacts on accessibility to the wider Brunswick Activity Centre.
- Boost tram and bus services (frequency and especially during poorly serviced times of the week) in advance of construction to encourage greater use of public transport, and so offset impact on parking during (and after) construction.
- Train replacement buses should travel the full length of the train line with both express services and stopping all stations routes.
- Increase service levels of trams on Sydney Road, Lygon Street and Melville Road; East-West bus routes; and Upfield Train Replacement Buses both in evenings as well as daytime, to help accommodate increased passengers and mitigate the impact of traffic delays.

## What we don't want to see

- Diversion routes that are unsafe, inaccessible, inconvenient, impractical, unrealistic, complicated, or ill-designed.
- Creating modal transport conflicts in diversion routes, e.g. putting cycling routes on the footpath.
- Replacement buses that disadvantage train users north of the level crossing removals, for example that don't provide a replacement along the entire route.
- People requiring accessible train replacement transport are made to wait longer than other users.

## What we commit to

- Working with the Level Crossing Removal Project and local active transport groups to identify safe and universally accessible diversion routes.



PTV Tram

## 6 Support for Impacted Local Businesses

Brunswick's loved local businesses are central to the character of the place. They provide livelihoods and jobs, service the community's daily needs, provide vital third spaces that bring people together, and make Brunswick a destination for those across Melbourne and beyond. There are several hundred businesses, including hospitality venues, bike shops, music recording studios, artists' studios, professional services, independent shops, and live music venues, along and nearby the corridor that contribute significantly to creating the unique vibe of Brunswick.

Many local businesses are still finding their feet after years of disrupted business, are now facing significant cost pressures and slowdown in consumer spending.

The disruption brought about by this project will be direct for some, particularly those businesses that face on to the Upfield Shared User Path. Some local businesses tell us that they are delaying investment decisions or expansion plans until more is known about the impacts of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project on their business.

Businesses, including those further away from the construction site, could also see impacts from road closures and other disruptions. This could lead to loss of revenue which, for smaller or more marginal businesses, could materially affect financial viability.

The Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project should ensure that local businesses are supported and consulted every step of the way, particularly those along the rail corridor who will be most impacted. Local agencies, social enterprises and community organisations will be similarly affected and should be similarly considered in communications and support arrangements.



Impacted local businesses are a high priority for the community

## What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

Work closely with businesses affected by amenity impacts, loss of parking and access, disruptions to delivery arrangements, traffic diversions, temporary interruption to utilities, or construction cordons and laydown zones, on an individual basis, including:

- Employ a dedicated Business Liaison Officer for the project.
- Support businesses whose premises become unusable to relocate within Brunswick.
- Communicate clearly and early with affected businesses about what will happen and when, including impacts to businesses' operational amenity, parking, utilities, deliveries, access arrangements, public transport disruptions, etc.
- Undertake a business-by-business impact assessment process.
- Interview and work with businesses individually to understand their varying sensitivities (e.g. proximity, outlook, dependence on passing bike and foot traffic, sensitivity to noise & vibration, etc.).
- Communicate as early as possible to businesses about what the construction process looks like (times, duration, nature of activities, traffic diversions, nature of likely off-site amenity impacts, etc.) and adopt mitigation measures identified by businesses to reduce impacts.
- Communicate regularly with Council concerning impacts on businesses, to enable Council to be on the front foot in providing support services.
- Compensate businesses who experience increased costs and/or a loss of turnover due to construction impacts, including:
  - » Businesses that need to close temporarily (or, if applicable – those that might need to relocate permanently)
  - » Businesses that experience a reduction in operating conditions that leads to corresponding and demonstrable increased costs and/or reduced turnover
- Actively market and promote affected businesses, especially those most seriously impacted, for example by:
  - » Erecting large scale and clearly visible 'Still open' and logo-displaying signs on construction hoardings
  - » Placing full page advertising of businesses in local media (print, online and social), as well as on project updates flyers that are delivered monthly to residents and other businesses
  - » Supporting or funding advertising for selected businesses in relevant print and online publications
  - » Relocating affected businesses during construction, for example into vacant shops on Sydney Road

- » Preferentially purchasing goods and services from affected businesses e.g. for the Level Crossing Removal Project's own workforce, for selected services)
- » Working with Sydney Road Brunswick Association to promote Sydney Road businesses and Brunswick as a whole
- » Businesses that face directly on to the Upfield Shared User Path should be invited to consider how the open space design might affect and benefit their business, for example a cafe spilling out tables and chairs into open space, or bike parking, pumps and repair stations located near iconic local bike shops.

