

3 Presentation of officer reports

3.1 Union Road Level Crossing Removal: June 2021 design feedback

Abstract

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the draft submission (refer **Attachment 1**) to the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) about the June 2021 design update for the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals.

At the 8 February 2021 Services Delegated Committee meeting, Council endorsed a submission to the State Government in response to an announcement and preliminary information with regard to proposed Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removals.

On 14 June 2021 the Hon. Jacinta Allan, Minister for Transport Infrastructure, and the Member for Box Hill, Paul Hamer, MP issued a media release about the new station design for Surrey Hills and Mont Albert (**Attachment 2**). At the same time the LXRP updated their website and issued a new community update (**Attachment 3**), fact sheet (**Attachment 4**), artists' impressions and a consultation report (**Attachment 5**).

The Engage Victoria website hosts the survey (**Attachment 6**) about the design update. The survey closes at 11:59pm on Friday 6 August 2021. Council and sought and received permission from the LXRP to provide our submission up to one week late.

The LXRP design update focusses on the train station building, station entry points, concourses and Lorne Parade Reserve. There is very little detail about the project in Boroondara. The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) seeks to:

- Clearly outline Council's understanding of the design update so as there is absolutely no confusion about what is and is not included in the June 2021 design.
- Acknowledge the positive elements of the design update which respond to requests Council made in the February 2021 submission about the project.
- Identify gaps and issues in the June 2021 plans.
- Offer gap fillers to improve the project for the community, Council and environment.

The gaps, issues and solutions are sourced from Council's February 2021 submission about the project, as well as discussions with the community, community groups and Council advisory committees.

Officers' recommendation

That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the submission (refer **Attachment 1**) to the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) about the June 2021 design update for the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals.
2. Write to the following to advise of this resolution and the submission:
 - a. The Hon. Richard Wynne, MP, Minister for Planning.
 - b. The Hon. Jacinta Allan, MP, Minister for Transport Infrastructure.
 - c. Mr Paul Hamer, MP, Member for Box Hill and Chair of the Community Reference Group.
 - d. Mr Kevin Devlin, CEO, Level Crossing Removal Project.
 - e. All State and Federal members of parliament whose electorates cover the City of Boroondara.
 - f. Mr Greg Buchanan, President, Surrey Hills Progress Association.

Responsible director: Daniel Freer, Director Places and Spaces

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the draft submission (refer **Attachment 1**) to the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) about the June 2021 design update for the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

This report is consistent with the Council Plan 2017-2021 and the Boroondara Community Plan 2017-2027, in particular the following themes:

- Getting Around Boroondara.
- Civic Leadership and Governance.

3. Background

At the 8 February 2021 Services Delegated Committee meeting, Council endorsed a submission about the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removals. The submission, provided to the LXRP and others by the 14 February 2021 deadline, detailed Council's expectations in relation to the look, feel and usability of the project. It highlighted the need for the LXRP to truly collaborate and work with the community and Council to achieve a best for community outcome.

On 14 June 2021 the Hon. Jacinta Allan, Minister for Transport Infrastructure, and the Member for Box Hill, Paul Hamer, MP issued a media release about the new station design for Surrey Hills and Mont Albert (**Attachment 2**). At the same time the LXRP updated their website and issued a new community update (**Attachment 3**), fact sheet (**Attachment 4**), artists' impressions and a consultation report (**Attachment 5**).

The Engage Victoria website hosts the survey (**Attachment 6**) about the design update, with the survey closing at 11:59pm on Friday 6 August 2021.

Council has sought and received permission from the LXRP to submit our response to this survey and consultation exercise up to one week late.

4. Outline of key issues/options

Key issues

The LXRP design update focusses on the train station building, station entry points, concourses and Lorne Parade Reserve. There is very little detail about the project in Boroondara.

The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) seeks to:

- Clearly outline Council's understanding of the design update so as there is absolutely no confusion about what is and is not included in the June 2021 design.

- Acknowledge the positive elements of the design update which respond to requests Council made in the February 2021 submission about the project.
- Identify gaps and issues in the June 2021 plans.
- Offer gap fillers to improve the project for the community, Council and environment.

The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) offers suggestions in the spirit of cooperation and a 'no surprises' approach.

The positive design elements are limited to the material palette shown for the western station concourse and station buildings, as well as the undergrounding of overhead power lines and other overhead infrastructure along Union Road, Surrey Hills. The former features muted tones and high quality finishes our community has come to expect of public buildings and spaces. The latter provides a less cluttered streetscape and provides the opportunity for canopy trees to be planted.

The gaps and issues identified fall under the following themes:

- Accessibility
- Passenger amenities
- Wayfinding and other signage
- Union Road (decking and overhead power lines)
- Public open space
- Strategic Cycling Corridor infrastructure
- Arts and culture
- Station forecourt materiality
- Trench walls

While the bulk of the gaps and issues can be easily filled and responded to by design tweaks, such as cladding the trench walls in pre-fabricated smooth concrete panels and designing wayfinding signage in-line with Council's wayfinding signage design strategy, the accessibility concerns require more concentrated effort and change.

The community has very real and very serious concerns about the accessibility of the new station. The draft submission notes the retention of two train stations would resolve a significant volume of accessibility concerns and Councils support for this outcome. It also notes the LXR is forging ahead with a single station proposal and is highly unlikely to revert to a two station design.

The gap fillers suggested under the theme of accessibility are not unrealistic and offer the LXR opportunity to create a train station that is truly accessible and not just bare minimum Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. A truly accessible train station would enable every member of the community, no matter their mobility abilities, to safely, easily and conveniently access the station concourse, platforms and trains. It would not discriminate. Suggestions include:

- Engage with the disability sector, invite them into the design process and incorporate the ideas and design elements the representatives offer to the LXR.
- Providing additional accessible car parking and in both off-street train station car parks.

- Provide ramps and/or escalators to allow passengers to access the platforms from the concourses.

The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) also responds to the seven survey questions in the LXP issued community survey. These responses note the lack of detailed understanding of the community and how they currently and want to use the project area. They seek to set the LXP a set of achievable tasks to better inform their design and to engage, truly, with the community.

Options

Council officers have prepared the draft submission (refer **Attachment 1**) for consideration and endorsement by Council and subsequent presentation to the Minister for Planning and LXP via the Engage Victoria dedicated project website.

The removal of the level crossings is welcomed, as is the multi-million dollar investment by the Victorian government in the Surrey Hills neighbourhood. This community consultation exercise presents Council an opportunity to share our opinions on and ideas about the design update, as well an opportunity to advocate strongly for our community.

If we do not engage in the consultation process presented by LXP, we are at risk of failing to improve the outcome of a critical part of the daily lives of Boroondara residents for many years to come.

The options available to Council are:

1. Endorsement of the draft submission for presentation to the Minister for Planning and LXP, noting any and all references to 'draft' will be removed prior to submission.
2. Alter the draft submission for presentation to the Minister for Planning and LXP, noting any and all references to 'draft' will be removed prior to submission.
3. Do not endorse the submission and do not present feedback about the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals to the Minister for Planning.

Option 1 is the Council officers' preferred option as it ensures we participate in the consultation process and are able to advocate for our community in a meaningful way.

5. Consultation/communication

The LXP has a consultation exercise available about the updated design, with the exercise closing at 11:59pm on Friday 6 August 2021. The survey shown in **Attachment 6** is the extent of their consultation. Council has received permission to submit a response to this survey and consultation exercise up to one week late.

The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) has been prepared in informed by Council's February 2021 submission, discussions with community members and groups and Council advisory committees.

6. Financial and resource implications

On-going participation in the project and advocacy for our community will incur costs. Council officers have secured funding from the LXRP for dedicated resources and some consultancy costs.

7. Governance issues

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and responsibilities.

The officers responsible for this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure.

8. Social and environmental issues

The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) seeks to improve the outcome delivered by the LXRP for the community, both now and for generations to come. The social and environmental benefits are positive, if our suggestions are implemented.

Manager: **Jim Hondrakis, Manager Traffic and Transport**

Report officer: Clare Davey, Senior Coordinator Transport Advocacy

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Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals

June 2021 design update

Submission from Boroondara City Council

Date: TBC

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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the June 2021 design update for the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals (LXRs).

As noted in our February 2021 submission to the Level Crossing Removal project (LXRP) about the LXRs, Council welcomes the removal of the dangerous level crossing on Union Road, Surrey Hills and is generally supportive of the planned removals at both Union Road and Mont Albert Road.

Council continues to object to the removal of the two train stations and construction of one station.

This submission has been prepared in an effort to provide the LXRP with a full and complete understanding of Council's response to the design update. The *Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Design Feedback Survey* is considered to be too narrow in scope to respond to and does not provide Council the ability to properly consider the design update and its impacts on the Boroondara community. The feedback provided in this submission is done so in the spirit of cooperation and with a 'no surprises' approach in mind.

Positive elements of the design update have been identified, namely the material palette for the western station concourse and the buildings, as well as the undergrounding of overhead power lines and other overhead infrastructure along Union Road, Surrey Hills. Gaps and issues in the design update have also been identified, with Council's February 2021 submission about the project and conversations with the community and Council advisory committees guiding this identification.

Concerns are held about the accessibility of the station and precinct by passengers with limited mobility or other needs. Accessible parking spaces, pick-up/drop-off areas, access ramps and vertical transport options are all areas where gaps have been identified and suggestions made as to gap fillers. These gap fillers focus on engaging with the disability sector, inviting them into the design process as a design partner and implementing their design suggestions and ideas.

The limited nature of the design update and artist impressions has left gaps and raised issues, including:

- Uncertainty about what passenger amenities will be provided at the station concourses.
- Whether wayfinding and other signage will be designed and installed.
- If decking will be provided at Union Road and whether green, public open space will be delivered next to 129 Union Road.
- How many trees and which ones will be felled by the project and how they will be replaced.
- The LXRP's intentions in relation to an arts and culture program.
- What the Box Hill to Hawthorn Strategic Cycling Corridor will look like through the project area.
- The lining of the rail trench walls.

Suggested gap fillers are noted in this submission and are consistent with previous asks of the LXRP.

This document is Council's submission to the June 2021 design update community consultation exercise for the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert LXRs. This submission was considered at the 9 August 2021 Services Delegated Committee meeting of Council.

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June 2021 design update

Our understanding

The LXR has published limited detailed information about the June 2021 project design update. The information available for review is generally artist impressions, short videos about the artist impressions and a fact sheet and community update with the same artist impressions and blurbs taken from the short videos.

Our understanding of June 2021 project design update, dot-pointed below for ease of reading, is based on the information available to Council at the time of preparation of this submission.

The scale of the design elements is difficult to understand from the artist impressions, with the actual topography not represented correctly in the images. The points of view and difficulties with scale in the artist impressions offer somewhat distorted view lines of the project. Where heights of elements is detailed in the dot-points, it has been scaled from various other elements in the artist impressions.

The images provided by the LXR show extensive and lush vegetation and tree growth. It is assumed this growth is five to eight years post planting and will not be the immediate outcome delivered by the project.

- New station infrastructure
 - o Station forecourt facing Windsor Crescent
 - At least one third of Lorne Parade Reserve will be occupied by station forecourt infrastructure.
 - A mixture of trees and low level plants will be included in the landscaping.
 - Both formal (i.e. benches) and informal (i.e. low retaining walls) public seating will be provided.
 - Stairs and a ramp will be provided for passengers to access the station.
 - A public bus stop will be provided on Windsor Crescent.
 - A drop-off/pick-up area will be provided on Windsor Crescent, with a sheltered waiting area provided for passengers.
 - A Parkiteer cage (a secure and weather protected bicycle parking facility) will be provided alongside a number of bicycle parking hoops.
 - A station services building will be located adjacent to the existing sub-station.
 - The paving will be bricks laid in a 'herringbone' pattern for the majority of the area, with the footpath and bike path paved in bricks laid in a 'subway tile' pattern.
 - o Western concourse
 - The paving is generally bluestone throughout the concourse, with tactile ground surface indicators as required, and a brick paving line throughout.
 - The concourse buildings have been reduced in scale when compared with other station concourses to reduce the visual bulk of the built infrastructure.
 - The station buildings are clad in a muted green shingle look finish, with a short bluestone skirt.
 - The white roof provides weather protection and allows sunlight through the perforations.
 - Barriers between the paid and unpaid sections of the concourse are clear.

