

3 Presentation of officer reports

3.3 Submission to the Union Road level crossing removal

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) for the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removals.

On 2 December 2020 the Victorian government issued a media release advising of the fast tracking of the level crossing removals at Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert. The media release states:

- "... the boom gates are (to be) removed and a rail trench dug to separate the road and tracks by 2023."
- "Construction on the new station will start in mid-2021, with major works to begin in 2022..."
- The two train stations at Surrey Hills and Mont Albert will be consolidated "into a single premium station in a central location..."
- "The new, modern station will sit in a central location less than 150 metres from the current Surrey Hills Station and less than 400m from the current Mont Albert Station – and with entrances at both ends of the platforms."

On the same day three community consultation exercises opened to the general public and Council, with supporting collateral (refer **Attachments 2, 3, and 4**). All three exercises provide a very narrow scope of suggested topics to respond to, with the planning project boundary map for the planning approval consultation exercise released, without notification, 12 days after the exercise opened for comment.

Council officers have identified several issues associated with the LXRP proposal and have prepared a draft submission detailing identified issues and offering suggestions and solutions to reduce and/or remove the impact of the project on the Surrey Hills community and place.

Key issues include:

- The implications for the community in consolidating of the two existing train stations to a single train station.
- Whether the project can and will respond adequately to the Surrey Hills built and natural environments.
- Tree and vegetation destruction, removal and lopping.
- Appropriateness of the walking and cycling infrastructure and whether it integrates with other strategic Victorian government walking and cycling projects.
- The implications of Clause 52.03 of the Boroondara Planning Scheme, particularly the planning project boundary and its land and road hungry nature.

The draft submission focusses on the community, both residential and trader communities, and has a strong emphasis on the LXRP engaging and working with the communities, listening and responding to their concerns and issues in a manner acceptable to the communities and not the LXRP.

Essentially, the draft submission asks the LXP to put themselves in the community's shoes and act in their best interests at all times.

There is also a strong focus on Surrey Hills as a place with heritage, history and strong connections to its past. These three elements are clearly present in the built environment architecture and the natural environment landscaping. The draft submission provides clear direction and ideas as to what the precinct should look and feel like, how the community should be able to use the space and how the LXP needs to work with all stakeholders throughout the life of the project.

The draft submission seeks to limit the number of trees and amount of vegetation lost to the project and encourages the LXP to work and engage with Council to develop tree and vegetation replacement plans. Ways to overcome the walking and cycling issues are suggested in detail and include providing grade separated road crossings and direct, safe paths rather than circuitous routes.

The planning project boundary (PPB) issues are significant as they will directly impact residents and traders for the duration of the works. Of most serious and immediate concern is the proposed occupation of the Canterbury Sports Ground (CSG) for undefined project purposes, assumed to be construction laydown, site compound and/or material stockpile. The CSG is home to many sporting clubs who cannot be rehomed for the period of works because all other sports grounds are at capacity. The draft submission asks the Minister for Planning to remove the CSG from the PPB and to reconsider the land and road hungry nature of the PPB.

The draft submission seeks to offer constructive criticism and solutions to issues likely to be faced by the community and Council throughout the life of the level crossing removal project, through construction and operation.

The consultation and engagement exercise has been managed through Engage Victoria and submissions, addressed to the Minister for Planning and LXP, are required by 11:59pm, Sunday 14 February 2021.

Officers' recommendation

That the Services Delegated Committee resolve to:

1. Endorse the submission (refer **Attachment 1**) to the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXP) for the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removals.
2. Request the LXP actively engages with Council and the community including, but not limited to, traders, businesses, residents, schools, pre-schools and sporting clubs/groups.
3. 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 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) for the Union Road and Mont Albert Road 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

On 2 December 2020 the Victorian government issued a media release advising of the fast tracking of the level crossing removals at Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert. The media release states:

"...the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert communities will be safer when the boom gates are removed and a rail trench dug to separate the road and tracks by 2023.

Extensive engineering and technical investigations found consolidating Surrey Hills and Mont Albert stations into a single premium station in a central location will reduce construction impacts, avoid acquiring homes and businesses and provide more trains, more often for the local communities.

The new, modern station will sit in a central location less than 150 metres from the current Surrey Hills Station and less than 400m from the current Mont Albert Station – and with entrances at both ends of the platforms.

Construction on the new station will start in mid-2021, with major works to begin in 2022 to deliver a modern, accessible station with entrances at both ends to maximise access from both Surrey Hills and Mont Albert."

Both Union Road in the City of Boroondara and Mont Albert Road in the City of Whitehorse are roads under the control and management of the two local governments. They are both high order local roads.

The LXRP opened three separate consultation exercises on 2 December 2020, with each of them closing at 11:59pm on Sunday 14 February 2021. In addition to the three consultations, an expression of interest program was run for the project's Community Reference Group and 'invitations' were virtually issued to the general public for attendance at the virtual information sessions to be held in February 2021. The three consultations are:

- Help shape your station precinct design.
- Surrey Hills and Mont Albert local business survey.
- Surrey Hills and Mont Albert planning approvals.

The consultation exercises were supported by the publication on the day of the media release of three artists' impressions of the potential station entrance designs, an information sheet titled "*Selecting the best design*" (**Attachment 2**), a community update newsletter (**Attachment 3**) and, 12 days after the media release, a proposed project boundary map (**Attachment 4**).

4. Outline of key issues/options

Key issues and responses

The key issues with the level crossing removal at Union Road are detailed in the draft submission (**Attachment 1**) and some are outlined below. The draft submission includes commentary about the issues and potential mitigation measures provided generally in accordance within the narrow scope of topic headings suggested by the LXP in their consultation collateral and listed immediately below. Where a concern and suggestion was thought to be outside the narrow scope, commentary has been provided under our own topic heading.

- *"Overall look and feel of new station.*
- *How you want to use the new station precinct.*
- *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 for car parking."*

Consolidation of two train stations to one train station

The consolidation of the two existing train stations to one train station is generally not supported. It reduces accessibility for passengers, particularly those with mobility impairments, by asking them to walk a further 150m (to/from the existing Surrey Hills station) or 400m (to/from the existing Mont Albert station) to access what will be the front door of the station (the Surrey Hills station entrance is located in the order of 110m from Union Road).

This approach disconnects the train station from public and private buses on Union Road as well as disconnecting the Union Road shopping centre from the station and removes the transit oriented design nature of the precinct. It will no longer be convenient to pick up groceries on your way home from work.

The train station design 'guidelines' the LXP is working within and the 'requirements' these 'guidelines' place on the project, being train stations must be located on straight sections of track and cannot be located on curved sections of track are noted in the draft submission. As is the desire of the LXP to ensure train stations are not, in their opinion, too close together.

The draft submission recognises these two elements combine to create the proposed one train station and respectfully challenges the LXP's interpretation and implement of the 'guidelines'. It also respectfully challenges the LXP's opinion on ideal train station separation distance.

The location of passenger amenities on the train platform and in the station is questioned, with passenger access the station from the east potentially required to walk the length of the platform to access passenger amenities including a toilet, staffed ticket office and indoor waiting area.

Surrey Hills - The community

The draft submission has a heavy and deliberate focus on the community, both residential and trader communities. The speed at which the project is progressing and the scale of the works will severely impact the community for the duration of the works.

Council's submission asks the LXP to engage and work with the community, to listen to their concerns and requests and to deliver solutions acceptable to the community and not just suitable and acceptable to the LXP and the project. The LXP offer little in their consultation collateral and project publications about how they intend to engage and work with the community, and so we have focussed our attention in this space.

Noting the LXP will establish a Community Reference Group, we have asked for the establishment of a Trader Community Reference Group for the traders. The impacts to the residents and traders will be similar but will require different interventions and mitigation measures.

The station precinct

The LXP invited comments about:

- How you want to use the new station precinct.
- Materials used for the station and surrounding areas.
- Screening and barriers along the rail trench.
- Landscaping and seating options.
- Location and inspiration for public art.

The draft submission responds to each of these topic headings and includes an additional topic heading of '*the architectural approach*'. The issues the feedback provided in the draft submission responds to focus on the unique and highly valued environment of Surrey Hills as a place and the need to involve Council and the community in the design process.

The draft submission talks to the Victorian timber architecture, Edwardian style architecture and brick building materials of the built environment. It discusses the formal and informal landscaping of the neighbourhood, and the strong connections the area has to its history and heritage through the built and natural environments. It seeks to connect the LXP with the story, history and heritage of the area so that they can understand and include it in their project.

Trees and biodiversity

The project, without a doubt, will impact on trees and biodiversity by the destruction, removal and/or lopping of trees and vegetation. Tree and vegetation loss is a very serious concern for the community, with several community members and representatives providing this feedback.

The draft submission seeks to respond to this grave concern by asking the LXP to not only develop a tree removal plan in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards, but that they also engage and work with Council to 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.

Walking and cycling

A feasibility study is currently being developed by the Department of Transport (DoT) for the Box Hill to Hawthorn (BH2H) Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC). The feasibility study assesses route and treatment options for a bidirectional cycling corridor between Box Hill Train Station in the east and Hawthorn in the west, with a potential connection over the Yarra River into Richmond.

As part of the SCC feasibility study, both Boroondara and Whitehorse Councils recognise a significant opportunity to deliver a safe, direct and comfortable off-road walking and cycling facility predominantly along the Lilydale/Belgrave railway reserve, including the section of track to be upgraded by LXP for the new Surrey Hills/Mont Albert station. The LXP fails to deliver on this opportunity by not providing a connection to the western extent of their project boundary at Robinson Road, providing an indirect route and not providing a grade separated crossing of Union Road for through cyclists and walkers.

The draft submission offers ways to overcome this failure to deliver on the opportunity and to ensure the SCC through the project area is a high quality, safe and usable shared path.

Clause 52.03 - Level Crossing Removal Project of the Boroondara Planning Scheme

Clause 52.03 of the Boroondara Planning Scheme was gazetted in early 2020 and gives the LXP the right to seek planning approval for the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removals directly from the Minister for Planning. It also requires the preparation of a consultation report which will inform the Minister for Planning's assessment of the project under Planning Scheme clause.

The clause raises three key issues, amongst others, being:

1. Heritage
 - Several portions of the project area are subject to heritage overlays (HOs), being HO523 and HO535.
 - The report that addresses the impact of the development on the heritage significance of the heritage place required by Clause 52.03-6 may be necessary if the project impacts on areas with an HO.
2. Vegetation
 - The potential scale of destruction, removal or lopping of vegetation is unknown.
 - The information the LXP is required to gather and submit to the Minister for Planning and Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning about the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation is detailed and extensive.
 - The provision of vegetation offsets for any native vegetation removed, destroyed or lopped is welcomed, however it is welcomed with some caution.

3. Planning project boundary
 - The draft Planning Project Boundary (PPB) extends over 11 pages and is considered to be excessively large, land and road hungry.
 - The inclusion of so many local streets in the PPB is concerning, particularly when the geometry of these streets and the limited vertical height clearances on some is considered.
 - The local streets identified as being in the PPB are generally narrow, asphalt roads with bluestone kerb and channel and on-street parking on both sides.
 - The PPB proposes the inclusion of the Canterbury Sports Ground (CSG) for an unspecified purpose.
 - It is assumed the CSG is proposed to be used as a construction laydown area, site compound and/or material stockpile location for the duration of the works, potentially starting in mid-2021.
 - This proposed occupation is not acceptable to the community, Council and the users at the CSG.
 - The sports clubs who train and play at the CSG cannot be accommodated at other Boroondara based sports grounds as they are at capacity.