## **What We Commit To**

Work with the Level Crossing Removal Project to assist them to supporting local businesses in Brunswick throughout the project through our dedicated Economic Development team

### **Businesses Next to the Rail Line**


Approximately 450 businesses operate within approximately 80m to 100m (west & east) of Upfield Rail Corridor (Sources: Monitor CRMS, based on Australian Business Register (ABR) data) including:

- approximately 80 professional, scientific and technical services businesses
- 30+ Cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars
- 17 Creative artists, musicians, writers and performers
- 9 businesses undertaking 'Music & Other Sound Recording Activities'
- 5 businesses undertaking 'Motion Picture & Video Production'
- At least 5 bicycle / scooter businesses, 4 of which are directly orientated to Upfield Shared Path and its users

At least 30 businesses front directly on to, or are immediately adjacent to, the Upfield rail corridor

Some businesses use the Upfield Shared User Path for deliveries by bike

# Place, Culture and Country



**“We need more seats! There are never enough...just one on their own is not enough – it would be good if we could sit and chat together.”**

## 7 A Sustainable, Cool, Green Corridor

The area around the rail line has been identified in Merri-bek's Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan as a hotspot where land surface temperatures can reach as high as 52 degrees Celsius during summer. Extremes of heat caused by climate change, the increasing threat to local wildlife, and projected increases to the population, make green space an absolute priority as the best way to create a mitigating 'Park Cool Island Effect'.

The Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project presents an opportunity to create a cool, green, shaded, and biodiverse space where people are provided with a refuge away from the heat of the surrounding urban environment.

The urban heat island effect can be mitigated by providing solutions which harness the cooling qualities of plant life and water, which can be thought of as 'green' (for plants) and 'blue' (for water) strategies.

By harnessing green and blue cooling strategies, the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project can create an urban oasis that cools the environment and provides locals and visitors a large space to relax and escape the heat of the urban landscape.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Achieve the highest Infrastructure Sustainability Rating possible at time of registration for the entire project (design, construction, and commissioning).
- Consider underground peak rainwater storage to replace an excess of swale areas (and deliver green urban community spaces instead).
- Maximise the use of trees and other shade plants.
- Cover structures with green infrastructure like green roofs, walls and facades.
- Use pervious materials which maximise infiltration and cooling benefits.
- Consider ease of maintenance as a central issue in plant selection.
- Integrate water harvesting, infiltration tools, raingardens, and swales.
- Collect and use stormwater onsite for passive and active irrigation.
- Integrate water play to provide nature play and a cooling benefit.
- Align landscape plans with key Merri-bek Council policy documents, including the Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2027, Urban Forest Strategy Report 2022, the Nature Plan and the Integrated Water Management Strategy 2020.



Nature playground within existing trees at Lincoln Square, Carlton

### **What we don't want to see:**

- Landscapes with no irrigation.
- Using impervious materials with no shade or no greening, which increases heat.
- Allowing stormwater to leave the site untreated or un-used.

### **What we ask of Melbourne Water**

- Model stormwater volumes in the rail corridor to determine the amount of required water storage.

### **What we commit to**

- A new Urban Design Framework for the area that considers how Council's adjoining land can support greening, cooling, and water management efforts.

**“Could these projects not make a direct contribution to creating a more sustainable energy mix? E.g. why not add solar and battery power/park & ride & charge facilities for scooters, bikes and cars.”**

## 8

## Usable, Characterful, Green Open Space

Usable green spaces are precious, particularly in Brunswick's dense urban context. Council's newly delivered park Bulleke-bek next to the rail line is full of people from morning to night, and more green open spaces are needed here to cater to the growing population.