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- Lifts and weather protected stairs provide passenger access to the platforms.
- Platforms
 - Two platforms will provide access to the three train tracks.
 - At least two thirds of the length of the platforms will be weather protected.
 - Seats and real time passenger information boards are provided.
- Montrose Street interface
 - The residential properties at 10, 12 and 14 Montrose Street, Surrey Hills will have an approximately 4m tall concrete panel separating their backyards from the train station northern pedestrian access path.
 - 14 Montrose Street, Surrey Hills will have an unspecified station building adjacent the eastern side of the property, with the western concourse directly abutting the property also.
- Blackburn Street interface
 - The residential properties at 2 and 4 Blackburn Street, Surrey Hills will abut the train station northern pedestrian access path.
- Car parking
 - Surrey Hills northern car park
 - No accessible parking spaces will be provided in the northern car park.
 - Pedestrian access is provided through a dedicated east-west path through the car park.
 - Surrey Hills southern car park
 - An unspecified number of accessible parking spaces will be provided at the eastern end of the southern car park.
 - Passengers are required to access the Windsor Crescent footpath via the car park and car park crossovers/driveways.
 - Mont Albert Road drop-off/pick-up area
 - Beresford Street, Mont Albert will be closed at Mont Albert Road to provide a drop-off/pick-up area.
- Union Road, Surrey Hills
 - Union Road will be bridged over the rail trench.
 - Pedestrian operated signals will be installed at approximately the same location as the boom gates.
 - Overhead powerlines and other overhead infrastructure will be removed and undergrounded.
 - The existing telecommunications tower will remain in place.
 - The Telstra phone booth will be removed or relocated.
 - On-structure traffic barriers and throw screens will be installed on the Union Road bridge.
 - Two public bus stops are provided, one on either side of Union Road.
 - Street trees and minimal landscaping will be planted.

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- Walking and cycling
 - o Between Churchill Street and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert a shared user path will be provided on the southern side of the rail line.
 - o Between Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert and the eastern concourse a two-way off-road bike and a separate pedestrian connection will be provided on the southern side of the rail line.
 - o Between the eastern concourse and the intersection of Lorne Parade and Windsor Crescent, Surrey Hills a two-way off-road bike path will be provided.
 - o Between the intersection of Lorne Parade and Windsor Crescent, Surrey Hills and the pedestrian operated signals at Union Road a two-way off-road bike and a separate pedestrian connection will be provided where the Windsor Crescent footpath is currently located.
- Lorne Parade Reserve
 - o A play space and equipment will be installed.
 - o Grassed areas will be provided, with trees and landscaping to be planted.

Positive elements

Material palette

The Principal Architect and their team must be commended on the material palette selected for the western station concourse and station buildings shown in the artist impressions. The proposed design features muted tones and high quality finishes our community has come to expect of public buildings and spaces.

The bluestone paving throughout the station concourse provides a sense of arrival, calm and clarity for passengers. The line of double brick paving delivers subtle wayfinding from the station forecourt to the concourse, as well as a materiality link between the two locations.

The continuation of the bluestone paving to provide a 'skirt' for the station buildings is a clever way of creating a sense of place and coherence at the concourse. The muted green shingle look cladding on the buildings is respectful to the Surrey Hills area and a nod to the heritage in the precinct. It is not pretending to be a heritage building.

The perforated concourse roof is clearly designed to mimic dappled sun coming through a tree canopy. It is a gentle acknowledgement of the leafy green, tree lined streets in the neighbourhood.

Overhead power lines and other overhead infrastructure

The removal and, presumably, undergrounding of the overhead powerlines and other overhead infrastructure along Union Road, Surrey Hills is a commendable and welcomed design feature.

We applaud the LXP for including this as part of the project as it provides a neater streetscape and allows for tall, canopy trees to be planted in Union Road.

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Gaps and issues

The following gaps and issues identified in the design update are drawn from Council's February 2021 submission about the project, as well as on-going conversations with the Surrey Hills community and community groups and various Council advisory committees.

Accessibility

Council wants the LXP to deliver a project that is truly accessible and not just bare minimum Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant as the current design proposal looks to be. A truly accessible train station would enable every member of the community, no matter their mobility abilities, to safely, easily and conveniently access the station concourse, platforms and trains. It would not discriminate.

Accessible car parking

The only accessible car parking provided is an unspecified number in the southern car park at the Union Road, Surrey Hills end of the project. To access the station concourse users of these spaces are expected to travel through the car park to access the Windsor Crescent footpath via a car park driveway/crossover, travel along Windsor Crescent and then negotiate stairs or a lengthy ramp. All without weather protection.

This is not acceptable.

Limited drop-off/pick-up areas

The design update notes there are two drop-off/pick-up locations, being Windsor Crescent, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert. The capacity of these facilities is not specified and the length of stay is not detailed. Neither facility provides weather protected access to the station concourses.

While we commend the inclusion of dedicated drop-off/pick-up areas, the location, capacity and number need to be considered to better cater for passenger needs rather than LXP budget.

Lengthy ramps and access routes to the station concourse

The access ramps in the station forecourt facing Windsor crescent and northern pedestrian access path are lengthy and rambling. It is impossible to tell from the artist impressions the true length and grade of the ramps, with assumptions made about the length based on other design elements visible and design standards.

While passengers on wheelchairs may easily manoeuvre along the ramps, other passengers with different mobility needs may struggle to travel that same distance and grade. Taking the North East Link Project Bulleen Park and Ride approach of providing a seat to allow passengers to rest along the way is a totally inadequate response to this issue.

Lifts and stairs

The provision two forms of vertical transport, lifts and stairs, to allow passengers to access the platforms from the station concourse should be commendable. However, concerns have been raised about the lack of ramps and escalators, with these vertical transport options preferred by some passengers.

The design update does not provide detail about the number of lifts provided or the capacity of the lifts. There is fear in the community the lifts will not allow passengers unable to use stairs to access the platforms in a timely fashion (particularly at peak hour) and will not cater for an ambulance stretcher, as has happened at other train stations.

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Passenger amenities

There is no information in the design update about the passenger amenities provided on the station concourse, both within the paid and unpaid areas. This includes public toilets, seating, Myki machines (both top-up and checking) and water fountains.

Despite repeated requests and sharing of product details, the LXR has not included a bicycle repair station in the design. These repair facilities are wide spread and well used across the Boroondara cycling network. Council installs them along all major cycling corridors and at major trip attractors and generators, as the new station will be.

Wayfinding and other signage

The artist impressions and design update are minimalist and do not show or discuss any wayfinding and other signage in or around the station precinct. This is misleading and deceptive, with viewers of the images and readers of the blurbs led to believe the precinct will be clutter free with open and clear view lines.

Union Road

Decking

Council and the community want the LXR to provide decking across the rail trench at Union Road, Surrey Hills. The design update fails to discuss the potential of decking, despite it being a technically feasible design element.

Overhead power lines and other overhead infrastructure

While we warmly welcome the removal and, presumably, undergrounding of the overhead powerlines and other overhead infrastructure along Union Road, Surrey Hills, there is a deal of scepticism as to whether this is truly a design element or is an elaborate use of artistic licence in the artist impressions.

Public open space next to 129 Union Road

As with decking the rail trench, Council and the community want the LXR to provide public open space on the site originally identified as an IDO site. It is acknowledged the design update lists this area as 'New open space at Union Road', but it fails to provide any information about how the community can get involved in the 'designs to be developed in the coming year'. The design update makes no mention of public toilets, be they in the public open space or anywhere in the station precinct or project area.

Box Hill to Hawthorn Strategic Cycling Corridor

The Department of Transport has nominated the Box Hill to Hawthorn (BH2H) corridor as a Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC). The proposed bicycle infrastructure concept design along the nominated BH2H SCC alignment is considered to be well below the standard considered acceptable for an SCC.

Vegetation and trees

The extent of soft landscaping shown in the artist impressions is welcomed, however this welcome is offered with caution as the artist impressions show growth five to eight years post planting. The artist impressions are misleading and provide a false sense of security.

The design update fails to clearly identify trees to be retained, areas of new plantings and areas of retained landscaping. The community and Council hold the existing landscape, including the established and healthy trees, in high regard and do not want any trees unnecessarily removed by the project.

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Arts and culture

The incorporation of a properly considered and funded art installations is not apparent in the June 2021 design update. Instead, the community is offered the opportunity to comment on a series of 'plonk art' sites, as well as maintenance intense, DDA incompatible carved ground surfaces. Of the six proposed 'plonk art' sites listed in the survey:

- One is located at 129 Union Road, Surrey Hills.
This location is currently home to a small business and the building is subject to a heritage overlay in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.
- A second is located adjacent to 111-113 Union Road, Surrey Hills.
This location is and will be a very busy thoroughfare which is already spatially constrained, with little to no room to add an artistic sculpture with little to no functional value.

Material palette of the station forecourt facing Windsor Crescent

The materials shown in the artist impressions of the station forecourt facing Windsor Crescent are of concern. They appear to have been selected for aesthetic purposes and have little to no regard for on-going maintenance, no matter the asset owner.

The areas of particular concern are the brick paved areas, both the 'herringbone' and 'subway tile' pattern areas. Both areas will be busy thoroughfares with heavy foot and bicycle traffic on an hourly basis. The asset owner and maintainer will need to replace and reset a brick each and every time one becomes loose to ensure safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists through the area. While such paving may be common in Europe, there are concerns about the build quality, and actual lifespan, of this style of paving in Australia where it is less common.

Rail trench walls

The rail trench walls look to be finished in shotcrete. This rough looking material will not provide a high quality, or even good quality, passenger experience and will not meet the expectations of the community and Council.

The shotcrete trench walls will significantly impact on the overall aesthetic value and appeal of the project. It will look unfinished, incoherent and reduce the value of the otherwise high quality station material palette.

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Suggested gap fillers

The following suggested gaps filler are drawn from Council's February 2021 submission about the project, as well as on-going conversations with the Surrey Hills community and community groups and various Council advisory committees. The suggestions acknowledge the LXR are forging ahead with a single station proposal and are highly unlikely to change their mind and retain both Surrey Hills and Mont Albert train stations.

The retention of two train stations by the project would remove a lot of the issues associated with accessibility. Council objects to the removal of the two train stations and construction of a single station approximately 160m east of the current Surrey Hills station. Council continues to support the retention of two train stations.

Accessibility

The issue of accessibility is one which will impact just about every community member at some point in their lives. The level crossing removal will leave a multi-generational legacy and cannot ignore this critical design matter.

To ensure the project is well informed and meets the needs of the community and not just the bare minimum DDA requirements, the LXR are strongly encouraged to engage with the disability sector, invite them into the design process and incorporate the ideas and design elements the representatives offer to the LXR.

Engineers and designers can hide behind the DDA and design guidelines and promote the final design as DDA compliant. Until they listen and properly respond to those with lived experience, the engineers and designers will never properly understand how important it is to provide a train station that is truly accessible and enables every member of the community, no matter their mobility abilities, to safely, easily and conveniently access the station concourse, platforms and trains.

Accessible car parking

Additional accessible car parking spaces must be provided, including in the northern car park close to the access ramps and stairs.

The access route from the southern car park must be reconsidered and rerouted to ensure passengers do not need to walk through the car park and access the footpath via a car park driveway/crossover.