The draft submission responds to these three issues by:

1. Heritage
 - Requesting the Minister for Planning require the LXP to develop and submit a heritage report for his assessment.
2. Vegetation
 - Requesting the Minister for Planning and the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning:
 - Critically assess and analyse the reports and information provided by the LXP in response to Clause 52.03-7 of the BPS.
 - Require any and all offsets be located as close as possible to the site of loss.
 - Requesting the Minister for Planning require the LXP to minimise the tree removal, destruction and lopping to facilitate the project and to strictly adhere to the written commitment to minimise impacts to trees and vegetation throughout the life of project.
3. Planning project boundary
 - Requesting the Minister for Planning:
 - Alter the PPB to remove the Canterbury Sports Ground from the project area.
 - Require the LXP to meet with Council to respond to the concerns and questions raised in the draft submission in relation to the PPB

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.

In general, the proposed removal of the two dangerous level crossings is welcomed. The multi-million dollar investment by the Victorian government in the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert neighbourhoods is appreciated and the opportunity for the Victorian government to collaborate with the community and Councils is highlighted.

The draft submission seeks to provide the LXP with context about Surrey Hills community and what Surrey Hills means as a place by providing history of the area and demographic information about our community. It offers detail about the impacts of the project on our community and our place and ways these impacts could be mitigated. We suggest ways the damage the project has the potential to inflict on the Surrey Hills community and place can be limited by implementing our ideas, actions and working with Council and the community to create a best for community outcome.

Boroondara residents will use Union Road, Surrey Hills on a daily basis. The train station will continue to be and become for some a familiar and critical part of their journey to and from work. The community consultation exercise about the level crossing removal presents Council an opportunity to influence the design, functionality, accessibility and landscape elements of the facility for the better and 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 element in 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

To inform this report and the draft submission (**Attachment 1**), Council officers and the ward Councillor, Councillor Jane Addis, have met and/or spoken with various stakeholders and community members to listen to their ideas and concerns about the level crossing removal. Further and continued communication with these stakeholders is expected for the life of the project.

There is no formal traders association for the Union Road, Surrey Hills shopping centre. Information about the shopping centre has been gathered from site visits and discussions with Council's Economic Development team.

The LXRP project team has met with Council officers to discuss the project and provided an overview of the project on 21 December 2021. Officers from Whitehorse and Boroondara have met and/or spoken on numerous occasions to share information and prepare for the project.

Given the timing of the consultation exercises conducted by the Level Crossing Removal Project, Council is continuing to receive feedback and information from community groups and it will be considered for incorporation into the final submission.

Should the officer recommendation be adopted by Council, future communication activities include contacting those listed in the resolution to share the resolution and submission.

6. Financial and resource implications

The financial or resource implications associated with the officers' recommendation are negligible.

On-going participation in the project and advocacy for our community will incur significant costs. Council officers are currently working with the LXRP to develop and finalise a memorandum of understanding which will include a funding mechanism for Council to use to seek reimbursement of all project related costs from the LXRP.

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

When delivered and finalised, the level crossing removal at Union Road, Surrey Hills will result in positive social, road safety and rail safety outcomes.

The social and environmental impacts between now, the planning stage, and the completion of the works are likely to be negative for the community and Union Road shopping centre traders.

The draft submission (**Attachment 1**) recognises these potentially negative impacts and outlines how we expect the community and traders to be engaged with and supported through the construction works in an effort to remove where possible and minimise otherwise the impacts of the works. Similarly, the draft submission details how we expect the LXRP to engage and work with Council and the community about tree and vegetation protection, removal and replacement.

Manager: Jim Hondrakis, Manager Traffic and Transport

Report officer: Clare Davey, Senior Coordinator Transport Advocacy

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

Submission from Boroondara City Council

Date: TBC

Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removals (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.

A double fatality involving two Boroondara residents occurred at the Union Road level crossing in 2016. It was a tragic incident which we, along with the community, wish had not taken place and do not want to experience again. The removal of the level crossing will ensure we do not experience any such incidents in the future.

Our understanding of the project has been informed by the information the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) has published and provided on its website and via its electronic distribution lists. We have not been privy to any information beyond that available to the general public. We understand the LXRP has made it abundantly clear there are two non-negotiable elements of the proposal.

1. The consolidation of the two train stations, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, to one premium station.
2. The lowering of the rail line into a trench which will travel under Union Road and Mont Albert Road.

The two non-negotiable elements of the proposal are acknowledged, however Council has concerns about the consolidation of the two stations to one.

Council prefers the retention of two train stations with one at Surrey Hills and one at Mont Albert. This preference is held for various reasons detailed in this submission, including:

- Providing public transport infrastructure that is accessible and located where people can easily and safely access it, no matter their mobility.
- Continuing to support the transit oriented development nature of the Surrey Hills station by having the station close to the Union Road shopping centre which enables and encourages multi-purpose journeys.

Concerns are held with other elements of the proposal and the adverse impacts these will have on the Boroondara community and the Union Road shopping centre trader community.

Throughout this submission we have included a number of 'asks' of the LXRP and, where appropriate, the Minister for Planning. At the heart of most every 'ask' is the need to engage and work with the community, traders and Council. This is to enable the LXRP and the Minister for Planning to better understand the issues this project generates for the community and allows for the development of solutions that meet the needs of the community, traders and Council.

The multi-million dollar investment by the State government in the level crossing removals at Union Road and Mont Albert Road is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the community, traders, Councils and the State government to collaborate to achieve a best for community outcome.

This submission also recognises and responds to the intention of the LXRP to seek planning approval from the Minister for Planning via *Clause 52.03 - Level Crossing Removal Project* of the Boroondara and Whitehorse Planning Schemes.

Feedback to *Clause 52.03* focusses heavily on the Planning Project Boundary (PPB) as it impacts a large number of Boroondara roads, along with the Canterbury Sports Ground (CSG). We have

serious concerns about the size of the PPB and query the need for and suitability of many of the local, narrow streets the LXR has included in the PPB. The majority of streets in Surrey Hills have vertical clearance restrictions because of the well-established and cherished street trees, which render them effectively impassable for the types of heavy vehicles generally associated with major construction works.

For many reasons, the use of the CSG for project purposes is not supported and will not be tolerated by the community, Council, sporting groups and park/reserve users. The negative and long-term impacts for the organised sporting clubs who rely on the CSG is not palatable. Neither is the likely impacts from the occupation on the neighbouring Canterbury Tennis Club and Canterbury and District Pre-School.

This document is Council's submission to the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert LXRs community consultation exercise. This submission was considered at the 8 February 2020 Services Delegated Committee meeting of Council.

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Introduction

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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.

A double fatality involving two Boroondara residents occurred at the Union Road level crossing in 2016. It was a tragic incident which we, along with the community, wish had not taken place and do not want to experience again. The removal of the level crossing will ensure we do not experience any such incidents in the future.

The Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) has made it abundantly clear there are two non-negotiable elements of the proposal.

3. The consolidation of the two train stations, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, to one premium station.
4. The lowering of the rail line into a trench which will travel under Union Road and Mont Albert Road.

The two non-negotiable elements of the proposal are acknowledged, however Council has concerns about the consolidation of the two stations to one.

This document seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the Surrey Hills community and area by providing community and suburb history and context. Otherwise, we have focussed our commentary and asks within this submission on elements of the proposal which will impact our community and have sought to align this commentary with the topics suggested by the LXRP in their consultation collateral and listed below.

- *“Overall look and feel of new station.*
- *How you want to use the new station precinct.*
- *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 for car parking.”*

Where we consider the suggested topics scope to be too narrow and restrictive, we have provided commentary and suggestions beyond the list above. The narrow focus of the suggested topics list and the timing of the consultation could be viewed as reducing it to a tick-box exercise which seeks to limit the input the community, and Council, have in shaping this critical project for both Boroondara and Whitehorse Councils.

The multi-million dollar investment by the State government in the level crossing removals at Union Road and Mont Albert Road is significant. It presents a once in a lifetime opportunity for the community, Councils and the State government to work together and collaborate to achieve a best for community outcome. Through this submission and on-going work with the LXRP, Whitehorse Council and project alliance team, Council seeks to engage with the community, Whitehorse Council

and the State government to ensure the project achieves great outcomes for the community and train users. We want to make sure our community is heard throughout the project.

This submission also recognises and responds to the intention of the LXP to seek planning approval from the Minister for Planning via *Clause 52.03 - Level Crossing Removal Project* of the Boroondara and Whitehorse Planning Schemes. In responding to the *Clause 52.03* elements of the proposal, we have aligned our commentary with the topics suggested by the LXP in their consultation collateral and listed below.

- *“Project boundary.*
- *Construction-related impacts.*
- *Environmental impacts.*
- *Amenity impacts.*
- *Native vegetation.*
- *Heritage.”*

This document is Council’s submission to the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert LXRs community consultation exercise. This submission was considered at the 8 February 2020 Services Delegated Committee meeting of Council.

Project understanding

The LXP has published limited information about the project. Our understanding of what the project consists of, outlined below, is based on the information available to Council at the time of preparation of this submission. Council has not been privy to information above and beyond that in the public domain on the LXP website and electronic distribution lists.

- The consolidation of the two train stations, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, to one premium station.
 - o The western entrance to the new station will be approximately 150m east of the current Surrey Hills station entrance.
 - o The eastern entrance to the new station will be approximately 400m west of the current Mont Albert station entrance.
 - o The single, premium station will provide premium passenger facilities including staff, kiosk, toilets, covered waiting areas and CCTV.
- The lowering of the rail line into a trench which will travel under Union Road and Mont Albert Road.
 - o The trench will:
 - Accommodate the three existing tracks and one premium station building and platform infrastructure, including vertical transport (i.e. lifts and stairs).
 - Be between 7m and 9m deep.
 - o The trench will not:
 - Be capped, with the exception of the station concourse area at the western end of the platform.
 - Be future-proofed to cater for a fourth track if deemed necessary in the future by the relevant authority.
- The provision of car parking generally within the footprints of the two existing car parks at the Surrey Hills station.
 - o The car parks will be at-grade and will not be under or above ground multi-deck structures.
- The installation of pedestrian operated signals to enable at-grade crossing of Union Road and Mont Albert Road generally near the location of the existing boom gates across both roads.
- The construction of shared path infrastructure from Union Road to approximately the western entrance of the existing Mont Albert station only on the south side of the train tracks.
- The creation of a 'new space' fronting Union Road, adjacent Bedford Avenue.
 - o The LXP have noted in their collateral the "future use of this area will be determined in consultation with the community".
- The removal of a number of healthy, established trees and other vegetation from the public realm.
 - o The LXP have noted trees and vegetation removed as a direct result of the project works will be replaced.

- The removal of some or all on-street parking from Lorne Parade, Mont Albert (City of Whitehorse) and the conversion of the road to one-way.
- The closure of Beresford Street, Mont Albert (City of Whitehorse) between Gordon Street and Mont Albert Road.
- Construction impacts on the community from mid-2021 to sometime in 2023 or later.
 - o Early works, including service relocations, are planned to commence in mid-2021.
 - o Major construction commences in 2022.
 - o The boom gates will be gone sometime in 2023.

It is not clear when the new station and Lilydale/Belgrave rail line will return to regular operation. There is no information available about whether the removal of the boom gates is the final construction task or, as has been the case on other level crossing removals where the train tracks have been lowered into a trench, if there are a number of other construction tasks to follow the physical removal of the boom gates from the site.

Project non-negotiable: Consolidation of the train stations

Council is aware of the train station design 'guidelines' the LXP is working within and the 'requirements' these 'guidelines' place on the project, being train stations must be located on straight sections of track and cannot be located on curved sections of track. Council is also aware of the desire of the LXP to ensure train stations are not, in their opinion, too close together.

Council recognises these two items, when combined, have resulted in the LXP proposing the consolidation of the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert train stations into one, premium station.

We respectfully challenge the LXP to:

- Review the 'guidelines' and reconsider their interpretation of the same.
- Rethink and reconsider their opinion on what is a suitable separation distance for train stations, taking the mobility of the community rather than a seemingly arbitrary acceptable separation distance into account.

The aims of challenging the LXP to review, reconsider and put themselves in the shoes of passengers are to have the project provide two train stations rather than one and to ensure a clear and thorough understanding of how 'guidelines' are applied for future projects.