The State Government announcement states that elevating the rail line from Albion Street to Park Street will create "four MCGs" worth of new open space. But much of this space will be given over to new rail bridge infrastructure, new station precincts, soft landscaping and swales, and a renewed Upfield Shared User Path with separated bike lanes.

The project presents a once in a generation opportunity to enhance the range, quality, and accessibility of public spaces in Brunswick. To make to most of this opportunity, we should look broader than the immediate corridor and consider State Government-owned and Council-owned spaces either side of the project area to create a broader linear park capable of meeting the needs of the area into the future.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- The project scope should be extended outside the narrow corridor to ensure better integration into the surrounding streetscape.
- Create flexible open space with functional diversity that will accommodate current and future generations and changing needs into the future.
- Create high amenity public spaces and places, including access to water, playgrounds, new seating, resting places, lighting, and public art.
- Create destinations for locals and visitors, building on existing community uses and businesses.
- Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in the project design.
- Design gender-sensitive and children-friendly public spaces.

**"Open space isn't the same as useable space. Useable space is the most important thing that needs to be kept for the local community."**

## What we ask of other Victorian government departments

- Department of Transport and Planning and VicTrack should consider contributing underused land either side of the corridor, or land acquired for laydown sites during construction, to the project to become open space at the end of the works.

## What we don't want to see

- Constrained open space with minimal space underneath the elevated rail
- Open space which is poorly integrated and has issues with legibility, wayfinding, and access.
- Not considering Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design to deliver unequitable or unsafe spaces with poor lighting.
- Open space which is inflexible or inaccessible to parts of the community.

## What we commit to

- Including consideration of the project area in the upcoming refresh of the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy.
- Reviewing Council owned streets to see if additional open space can be provided to enhance the open space provided by the project.



Example of generous seating spaces integrated with lighting



Swing Time in Boston delivered the kind of fun, physical outdoor experience that many teen girls are looking for  
Photographer: Höweler + Yoon Architecture

## 9

## As Little Tree Loss as Possible and Many New Trees Planted

Trees are deeply loved and valued by our community. Many of the trees in the corridor are significant, in terms of their size and age, and in terms of the role they play in softening and greening local streets, contributing to local character and amenity, providing habitat for local wildlife and shading to combat the heat island effect.

There are areas of trees and landscaping that have particular value, especially around Royal Park as one of the most significant green spaces in Melbourne, around Jewell Station, where the collection of statuesque mature gum trees are local icons, and pockets of plantings created by the Upfield Urban Forest group, whose distinctive style creates a sense of community ownership and care. There is also an important north-south habitat link between Royal Park and Princes Park and Fawkner Cemetery and Memorial Park, each with high conservation values.

It is impossible to deliver a major project like this one without impacting some trees but proper consideration should be given to each impacted tree, and tree loss minimised to the greatest possible extent.

Plant families of Eucalypt and Callistemon dominate in the Merri-bek area (32% and 25%, 2022 report) and a high number of species growing now in the Merri-bek area are already temperature vulnerable. This will significantly increase over the coming decades.

The project creates an opportunity to increase diversity for a healthy tree population, make us more resilient to climate change and increase habitats for local wildlife.



Jewell Station's valued mature trees

## What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- In consultation with the Upfield Urban Forest, carry out a Tree Study, engaging with them to assess local trees to understand their health, maturity, biodiversity value, aesthetic value, canopy coverage and value to the community. Where these values are high, trees should be retained if possible.
- Work with Merri-bek arborists to establish an appropriate plant list for an optimal tree canopy and biodiversity outcome.
- Minimise impacts to Royal Park.
- Retain as many existing trees as possible and consider transplanting trees and community plantings to suitable and connected locations where retention is not possible.
- Make new trees a central driver of landscape plans.
- Give over some areas of new open space to community planting groups such as the Upfield Urban Forest group, to design and tend.
- Set a replacement rate of at least 6 new trees for every tree lost.
- Prioritise older growth indigenous plantings for retention.
- Incorporate climate change ready trees in the palette, i.e. more species from NSW and Queensland.
- Review the plantings on the Bell to Moreland level crossing removal project to see what worked, remove species that haven't established well from the planting list for the Brunswick level crossing removal project and include the ones that have demonstrably thrived.