The LXR must consider the installation of accessible parking spaces closer to the station entrances. This would enable those passengers unable to walk long distances, as is required by locating accessible car parking spaces in only the northern and southern car park, a safe and equitable access to the train station.

Limited drop-off/pick-up areas

The LXR is encouraged to provide details about the two proposed drop-off/pick-up areas proposed in the design update.

In addition, the LXR must consider providing an additional accessible parking only drop-off/pick-up area near the intersection of Montrose Street, Beresford Street and Wilson Street, along with an additional access point to the western concourse. This proposed drop-off/pick-up point would provide passengers with an 'at the door' access point to the station. It would provide passengers with limited mobility or those unable to walk long distances fair and equitable station access.

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[Lengthy ramps to access the station concourse](#)

The additional drop-off/pick-up area noted above, along with the additional accessible parking closer to the station entrances will go some way to addressing the concerns about the length and grade of the access ramps.

The LXR is encouraged to provide to the community and Council true and accurate information about the length and grade of the access ramps so informed discussion can occur and decisions can be made. The previously noted engagement with and involvement of the disability sector will assist in the improvement of this aspect of the project.

[Lifts and stairs](#)

The LXR must provide ramps and/or escalators to provide access to the platforms from the station concourses. If this is truly an impossible ask for engineering reasons and not just State government train station design guideline or budget reasons, the LXR must be upfront about this with the community.

[Passenger amenities](#)

The LXR must provide information about the passenger amenities provided on the station concourse, both within the paid and unpaid areas. The community deserve to know if they will be able to access public toilets, seating, Myki machines (both top-up and checking) and water fountains at the train station or if they need to have used these services and amenities.

The LXR must include a bicycle repair station in the design and locate it as close as practicable to the bicycle parking.

[Wayfinding and other signage](#)

The LXR must provide details and artist impressions of the station precinct complete with wayfinding and other signage.

Council has a very well developed wayfinding signage strategy that has been rolled out across a number of shopping centres that we would be pleased to share with the LXR with a view for it to be implemented across the project area. This inclusion by the LXR would complement the wayfinding element of Council's shopping centre improvement plans for the Union Road, Surrey Hills shopping centre.

[Union Road](#)[Decking](#)

There is little more to say than the LXR must provide decking over the rail trench at Union Road and work in collaboration with Council and our urban designers to ensure the decking meets the needs and expectations of the community and Council.

[Overhead power lines and other overhead infrastructure](#)

In the event elaborate artistic licence has been taken and the overhead power lines and other overhead infrastructure will not be removed and undergrounded by the project, we request this is done.

[Public open space next to 129 Union Road](#)

As with the decking, there is little more to say than the LXR must provide green, public open space with a 'Changing Places' public toilet facility next to 129 Union Road and work in collaboration with Council and our urban designers to ensure the design meets the needs and expectations of the community and Council.

DRAFT - UMA LXR, JUNE 2021 DESIGN UPDATE, BOROONDARA RESPONSE

Box Hill to Hawthorn Strategic Cycling Corridor

It is critical the LXR design and deliver an SCC that meets the exacting standards set by the Department of Transport (DoT) for SCCs. This includes grade separation of major road crossings, such as Union Road and Mont Albert Road, and mode separation where pedestrians and cyclists would otherwise mix.

We acknowledge the DoT is the BH2H SCC proponent and has the final say on the alignment and design. However, Council wants to work with both the DoT and LXR to ensure the SCC provides high quality, safe and equitable bicycle infrastructure.

Vegetation and trees

To ensure the community is provided with a true and accurate idea of what the station precinct will look like post construction, the creation of artist impressions immediately post construction completion is recommended. This would remove the shock and surprise the community may experience when they see tube stock and 45L potted trees plants and not the lush, green growth shown in the artist impressions. Additionally, the LXR must:

- Develop a publicly available tree removal plan which:
 - o Clearly identifies trees to be removed for works and trees that do not need to be removed.
 - o Provides an assessment of the condition, arboriculture value and canopy spread of all trees in the Major Transport Project Facilitation Act declared project area.
- Assess and document in a publicly available report all non-tree vegetation to be removed and replaced.
- Engage and work with Council to:
 - o Develop a planting palette to Council's satisfaction.
 - o Understand the size of trees and other plants expected by Council.
 - o Develop and implement a Tree Protection Plan, which complies with the relevant Australian Standards, to protect trees and their root systems from damage during the works.
 - o Develop and implement a tree, canopy and vegetation replacement plan that sets out how trees and other vegetation to be removed will be replaced to provide shade, urban character, habitat and amenity values.
 - o Reuse and repurpose all trees felled by the LXR in the project area.

Arts and culture

To ensure the design of artwork is a true reflection of the community's past, present and future, we ask that a community arts engagement process be undertaken by the LXR with input from Council. The process would engage community stakeholders with the aim of providing a narration of place to reflect the history and heritage, its members and aspirations.

Possible themes which could emerge and be celebrated through public artwork could include:

- Strong connections to Surrey Hills history and heritage, including indigenous beginnings.
- Surrey Hills famous gardens and leafy streets.
- Music, culture and art which is fostered within the community.
- Union Road and its local traders, community and history.

DRAFT - UMA LXR, JUNE 2021 DESIGN UPDATE, BOROONDARA RESPONSE

[Material palette of the station forecourt facing Windsor Crescent](#)

The material palette of the station forecourt needs to be better considered to fit the maintenance standards of the likely asset owners. The material palette cannot be designed with only aesthetics in mind.

In the case of the Windsor Crescent footpath and two-way off-road bike path, the LXPR designers must consult the relevant Council and provide a material palette to meet their maintenance standards. The station forecourt proposed to be on Lorne Parade Reserve land should be discussed with the land owner, the Department of Education and Training, as well as the authority likely to be responsible for the maintenance of the area.

[Rail trench walls](#)

The simple solution to the issue of shotcrete rail trench walls is to line them with smooth, pre-fabricated concrete panels. This will ensure the whole train station has a high quality material palette and the passenger experience is an excellent one from the station concourse to the platform.

DRAFT - UMA LXR, JUNE 2021 DESIGN UPDATE, BOROONDARA RESPONSE

Consultation survey questions

The six-page survey release by the LXR seeks responses to seven questions. The questions are incredibly limited in what they are asking and, where multi-choice tick boxes are supplied, the responses available. The scope of the survey is very limited and does not respond to critical elements of the project in Boroondara.

The two questions with direct links to Boroondara suggest decisions have already been made and the community is being asked to window dress these decisions. It is not true community consultation or engagement. It is community notification at best and far less than our community deserves.

Noting this submission is in response to the community consultation associated with the June 2021 design update, responses to the seven survey questions are provided below.

Lorne Parade Reserve Master Plan

Question: Please tell us what you think about the plan with respect to the open grassed area and planting.

Response: The planted versus open grassed area delineation is not clear from the plans available and is not sufficiently detailed to enable the question to be answered by the multi-choice, tick box answers. The artist impressions, tagged with a subject to change notice, offer little additional insight and do not assist greatly in responding to the question.

The LXR must review and assess the current use of the Lorne Parade Reserve in order to properly and fully inform the master plan developed for the reserve. A simple question about do you want more landscaping or more open grassed areas is insufficient and does not allow the community to share how they use and enjoy the reserve at the moment and how they want to continue to do this into the future.

Any and all plans put to the community must show any and all infrastructure to be located in the reserve, levels and other details impacting on the design and usability of the space.

Potential public art locations

Question: Please rank your preference for artwork locations, with 1 being your first preference and 9 being your last.

Response: It is impossible to respond to this question and rank the preferred location for artworks without know what sort of artwork the LXR is proposing. We ask that a community arts engagement process be undertaken by the LXR with input from Council.

Comments noted previously in this submission about the proposed sculptural artworks at 129 Union Road and near 111-113 Union Road are worth highlighting. As are the concerns about DDA compatibility of artworks carved or integrated into ground surfaces.

Play space

Question: The current master plan has the play space located to the east of Lorne Parade Reserve on the corner of Lorne Parade so as to separate the new train station from the play space and provide good access from local streets. Do you agree this is the right place for the play space?

Question: What age group would you like the play space to be for?

Question: What type of play activity would you like to see in the play space?

DRAFT - UMA LXR, JUNE 2021 DESIGN UPDATE, BOROONDARA RESPONSE

Response: See response to *Lorne Parade Reserve Master Plan*. The LXR must consult and engage with current users of Lorne Parade Reserve in an open and meaningful manner. Asking the community to choose an age group and type of play activity suggests the LXR does not understand the current use of the reserve.

Sunbury Crescent and Churchill Street

Question: Please tell us which planting style you would prefer for these streetscapes.

Response: We appreciate the LXR asking the community about which planting style they would prefer for their street, specifically Sunbury Crescent as Council officers suggested. As noted previously in this submission, the LXR must:

- Develop a publicly available tree removal plan which:
 - o Clearly identifies trees to be removed for works and trees that do not need to be removed.
 - o Provides an assessment of the condition, arboriculture value and canopy spread of all trees in the Major Transport Project Facilitation Act declared project area.
- Assess and document in a publicly available report all non-tree vegetation to be removed and replaced.
- Engage and work with Council to:
 - o Develop a planting palette to Council's satisfaction.
 - o Understand the size of trees and other plants expected by Council.
 - o Develop and implement a Tree Protection Plan, which complies with the relevant Australian Standards, to protect trees and their root systems from damage during the works.
 - o Develop and implement a tree, canopy and vegetation replacement plan that sets out how trees and other vegetation to be removed will be replaced to provide shade, urban character, habitat and amenity values.
 - o Reuse and repurpose all trees felled by the LXR in the project area.

Screening

Question: Below are options for colour styles for the pedestrian bridge between Beresford Street and Mont Albert shopping village, as well as the new road bridges on Union Road and Mont Albert Road. Please tell us which colour style you prefer for the screening.

Response: The screening and barriers provided on the Union Road bridge must respond sensitively and respectfully to the Surrey Hills context and sit seamlessly within the local environment. The LXR are encouraged to review the Union Road context and draw inspiration from the built form and colour palette to inform the colour styles for the barriers and screening. If the LXR had undertaken this relatively simple exercise, they would note 'bright, vibrant colour' does not feature in the Union Road, Surrey Hills built environment.

We encourage the LXR to consider installing discreet signage on barriers and screening that encourages anyone experiencing trouble to contact Lifeline or a similar organisation.

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Leader of the House
Minister for Transport Infrastructure
Minister for Suburban Rail Loop



Monday, 14 June 2021

NEW STATION DESIGN REVEALED FOR SURREY HILLS AND MONT ALBERT

The fast-tracked removal of dangerous and congested level crossings at Union Road in Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road in Mont Albert is a step closer with the release of updated designs for a new premium station in Surrey Hills.

These are two of Melbourne's worst level crossings and have been fast-tracked for removal by 2023, two years ahead of schedule. The crossings will be removed by lowering the rail line beneath the roads in an open trench and building a new premium station with better facilities and more services.

With two fatalities at Union Road in 2016 when a train and car collided – and a further eight near misses in recent years – the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert communities will be safer when the boom gates are gone for good.

The premium station will provide more trains, more often for commuters from Surrey Hills, Mont Albert and surrounds, including express trains, and will be staffed from the first train in the morning until the last train.

Feedback from the community showed overwhelming support to remove the level crossings and the updated designs incorporate the extensive community feedback.

The new station will step down from concourse level to meet the new platforms, with lifts and stairs providing all abilities access. Entrances at both ends of the platform will provide convenient access to Surrey Hills and Mont Albert communities.

The updated designs will provide new green space with play spaces and seating and deliver new cycling and pedestrian paths that will be linked to Box Hill and Hawthorn as part of a future cycling corridor.