While the new station appears to be closer to the Union Road shopping centre than the Hamilton Street shopping centre in the City of Whitehorse, the proposed location of the single train station is of concern to Council.

Accessibility and functionality

The LXP has noted the western station entrance will be approximately 150m from the current Surrey Hills station entrance. The current station entrance is in the order of 110m east from Union Road. This is considered to be a long distance for some passengers to walk to access public transport, noting the bulk of the walk is through a car park, and effectively disconnects the public and school bus services operating on Union Road from the trains. Any integration between public transport services that exists now will be severed by the LXP proposed location of the train station.

The LXR proposal will disconnect the train station from the shopping centre and discourage multi-purpose journeys. It will no longer be quick and easy to drop by the shops to purchase for example, groceries or a bottle of wine after work given the overall proposed distance of 260m from Union Road to the new station entrance. The 'transit oriented development' nature of the current Surrey Hills train station will be wiped out by the longer walk required by the LXR proposal.

Passenger amenities

There is little detail about platform infrastructure, including passenger amenities, available for review. However, noting the location of the car parking, brief notes on the diagram and different shades of blue used to denote the 'new premium station' on the December 2020 Community Update published by the LXR, it is considered the bulk of the passenger amenities will be located at the western end of the platform. These amenities are expected to include:

- Public toilets.
- Staffed ticket office.
- Indoor waiting area.
- Secure bicycle parking.
- Wayfinding signage.
- Myki top-up and checking machines.
- Accessible drinking fountains.
- Dynamic passenger information boards.

There appears to be little to no space at the eastern end of the platform to provide anything more than a small sheltered entrance, one Myki machine and vertical transport (i.e. stairs and a lift). Should passengers accessing the station from the eastern end require any of the amenities listed above, they will need to walk the length of the station to access these services. For anyone with a mobility impairment, including a parent/carer with children, or anyone in a rush, this may be an impossible ask. This is important to raise as a concern as the LXR has highlighted the accessible parking being located at the eastern end of the works area at 332 Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert.

We hope our assumption about the location and provision of passenger amenities is entirely incorrect and, should the project proceed with one single station rather than two, all amenities be provided at both ends of the platform, including accessible parking spaces.

The ask

The LXR:

- Provide two train stations, one at Surrey Hills and one at Mont Albert.
- Review the 'guidelines' applied to the project that 'require' train stations to be located on straight sections of track and reconsider their interpretation of the same.
- Rethink and reconsider their opinion on what is a suitable separation distance for train stations, taking the mobility of the community rather than a seemingly arbitrary acceptable separation distance into account.

Should the LXR insist in providing only one station, they must:

- Locate the station closer towards Union Road, Surrey Hills to better connect it with the Union Road shopping centre and Union Road on-road public transport services.
- Engage and work with Council to improve accessibility and functionality of the train station, platforms and other public infrastructure and amenities.

- Provide passenger amenities, including but not limited to those listed below, at both ends of the single platform:
 - Public toilets.
 - Staffed ticket office.
 - Indoor waiting area.
 - Secure bicycle parking.
 - Wayfinding signage.
 - Myki top-up and checking machines.
 - Accessible drinking fountains.
 - Dynamic passenger information boards.

Surrey Hills - The community

Our people

Information and data from the 2016 ABS census¹ provides interesting insights about the Surrey Hills community. This is the community directly impacted by and likely to directly benefit from the removal of the Union Road level crossing removal in the long term.

From experience in developing the Boroondara Community Plan, we know the diverse and bright Surrey Hills community is engaged and interested. They want to actively and positively participate in the development of projects in their suburb which seek to enhance the amenity of their neighbourhood.

The population of Surrey Hill is estimated to be over 9,110 and consists of households of 2.69 people on average. In excess of 3,280 dwellings make up Surrey Hills, with a relatively low population density of 33.19 people per hectare.

Of the over 9,110 community members that call Surrey Hills home, the median age is 40. In 2016, Surrey Hills had a higher proportion of children (under 18) and a lower proportion of persons aged 60 or older than the City of Boroondara as a whole and 42% of the community are couples with children.

Over 25% of the community was born overseas, with China, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malaysia and India the top five countries of origin within the Surrey Hills population (in highest to lowest order). Close to 20% of the community speak a language other than English (LOTE) at home, with Mandarin, Greek, Cantonese, Italian and Vietnamese the top five LOTEs spoken (in highest to lowest order). Other languages include Hindi, Gujarati, Sinhalese, Indonesian, Tamil, Russian and Samoan.

Almost a quarter of the total population use public transport daily. Noting the available public transport in the area, most will catch trains from Surrey Hills train station. The Surrey Hills community is transient during the working week, with less than a third of the community living and working in the City of Boroondara. Over 70% of Surrey Hills residents travel outside of the suburb for work.

Close to 3% of the Surrey Hills community reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. When comparing the 2016 ABS census to the 2011 ABS census, this percentage rose and is expected to continue to rise as our community ages.

There are many community reference groups in Surrey Hills and two groups who must be consulted on the project are the Surrey Hills Historical Society² and the Surrey Hills Progress Association³.

The Canterbury Sports Ground (CSG) is home to four sports clubs:

- Canterbury Football Club:
 - o 130+ members across senior male and senior female teams.
- Canterbury Junior Football Club:
 - o 470+ members across junior male and junior females teams.
- Canterbury Cricket Club:

¹ <https://profile.id.com.au/boroondara/highlights-2016?WebID=210>

² <https://surreyhillsnc.org.au/surrey-hills-historical-society/>

³ <https://www.surreyhillsprogress.org.au/>

- 410+ playing members including senior male, senior female and junior teams.
- Chatham Auskick:
 - 120+ playing members including male and female juniors.

The Canterbury Tennis Club is next door to the CSG and has 350 members across all age groups. The five sporting clubs are communities to their close to 1,500 members, all whom cherish the active lifestyle and close-knit community being part of a sporting club brings.

Our businesses

The Union Road shopping centre and its 60 plus businesses are at the heart of the Surrey Hills neighbourhood and, quite literally, envelope the Surrey Hills train station.

The fine grain nature of the shopping centre contributes to the thriving, vibrant village feel of the area. Cafés, restaurants and take-away businesses are the largest cohort within the centre, with several venues open late on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. These venues are well loved by locals and all work to ensure the night-time economy is alive and well in Surrey Hills.

Professional services, including accountants, real estate agents and graphic designers, are well represented in the centre and are the second largest service sector present. Home services, medical related business and personal care services, along with homewares and lifestyle stores, fitness businesses and a travel agent are also present in the shopping centre. The staff from these businesses would typically spend their working day within the shopping centre area, buying their coffees and lunch from the local cafes and enjoying the nearby Surrey Gardens during their breaks from work.

The strip of shops includes a recently constructed boutique Coles 'Local' supermarket and an automotive repair garage which has been continuously used for such a purpose since its construction. Even through 2020 and the restrictions created by Covid-19, the Union Road, Surrey Hills shopping centre has flourished through the continued support of and patronage by the community.

During construction

While the transformation of the existing Union Road level crossing to 'rail under road' will create a safer environment for all transport network users including pedestrians, train drivers and passengers, there will be disruptions to the community who live, work, recreate and shop in Surrey Hills. These disruptions will start with the early works in mid-2021, continue through the construction works and may not finish until the 12 month defects liability period is over in 2024 or 2025.

Our people

The disruption experienced by our community will range from being a minor inconvenience for some to being severely damaging for the health and wellbeing of others, and just about everything in between.

While it would be convenient for the LXP to treat all concerns and disruptions in the same manner, this is considered to be inappropriate given the potential intensity of impact and disruption for some of the Surrey Hills community, as well as the range of impact different parts of the community will experience.

The 'every day' of our community must not be adversely impacted by the level crossing removal. This includes the 'every day' of our sporting club members and their allocated use of the CSG for training and matches.

Our businesses

The level crossing removal at Union Road has the potential to tear apart the heart of the village during the lengthy construction period. This potential stems from the location of the train station, the car parks, the depth and length of the proposed trench and the anticipated heavy vehicle movements and routes. The potential, if realised, would irreversibly damage the shopping centre that has managed to not only survive Covid-19 but thrive through 2020.

Council is very concerned about the adverse impact the level crossing removal will have on all businesses in the Surrey Hills shopping centre. We want all businesses to survive and continue to thrive. We do not want to see businesses close as a result of the LXR works.

All businesses in the Union Road shopping centre are important stakeholders and deserve attention and respect from the LXR. We consider it is important to bring to the attention of the LXR the two businesses at 129 and 111-113 Union Road, Surrey Hills. Both of these small businesses will be engulfed by the LXR works by virtue of their location next to the train line and station and must be treated with care and respect and consulted as part of the works and during construction.

As with the community, a bespoke approach will be required from the LXR in how it liaises with and supports each business in the centre. The support provided by the LXR must focus on the best interests of the businesses and not the LXR.

The ask

The LXR must:

- Engage and work with each and every community member impacted by the project to listen and respond to their concerns, to the satisfaction of the community member.
- Assign a dedicated contact person for each community member and that LXR officer must listen and respond and do so empathetically, responsibly and in the best interests of the community member and not the LXR.
- Establish a 'Sports clubs Community Reference Group' to bring the sports clubs together in one forum, to consult with the group and to deliver support that meets their collective and individual needs.
- Maintain the community's access to Council services, including but not limited to rubbish, recycling and FOGO collection, meals on wheels, Maternal and Child Health services, and on-street parking.
- Provide support to each business, to the satisfaction of each business, throughout the level crossing removal works to ensure each business remains open and viable.
- Establish a traders only 'Trader Community Reference Group' to bring the traders together in one forum, to consult with the group and to deliver support that meets their collective and individual needs.
- Maintain access for deliveries to businesses and collection of rubbish, recycling, food waste, waste oil and the like throughout the construction period, including the early works.
- Maintain access to on-street parking along the length of Union Road throughout the construction period, including the early works.

- Work with Council and traders to create, fund and deliver a marketing strategy for the shopping centre which showcases the *Love Local Life*⁴ campaign for Surrey Hills.

Council welcomes discussions with the LXP about providing pop-up spaces for existing businesses in the shopping centre to occupy.

⁴ <https://lovelocallife.com.au/>

Surrey Hills - The place

Past

For thousands of years, the Boroondara region was densely forested with stringybark, box, wattles, casuarinas, indigenous gums and mountain ash. The name Boroondara came from an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of shade.'

Soon after Melbourne's settlement, the British government introduced the special survey regulation, which allowed square mile portions (5,210 acres) of crown land to be purchased for £1 per acre. This included the land bounded by the present-day Burke Road to the west, Yarra River and Koonung Creek to the north, Elgar Road to the east and Canterbury Road to the south. Surrey Hills received its name from Surrey County, England, by an estate agent and councillor, J.H. Knipe (1828-95).⁵

In the 1850's small farms and grazing runs, were scattered across Surrey Hills and some of these were marked for public use before being sold for development. Some parks and gardens were donated by the general public or acquired to offset unpaid rates. One such park is South Surrey Park located approximately 1.5km south-west of the level crossing site. The site was initially subdivided for housing and had houses almost all around its perimeter, however as this area had a small creek in it was not possible to be built on and today provides a tranquil walk and biodiversity hotspot for the local community.

By 1883, the railway extended from Camberwell to Lilydale, and by 1892 most of the land was subdivided for housing. The Surrey Hills train station opened on 13 August 1883. During early investigations, engineers were initially unwilling to allow trains to stop at Surrey Hills claiming potential difficulties with the gradient and that there was not enough traffic to warrant the stop. By 1888, a second platform arrived, and by 1930 a small goods yard to the south of the station. In 1966, the signal box and goods yard were removed, and the present-day station building and platform were converted to an island platform.⁶

Intensive residential development followed the announcement to extend the train line to Lilydale. One of the earliest was the Mount Grand View Estate, which was publicised as being "between the Canterbury and Surrey Hills railway stations" when it was auctioned in April 1888.