## What we commit to

- Considering opportunities for new tree planting on Council's adjoining land.

**“The Level Crossing Removal Project should minimise the removal of trees and greenery during construction, and work with Upfield Urban Forest and other community organisations that are already involved in greening the Upfield corridor.”**

## 10

**Invite the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to Play a Significant Role in the Design of the Project**

The Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people are the traditional owners of the land on which the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project will take place, and the project represents an excellent opportunity to support the larger process happening in Victoria towards self-determination and Treaty.

Merri-bek's redevelopment at 33 Saxon Street to create a cultural and community hub sits adjacent to the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project and has First Nations involvement as a key design driver of both buildings and public space. The hub will be home to Blak Dot Gallery, Australia's leading indigenous contemporary art gallery. The design approach of this site should be expanded to the rail corridor to further celebrate and acknowledge the traditional owners.

The traditional owners should be engaged with early, and throughout the project, and their stories, language, and culture should form a strong and visible part of the finished project.



The Yarning Circle as part of Frankston's line Indigenous Songlines

## **What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project**

- Recognise the unique status of the traditional owners in the project by inviting the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to play a significant role in feeding in to the design of precincts, built form and open space elements of the project.
- Incorporate spaces with meaning to First Nations people, such as a bush tucker garden, native plantings, seating circles or swampy areas, as directed by engagement.
- Embrace First Nations language in place names, descriptions or stories to help First People's languages and culture to live on.
- Incorporate artworks by Aboriginal people that celebrate Aboriginal activities and artists, or stories, of local First Nations people.
- Commit to realising employment and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people through the project, for example by supporting training for women in the Narrap Natural Resources Management team.
- Create opportunities for local Aboriginal artists, particularly those connected with Blak Dot Gallery, and the Counihan Gallery in Brunswick.

## **What we commit to**

- Supporting the process of co-design in any way that is useful, for example coordinating with Merri-bek's First Nations Advisory Committee to facilitate their involvement.

# 11

## Interwoven with Local History and Local Stories

Brunswick is a place with a completely distinct local character. It is a richly layered inner suburb, famous for its exciting creative scene, its progressive and tolerant attitude, its sense of community, its lively local nightlife, and its colourful history.

The history of Brunswick is an essential part of this identity.

Merri-bek enjoys a high level of community interest in preserving heritage and keeping stories alive, as well as being home to local organisations who are passionate about the historic Upfield rail line.

Historic places enrich the character of the spaces we live, work and play and help us distinguish one from another. By meaningfully and authentically engaging with local history groups, the project can conserve and enhance the rich cultural heritage of Brunswick and create a vibrant, interesting and welcoming spaces.



Heritage signal boxes and gateway



Moreland Station's signal house and heritage interpretation signs

**"We need to acknowledge the place of ordinary people in the history of our railway line and that along with the Brunswick Baths, Phoenix Street and Miller's Rope Works this railway line is crucial to our sense of place and belonging."**

To conserve Brunswick's rich cultural heritage, identity, and character the project should:

- Preserve all railway buildings and structures listed in the Victorian Heritage Register, and Anstey Station.
- Wherever possible, preserve or repurpose assets that have meaning and value to local people, particularly our local history groups, that are not listed on the heritage register.
- Consult with Council, local history groups and community on heritage interpretation.
- Represent local social history through the identification and acknowledgement of places, people and elements along the line and incorporate narrative and storytelling which includes First Peoples and the waves of multiculturalism of Brunswick.
- Consider including storytelling devices like projections, QR codes, maps, and public art.
- Incorporate murals that tell stories, prevent graffiti and support public safety.

**"We need a safe bike path and areas with plants, public art that recognises place and Country, things that talk about what this site used to be like different histories, to help people connect to this place."**

## 12 Supportive of Brunswick's Vibrant Creative Ecosystem

Brunswick's iconic creative and cultural scene has been shaped by waves of migration, creating a diverse, vibrant and proud creative community. One of Melbourne's oldest suburbs, Brunswick is home to more artists per capita than anywhere in Victoria, and three times as many people working in the arts compared to the rest of Australia.