A new drop-off zone on Mont Albert Road will connect commuters to the eastern station entrance. A separated pedestrian path will run alongside the rail trench and link the Lorne Parade entrance to Mont Albert Road and Mont Albert shopping village from the south.

While the historic Mont Albert Station building will need to be removed during construction, it will be restored and transformed into a café, restaurant or possibly even a community centre, returning the building back to the community.

Early works will start this year and major construction to begin next year – bringing hundreds of jobs to the area.

The community is invited to review the updated designs and have their say to help shape the final designs by visiting engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert or by attending one of the community information sessions in June and July, restrictions permitting.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport infrastructure Jacinta Allan

"We know these are some of the most dangerous level crossings in Melbourne and I'm proud we've fast-tracked their removal. The release of these new designs is an exciting step towards starting construction."

"We said we'd remove 50 dangerous and congested level crossings by 2022, and we're smashing that goal with 46 already gone and many more set to go this year."

Quote attributable to Member for Box Hill Paul Hamer

"I know how important the removal of these level crossings is to our community. The community now has another opportunity to share their preferences to help shape the final design."

Media contact: Hayley Bester 0424 753 775 | Hayley.bester@minstaff.vic.gov.au



The station entrance on Windsor Crescent

Community information sessions

Join us to find out more about the updated designs at one of our **face-to-face community information sessions***.

Please note registration for these sessions is required.

**Face-to-face sessions are subject to change based on health advice*

Virtual sessions

Following a positive response to our online sessions earlier this year, we'll also be holding virtual community information sessions for those of you who would like to get more information about the project online.

More information about these sessions is available on the Engage Victoria website and you must register to attend.

To register for one of our **face-to-face or virtual sessions, just head to the engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert or get in touch with our contact centre.**

Top: New open space in Lorne Parade Reserve
Bottom: Surrey Hills northern entrance to new station



Have your say

You can now provide feedback on the finishing touches for the new station and station precinct. We want to hear your thoughts on:

- Lorne Parade Reserve design elements
- Public artwork locations within the precinct
- Colour styles for the pedestrian bridge between Beresford Street and Mont Albert shopping village, as well as the new road bridges on Union Road and Mont Albert Road
- Planting preferences along the rail trench on Churchill Street and Sunbury Crescent.

To have your say, complete the survey at the engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert. Surveys will also be available at upcoming information sessions, or you can request a hard copy by calling us on **1800 105 105**. Your feedback will help shape the final designs.



Level crossing free Mont Albert Road with station drop-off zone to the right

Early works starting soon

Major construction on the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removal project is scheduled to start in 2022, with early works commencing in the second half of 2021.

Early works will involve minor works throughout the area that need to be completed before major construction activities can begin.

This will include setting up site offices, installing temporary fencing, removing

vegetation that is impacted by construction, and moving utilities like sewers, water pipes and drains out of the way.

To store equipment and supplies, we'll set up site compounds and storage along the rail corridor, in Lorne Parade Reserve and at a temporary storage area at Surrey Park.

We'll let the community know well in advance of any upcoming disruptions or changes in the local area.

Union Road and Mont Albert Road Site investigations

We undertook **6 months** of site investigations

We identified **water, gas, telecommunications, drainage and rail assets and services**

We located **143** underground services

We dug **191** holes up to 20 metres deep

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Project timeline

Early 2021

First phase of community engagement completed

Mid 2021

- Updated designs released
- Further community engagement
- Early works begin

2022

- Final designs released
- Major construction begins

2023

Level crossings gone for good

** The timeline above is subject to change.*

YOUR NEW STATION PRECINCT DESIGNS

We're removing the dangerous and congested level crossings at Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert by lowering the rail line beneath the roads in an open trench and building a new, premium station with better facilities and more services.

The Victorian Government has fast-tracked these level crossings for removal, bringing hundreds of jobs to the local area and removing the boom gates two years earlier than originally planned.

Thousands of drivers, pedestrians, commuters, businesses and residents provided a fantastic response to our consultation on the concept design, contributing over 5000 individual pieces of feedback.

We heard overwhelming support for removing the level crossings and unclogging the roads.

We've now released updated designs for the new station and station precinct, incorporating extensive

community feedback and further detailed technical work.

The new station architecture and bespoke layout responds to the community's preference for a design that complements the local area.

Key features include layered canopies, traditional materials, and soft muted colours that allow the station to blend with its surrounds.

Our updated designs are now available and you can have your say on the finishing touches.

Early works for the project will start soon, with major construction starting in 2022 and the boom gates will be gone for good in 2023.

UNION ROAD, SURREY HILLS AND MONT ALBERT ROAD, MONT ALBERT
JUNE 2021

The project will deliver:

- Improved safety and less congestion
- A new premium station with better facilities and more services
- New pedestrian and cycling connections
- New community spaces and a rejuvenated Lorne Parade Reserve
- A new modern and safe commuter car park
- A new station precinct with no compulsory acquisition

UPDATED DESIGNS

New premium station

The new premium station will deliver better facilities and more train services to the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert communities.

In response to community feedback, we've developed an understated station design that respects and complements the local area.

The result is a calm, composed and connected station design that is open, light and inviting.



A unique perforated canopy will create a dappled light effect

Rejuvenated open space

The new station precinct connects with and celebrates Lorne Parade Reserve as a modern green space for generations to come.

The rejuvenated green space will include new seating, a new play space and trees, shrubs and grasses.



New open space in Lorne Parade Reserve

Mont Albert precinct

A spacious pedestrian bridge will replace the old narrow underpass at Mont Albert Station, providing a safer, more direct connection between residents and the shops.

While the historic Mont Albert Station building will need to be removed during construction, we'll restore the old station to its former glory, so it can serve a new community purpose. This may include a café, restaurant or community centre, which were the most popular ideas we heard through community feedback.



The new pedestrian bridge looking towards Mont Albert Village



SIGN UP FOR PROJECT UPDATES
levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne



Project overview

Safer, more accessible car park

We're rebuilding both car parks at Surrey Hills to modern standards with a better layout, improved lighting and CCTV, and, with stairs and ramps connecting commuters to the main station concourse.

New open space at Union Road

New open space will be created either side of the rail trench at Union Road. The space south of the rail trench will provide an arrival point into the station precinct and safely connect cyclists and pedestrians to Union Road.

Open space will be created north of the rail trench with landscaping designs to be developed in the coming year.

New station entrance - Surrey Hills

In response to community feedback, we've developed an understated and subtle station design that respects and complements the local area.

The station will be built with traditional materials such as brick, stone and shingle cladding to reflect local heritage and history.



Easier drop-off at Mont Albert Road

A new Kiss and Ride drop-off area close to the station entrance will make it more convenient and safer to drop off commuters at the station.

Level crossing gone at Mont Albert Road in 2023



Hamilton Street precinct

A spacious pedestrian bridge will replace the old narrow underpass at Mont Albert Station, providing a safer and more direct connection between homes and the shops.



Better local connections

There will be new cycling and pedestrian paths from Union Road in Surrey Hills, along Windsor Crescent and Lorne Parade, to connect with the Mont Albert shopping village. In future, these paths will link to Box Hill and Hawthorn.

New station entrance - Mont Albert

The station building will allow commuters to access the new station from both sides of the rail trench.

Level crossing gone at Union Road in 2023



Main station concourse

A unique perforated canopy will create a dappled light effect throughout the station concourse and soft muted colours will help the station to blend with its surrounds.



New station precinct























We will create a 'green heart' for the new station, with planting and landscaping in and around the precinct.



Rejuvenated Lorne Parade Reserve

Responding to community feedback, Lorne Parade Reserve will be returned as open green space with timber seating and new plants, trees and shrubs. The design features a new play space for local children.



 Drop-off zone	 Station building	 Car park
 New signalised pedestrian crossing	 Station canopy	 Accessible parking
 Pedestrian connections to station	 Station concourse	 Bike parking
 Two-way off-road bike path	 Platform shelter	 New landscaping
 Shared user path	 Station platform	 New play area
 Parkiteer	 Station area	 Paths
 Bus stop	 New space at Union Road	 Existing substation
		 Retained pump station

Concept design and artist impressions. Subject to change.

UNION ROAD AND MONT ALBERT ROAD – JUNE

UPDATED STATION DESIGNS



*The new premium station reflects the heritage and history of the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert area
All images are artist impression only, subject to change*

How you've influenced the design

We're removing the dangerous and congested level crossings at Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert by lowering the rail line beneath the roads in an open trench and building a new premium station with better facilities and more services.

The Victorian Government has fast-tracked these level crossings for removal, bringing hundreds of jobs to the local area and removing the boom gates two years earlier than originally planned.

Between December 2020 and late February 2021, we asked the community to share ideas and

feedback on the concept design for the new station and station precinct.

We received a fantastic response – with more than 5000 individual pieces of feedback from hundreds of local residents, businesses, drivers and commuters.

Your feedback, along with further technical investigations, has helped shape the updated designs.

The new station architecture and bespoke layout is open, light and inviting, and complements the local area. The new station precinct connects with and celebrates Lorne Parade Reserve as a modern green space for generations to come.

The result is a calm, composed and connected design that blends with the local surrounds.



5327 pieces of feedback from 1500 community members



994 design feedback surveys completed



15,000+ visits to our online engagement hub



487 attendees across nine virtual community information sessions



More than 740 enquiries answered via contact centre and online engagement hub

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STATION PRECINCT DESIGN



Station precinct and public realm

The new station precinct forms an integral part of the project design.

You told us that you value the leafy feel around the local area and want the new station to fit in with and respect the heritage buildings. You also wanted to see better connections for cyclists and pedestrians.

In response, our designers have created a 'green heart' for the new station, with planting and landscaping in and around the station precinct, new open spaces on Union Road and Mont Albert Road, and a rejuvenated Lorne Parade Reserve.

A dedicated bike path along Lorne Parade will connect with the Box Hill to Hawthorn Trail and new pedestrian links between the new station and the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert shopping villages will improve community access and safety.

Finally, to breathe life into the precinct, we are considering integrating the area's rich Indigenous and European history in design elements such as screening and public artworks.

Landscaping, trees and greenery

Landscaping in and around the station precinct will include canopy trees along

pedestrian paths, and thousands of shrubs, plants and other greenery.

In response to community feedback, we will plant mostly native species as well as some exotic species.

While some trees near the rail corridor will need to be removed, the project is committed to retaining as many trees as possible, particularly mature trees with high amenity value. In addition, we'll plant thousands of new trees and plants as part of our landscaping, and for every tree we remove we'll plant at least two new trees, either within the project area or elsewhere nearby.

Union Road level crossing gone in 2023



A unique perforated canopy will create a dappled light effect throughout the station concourse





Lorne Parade Reserve will be rejuvenated upon project completion

Car parking

Many community members have said they would like to see better car parking and we have heard about problems with informal and illegal parking where vehicles block each other in.

The new station car park will be built to modern standards with a better layout, improved lighting and CCTV, and around the same number of current car park spaces.

Our designs also provide the opportunity for additional car parks to be added in the future.

Lorne Parade Reserve

Lorne Parade Reserve is a highly valued community asset.

We heard you want to see a children's play space and as much open grassed area as possible, to allow informal play and other community uses.

In response, we'll replace the existing play equipment with a completely new play space, and we've arranged the station buildings, main station entrance and paths in a way so as to maximise the amount of open space in the reserve.

You can now have your say on design elements for Lorne Parade Reserve to help us shape the final designs for this area.

Old Mont Albert Station

The old Mont Albert Station holds a special place in the community's heart and many people would like to see the old building repurposed and kept in the local area.

Ideas for the old Mont Albert Station included turning the building into a café or restaurant, or using it as a community centre.

We're committed to returning the building to the local area upon project completion. We're considering your feedback and will provide more information about restoring the old building when we release final designs.