The railway also caused a commercial boom, spurring new retail centres around the stations including the shopping village along Union Road, Surrey Hills.

Lot sizes across Surrey Hills are generous, with extensive gardens and period homes. The dominant materiality is brick produced in the nearby suburb of Hawthorn. During this time street trees were planted on main roads, and a century later side streets had street trees, nature strips, improved drainage, traffic islands, lights and pavement installed. The first bike paths began to be established in parks in 1985.⁷

One of Surrey Hills' prized gardens is the Surrey Gardens which has more history than any other park in the City of Boroondara. The gardens were designed by William Guilfoyle who originally designed Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. The Surrey Gardens were opened in 1917 and are home to one of the first First World War memorials in Australia.⁸

⁵ [Surrey Hills | Victorian Places](#)

⁶ https://australian-railways.fandom.com/wiki/Surrey_Hills_railway_station#cite_note-2

⁷ [SHADY PLACES : Hawthorn's Parks, Gardens and 'Public' Property.](#)

⁸ [Surrey Gardens \(boroondara.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Present

Surrey Hills has an irregular boundary but is roughly an 'L' shape contained by Elgar Road to the east, Riversdale Road to the South, Highfield and Chatham Roads to the west, Whitehorse Road to the north and York Street/Wilson Street/Windsor Crescent to the north-east.

The Surrey Hills neighbourhood character is broadly recognised as low rise one to two-storey detached and semi-detached Victorian timber architecture and Edwardian villas, terraces, units and townhouses, with leafy outlooks. There are two contemporary mixed-use buildings with apartments above the ground floor along Union Road and several residences above older shops.

The rail corridor is close to several arterial roads including; Canterbury and Mont Albert in an east-west direction and Union and Elgar Roads in a north-south direction. Local streets are tree-lined and follow a grid pattern. The significant exceptions are where the rail corridor slices diagonally across.

The landscape character surrounding the rail corridor is characterised as gently undulating topography that rises to the north and south from the rail corridor, with sections of the rail corridor sometimes being in a shallow cut. A majority of the surrounding character is leafy green suburban residential areas with significant trees.

The Surrey Hills community value this landscape character and will expect the green landscaping and trees to be protected and maintained through and by the level crossing removal project.

The Union Road shopping centre is characterised for its neighbourhood and the village shop feel. The strip emerged after the railway station was opened in 1882 and contains a mix of Victorian, Edwardian, post-war and more contemporary buildings. The majority of heritage graded properties date from the 1890s to the 1920s and are typically single or double-storey masonry construction with no setbacks to the street. The footpaths are generally asphalt with bluestone kerbing. The formal garden beds and significant trees along Union Road and into the car parks near the station add to the area's leafy character.

Other than the forecourt of the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre north of the train station there is currently no space for the community to meet and congregate along Union Road or near the Surrey Hills Station. As part of Council's shopping centre improvement plans, new seating opportunities were planned to be provided for the community however, Council put the shopping centre improvement plan works on hold when the Union Road level crossing removal project was first announced. It is expected, by both Council and the community, the LXR will work with Council to integrate the designs of the two projects and the delivery of both to minimise the impact to the community. The 'new space' fronting Union Road near Bedford Avenue will be a critical connecting element between the LXR works and the shopping centre improvement plan works.

There is one bus stop on each side of Windsor Crescent with a single unmarked bay, servicing route 766 and one bus stop on each side of Union Road with a single marked bay, servicing route 612. Aside from commuters and other passengers, these buses are also used by schoolchildren who transfer to Surrey Hills train station before and after school. Schools within the area include Surrey Hills Primary, Our Holy Redeemer School, and many childcare centres and kindergartens.

Currently cycling access to the train station is promoted with the Parkiteer cage and bike hoops in front of the Coles local. No on- or off-road bicycle facilities are located in the Surrey Hills area to facilitate safe and easy access to the train station and shopping centre by cyclists. Pedestrian access is encouraged to the train station and shopping centre through the local street network in both Boroondara and Whitehorse. There are two pedestrian and cyclist train track crossing opportunities

being an at-grade crossing of the train tracks on the west side of Union Road and an underpass of the train track on the east side.

Future - During construction

There is a real risk that the area around the train station, train line and Union Road shopping centre will become an uninviting and unsightly place during the construction period, starting with the early works in mid-2021. This negative environment will adversely impact traders, residents, visitors and public transport users. Essentially anyone who visits the Union Road shopping centre, as well as those who live nearby.

The Surrey Hills community and traders, along with Council, are proud of the beauty of their area and do not want to see the environment degraded for the sake of or during construction. We expect the LXRП will have developed strategies to ensure the area is not degraded and becomes an eyesore.

It should go without saying the retention of safe, reliable and convenient access routes for all transport modes to the shopping centre is critical to its survival. Access for pedestrians and cyclists across the rail line, as well as access through, around and on the wider road and footpath network are critical elements of project planning and delivery we anticipate the LXRП will design to meet the needs of the community.

The ask

The LXRП must:

- Engage and work with the community, traders and Council to refine, design, fund and deliver measures to ensure the area is not degraded and does not become an eyesore during construction.
- Ensure hoarding, where installed, is sympathetic to the natural and cherished Surrey Hills surrounds.
- Provide a construction management plan for community and Council comment.
- Develop hoarding which tells the project's story, describes the timeline for the project, provides peep holes at children height to watch the construction unfold, is colourful and ensures the community does not look at a blank, dark hoarding that invites graffiti/tags.
- Look to the creative hoarding programming for the Melbourne Metro project⁹ for inspiration.
- Engage and work with the community, traders and Council to develop a context understanding of how people currently use the Surrey Hills train station and Union Road shopping centre.
- Engage and work with the community, traders and Council to develop, design, fund and deliver a safe movement plan for all transport modes that considers, but is not limited to:
 - o The context understanding of how people use the train station and shopping centre.
 - o Routes to the shopping centre from all directions.
 - o Routes to public transport services, including trains, buses and train replacement buses.
 - o Public transport provision.
 - o Routes to the local schools, kindergartens and other education opportunities.
 - o Integration between transport modes and the provision of safe, comfortable spaces for people to wait.
 - o Locations for Protective Services Officers for public transport.

⁹ <https://metrotunnel.vic.gov.au/about-the-project/creative-program/cultural-programming>

- Deliveries and collections by heavy and other vehicles for all businesses.

Urban design and landscape

Surrey Hills - The place - Future - Post construction

In responding to the LXP suggested topics, the post construction future of Surrey Hills and the Union Road shopping centre is shared in this section of the submission.

The overarching theme, and ask, of the post construction future is the proper and effective engagement, consultation and working with all stakeholders, the community, the traders and Council, from the very early stages of the project.

Materials used for the station and surrounding areas

The new train station and public realm materiality must be reflective of and distinctively Surrey Hills. To achieve this aim and to improve amenity and create new spaces for people to meet and congregate the materials must reference the:

- Need to recognise and enhance the qualities that make Surrey Hills special.
- History of the suburb and the train station.
- Victorian timber architecture and Edwardian style architecture and their brick building materials.
- Existing train station elements, including the heritage components of the Mont Albert Station building.
- Formal and informal landscaping in the area.

The public domain and station must embed into its surrounding context with legible ground surfaces linking people through the public domain and stitching the station into its surrounds. Both the public domain and the station must give a nod of recognition to the history of Surrey Hills.

Council and the community expect the LXP to adopt a conservative approach to materials and landscaping choice where possible. Council encourages the LXP to reuse materials from the demolition as landscape features and elements. The LXP must reference the Surrey Hills formal garden landscape features where possible.

No matter whether the trench is capped or not, it is important the exposed materials in the trench are of a high quality and finish to provide a positive passenger experience. It is essential the trench sides and other exposed surfaces constructed and installed by the project are not attractive to taggers and graffiti.

The ask

The LXP must:

- Provide Council with a design brief for comment on the new station buildings.
- Incorporate relevant principles of the Urban Design Protocol.¹⁰
- Develop a material palette in collaboration with the Community Reference Group, the Trader Community Reference Group and Council to ensure local ownership in the project.
- Help people to orientate themselves and understand how the surrounding streets work and best ways to get there through art and way finding signage.
- Develop a materiality plan that:
 - Provides high quality surface finishes for all project elements.

¹⁰ [Creating Places for People — an urban design protocol for Australian cities | Infrastructure Australia](#)

- Does not encourage graffiti and tagging.
- Identifies the materials chosen for the building and landscapes.
- Has a defined maintenance plan for new public spaces and all other elements.
- Engages with Council to ensure the materials meet the needs and expectations of Councils for any asset Council may own and be responsible for post construction.
- Has hold points in the construction program to allow for site meetings with Council to discuss materiality of any asset Council may own and be responsible for post construction.
- Delights the senses and mind.
- Works with local artists to create a lighting strategy for the public realm.
- Looks to the Earth Sciences Garden at Monash University¹¹, the Pitt Street Mall Sydney¹² and Prahran Square (previously Cato Square)¹³ for inspiration.
- Embed the history of the train stations and train line into the public realm.
- Provide a finish to the trench sides that is something other than unsightly shotcrete.

The architectural approach

Ideally, the new train station's architectural response should draw on the surrounding character of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert to provide a train station that is complementary to the neighbourhood context and provides an open and inviting precinct that forms part of the public transport infrastructure to the area.

Whilst there are a substantial number of Edwardian homes in the precinct, Council does not wish to replicate this period of design but rather draw from this context in a contemporary and insightful manner. In general the following elements should be considered:

- Materials: Consider adopting similar materials that are predominantly used in the adjacent neighbourhood precinct such as utilising brick and timber façade elements which provide warmth and texture.
- Building form and articulation: Reducing visual bulk and mass to avoid dominating the precinct. Consider how the facade can be integrated with the surrounding streetscape in a visually appealing manner without being reproductive and that is also considerate of human scale.
- Roof profile: Consider a roof form for the pedestrian bridge (in the City of Whitehorse) that makes reference to the sloping rooflines of the surrounding residential built form.
- Screening and barriers: Consider screening along the rail trench that is articulated with depth and character, rather than a bland and flat element. Potential variations in height and colour could also assist in avoiding a monotonous element that extends for several metres.

In regards to the future use of the old Mont Albert Station building, this could form an extension to the retail village along Hamilton Street in Mont Albert by providing a semi enclosed station structure that functions as a café and train themed children's play area which keeps intact the Edwardian character of the building. The heritage façade can be preserved but opened up to the footpath and adjacent nature strip with retail and playground activation. This quaint remnant of Melbourne's

¹¹ <http://landezine.com/index.php/2017/11/earth-sciences-garden-monash-university-by-rush-wright-associates/>

¹² <http://landezine.com/index.php/2013/10/pitt-street-mall-by-tony-caro-architecture/>

¹³ <https://www.aspect-studios.com/au/project/prahran-square/>

railway history should be restored and reactivated by a younger demographic of the community, and engage with the quaint and unique character of the building.

The ask

The LXRPs consider the elements listed in the architectural approach to the built form of the project.

How you want to use the new station precinct

The Surrey Hills community is diverse, active and connected, with a wide range of needs. The community visit the Union Road shopping centre and use Surrey Hills station on a daily basis. They know the area intimately and will expect the LXRPs to deliver high quality community and public assets that are well maintained, work for the community and are reflective of their needs.

The proposed rail trench will segregate the community and shopping centre and will, for some, be an insurmountable barrier to cross no matter the number of pedestrian bridges or underpasses provided. The community deserves a better outcome and expects the project to improve connectivity.

To cater for the needs of the community and Council now and into the future, noting this is a once in a lifetime investment in the Surrey Hills area, the public spaces and infrastructure delivered by the LXRPs, including the train station and platform infrastructure, must:

- Be accessible for all ages and abilities.
- Be fairly and equitably delivered throughout the precinct.
- Be dynamic and flexible.
- Ensure passing through, accessing and exiting the station is a breeze and not a hassle or a barrier.
- Be green and lush.
- Provide diverse public experiences.

Pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and drivers needs must be considered in the design of the new station precinct, but not at the expense of each other and not at the expense of the Union Road shopping centre.

The ask

The LXRPs must:

- Cap the trench from at least west of Union Road and east to the platform concourse, if not the length of the trench from west to east.
- Engage and work with the community and Council to:
 - o Design the civic space to occupy the trench cap.
 - o Design the 'new space' on Union Road.
 - o Design the new parkland adjacent 111 Union Road, Surrey Hills and include the nearby traders in the process with a view to provide a new outdoor dining space.
- Work with the Community Reference Group, the Trader Community Reference Group and Council to develop a management and activation plan for the new public spaces.
- Work with Council to ensure the Union Road and capped trench are seamless, accessible and as landscaped as possible to reduce the heat island effect.
- Ensure there are diverse public experiences in the overall public realm by working with the community to co-design and create the new spaces and encourage art interventions.
- Work with Council, friends of the station and the station master at creating a welcoming and safe environment feel at the station post construction.

- Ensure the 'new space' on Union Road:
 - o Works in many modes.
 - o Is connected to the train station car park and, if the trench is capped, the trench cap so that it can be used as one space.
 - o Is seamlessly designed with infrastructure to support and enable Council and others to host public events.
 - o Considers active sporting including bouldering and nature play elements in the public spaces to provide interest for all age groups.
 - o Provides drawcard features (including embedding tech into the furniture, places to sit and work etc.) to encourage people to linger in the space and the Union Road shopping centre.
 - o Includes a public toilet, potentially a 'Changing Places'¹⁴ facility, that is available to the general public 24/7 in a location agreed by Council.
- Provide passenger amenities including, but not limited to the following, at both ends of the platform:
 - o Way finding signage which connects into the surrounding Surrey Hills context
 - o Public toilets.
 - o Staffed ticket office.
 - o Indoor waiting area.
 - o Secure bicycle parking.
 - o Myki top-up and checking machines.
 - o Drinking fountains.
 - o Passenger information boards.
- Ensure trees and landscaping are embedded in the public realm to provide shade, shelter and to cool the large expanses of concrete.
- Engage and work with the community and the two Councils to design the upgraded park and landscaping on Windsor Crescent, including:
 - o Active sporting elements must be considered for inclusion in the upgraded playground on Windsor Crescent.
 - o The playground must have nature play elements included and cater to the diverse needs of children.
- Look to Dandenong Civic Space¹⁵, the Yagan Square, Perth¹⁶ and 447 Collins Street¹⁷ for inspiration.

Screening and barriers along the rail trench

Noting the request above, that the trench be capped and covered with a civic space, we offer commentary on screening and barriers along the rail trench should the unpalatable outcome of the trench remaining uncapped and it being a gaping chasm segregating the community occur.

Council understands and acknowledges the tragic and upsetting need to provide anti-jump barriers on bridges, overpasses and alongside rail line trenches. We encourage the LXP to take an innovative but sensitive approach to the design of these barriers, along with consideration of discreet signage that encourages anyone experiencing trouble to contact Lifeline or a similar organisation.

¹⁴ <https://changingplaces.org.au/build-a-facility/designs/>

¹⁵ <http://landezine.com/index.php/2019/04/dandenong-civic-square-by-rush-wright-associates/>

¹⁶ <http://landezine.com/index.php/2018/08/yagan-square-by-aspect-studios/>

¹⁷ <https://www.australiandesignreview.com/news/new-park-melbourne-cbd-endorsed/>

As has been previously discussed, the community and Council are proud of the amenity of the Surrey Hills area. The established and lush landscaping is a highly valued element of the environment and connects the community to the history of the area. The neighbourhood lacks, in a positive sense, large numbers of hard landscaping elements, with the focus on established street trees, greenery and formal landscaping.

The neighbourhood amenity in Surrey Hills is not disrupted by garish, fluoro design. The area is known for its Edwardian and Victorian timber architecture and gentle design approach. The brightly coloured Perspex noise wall panels, like those on the Chandler Highway bridge and EastLink, are not an appropriate design intervention for Surrey Hills, or Mont Albert.

The ask

The LXP must:

- Ensure any and all screening and barriers respond sensitively and respectfully to the Surrey Hills context and sit seamlessly within the local environment.
- Ensure lush green landscaped elements are considered in the screening.
- Engage and work with the community, Council and traders to design all screening and barriers along the rail trench.
- Provide adequate screening and noise attenuation to affected properties.

Landscaping and seating options

The landscaping of the project area is lush, green and well established. Visitors to the Union Road shopping centre, the train station and the community enjoy and value highly the local landscape. The area has both formal and informal landscaping, with the former focused in the shopping centre. Additionally, the street trees are well established and generally healthy.

Council and the Surrey Hills community expect landscaping delivered as part of the LXP to be reflective of the Surrey Hills surrounding landscape context and to be designed in conjunction with both stakeholders.

Seating options should be varied to cater to all community needs now and into the future. These needs include encouraging congregation and meeting of different cohorts within the diverse community of Surrey Hills, offering places of respite and adding to the amenity of the streetscape.

The ask

LXP must:

- 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 the best seating palette to Council's satisfaction and the diverse community needs.
- Provide way finding signage in the station forecourt which connects with the Surrey Hills identity and neighbourhood.
- Provide irrigation to new garden beds.
- Install anti-graffiti coating to surfaces.
- Refer to Council's standard drawings¹⁸ for all detailing.

¹⁸ <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/parking-roads/roads-and-footpaths/standard-drawings>

- Provide exercise equipment in the new parks which caters to an older demographic and nature play elements to cater for children in the new civic spaces.

Arts and culture

Location and inspiration for public art

The level crossing removals are exciting opportunities to showcase the community's rich culture and history by designing an atmosphere which is unique and a reflection of the community and local area.

We welcome and encourage the LXP to properly consider and invest in art interventions through the life of the project, from early work starting in mid-2021, through construction and post-completion. Art interventions could include:

- Multi-sensory art installations and sculptures, using sight, touch and sound to create a playful atmosphere.
- Murals which are bright and abstract to create intrigue and to be a mitigation tool for graffiti in the station area.
- Functional and creative lighting which is visually appealing both day and night, and creates a sense of safety.

The hope is the incorporation of the art installations generate a welcoming and safe environment for the community to gather and linger. It would provide a pleasant arrival and departure experience to both visitors and residents alike.

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 LXP 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.

The ask

Noting the details above, the LXP properly consider and invest in art interventions through the life of the project, from early work starting in mid-2021, through construction and post-completion and involve Council in the creation and planning processes.

Trees, biodiversity and WSUD

Trees

While the transformation of the existing Union Road rail crossing to 'rail under road' will create a safer environment for transport network users, there will be many in the community that will be distressed at the loss of canopy trees near the rail line and carpark and by any impacts from works on street trees within the project boundary.

Many of the trees in the vicinity of Surrey Hills station and along Beresford Street are considered significant due to their size. They provide shade and contribute to the character of the Surrey Hills Village. Significant canopy trees in and near the project area are detailed in the table below.

Species	Common name	Location	Council/ VicTrack asset	DBH	Retention value	ULE
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	Plane Tree	129 Union Rd, Surrey Hills	Council	100cm	High, Mature	>20 years
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	Plane Tree	Beresford Street - adjacent to 131 Union Road	Council	100cm	High, Mature	>20 years
<i>Melaluca linarifolia</i>	Paperbark	Beresford Street, adjacent to 131 Union Road	Council	60cm	Medium	>10years
<i>Melaluca linarifolia</i>	Paperbark	1 Beresford Street	Council	90 cm	Medium	>10years
<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	Plane Tree	3 Beresford Street	Council	100cm	High, Mature	>10years
<i>Melaluca linarifolia</i>	Paperbark	5 Beresford Street	VicTrack	44cm	High, mature	>20years
<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>		Beresford Street Car park	VicTrack	78cm	High, mature	>20years
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	Beresford Street Car park	VicTrack	100 cm	High, mature	>20years
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	Beresford Street Car park	VicTrack	100cm	Medium	>10years
<i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i>	Sugar Gum	Beresford Street Car park	VicTrack		Medium	>10years
DBH = Diameter at breast height; ULE = Useful life expectancy.						

Council and the community will expect the LXP to adopt a conservative approach to tree removals and to retain trees where possible. Council encourages the LXP to reuse the timber from felled trees for example for seating, tables, in landscaping, for shade structures and creating habitat for native fauna. There is a group of residents who currently care and look after the trees within the Surrey Hills car park.

Following the lead of other Victorian government major state transport projects, it is expected that the LXP will develop a tree replanting plan to replace trees removed for the project on a 2:1 basis and that the trees are replaced as close as possible to the site of loss. If trees cannot be planted near the site of loss or in the project area, it is expected the LXP will negotiate with Council to plant trees and associated understorey planting elsewhere in Surrey Hills or nearby suburbs in locations.

The ask

The LXP must:

- Develop a tree removal plan which:
 - o Clearly identifies trees to be removed for works and trees that do not need to be removed.

- 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 all non-tree vegetation to be removed.
- Engage and work with Council to 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.
- Engage and work with Council to 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.
- Engage and work with Council to reuse and repurpose all trees felled by the LXR in the project area.

Biodiversity

For a fully developed, landlocked municipality Boroondara has a surprising diversity of indigenous flora and fauna spread throughout the municipality. There are parks and reserves along the Yarra River and close to local creeks and former rail lines that provide valuable fauna and flora habitat. Locally this includes South Surrey Park, Beckett Park and Maranoa Gardens.

As well as managing a network of 45 biodiversity reserves, Council fosters nature play by using natural materials, indigenous plants and repurposed trees in its playground renewal program. At the community level, Council's Backyard Biodiversity project includes home owners from Surrey Hills who are actively building stepping stone corridors for fauna within their neighbourhoods by planting indigenous and native plants, providing access to fresh water, native bee hotels and installing nest boxes in trees.

Building on these existing activities and the broad community support for enhancing biodiversity, Council has identified the following opportunities for integrating biodiversity into developments at the new station precinct.

1. Where new landscapes will be developed, indigenous plants should be used to provide habitat resources for local fauna.
 - a. Grassy wildflower meadows have been 'seeded' in Royal Park and other locations across Victoria providing stunning displays of colourful flowers and opportunities for interpretation and links back to Council's Backyard Biodiversity project.
2. With the loss of canopy trees from the station precinct and loss of fauna perching, nesting and feeding opportunities that may be associated with these trees, the LXR must replant trees that encourage native birds, bats, other native mammals and insects.
 - a. Log hollows may be able to be carved from the branches of trees that are removed and installed in nearby trees while new habitat trees are establishing.
 - b. Bat boxes and native bee hotels appropriately located would provide much needed habitat and interest for commuters.
3. While there is a playground at Lorne Reserve, there is nowhere for children to play safely in the Surrey Hills shopping centre when parents finish shopping or visit the area for shopping or a coffee or lunch. The LXR could create a small playground close to Union Road in the 'new space' that features seating and opportunities for nature play.
 - a. It could reuse some of the timber or logs from trees that are to be felled for the project.

- b. If the rail trench between the south and north car parks were to be capped, this could provide an opportunity to build a link between a small Union Road playground and the Lorne Reserve Playground featuring active play (stepping stones, musical play equipment, climbing areas), seating, screens, shade structures, artwork and plantings.
 - c. The development of the playground and linking path could be undertaken with the community and the input of local children.
4. Water is a critical element for fauna in the environment. There are opportunities to provide bird baths or other water features which should form an important aspect of the new design.

The ask

The LXP engage and work with Council and the community to design and implement the biodiversity integration suggestions detailed.

Water Sensitive Urban Design

The level crossing removal at Surrey Hills presents opportunities for Council and the LXP to collaborate to deliver water sensitive urban design (WSUD) initiatives that seek to improve water quality and reduce the impact of high rainfall events on the community. Benefits could also be realised in the protection of public assets during these same events.