Challenges over the past few years, such as rising rents for maker spaces, the increasing insecurity of work, and the pandemic, have left this creative ecosystem under threat and the State Government, RMIT and Council are working together to try and strengthen and support the sector through the formation of the Brunswick Design District.

The Level Crossing Removal Project in Brunswick offers an unparalleled opportunity to profile, celebrate and embed the expression of one of Victoria's most creative communities. The best way to reach and engage this sector is with support from Council's Public Art Program. This program offers local knowledge and logistical support to ensure artworks are responsive to and celebrated by the community.

Studies show numerous positive health and wellbeing outcomes from incorporating art in major urban infrastructure both for individuals and communities. Aside from creating inviting and safe places, public art promotes social connection, access, participatory engagement and an appreciation of cultural heritage, its preservation and the transfer of knowledge (Cheung, Smith & Craven, 2022). There are also significant local economic benefits including job creation, training opportunities and small business support. Above all for this project, the involvement of local creatives is central to ensuring the design of the project is authentic to a place as iconoclastic Brunswick.



Coburg Courtyard has brought the area adjacent to the new Coburg Station precinct to life, showcasing the work of artist Tom Civil

**“Be bold about creativity and culture to inform our planning and use of space.”**

## What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- The development of a Creative Strategy, produced in partnership with the Brunswick Design District Steering Committee, which outlines how opportunities will be targeted towards local creatives as well as how art will be integrated into every aspect of built form and open space design.
- Deep consideration of public art as an integral part of the project including integrated artworks along the corridor and station precincts that strengthen local identity.
- A significant number of new commissions that engage local artists and celebrate Merri-bek's cultural community and are representative of Merri-bek's creative excellence.
- Involvement of Merri-bek's Arts and Culture and Public Art teams in the site selection of public art.
- Work in partnership with Council on the briefing and artist selection process and to identify opportunities for co-design with First Nations artists and local creatives.
- Incorporate flexible spaces that can be used for different art-based activities and events by considering availability and location of power, open spaces for audiences and event infrastructure, multi-purpose hard surfaces that can be utilised as stages/platforms/seating areas, etc.
- Involve artists in the creation of active recreational spaces, similar to what has been delivered by Council at Coburg Courtyard.
- Repurpose buildings and spaces so that they can be rented out to Merri-bek creatives
- Consider creative uses for heritage buildings along the line e.g. artist studios, residency spaces, gallery spaces, living museum, etc.

## What we commit to

- Staffing resources and support to collaborate on the Creative Strategy, artist selection, and the repurposing of heritage buildings.

### The Brunswick Design District

The Brunswick Design District is a collaborative partnership between Council, RMIT University and Creative Victoria that aims to support the renewal, recovery and resilience of Brunswick's ecosystem of artists, makers and creative industries

## 13

## Design That Reflects Local Character and Inspires Community Activity

The design of the stations, elevated rail structure and the spaces between will determine how people use and feel about the space at the end of the project, and forever change Brunswick.

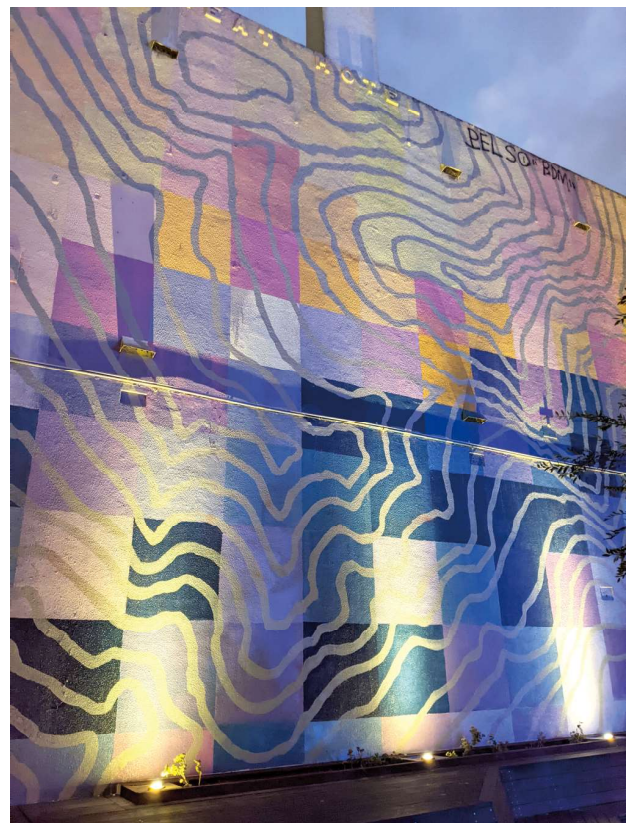
The way locals use Brunswick, how they move around, their sense of connectedness to place will all be impacted by the details of this project.