Mont Albert Road level crossing gone in 2023

Surrey Hills northern station entrance

A rejuvenated Lorne Parade Reserve



How you've helped shape the designs

Community feedback	Design response
New station design	
 <p>Desire for subdued, subtle station design that complements the local area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've broken up the new station concourse into smaller buildings to reduce the scale and bulk of the station area. • We've used traditional materials such as stone, brick and shingle cladding in the station design to reflect local buildings of the Victorian, Edwardian and Federation eras. • A custom-made, perforated station canopy creates a dappled light effect throughout the concourse, making it feel light and open. • We've also used soft, muted colours in the station design to create a subdued and subtle look and feel.
New station precinct design	
 <p>Reflect the heritage and history of the local area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Station precinct design uses brick, stone and timber in paving, garden walls, outdoor furniture and screening. • Historical images are being considered for use in screening and public artworks.
 <p>Retain as much open space as possible and keep green, leafy feel of local area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new station sits over the trench to maximise surrounding space and preserve most of Lorne Parade Reserve as open space. • We will rejuvenate the reserve incorporating new trees and shrubs, open grass areas and a new play space. • We'll retain as many large trees as possible and plant new trees and greenery in a 'formal' planting style – with thousands of new trees and plants to be installed as part of our landscaping.
 <p>Improve local links and connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The station precinct features new pedestrian and cycling connections, including a dedicated cycling path as part of the Box Hill to Hawthorn Strategic Cycling Corridor and links to the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert shopping villages from the station.

The station entrance on Windsor Crescent



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SEPA5787



UNION ROAD AND MONT ALBERT ROAD

Consultation Report

2021



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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne



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SELECTING THE BEST DESIGN



Mont Albert Station

In December 2020, the Victorian Government announced that the dangerous and congested Surrey Hills and Mont Albert level crossings have been fast-tracked for removal – with major construction starting in 2022 and boom gates gone in 2023.

The level crossings will be removed by lowering the tracks into an open trench and we'll build a new, safer station with premium facilities and more services.

The rail trench design and new premium station will deliver better accessibility and more train services, while avoiding impacts such as the permanent closure of local streets.

Removing the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossings will improve safety for tens of thousands of local drivers, pedestrians and cyclists every day. Once removed, it will mean no more level crossings between the city and Ringwood on Melbourne's second busiest rail line.

The new premium station for Mont Albert and Surrey Hills will mean:

- more trains, more often
- better safety and accessibility
- less impact from construction
- premium facilities for both communities
- station will be staffed from first train to last.

CONSULTATION SUMMARY



Between December 2020 and February 2021, we asked the community to share their ideas and feedback on various aspects of the project's concept design for the new station and surrounding precinct.

We received more than 6000 pieces of feedback via online surveys, the online engagement hub, virtual community information sessions and through the call centre.

5327

pieces of feedback received from approximately 1500 community members



487

attendees across 9 virtual community information sessions and precinct meetings



15,000+

visits to our online engagement hub

Email updates sent to over

3550
subscribers



More than

740

enquiries answered via contact centre and online engagement hub



994

design feedback surveys returned

Community update sent to about

20,000

households with over 570 properties door knocked and 333 face-to-face conversations held



We heard that:

- the look and feel of the station building and precinct is very important for many members of the community who stated they would prefer a subdued, subtle look and feel that respects and complements the existing character of the area
- the heritage and historical aspects of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert should be reflected in the design, including the use of bluestone, brick and timber materials
- people prefer patterned or perforated screening with some landscaping and vegetation
- open space, trees and greenery are important when considering the station precinct design
- cycling and pedestrian paths and connections are important to people who live in the area
- many people would like to see the old Mont Albert Station converted into a cafe or restaurant, or used for community purposes
- people were fond of integrated public art that incorporates the history of the area.

FEEDBACK OVERVIEW

How your feedback is helping shape our plans so far

Reflecting heritage

The community placed a strong emphasis on keeping the general station building design subtle and want to see a number of heritage elements integrated into various parts of the station and precinct. This includes integration with the artwork, the general 'look and feel' and with the selection of some materials.

Popular materials mentioned include brick, timber, tiles, and natural stone which appeared in our design surveys and virtual community information sessions.

We're considering this feedback as we work to refine the architectural features of the station building and what goes in the surrounding precinct.

The community will also be able to provide further input as the designs are updated and refined.

Trees, vegetation and greenery

We heard that trees and greenery are highly valued by the local community, and important to the character of the area.

In response to the feedback, and although many will need to be removed, we will retain as many large trees as we can.

The project will also plant thousands of trees, shrubs and grasses at the completion of the project and we will replace every tree we remove with at least two new trees, either within the project area or elsewhere nearby.

We'll provide more detail on our landscaping plans in the coming months.

Retaining and rejuvenating Lorne Parade Reserve

The Surrey Hills station entrance will connect with Lorne Parade Reserve and we're using your recent input and suggestions to develop our plans for how the reserve will be revitalised.

We heard you want to see as much of the existing open space and grassed areas retained as possible.

In response, we will design most of the station building to sit over the tracks, with most of Lorne Parade Reserve to be returned as public open space. We will also arrange the paths and buildings to maximise the amount of open space.

Construction planning

As part of works to lower the rail line into a trench and build a new premium station, the project will need to set up areas to temporarily store equipment, machinery, material, and construction vehicles.

Through the consultation period between early December 2020 and end of February 2021, we received more than 1000 planning submissions and heard about the importance of community sport and public spaces. We also received many comments on the inclusion of sporting grounds in the draft project boundary.

Through detailed project planning we can now confirm three of the four sporting ovals initially included in the draft project boundary will not be used as part of the level crossing removal project.

At Surrey Park, the under-utilised north-west oval will be temporarily used for up to two years and the baseball diamond will be used for a shorter period, from early 2023.

Both playing surfaces will be returned in brand-new condition and we will work with the baseball club to support them in temporarily relocating to an alternative venue.

We thank the sporting clubs and the community for providing input into the draft project boundary released in December 2020.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



The project follows eight principles of urban design

	Enhancing	1. Identity A well-defined identity and sense of place is key to creating strong and vibrant communities.
	Diverse	2. Urban integration A well-integrated environment is a fundamental framework for the successful development of a great place.
	Connected	3. Connectivity and wayfinding A well-connected and legible environment contributes significantly to a strong economy, the use of public and active transport, and an integrated community.
	Walkable	4. Accessibility A highly accessible and inclusive environment provides a positive user experience and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the community.
	Safe	5. Safety A safe environment is essential for a strong and connected community.
	Comfortable	6. Amenity High-quality urban amenity associated with the experience of a great public place contributes to a successful, equitable and prosperous community.
	Vibrant	7. Vibrancy Activation and diversity in the experience of urban places supports a prosperous and healthy community.
	Enduring	8. Resilience and environmental sustainability Places and corridors must be sustainable, enduring and resilient to support and nurture current and future generations.

GETTING AROUND SURREY HILLS AND MONT ALBERT



As part of our engagement, we asked the community how they get around the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert areas.

We found that:

- 86% of respondents walk to Surrey Hills or Mont Albert stations
- 54% of respondents use the Belgrave–Lilydale line at least once a week
- More respondents use Surrey Hills Station than Mont Albert Station
- 25% of respondents from Mont Albert or Mont Albert North use Surrey Hills Station

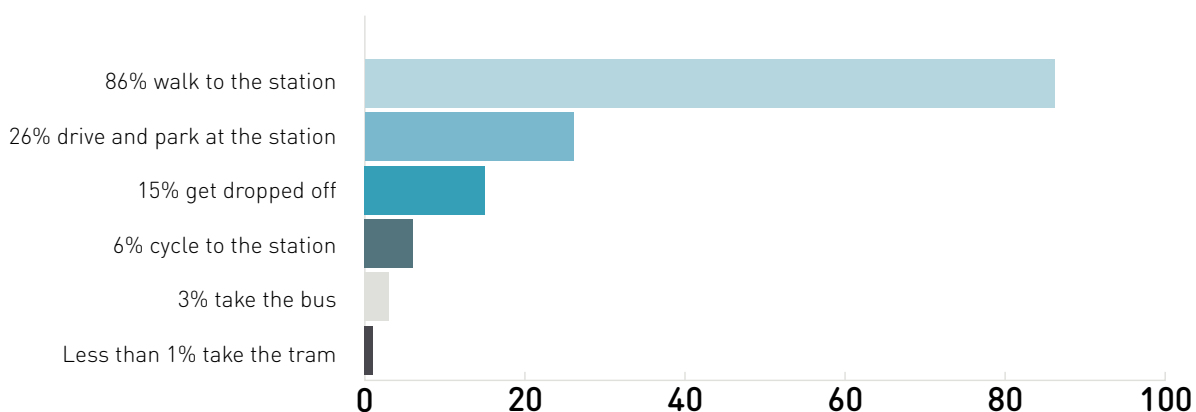
Most used station



- 57% use Surrey Hills Station
- 24% use Mont Albert Station
- 19% Other
- Total responses 956

Mont Albert Station Surrey Hills Station
Other

Getting to Surrey Hills and Mont Albert stations



Total responses 781 (note that multiple selections could be made)

WHAT WE'VE HEARD



In December, January and February we asked the community for ideas and feedback on 10 elements of the station and precinct design:

- overall look and feel
- how you want to use the new station precincts
- materials used for the station and surrounding areas
- screening and barriers along the rail trench
- landscaping and seating options
- pedestrian and cycling connections
- style of the new pedestrian bridge at Mont Albert Village
- future use of the old Mont Albert Station building
- location and inspiration for public art
- provision of car parking.

Station design

Overall look and feel

The look and feel of the station building and precinct is very important for many members of the community. People prefer an understated, subtle look and feel that respects and complements the existing character of the area. A design that reflects the heritage and history of the area is also important.

- From 892 responses, there was a similar split of first preferences between two of the 'look and feel' options, with 49% selecting a contemporary feel that respects the character of the area and 43% selecting formal design that complements the character of the area.
- These results also suggest that there is little interest for a design that is vibrant and stands out from the current environment.
- 40% of respondents mentioned that it was important to incorporate heritage into the look and feel and have a design complementary to the existing environment.
- 30% of the feedback in the virtual community information sessions mentioned that people preferred a design that complemented the heritage of the area and kept a subtle profile with some suggesting neutral colours.

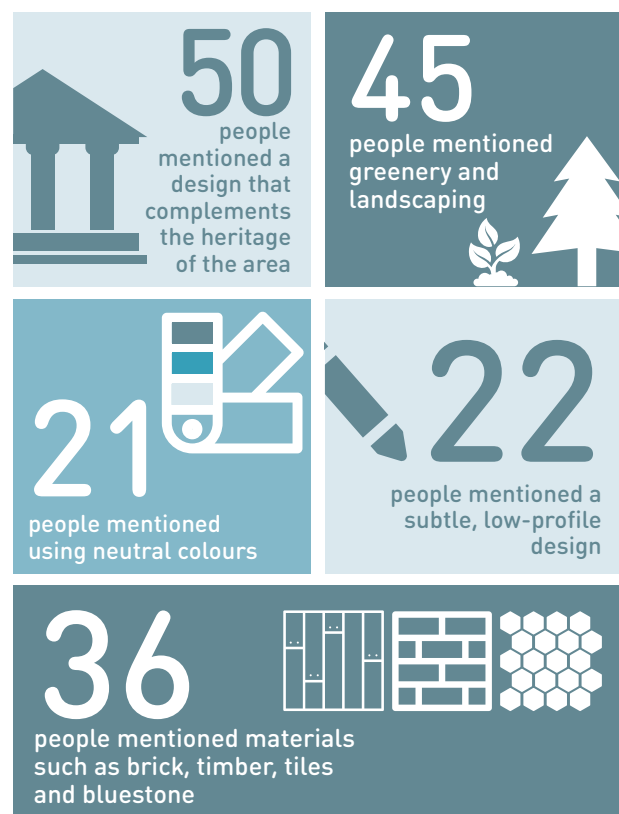
Examples of comments included:

"Discrete design which is consistent with aesthetic and materials of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert area."