The car parks proposed, along with the trench cap sought by Council, have the potential to be a large area of impermeable surface that adds to the urban heat island effect if not considered and treated with drainage improvements (e.g. swales) and permeable or semi-permeable surfaces. Both treatments would retain water in the landscape allowing trees a better opportunity to access water, improving growth rates and canopy cover, providing shade and aesthetic value to this area. Permeable or semi-permeable pavement could potentially slow the flow of runoff from the car park surfaces, helping to mitigate local nuisance flooding.

The 'new space' on Union Road is an exciting prospect for WSUD elements and retention of water in the landscape. It has the added benefit of creating a cooler and more inviting public gathering and meeting space. The space generates engagement and educational opportunities for the community. These WSUD opportunities are present on all streets and passive irrigation elements should be considered throughout the project. These opportunities can assist in providing water supply to street trees to potentially help secure their longer term health.

The new train station is likely to have a significant roof area and, as such, significant water harvesting potential. This potential needs to be realised to ensure the station precinct is built and operates to ESD expectations. The integration of rainwater tanks into the station design ensure harvested water can be supplied to all toilets and potentially used for irrigation and cleaning. If designed well, the rain tanks could be visible (as opposed to screened or underground) and be a visible demonstration of good sustainable design.

The ask

The LXP:

- Design and deliver permeable or semi-permeable surfaces to the car parks and improve drainage through the installation of vegetated swales or bioretention swales to convey runoff.

- Design and deliver WSUD treatments, in conjunction with Council, for the 'new space' at Union Road.
 - Include engagement and education opportunities in the WSUD design.
- Include passive irrigation elements throughout the project.
- Integrate rainwater tanks into the design of the train station.
 - Connect the tanks to the public and staff toilets and, if water volume and quality allows, irrigation and cleaning operations also.

Walking and cycling

Pedestrian and cycling connections

An overarching project objective is understood to be to provide better connections for pedestrians and cyclists. The LXP's proposal to achieve this is limited to:

- New shared paths connecting Union Road to the new station and through to Mont Albert Road.
- Removal of the old pedestrian underpasses under the rail line at Union Road and construction of new, signalised at-grade road crossing points.
- Construction of a new pedestrian bridge across the proposed rail trench at the current Mont Albert station location.

The proposed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is thought to be poor and there are many missed opportunities to provide high quality walking and cycling outcomes for the community and missed links to existing Victorian government projects.

The Surrey Hills neighbourhood and Union Road shopping centre is very walkable, with the community walking to the area from up to 600m away. Through 2020 and Covid-19 we have witnessed an increase in demand for walking and cycling infrastructure as the community discovered their neighbourhoods and their 5km radius bubbles. While the community in Surrey Hills is connected to the area, this increased demand occurred in the neighbourhood and more people walked and cycled for transport and recreation purposes.

Council and the community expect the level crossing removal project to further improve walking and cycling infrastructure, including shared paths, bicycle parking, bicycle repair stations, seating, lighting, wayfinding and shade.

Strategic context

A feasibility study is currently being developed by the Department of Transport (DoT) for the Box Hill to Hawthorn (BH2H) Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC). The feasibility study assesses route and treatment options for a bidirectional cycling corridor between Box Hill Train Station in the east and Hawthorn in the west, with a potential connection over the Yarra River into Richmond.

As part of the SCC feasibility study, both Boroondara and Whitehorse Councils recognise a significant opportunity to deliver a safe, direct and comfortable off-road walking and cycling facility along the Lilydale/Belgrave railway reserve, including the section of track to be upgraded by LXP for the new Surrey Hills/Mont Albert station.

This shared path would be suitable for riders of all ages and abilities, connecting several major activity centres, while also catering for CBD commuter trips. It would connect to the Box Hill to Ringwood Trail as well as the Anniversary/Outer Circle Trail, enabling connection to the Koonung Creek Trail, the soon to be built North East Bicycle Corridor and further east to EastLink and Peninsula Link trails.

Usage data and feedback from the community consistently indicates bicycle riders have a strong preference for riding on separated, off-road paths where they can avoid the risk and stress of interacting with parked cars and fast-moving vehicular traffic on roads. Community surveys have also indicated there is a significant 'untapped market' of people who would like to begin cycling or ride more often, however they are reluctant to do so because of the lack of safe, off-road infrastructure connecting them to their destination.

Recent advice from the DoT regarding the BH2H SCC indicates the off-road path options along the rail corridor scored strongly in a weighted multi-criteria analysis compared to alternative on-road alignment options.

Walking and cycling design elements

In order to unlock significant active transport benefits and achieve a high standard east-west link, an integrated solution with LXP's Union Road and Mont Albert Road project is absolutely critical. To achieve this, the following elements should be included in the project scope.

A grade separated pedestrian and cycling crossing at Union Road

This will provide a safe, continuous and non-stop link which will minimise delays for traffic on Union Road as well as improving safety and travel times for commuter cyclists and pedestrians (including rail users). A grade separated facility will also appeal to a significant number of recreational users and is likely to contribute to a mode-shift to active transport.

A grade separated crossing in the form of an underpass will:

- Eliminate the need to dismount and wait for signalised crossings, resulting in significant travel time improvements for active transport.
- Improve traffic flow with fewer red cycles for on-road traffic.
- Logically connect the segments of the future BH2H trail together.
- Lead to an improved level of safety.

We understand the Blackburn Road level crossing removal project completed in Whitehorse in 2017 included an underpass for the Box Hill to Ringwood shared use pedestrian and cycling path, as well as an additional signalised pedestrian crossing at road level.

It is worth noting Federal Government, State Government and Council strategies/plans have a strong focus on constructing grade separated facilities (underpasses and overpasses) for existing at-grade shared path crossings, with examples in Boroondara detailed below.

- Gardiners Creek Trail at Glenferrie Road and Warrigal Road
 - o The Victorian government funded a shared path bridge over Gardiners Creek to allow use of the underpass instead of forcing users to cross at signals on Glenferrie Road.
 - o The Federal Government funded a shared path underpass for users of the Gardiners Creek Trail to cross Warrigal Road.
- Main Yarra Trail at Chandler Highway
 - o The Victorian government funded a shared path underpass at Chandler Highway to allow path users a safer and more convenient crossing of Chandler Highway than at the at-grade pedestrian signals.
- Anniversary Trail

- A proposal to construct a new shared path bridge over Toorak Road to allow path users a safer and more convenient crossing than the at-grade pedestrian signals has received in-principle support from all key stakeholders including the DoT, VicTrack, Yarra Trams and Public Transport Victoria.
- Council has also undertaken detailed consultation with traders and the local community who are also strongly supportive of the proposal.
- Council has been advocating for and continues to seek funding to deliver this key project.

We recognise the examples listed above are all located on arterial roads under the care and management of the DoT and carry a larger volume of traffic and on-road public transport services than Union Road does. Additionally, we acknowledge Union Road is a local road under the care and management of Council.

Extension of the pedestrian and cycling path along to Robinson Road

A key opportunity exists to deliver a high quality off-road pedestrian and cycling link within the LXRP project boundary west of Union Road. That is extending the shared path west to Robinson Road from Union Road. This will ensure an integrated solution is achieved throughout the LXRP project area which can be extended in the future for construction of the BH2H SCC.

It is critical that this opportunity is captured now while there is scope to include it within the design of the level crossing removal works. Opportunities to retrofit a shared use pedestrian and cycling path through this section at a later date will be limited or far more costly, likely cost prohibitive, to achieve.

Extending the path to Robinson Road would allow for the progressive extension of the path to the west in line with the recommendations in the BH2H SCC.

The proposed pedestrian operated signals on Union Road

Council supports the proposed pedestrian operated signals at Union Road near the existing boom gates. These signals will integrate both sides of the road and provide important access to nearby bus stops and shops.

Making Bedford Avenue safer for pedestrians.

The Surrey Hills neighbourhood house is located on Bedford Avenue and Council asks that the LXRP makes this street crossing safer by investigating traffic calming measures, providing a safe place for a drop off area and working with Council to provide a better experience for pedestrians which is easy, accessible and is safe for all users.

Design a more direct route alignment for the pedestrian and cycling shared path

The proposed route alignment for the pedestrian and cycling path is indirect and requires users to cross multiple car park access points and perform a sharp turning manoeuvre at the corner of Union Road and Windsor Crescent. This introduces significant safety hazards for path users by introducing conflict points with vehicles particularly where right of way may be ambiguous or misunderstood, as well as increasing the risk of a collision between path users due to limited visibility and less proficient path users who may not be able to safely negotiate the tight bend. High volumes of path users may also significantly delay vehicular traffic entering and exiting the car park. Interactions and safety concerns with pedestrians such as shoppers, visitors, bus passengers using the Union Road footpath would also be evident.

Instead the path through the project boundary should be made more direct to follow the rail alignment and remove all potential conflict points.

Include lighting and wayfinding signage for all pedestrian and cycling paths

Lighting and wayfinding of pedestrian and cycling paths is vital to ensure the route is safe and appealing to users of all ages. These components should be included within the LXR project scope and designed to meet all relevant standards.

Ensuring school students are catered for in the station zones

School students catch the school buses on Union Road and regularly transfer to Surrey Hills train station; they use the station forecourt and seats to wait and socialise. As regular users of the train station and infrastructure the 12 - 18 year old school student demographic must be considered as part of the proposed design. This includes ensuring they can cross Union Road safely and easily.

The ask

The LXR:

- Ensure the new train station prioritises pedestrians and cyclists.
- Engage and work with Councils, Bicycle User Groups, DoT and other stakeholders to design, fund and deliver walking and cycling infrastructure which:
 - o Connects and seamlessly integrates with the BH2H SCC and other projects and plans of the DoT.
 - o Provides a grade separated pedestrian and cycling crossing in the form of an underpass at Union Road.
 - o Extends the pedestrian and cycling path from Union Road west to Robinson Road.
 - o Provides a more direct route alignment for the pedestrian and cycling path along the rail corridor, through the station and through the project area.
 - o Includes lighting and wayfinding signage for all pedestrian and cycling paths.
- Provide secure bicycle parking at the train station.
- Provide bicycle parking within the public realm to Council's satisfaction.
- Install a bicycle repair station¹⁹ in the public realm to Council's satisfaction.
- Ensure pedestrian access from the train station to the existing signalised pedestrian crossing is safe, efficient and comfortable (via neighbourhood house / lane).
- Work with property owners at 10, 12 and 14 Montrose Street to ensure the best outcome for pedestrian access is achieved.
 - o Connect and make accessible all local streets to the new path network to the new train station.

Traffic and transport

There is a risk with any road and rail project the outcome focusses only on the road and rail benefits, without considering and including other transport modes. In the case of the Union Road level crossing removal, and has been highlighted in other sections of this submission, opportunities exist to improve conditions for and experiences of all transport modes. It is considered the Union Road shopping centre and neighbourhoods lends itself to pedestrian priority, particularly as Union Road is a Council road and not a State arterial road.

¹⁹ <https://www.all4cycling.com.au/shop/deluxe-bicycle-repair-stand/>

Provision for car parking

The expanse of off-street car parking at the Surrey Hills station, which will likely to be retained and perhaps expanded by the LXP, creates a significant heat island effect in the area. The trees on the edges of and within the car park go some way to reducing this impacts, however they are at risk of removal.

The provision of adequate commuter and shopping centre car parking is important to Council and the community, however it must not be at the expense of the wellbeing of the community and their experience of the improved Surrey Hills shopping centre and station precinct. While the off-street car parks will be rebuilt and redesigned to provide a more efficient layout, how pedestrians and cyclists safely move through the car parks and the provision of shade and landscaping will be critical to the success of the project.

The 'new space' on Union Road will likely be connected with the northern off-street car park, if not the trench cap and its civic space. This connection must be seamless and enable the 'new space', car park and trench cap to be used and transformed for a range of local and community events. The seamless integration of infrastructure to enable public events will be integral to the success of the car park design and public use and experience of the space.