An urban design intervention of this scale brings enormous opportunity. But if it not designed in a way that is true to Brunswick, it could feel sterile, separate, unsafe or uncomfortable.

The project should be designed to strengthen the existing character of the area, draw people into spaces that look and feel good and contribute to the cultural vibrancy of Brunswick. Design decisions should be informed by the perspectives of local experts to understand and respond to the unique physical character and communities of Brunswick.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Establish a Community Design Review Panel made up of those with technical expertise in architecture, landscape architecture or other relevant disciplines, who live near the rail line, to review and provide feedback on designs as they are developed, and used in a similar way as the Victorian Review Design Panel run by the Office of the Victorian Government Architect.
- Create small-scale direct co-design opportunities for communities.
- Enable small businesses and facilities such as The Brunswick Baths along the rail corridor to expand into, and engage with, the new open space.



Mural at Brunswick Mechanics Institute forecourt delivered through a local expression of interest

- Develop an Activation Strategy for retained heritage buildings and other facilities for community use developed in consultation with Council, local creatives and local history groups.
- Incorporate a Wayfinding Strategy that includes items that support the legibility of the broader area, creating a distinct Brunswick destination identity and incorporating local stories.
- Retain key view corridors from major streets away back of house services.
- Well-considered pylon locations that accommodate key view corridors, and good use of spaces around the pylons.
- Attractive pylon design using landscaping, integrated artworks, or relating to the stations' design.

## What we don't want to see

- Poorly articulated station design which does not contribute to the surrounding Brunswick context.
- The use of large blank expanse commercial-looking materials without consideration of finer grain architectural materials.
- Poor consideration of gender impact in the physical design.
- Crisscross of bike paths and pedestrians around the train stations.
- Undercroft left-over areas which are uninviting and prone to antisocial behaviour.
- Back of house services and visual clutter in prominent locations.
- Vacant heritage station buildings and facilities.
- Uninviting seating areas which do not encourage socialising and accommodating the dynamic of public space users.



Victoria Street, Coburg is visually cluttered



Undercroft area north of Bell St, Coburg



Seating that does not invite social interaction, at Frankston Station



Bulleke-Bek Park

## What we commit to

Developing a new Urban Design Framework to respond to the local changes that the project will bring. The scope of this short document would be to look at the area between the Upfield line and Sydney Road and map the future updated assumptions from Urban Design, Transport, Open Space and Drainage perspectives, before the detailed design phase for the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project is locked in.


This work would allow the project to incorporate a broader corridor boundary and make more things possible, for example planning work for future upgrade of streets adjacent to the railway, or even having an underground water tank below Council local roads, to free up the corridor for planting and usable open space.

**“This project can be an urban catalyst for new activation of the precinct, east to west and north to south.”**



Lighting at Greville Street, Prahran

# Moving around

A photograph of two women riding bicycles on a paved residential street. The woman in the foreground is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, black pants, and a black helmet. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman behind her is wearing a denim jacket over a green patterned top, black pants, and a grey helmet. She is also smiling. To the left, a white sedan is parked on the street. The background shows trees and a house under a bright sky.