"Design should reflect or be complementary to the heritage neighbourhood."

"We would like to see a strong bias towards traditional architecture and design that reflects the look and heritage feel that the area currently has."

Station design – Top 5 themes from our virtual community information sessions



First preference for 'look and feel' of the new station and surrounding precinct



- Contemporary feel that respects the character of the area 49%
- A formal design that complements the character of the area 43%
- Vibrant, fresh feel that stands out from the surrounding environment 8%

Total responses 892

Materials

Feedback received during our virtual community information sessions indicated a preference that the station be built using materials that complement the area.

With respect to materials for the new station and surrounding precinct, we heard popular suggestions for the design to include bluestone, brick, tiles and timber.

Brick, timber, tiles and natural stone (e.g. bluestone) were mentioned and selected 817 times across our design surveys and virtual community information sessions.

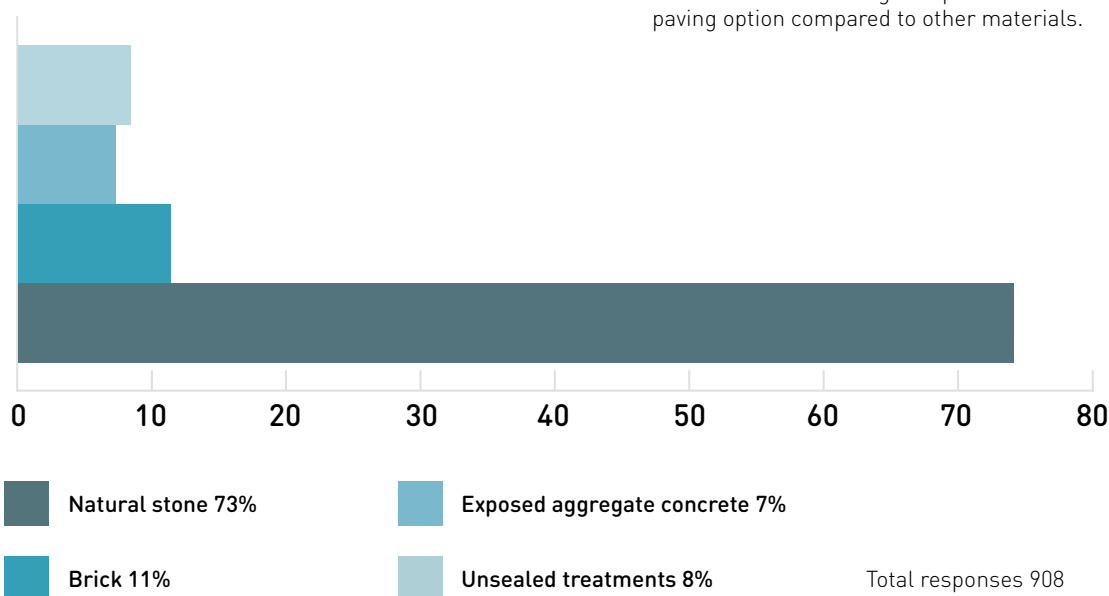
Examples of comments included:

"This may require an urban architect to consider the use of traditional materials such as brick and wood and look beyond the prefabricated products widely used in urban design today."

"A simple, durable design for the station which incorporates as much wood (over metal) as possible."

"Make sure it integrates into the character of the neighbourhood i.e. less exposed concrete, more brickwork."

There was also a strong first preference for a natural stone paving option compared to other materials.



Total responses 908

STATION PRECINCT AND PUBLIC REALM

We heard many community members desire to retain or create more open space in the precinct area for purposes such as a meeting place, community gatherings, exercise and a space for children to play.

Over 90 survey responses highlighted the need for open community space in the area, with 43 people suggesting that the trench be partially covered by a deck to achieve this.

Examples of comments included:

"Retain as many existing trees as possible, and plant as many natives as possible."

"Must have spacious parks and also allowance for a pick up or drop off point too!"

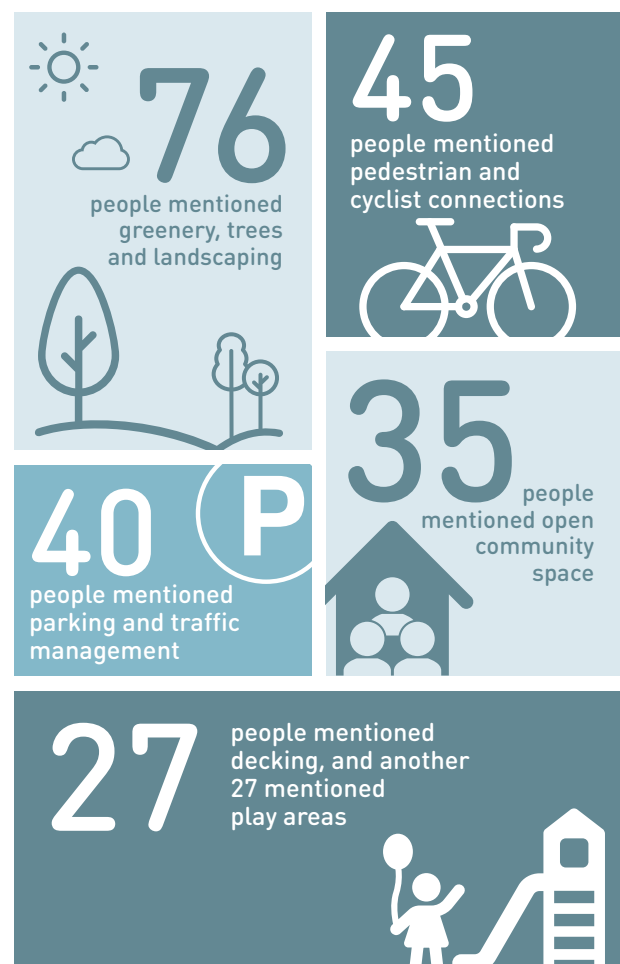
"Please try to incorporate a cycling/shared path into the works. Businesses and residents will benefit from the added "active" connection."

"Open space must be retained for children to play, adults to exercise and pets to be exercised."

"Make sure there is consideration for park land and play areas for local children and families with dogs etc as this is such an outdoors-loving community."

"I agree with moving to one station and the location but believe the trench needs roof space with preferably green spaces wherever possible."

Station precinct and public realm – Top 5 themes from our virtual community information sessions

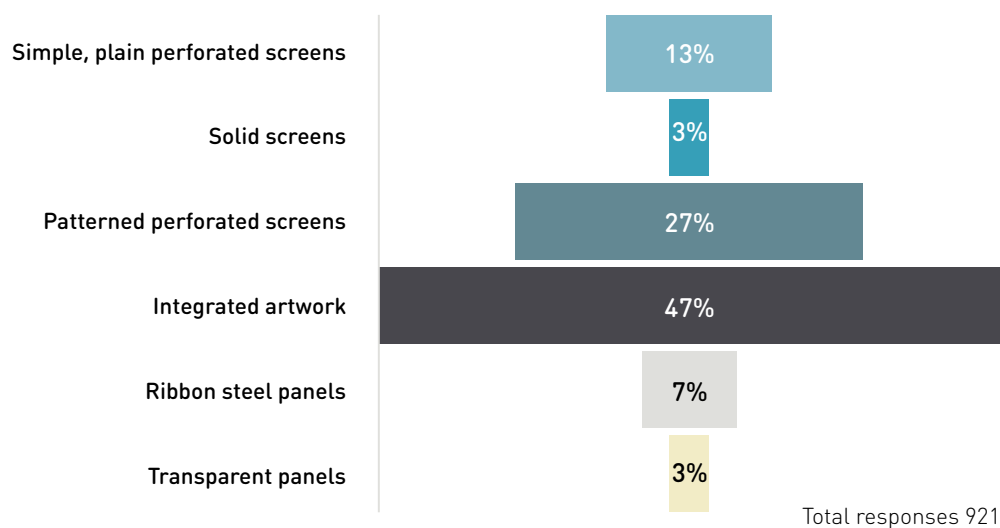


SCREENING



Most respondents said that they prefer integrated artwork and patterned or perforated screening treatments. There were also suggestions for landscaping and vegetation along the rail corridor.

First preference for screening and barriers



- People indicated they would like to see integrated artwork as their first preference for screening and barriers.
- Of the examples provided during our virtual community information sessions, the community favoured integrated historical artwork and patterned perforated screening.
- Greenery is important to the community and we had several suggestions to integrate greenery into the screening, with some favouring a 'green wall' to block the trench. Others held a view that they would prefer to see greenery across the trench.

Examples of comments included:

"I know trees can no longer be planted near a railway line, so it is imperative that the screening is pleasant to look at and covered as much as possible with shrubs, creepers and other plants."

"Use simple transparent mesh screening to retain views of all the trees, gardens and roofs around and across the tracks, rather than solid or distractingly patterned screens."

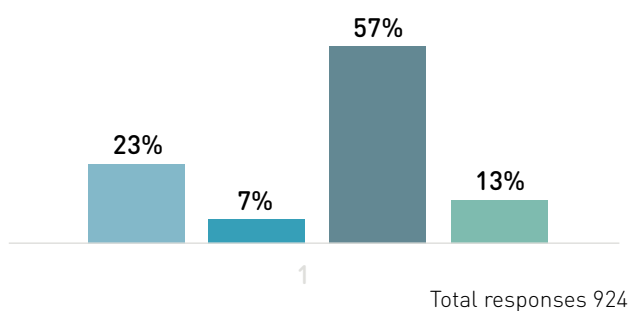
LANDSCAPING AND SEATING



- Native vegetation and landscaping: 20% of people mentioned they would like to see more trees and vegetation retained where possible and incorporated into the design.
- 40% of people also stated their first preference was for a formal landscaping style with native/indigenous species.
- There was a big first preference for timber seating in comparison to other options in the survey.



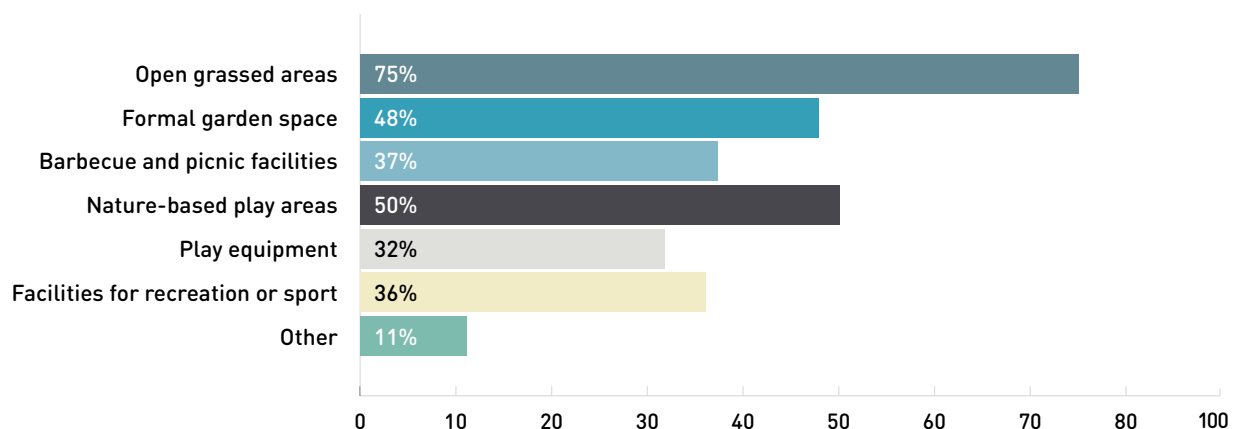
Seating style preferences



Lorne Parade Reserve

- Feedback collected during our virtual community information sessions showed the community would prefer that Lorne Parade Reserve remain as informal open space that can be used for a range of activities.
- The community put forward the importance for existing greenery to be retained or replaced in the reserve and station precinct.
- Many community members commented on the need for a new playground space in Lorne Parade Reserve.
- As part of the Lorne Parade Reserve rejuvenation, people's preferences indicated that they would like to see open grassed areas (75% selected this option)
- There were also a number of people who indicated they would like to see a playground space, with some preferring a nature-based play area (50% selected this option).