On-street parking is a critical element that has enabled the Union Road shopping centre to thrive through 2020. Safe and easy access to this parking for shoppers and visitors is essential throughout the construction period, including the early works starting in mid-2021.

In residential streets surrounding the project and within the project boundary, on-street parking is important in ensuring residents every day can continue through the construction period. On-street parking enables Council services, such as meals on wheels and Maternal and Child Health service visits, and social events. Parking in residential streets by LXP associated workers will not be tolerated.

The ask

The LXP must:

- Retain at least as many car parking spaces in the off-street, commuter car parks as currently exists (307 spaces).
- Consider providing 4 hour parking for short term commuters in the off-street car parks.
- Replace trees lost from the off-street car parks in consultation with Council's Urban Tree officers.
- Provide irrigation to all new trees planted in the new civic spaces.
- Retain and provide safe and easy access to all on-street parking on Union Road.
- Not allow any LXP associated worker to park on any residential street.
- Engage and work with Council to design, fund and deliver an excellent car park layout that includes:
 - Trees, vegetation and WSUD elements.
 - Safe and sensible pedestrian and cyclist access through the car park.
 - Seamless integration of the 'new space' on Union Road and, if provided, the trench cap.
 - Amenities and infrastructure for events and public activations.
 - Look to Franklin Wharf Hobart ²⁰ and for inspiration.

²⁰ <http://landezine.com/index.php/2011/02/franklin-wharf-project-stage-1-by-oculus-landscape-architecture/>

Clause 52.03 - Level Crossing Removal Project of the Boroondara Planning Scheme

Council recognises the right of the LXR to seek planning approval for the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossing removals directly from the Minister for Planning via Clause 52.03 of the Boroondara Planning Scheme (BPS). We understand all feedback received will be summarised and included in a consultation report which will inform the Minister for Planning's assessment of the project under Clause 52.03.

We welcome the opportunity to provide input to this critical element of project planning and trust our feedback and recommendations will be seriously considered and implemented.

Applicable Planning Scheme Overlays

Clause 52.02-3 of the BPS specifies four overlays which trigger involvement of the relevant floodplain management authority. The northern car park at the Surrey Hills train station is subject to a Special Building Overlay (SBO)²¹, one of the four overlays noted in the BPS. The SBO is under the care and management of Melbourne Water and also covers parts of the streets listed below.

- Blackburn Street, Surrey Hills.
- Bedford Avenue, Surrey Hills.
- Union Road, Surrey Hills.
- Croydon Road, Surrey Hills.
- Robinson Road, Surrey Hills.
- Kingston Road, Surrey Hills.
- Junction Road, Surrey Hills.
- West Road, Surrey Hills.
- Chatham Road, Surrey Hills.
- Faversham Road, Canterbury.
- Shierlaw Avenue, Canterbury.
- Canterbury Road, Canterbury.
- Railway Place, Canterbury.

The SBO impacts many residential properties and Council assets. Any changes to the flood regime managed by the SBO which could or does adversely impact any of these properties will not be tolerated.

The ask

Noting the clause does not require the LXR to consult and work with Council, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration we ask the LXR to work and consult with both Melbourne Water, as the relevant floodplain management authority, and Council to understand and manage the SBO in the project area.

Other pre-commencement requirements

Clause 52.03-6 of the BPS notes several requirements which must be satisfied prior to the commencement of works and these requirements may be varied or waived by the Minister for Planning.

²¹ https://planning-schemes.api.delwp.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/466368/boroondara14sbo.pdf?_ga=2.234888065.1616246154.1611548869-1003531669.1574313764

Environmental Management Framework

An environmental management framework (EMF), prepared in consultation with each relevant municipal council is required and should include:

- "A summary of key construction methodologies.
- An overarching framework of measures to reduce and manage environmental and amenity effects during construction.
- A summary of performance monitoring and reporting processes, including auditing, to ensure environmental and amenity effects are reduced and managed during construction.
- A summary of how each relevant municipal council, the community and other stakeholders will be engaged during construction, including enquiries and complaints management."

A summary of the consultation with each Council that informed the EMF is also required to be presented to the Minister for his assessment.

We welcome this requirement of Clause 52.03 and look forward to working with the LXP in the development of the EMF. It is not appropriate, in our opinion, to vary or waive this requirement given the proximity of works to private residential properties and a busy shopping centre, as well as the natural environment surrounding the project area.

Heritage

Several portions of the project area are subject to heritage overlays (HOs)²², being HO523 and HO535. The report that addresses the impact of the development on the heritage significance of the heritage place required by Clause 52.03-6 may be necessary. The report should detail site plans and elevations showing the extent of development on the land and include photographs of building or works to be demolished or removed.

The Surrey Hills area is rich in heritage, which is appreciated and cherished by the community. Large HOs are present to protect the built heritage of the area. It would be inappropriate for the LXP to do anything other than prepare a heritage report, however brief, that considers the impacts the project will have on the heritage significance of heritage places in the project area.

The ask

Noting the Minister for Planning can alter or waive the need for any and all requirements of Clause 52.03-6, we ask the Minister to require the LXP to develop and submit an EMF, heritage report and environmental assessment for any new open space for his assessment.

Native vegetation requirements

The requirements placed on the LXP by Clause 52.03-7 regarding the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation are noted and welcomed by Council. The information the LXP is required to gather and submit to the Minister for Planning and Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning about the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation is detailed and extensive.

The requirement to detail the biodiversity impacts is appreciated noting the work the community and Council has undertaken to enhance the biodiversity values of the Surrey Hills area through the 'Backyard Biodiversity' and 'Stepping Stones' works programs. The provision of offsets is welcomed,

²² https://planning-schemes.api.delwp.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/466365/boroondara14ho.pdf?_ga=2.140917426.1616246154.1611548869-1003531669.1574313764

however it is welcomed with some caution. Any and all offsets must be provided as close to the site of loss as possible. It is not appropriate to offset native vegetation lost to the Union Road, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road, Mont Albert level crossing removal project in, for example, the You Yangs.

We acknowledge the LXP's stated approach of tree and vegetation removal, being to avoid and minimise impacts to trees and vegetation where practicable. However, we have concerns regarding tree and vegetation removal to facilitate the level crossing removal works.

The community and Council hold the landscaping of the Surrey Hills area in high regard. The established, healthy street trees create a shady, cool environment and are the embodiment of the indigenous origins of the name Boroondara. The more formal landscaping through the shopping centre adds to the village feel and, as the street trees do for residential streets, helps to create a shady, cool environment that invites people to linger longer.

The removal of any tree and any vegetation will cause stress, sadness and anger for the community and Council. The commitment to minimise impacts to trees and vegetation must be strictly adhered to by the LXP and their contractors.

We welcome the opportunity to work hand in hand with the LXP to protect our trees and vegetation so that they survive the construction works and continue to grow and provide the community with their shady place long into the future.

The ask

The Minister for Planning and the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning:

- Critically assess and analyse the reports and information provided by the LXP in response to Clause 52.03-7 of the BPS.
- Require any and all offsets be located as close as possible to the site of loss.
- Ensure any and all offsets are not located in the You Yangs or other location far removed from the project site.

The Minister for Planning direct the LXP and their contractors to:

- Minimise the tree removal, destruction and lopping to facilitate the project.
- Strictly adhere to the written commitment to minimise impacts to trees and vegetation throughout the life of project.
- Engage and work with Council to ensure our trees and vegetation is protected, survives the construction works and thrives post-construction.
- Develop a 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.
- Engage and work with Council to 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.

Project boundary requirement

We note the project boundary has been developed to satisfy Clause 52.03-5 which simply states "...a plan that shows the boundary of the land on which the use or development will be undertaken must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning."

We note also the LXP's suggested question to consider when examining the project boundary, being "*do you have any feedback on the land required for the project?*". There is no evidence or information provided by the LXP for consideration and analysis which demonstrates why much of the proposed project boundary and land within is required for the project. The question appears to be designed to make the responder think there is no opportunity to alter the proposed project boundary whatsoever and suggests the LXP has a full design ready to go when the Minister for Planning issues his approval.

The draft Planning Project Boundary (PPB)²³ extends over 11 pages and is considered to be excessively large, land and road hungry.

Local streets

The inclusion of so many local streets in the PPB is concerning, particularly when the geometry of these streets and the limited vertical height clearances on some is considered. The local streets identified as being in the PPB are generally narrow, asphalt roads with bluestone kerb and channel and on-street parking on both sides. The streets contain many traffic management devices which aim to slow vehicles speeds, reduce cut through traffic and enhance the neighbourhood amenity. Some streets are essentially impassable by heavy vehicles without significant tree trimming, traffic management device removal (or damage) and banning of all on-street parking. None of these three measures will not be tolerated by Council or the community.

Where we have identified specific queries or concerns about specific streets, we have detailed these below. Not all street specific concerns have been identified as the PPB is so large and we welcome detailed discussions with the LXP so they may explain the seemingly excessive use of the local Boroondara street network for project purposes.

Robinson Road

Robinson Road provides a critical access and egress to Canterbury Road for the community north of the rail line. The link between Sunbury Crescent and Canterbury Road carries in excess of 2,200 vehicles per day. The vertical height clearance under the bridge is only 2.5m and pedestrian access is severely restricted.

The inclusion of Robinson Road in the PPB is questioned when it is not capable of accommodating heavy vehicles.

Chatham Road

We question the inclusion of Chatham Road north from Guildford Road in the project area. While it physically connects with Mont Albert Road in the north, this section of Mont Albert Road is not included in the PPB.

The inclusion of this section of Chatham Road is illogical to an audience that is not privy to the details about construction traffic management plans, haulage plans, material storage plans and the like. To the general public it could be seen as the LXP reserving the road to provide a staging point for their heavy vehicles accessing the potential site compound at the Canterbury Sports Ground.

²³ https://engage.vic.gov.au/download_file/39479/4937

Stanley Terrace and the Laneway between 417 and 425 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills

Stanley Terrace and the laneway between 417 and 425 Canterbury Road provide vehicle access to the properties stretching from 345 to 431 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills. It is evident from a review of aerial photos of the area the staff and visitors to these properties rely heavily of both roads to park.

The use of both roads, assuming either full or partial occupation, will effectively remove vehicle access to these properties. This is not considered appropriate, unless the occupants have been specifically consulted with and have accepted the proposal.

Private property

The exclusion of two private properties, both currently occupied and open for trade businesses, at 129 and 111 Union Road, Surrey Hills is of concern when considered in the broader context of the PPB.

Both properties will be engulfed by the LXR works, from the early works starting in mid-2021 to the post-completion works in 2024 and maybe 2025. The impact of the works on the businesses will be devastating. Neither will be surrounded by the current welcoming and landscaped environment. Instead, they will be surrounded by a dusty, noisy and confronting construction zone that no amount of fencing, hoarding or decorative shade cloth will ameliorate.

Parks and sportsgrounds

The PPB proposes the inclusion of the Canterbury Sports Ground (CSG) for an unspecified purpose. It is assumed the CSG is proposed to be used as a construction laydown area, site compound and/or material stockpile location for the duration of the works, potentially starting in mid-2021.

This proposed occupation is not acceptable to the community, Council and the users at the CSG. It is critical to note we have assumed the use of the CSG and there has been no information published by the LXR about what the CSG will be used for. This raises concerns that the community is missing out on vital information that would inform their feedback to the project team.

The CSG is a very well utilised sportsground and reserve that hosts four sports clubs, listed below, and a personal trainer.

- Canterbury Football Club²⁴.
- Canterbury Junior Football Club²⁵.
- Canterbury Cricket Club²⁶.
- Chatham Auskick.

The Canterbury Junior Football Club are a member of the Yarra Junior Football League (YJFL). The YJFL are directly impacted by the North East Link project through the loss of their main oval and administration centre. The four clubs and a personal training business are allocated 89 hours of use at the CSG for training and match purposes.