**“We need a wider, safer, better bike path – it will make cycling more accessible and promote walking as well – we need a separate path for walking and cycling.”**

**“Please ensure the connecting line will continue this so that community members can for at least the majority of the line walk underneath it from start to finish and be safely shaded. It is very important to a lot of us, especially the elderly community members who use this track for their morning walk and seek shelter from the hot sun.”**



## 14 A People Project not a Car Project

Brunswick is a dense, walkable neighbourhood with a high proportion of trips made by walking or cycling. There is a high take-up of cycling in Brunswick, and a strong community of cyclists locally centred around the highly active and engaged Merri-bek Bicycle Users Group (Merri-bek BUG).

Environmental considerations, as well as the limits of road space, and the fact it can't be expanded to accommodate more cars, mean that more trips in future will need to be made using active transport or public transport. There are also social and physical benefits that support a shift towards more active transport.

Merri-bek City Council welcomes the announcement that the separated user paths which have been constructed north of Moreland Road will be extended south, connecting with the Capital City Trail south of Park Street. It will be important to get the design of these paths right, along with the connections to the existing transport network and between different modes of transport.

The Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project should embed active transport in the overall project design to prioritise pedestrians, people with mobility issues, cyclists, and then vehicle drivers.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Help with existing conflicts between cars, cyclists, and pedestrians by isolating and giving priority to cycling and pedestrian routes.
- Ensure a detailed understanding of different forms of access including ride share, emergency services, deliveries, and waste collection to identify designated access for these services.
- Signalised pedestrian crossings on streets where boom gates are removed, where this is appropriate to the local conditions.

- A smart-signal 'green wave' which is timed so bicycles travelling at a casual pace get a green light as they approach each intersection.
- The width of the separated paths to be designed to allow for future projected volumes, ideally at least 2.5m wide for pedestrians and 4m for bicycles.
- Separated paths should have a high-quality interchange with Dawson Street, which is an important east-west cycling route where Council has installed separated bike lanes.
- Install traffic calming infrastructure at east-west connections where appropriate, such as speed humps, kerb outstands or chicanes.
- Re-open cycling and pedestrian paths as soon as possible.
- Differentiation of bike paths pavement around train station to prioritise pedestrians and highlight conflict points to prioritise accessibility.
- Develop a Wayfinding Strategy for the whole precinct.
- Improve accessibility, connectivity and integration between train stations, bus stops, Sydney Road, and local destinations.
- Lighting and accessibility improvements along the rail corridor and at east-west intersections where required.
- Conduct a safety audit at crossing intersections for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Carry out a Safety Audit at pedestrian and cyclist crossings a month after the removal of the boom gates to ensure that the crossings are safe.

## **What we ask of Department of Transport and Planning**

- Ensure quality connections to Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC) and Principal Bicycle Network (PBN).
- Invest in and bring forward the upgrade and duplication of the Upfield Rail Corridor.
- Increase the frequency of Upfield Services post completion of project, by duplication of Upfield line, not by shunting of trains near Coburg, and increasing the transport disadvantage and car reliance for northern Merri-bek residents.

## **What we don't want to see**

- Poor connectivity and integration between different transport modes at transport interchanges.
- Creating barriers to active transport.
- High speed bicycle superhighways that are not welcoming for everyone, including less confident cyclists, children, those with mobility issues, parents with prams, joggers, and walkers.
- Existing closed east-west roads in the corridor being reopened to vehicle traffic.

## What we commit to

- Investigating opportunities for complementary capital works that improve connectiveness and ease of transport.
- Reviewing existing active transport strategies for the corridor to delivers better east-west connections from Merri Creek to Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Carrying out a Traffic Impact Assessment to understand the impacts of changes to our transport networks and determine what changes should be made by each relevant stakeholder associated with the project.



Different type of bike paths treatments around Carrum Station

## Duplication of the Upfield Line

Council has an existing advocacy position that the Upfield Line should be duplicated in order to ensure that train users north of the project are not disadvantaged.

Duplicating the Upfield rail line north of Gowrie Station is needed to help provide a safe and efficient public transport network for our community. Right now, trains only run every 20 minutes on the Upfield line during peak hour, due to frequency restraints created by the single line of track between Gowrie and Upfield Stations.

The Victorian Government should simultaneously duplicate the Upfield line north of Gowrie Station while carrying out the Level Crossing Removal Project.