What would you like to see in this space?



Total responses 954 (note that multiple selections could be made)

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST CONNECTIONS

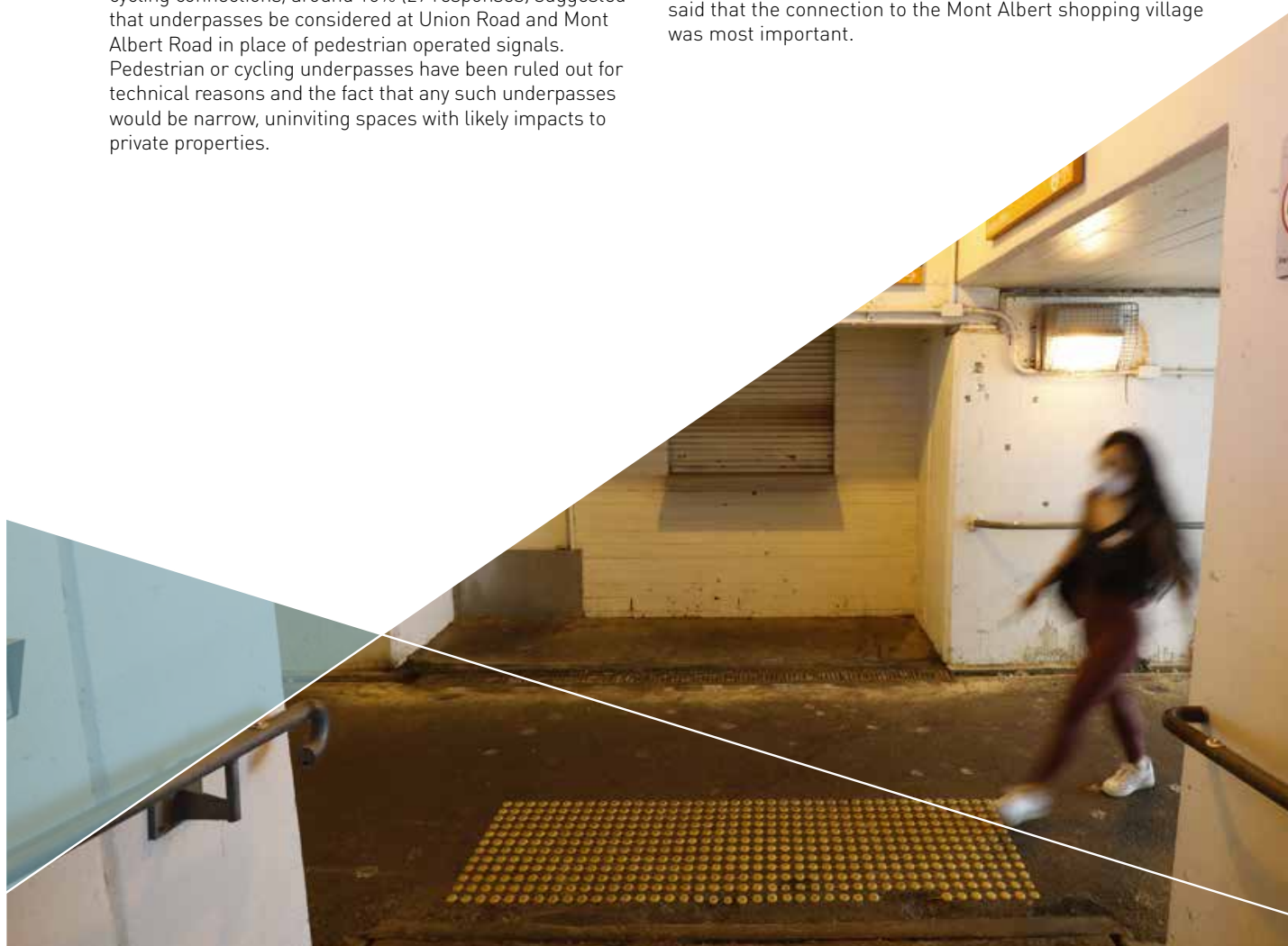
- People mentioned they would like wide and separated paths for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The connections to local schools were also important.
- 28% of survey respondents said they would like to see new or improved cycling paths around the station precinct, with 11.4% mentioning they want to see provisions for the Box Hill to Hawthorn cycling corridor plan (by the Department of Transport).
- People also mentioned they want to see improved pedestrian and cycling links across Union Road and Mont Albert Road for both locals and commuters getting to the train station.
- Out of the 271 responses received regarding pedestrian and cycling connections, around 10% (29 responses) suggested that underpasses be considered at Union Road and Mont Albert Road in place of pedestrian operated signals. Pedestrian or cycling underpasses have been ruled out for technical reasons and the fact that any such underpasses would be narrow, uninviting spaces with likely impacts to private properties.

Examples of comments included:

"...Also believe that it is critical that a pedestrian crossing is installed at Union road between the car park and Coles- people jaywalk here all the time and it is quite dangerous."

"Integration of the proposed Hawthorn to Box Hill rail trail into the designs is also essential, as is safe pedestrian crossings at Mont Albert Road and Union Road."

When asked about walking and cycling links from the station precinct, 41% said the connection to the Surrey Hills shopping village was the most important to them, while 29% said that the connection to the Mont Albert shopping village was most important.



OLD MONT ALBERT STATION BUILDING



The old Mont Albert Station holds a special place in the community's heart and we heard a number of people say they would like to see the building repurposed and kept in the local area.

There were many different ideas and suggestions about how the building could be repurposed:

- 36% of people said they would like to the building repurposed as a café or restaurant
- 35% of people said they would like to see it used as a community centre

Old Mont Albert Station Building – Top 5 themes from our virtual community information sessions

11

mentioned incorporating the station building into the new station



30

mentioned building a deck over the trench to house the refurbished station



15

mentioned retaining the location of the station building



31

mentioned creating a community meeting place



11

mentioned repurposing the building as a café or retail space



Pedestrian bridge at Mont Albert

- A suggestion was for the pedestrian bridge at Mont Albert was for it to be widened and built into a deck that connects the north side of Beresford St to Mont Albert village.

Examples of comments included:

"It would be ideal if the railway line trench was covered over adjoining the Mont Albert shopping village to create an open garden space."

"Building should be preserved. Perhaps as a community centre or cafe/restaurant, keep it as close to the old Mont Albert station as possible."

"Would like to see it retained and reused as some kind of community facility for Mont Albert Village incorporating relaxed outdoor seating and space for people to gather."

"Perhaps as a cafe or integrated into the overall local area in a plaza or similar. Definitely something unique for the community that fits into the overall character."

PUBLIC ART



Residents of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert value the rich heritage of the area and would like to see it reflected in public art as part of the new station and surrounding precinct.

Many people said that they would like the artwork to reflect some of the heritage and history of the area, and gave examples of existing artwork in the local area that they were interested in.

- An example of artwork in the area that people liked is the murals located in Surrey Hills, opposite Coles.
- Much like the station design, the community would like to see interpretive and integrated artwork that celebrates the heritage of the area.
- There were also preferences for Indigenous art and community art.

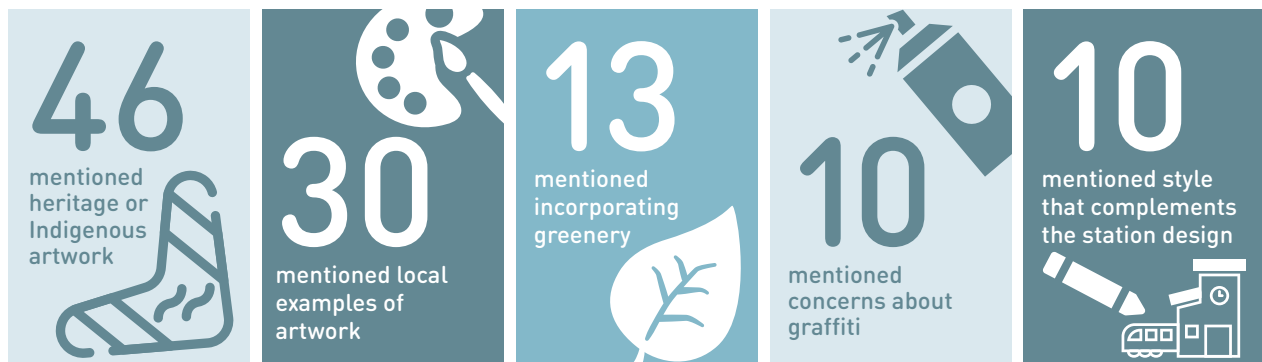
Examples of comments included:

"There's a lot of local artwork in Surrey Hills on walls - station precinct should incorporate art and heritage features of area."

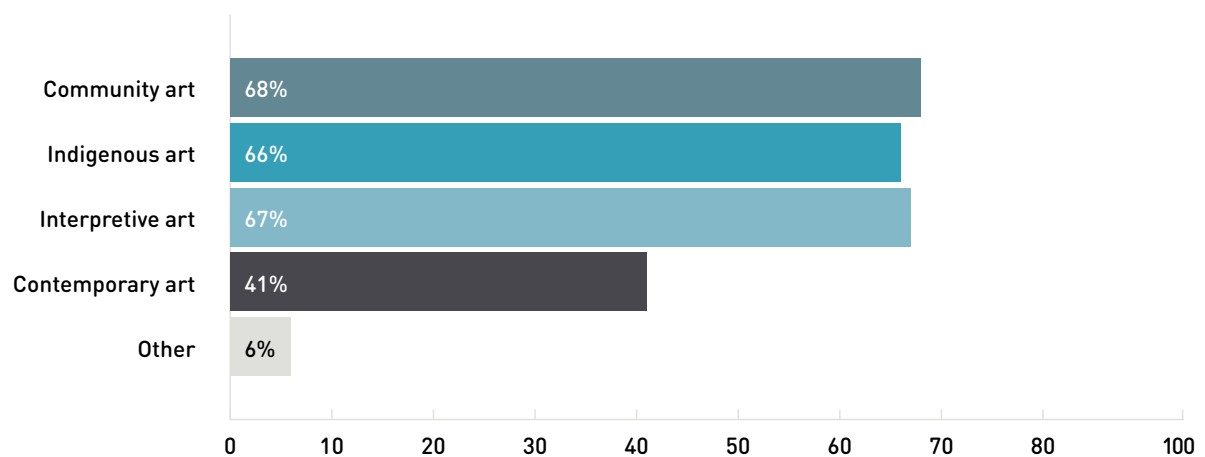
"I like the artwork on the sides of the current main street (Union Road)."



Public art – Top 5 themes from our virtual community information sessions

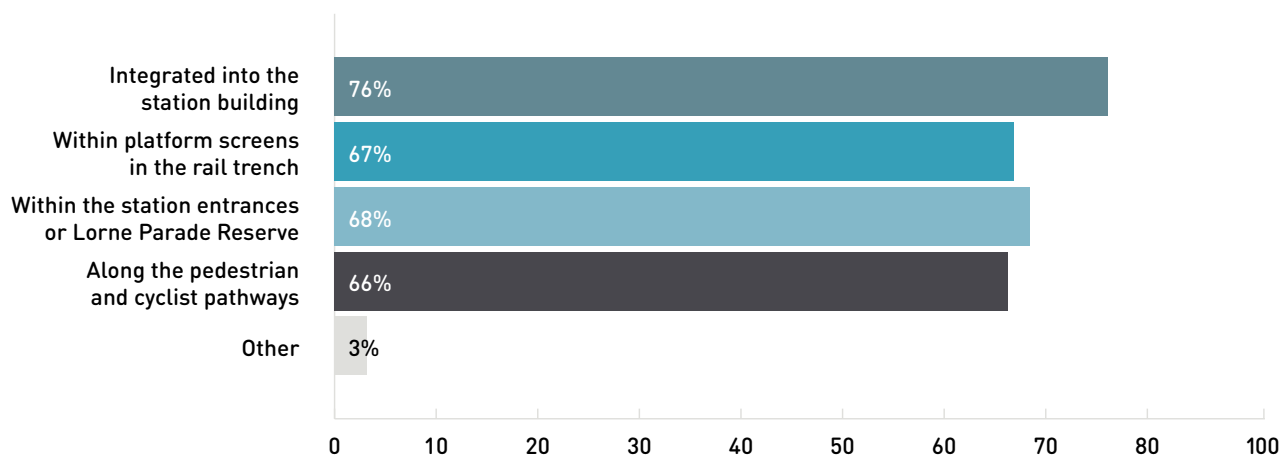


What style of public art you told us you wanted to see:



Total 950 responses (note that multiple selections could be made)

Where do you want to see artwork located around the station?



Total 923 responses (note that multiple selections could be made)

CAR PARKING



- 47% of people indicated they would like more commuter parking at the station. A number of local residents also stated that they would like to see more commuter parking to reduce the number of commuters parked in residential streets.
- Over 10% of respondents highlighted that the car park needs to be safe, accessible, and well-lit for all commuters.

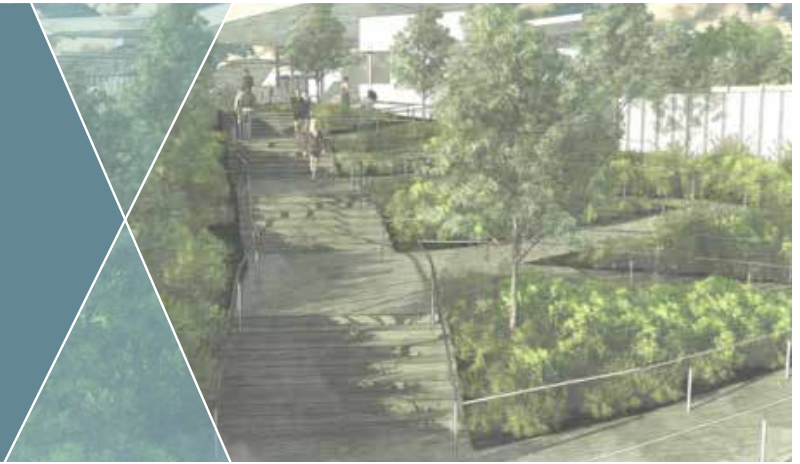
Examples of comments included:

"Needs to be well lit and suitable for easy and safe access to station for all people: young, old, disabled etc."

"Most definitely need parking that is well lit and safe at night as well as day".



REFINING THE DESIGNS



There are a number of factors that influence the development of the design.

Considerations for design development

Technical and engineering considerations

For example:

- Topography of the site
- Narrow rail corridor and distance between existing stations
- Meeting modern rail safety standards

Community considerations

After selecting the best solution based on extensive technical and engineering investigations, the project asked for your input on aspects of the concept design.

The community will be asked for further input when the updated designs are released.

Impacts to the surrounding area

For example:

- Avoiding compulsory acquisition of local homes and businesses
- Avoiding permanent closure of local streets

Environmental considerations

For example:

- Minimising tree removal and maximising feasible open space
- Managing construction impacts

Design benefits

For example:

- Improved train services
- Improved accessibility and safety
- Avoiding compulsory acquisition
- Improved amenities

All these factors are considered when developing the updated designs, which are informed by community feedback and further detailed technical work.

NEXT STEPS

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the initial concept designs for the Union Road and Mont Albert Road Level Crossing Removal Project.

This includes key local stakeholders and the many local community organisations, sporting clubs and other groups who provided their submissions on behalf of their members.

We will provide further opportunities for feedback as we update and refine the designs in the coming months.

We are also continuing to plan for construction. In advance of early works starting in 2021 and major works starting in 2022, we will begin preparing the site by relocating utilities and setting up facilities for the workforce.

Major construction will start in 2022 and the dangerous and congested level crossings will be gone for good in 2023.

Project timeline



Early 2021

- First phase of community engagement completed



Mid 2021

- Updated designs released
- Further community engagement
- Early works begin



2022

- Final designs released
- Major construction begins



2023

- Level crossings gone for good

**Timeline above subject to change*



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SEPA5781

UNION ROAD AND MONT ALBERT ROAD

SURREY HILLS AND MONT ALBERT DESIGN FEEDBACK SURVEY



The Victorian Government has fast-tracked removal of the dangerous and congested level crossings at Surrey Hills and Mont Albert. We're removing the level crossings by lowering the tracks into an open trench and building a new, premium station with better facilities and more services.

We've now released updated designs for the new premium station – these designs combine community feedback with technical and engineering advice to create a station that complements the character of the local area.

Community feedback has also influenced how we connect the premium station with its surrounds and celebrate Lorne Parade Reserve as a modern green space for generations to come.

Our updated designs are now available and you can have your say on the finishing touches for the design.

We'd like to hear your views on the proposed arrangement of Lorne Parade Reserve, elements of the new play space, locations for public artwork, and screening and planting along the rail trench.

Once you have completed this survey you can email it to contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au or by mail to GPO Box 4509, Melbourne Vic 3001. This survey can also be completed online at engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert.

Surveys must be submitted by Friday 6 August 2021.

All images are artists impressions or design examples and subject to change

Before you complete this survey, please note:

- All items in this survey are indicative examples only.
- We follow Urban Design Guidelines which consider the extensive list of state and local strategic plans and policies as well as surrounding major projects.

About you

Name

Suburb

Email

Would you like to receive email updates about the level crossing removals at Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Lorne Parade Reserve

Lorne Parade Reserve is a highly valued community asset. The proposed master plan below incorporates community preferences and suggestions to date. We would like your thoughts on this plan regarding landscaping and the new play space. Community feedback will then be considered in the final design.



Landscaping

We will plant new trees, shrubs and greenery in Lorne Parade Reserve and create an open grassed area for recreation activities and community gatherings. The current master plan aims to achieve a balance between these two design elements.

Q1. Please tell us what you think about the plan with respect to the open grassed area and planting.

- ☐ The balance between the open grassed area and planting areas is right.
- ☐ There should be more open grassed area and less planting.
- ☐ There should be more planting and less open grassed area.

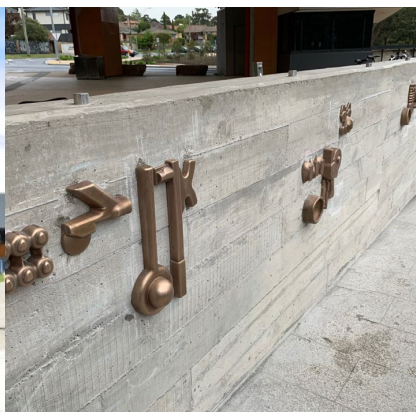




Public Artwork

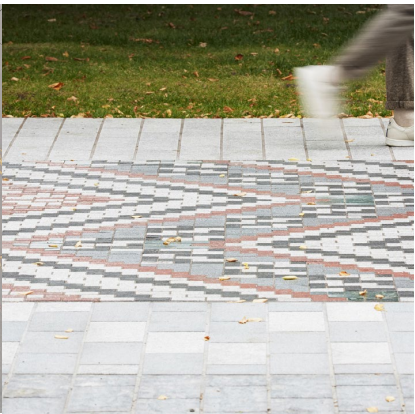
Our initial community consultation revealed a strong desire for public art at the new station and in the surrounding precinct. The map above shows potential locations for public artwork in the station precinct.

Q1. Please rank your preference for artwork locations, with 1 being your first preference and 9 being your last.



Sculptural artworks at various locations around the station precinct

- ☐ Location 1
- ☐ Location 2
- ☐ Location 3
- ☐ Location 4
- ☐ Location 5
- ☐ Location 6



Artworks carved or integrated into ground surfaces

- ☐ Location 7
- ☐ Location 8
- ☐ Location 9

Play space

As part of the Lorne Parade Reserve rejuvenation, we will build a new play space in the reserve.

Q1. The current master plan has the play space located to the east of Lorne Parade Reserve on the corner of Lorne Parade so as to separate the new train station from the play space and provide good access from local streets. Do you agree this is the right place for the play space?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If no, please tell us your preferred location for the play space and why.

Q2. What age group would you like the play space to be for?

- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-6 years
- ☐ 6-12 years

Q3. What type of play activity would you like to see in the play space? [You may tick more than one option]

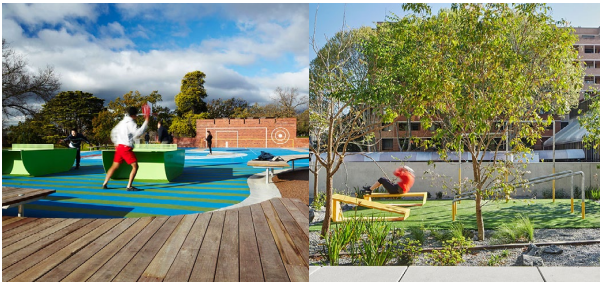
- ☐ Nature/nature play



- ☐ Formal playground



- ☐ Sport/fitness activity



Do you have any other suggestions for the play space?

Sunbury Crescent and Churchill Street

We will be planting shrubs and greenery alongside the trench in Sunbury Crescent and Churchill Street.

- Q1.** Please tell us which planting style you would prefer for these streetscapes.
- ☐ Larger shrubs and plants that provide some cover of the trench and rail infrastructure.
- ☐ Smaller shrubs and plants that provide a clear line of sight across the trench to the other side of the rail line.



Smaller shrubs and plants

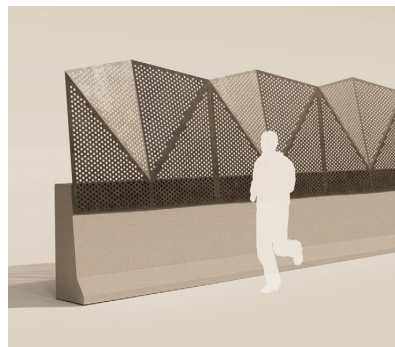


Larger shrubs and plants

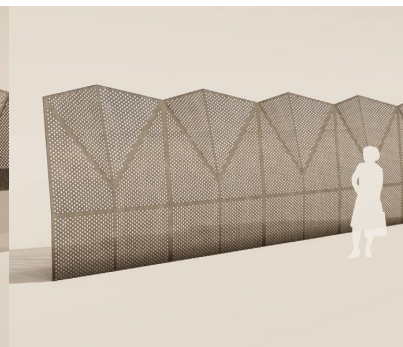
Screening

- Q1.** Below are options for colour styles for the pedestrian bridge between Beresford Street and Mont Albert shopping village, as well as the new road bridges on Union Road and Mont Albert Road. Please tell us which colour style you prefer for the screening.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Light pastel colour
- ☐ Neutral colour
- ☐ Natural earthy colour
- ☐ Darker colour
- ☐ Bright, vibrant colour



Screening along road bridges



Screening along pedestrian bridge

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All feedback received will be used to help design this important project.

Privacy Statement: The Level Crossing Removal Project is committed to protecting your privacy by fully meeting its responsibilities under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. We will record and use your personal information (including your email address) to keep you informed about the project. Only authorised staff will have access to your personal information. For further details please visit levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/about/corporate-governance/privacy



Stay up to date

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