## 15 Safe, Accessible and Dignified for All

Users of open space, public transport or shared paths should not be disadvantaged by this project. Getting to the train should not be more difficult than it is now, especially for those living with a physical disability or mobility issues.

The Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project should ensure everyone has equal, dignified and safe access to all new spaces. Everyone, regardless of age or ability, should be able to use buildings, transport, parks, and playgrounds without the need for specialised or adapted features.

Minimum design requirements, like the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, do not go far enough and end up in projects that fail to meet the needs of everyone in the community.

Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2026 sets out principles of Universal Design for infrastructure and open space that can be accessed by everyone, and this is the standard that the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project should reach, wherever possible.

### What we ask of the Level Crossing Removal Project

- Adopt a Universal Design approach to the project.
- Ensure people with disabilities have equitable and dignified access to new stations.
- Consult with local people living with disabilities before making design decisions: “nothing about us without us”.
- Ensure lifts, and all other accessibility features, are fully operational on opening day.
- Provide accessible toilets at stations.
- Ensure all boarding points, including for wheelchair users, are easily accessible and sheltered.
- Provide adequate drop-off and pick up points for wheelchair users and people with other mobility limitations.
- Provide appropriate amenities for people with disabilities at all stations, including but not limited to shelter, accessible seating, accessible water fountains, and accessible toilets.
- Ensure the needs of neurodiverse people and people with intellectual disabilities

are carefully considered and accounted for.

- Provide information in multiple accessible formats like social stories, communication boards, and audible messages in different languages.
- Incorporate a whole-of-journey approach to design and improve connectivity to the surrounding area and with other modes of transport.

## **What we ask of Metro Trains and the Department of Transport and Planning**

- Provide customer service staff at all completed stations to assist travellers with journeys.
- Train staff and drivers in disability awareness training, and communication access training to help staff communicate with people with complex communication needs.
- Provide education and awareness raising campaigns to all users about proper etiquette at stations, for example, leaving priority seating for someone who needs it.
- Provide employment opportunities specifically for people disabilities.

## **What we don't want to see**

- A bare minimum approach to accessibility, for example implementing only the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.
- Discrimination, unequal access and poor outcomes for people with disabilities and other access needs when the project is completed.

## **What we commit to**

- Implementing, improving and maintaining good quality accessible pathways and open space surrounding new stations and the rail corridor.
- Providing accessible parking bays near stations where appropriate.

**“Every new train station should have 2 accessible lifts with power backup system; every platform will need to be at the same level as the train entrance door to minimise the use of ramps; all new stations should reopen when the lifts are in working order.”**

## Next Steps

Reshaping Brunswick is based on officer research and analysis, existing Council policy, and the hundreds of conversations that have taken place with our local community about the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project.

It represents Council's view at this point in the project, and with what is currently known and understood, about what is most important to consider as the State Government designs and delivers the project.

The contents of this paper, and the feedback from the engagement program, will be shared in detail with the State Government, and other relevant bodies.

As the project progresses, and key decisions are made public, Council will re-engage with the communities of Brunswick to continue to ensure that their views are sought and that their perspectives continue to be considered through the delivery of the project.

## How to stay in touch with the project

### Level Crossing Removal Project

The best way to stay updated on the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project is by subscribing to receive email updates from the State Government's Big Build. Subscribe - Victoria's Big Build.

The Level Crossing Removal Project can be contacted directly on **1800 105 105** or at **[contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au)**

To find out about works notices and disruptions in the Brunswick area, visit **[www.bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/level-crossing-removal-project/projects/brunswick](http://www.bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/level-crossing-removal-project/projects/brunswick)**

### Merri-bek Council

Council has a Conversations Merri-bek page for the Brunswick Elevated Rail project where community members can find details of the project, Council's engagement process and download public documents. This page will be updated with new milestones and relevant information as we learn more.

Visit **[www.conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/brunswick-level-crossing-removals](http://www.conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/brunswick-level-crossing-removals)** and click the +FOLLOW button on this page to receive email updates, or contact the project team directly at **[brunswickelevatedrail@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:brunswickelevatedrail@merri-bek.vic.gov.au)**