The relocation of any of the four clubs for the duration of the occupation would be an impossible challenge as the CSG is the only sports ground in the Surrey Hills neighbourhood and all nearby sportsgrounds are at capacity. The CSG is an important community asset which provides a green, relaxing space as well as opportunities for a casual kick-to-kick. It is, for a large proportion of Surrey

²⁴ <https://canterburyfootball.club/>

²⁵ <http://www.canterburyjfc.com.au/>

²⁶ <https://www.canterburycc.com.au/>

Hills residents, their closest park and reserve. The well-established and healthy trees that surround the sportsground provide critical cooling and shade services.

Neighbouring the CSG, and likely to be significantly impacted by any occupation of the CSG, is the Canterbury Tennis Club²⁷ fronting Croydon Road and the Canterbury and District Pre-School²⁸ fronting Guildford Road. The tennis club has over 300 members, most of whom are very active in and engaged with the local community. Both the tennis club and kinder rely on access to outdoor facilities and would be adversely impacted by, for example, noise, dust and tree removals that would accompany the occupation of the CSG by the LXP.

The ask

The Minister for Planning to:

- Remove the Canterbury Sports Ground from the PPB and the “land required for the project”.

The Minister for Planning direct the LXP to:

- Meet with Council to:
 - o Discuss the PPB.
 - o Negotiate roads and land actually required for the project to be included in the PPB.
 - o Negotiate an Access Licence Agreement for any occupation of Council land.
 - o Share information and evidence the PPB is based on.
- Respond to the concerns and questions raised in this submission in relation to the PPB.
- Engage with neighbours of the CSG to advise them of the potential occupation of the CSG, the likely impacts and to work with the groups and clubs to provide support to their satisfaction.

Construction related impacts

The construction related impacts which will be experienced by the Surrey Hills community will be significant and have been detailed in the ‘*Surrey Hills - The community*’ section of this submission.

The nearby residents and traders will be subject to 24/7 air, noise and light pollution, as well as vibration and constant heavy vehicle traffic. The impacts will vary in scale, with some experiencing a minor inconvenience to their every day and others experiencing significantly negative health and wellbeing outcomes as a direct result of the construction works.

Users of the Canterbury Sports Ground, if it is occupied by the LXP for project purposes, will be displaced for the duration of the works. Effectively rendered homeless for anywhere between 18 and 30 months. This would be a devastating outcome for an established sports club as they would lose members, not be able to train and may not be able to compete.

The construction related traffic, particularly heavy vehicles used for haulage of spoil from the trench, will cause stress, sleeplessness and congestion in the local road network. It will also adversely impact the Union Road shopping centre.

From experience of other trenched level crossing removals, the construction related traffic is one of the most consistent, intrusive and distressing components of the works. It will be a seemingly never ending procession of noisy, dusty and unsightly dog and trailers in the local streets as they haul the spoil from the trench through 24/7 operations in a bid to get the project done quickly.

²⁷ <https://canterburytc.com.au/>

²⁸ <https://canterburykinder.org.au/>

In addition to the truck traffic travelling on local streets, noting the geometry concerns of all of the local Boroondara streets included in the PPB, there will be a need to ban parking on one or both sides of residential streets to facilitate heavy vehicle movements. Banning of on-street parking for project purposes will not be tolerated by the community or Council.

The ask

The Minister for Planning direct the LXR to:

- Remove the Canterbury Sports Ground from the PPB and “land required for the project”.
- Do not use local streets for heavy vehicle and haulage operations associated with the project.
- Use only arterial roads and major roads for all heavy vehicle and haulage operations associated with the project.
- Engage and work with each and every community member impacted by the project to listen and respond to their concerns, to the satisfaction of the community member.
 - o This includes but is not limited to, schools, pre-schools, community and sporting groups.
- Assign a dedicated contact person for each community member and that LXR officer must listen and respond and do so empathetically, responsibly and in the best interests of the community member and not the LXR.
- Establish a ‘Sports clubs Community Reference Group’ to bring the sports clubs together in one forum, to consult with the group and to deliver support that meets their collective and individual needs.
- Maintain the community’s access to Council services, including but not limited to rubbish, recycling and FOGO collection, meals on wheels, Maternal and Child Health services, and on-street parking.
- Provide support to each business, to the satisfaction of each business, throughout the level crossing removal works to ensure each business remains open and viable.
- Establish a traders only ‘Trader Community Reference Group’ to bring the traders together in one forum, to consult with the group and to deliver support that meets their collective and individual needs.
- Maintain access for deliveries to businesses and collection of rubbish, recycling, food waste, waste oil and the like throughout the construction period, including the early works.
- Maintain access to on-street parking along the length of Union Road throughout the construction period, including the early works.
- Work with Council and traders to create, fund and deliver a marketing strategy for the shopping centre which showcases the *Love Local Life*²⁹ campaign for Surrey Hills.

Environmental Impacts

The environmental impacts have been detailed in *Trees, biodiversity and WSUD* section of this submission.

The ask

The Minister for Planning direct the LXR to:

- Develop a tree removal plan which:
 - o Clearly identifies trees to be removed for works and trees that do not need to be removed.

²⁹ <https://lovelocalife.com.au/>

- 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 all non-tree vegetation to be removed.
- Engage and work with Council to 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.
- Engage and work with Council to 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.
- Engage and work with Council to reuse and repurpose all trees felled by the LXP in the project area.
- Engage and work with Council and the community to design and implement the biodiversity integration suggestions detailed in this submission.
- Design and deliver permeable or semi-permeable surfaces to the car parks and improve drainage through the installation of vegetated swales or bioretention swales to convey runoff.
- Design and deliver WSUD treatments, in conjunction with Council, for the 'new space' at Union Road.
- Include engagement and education opportunities in the WSUD design.
- Include passive irrigation elements throughout the project.
- Integrate rainwater tanks into the design of the train station.
 - Connect the tanks to the public and staff toilets and, if water volume and quality allows, irrigation and cleaning operations also.



UNION ROAD, SURREY HILLS
MONT ALBERT ROAD, MONT ALBERT

SELECTING THE BEST DESIGN

DECEMBER 2020



levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

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



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Level crossing at Mont Albert Road in Mont Albert.

Understanding the designs

The Victorian Government has fast-tracked the removal of two of Melbourne’s most dangerous level crossings in Surrey Hills and Mont Albert.

The dangerous and congested level crossings at Union Road in Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Road in Mont Albert have recorded at least eight near miss incidents since 2005, with the crossing at Surrey Hills the scene of a tragic incident in 2016.

With 22,000 vehicles travelling through the crossings every day, and boom gates down for up to 40 per cent of the morning peak, removing these crossings will improve traffic flow and make the area safer for commuters and the community.

Following 18 months of technical and engineering assessments, we identified challenges to building two new stations and found that a single station design is the best way to meet modern rail safety and accessibility standards.

The existing stations are located on curved sections of track which obscure sightlines for train drivers and create a dangerous gap between the carriages and platforms. Rebuilding two stations on curved sections of track would be a breach of rail safety standards and cannot be considered.

The new station platforms will be located less than 150 metres from the current Surrey Hills Station and less than 400m from the current Mont Albert Station. There will be entrances at both ends of the station platforms.

The new premium station delivers greater benefits and will mean more frequent services for passengers currently using Surrey Hills and Mont Albert stations.

With roads, businesses and homes so close to the rail line, building two new stations would mean:

- Compulsory acquisition of homes in Mont Albert and the Coles supermarket in Surrey Hills
- Permanent closure of local streets
- More excavation, and more trucks on local roads for months
- Enormous stairs at Mont Albert Station, with a daunting 12 metre climb from the platforms to ground level – equivalent to climbing the stairs in a four-storey building.

This brochure details why a rail trench and one new premium station is the best solution for Surrey Hills and Mont Albert and explains why other solutions have been ruled out.

Project benefits



Less congestion for the 22,000 vehicles travelling through the crossings each day



A new premium station, with entrances at both ends of the station platforms



Opportunity for more frequent services in the future



Improved local connections, with opportunities for new pedestrian and cycling paths



Hundreds of jobs brought to the local area during construction, helping the Victorian economy recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considering the site context and constraints

Each level crossing site has its own set of unique characteristics that must be considered when planning a major project. The sites at Union Road and Mont Albert Road have particular challenges, owing to the topography of the area and the history of residential and retail development close to the rail corridor.

The leafy inner suburbs of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert are steeped in history, with bustling local shopping strips and many Victorian and Edwardian homes.

When determining the design solutions to remove level crossings, we must take local context into consideration and create new infrastructure that fits in with the area, complementing the surroundings while improving the safety, amenity and functionality of the urban environment to leave a positive legacy for years to come.

There are numerous constraints with the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert level crossing removal sites that have influenced the design



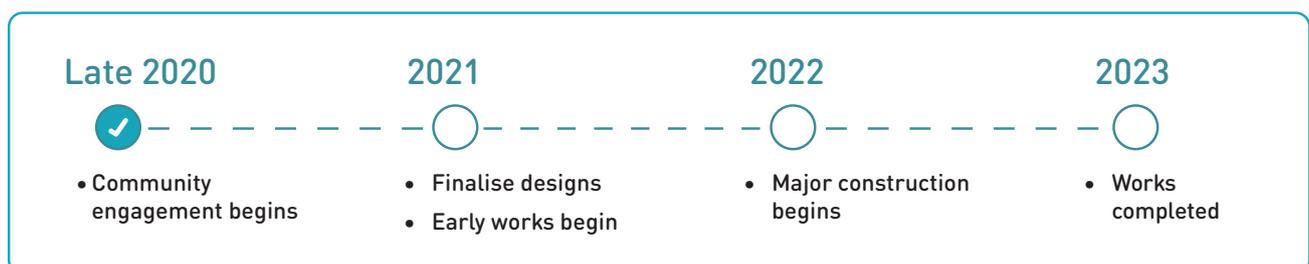
The existing stations are located on curved sections of rail track. Curved tracks obscure sightlines for train drivers and create large gaps between the train and the platform, making wheelchair access more difficult, increasing the risk of trips and falls and potentially trapping limbs or objects such as scooters and prams.

In the late 1800s, when the stations at Surrey Hills and Mont Albert first opened, this was not considered a problem. Today, modern safety and disability access standards require stations to be built on straight tracks to minimise the gaps and their inherent risks.

The need to position the platforms on straight tracks meant that we could not rebuild both stations in their current locations, and was a factor in the decision to combine the stations into one set of central platforms with separate entrances for Surrey Hills and Mont Albert.

Image left: Curved platforms leave dangerous gaps. We will build the new premium station on straight tracks, improving safety and accessibility.

Project timeline





Considering the natural and built environment

Topography

The landscape through Surrey Hills and Mont Albert – as the suburb names suggest – is naturally undulating.

From Union Road in Surrey Hills, the land slopes upwards to a peak near the current Mont Albert station. To follow this slope without becoming too steep for trains, the rail trench becomes deeper towards the top of the hill at Mont Albert.

This topography has influenced decisions around the placement of the station entrance at Mont Albert. For example, towards the peak of the hill, where the trench is deepest, a station entrance would mean climbing 12 metres of stairs to get from the platforms up to ground level – the equivalent of climbing the stairs in a four-storey building.

The topography also influenced the design of the Surrey Hills entrance to the combined station, with the need to keep the trench shallow at that end requiring a slightly elevated entry.

Narrow rail corridor

The rail corridor between Mont Albert and Surrey Hills is very narrow, with residential and retail precincts built up around the train line, and narrow roads next to the tracks with mature trees screening the rail line.

Lowering the tracks results in a wider rail corridor, with extra room required to fit the walls of the trench and barriers on top. Placing a station in the trench requires it to be wider still to accommodate the platforms.

At Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, stations would be unable to fit within the rail trench without increasing the impacts to the surrounding area – like removing more trees, closing local roads and compulsorily acquiring homes and businesses.

Consolidating the two stations means platforms need only be fitted within the trench in one location, lessening the impact on surrounding areas, and avoiding undesirable compulsory acquisitions of homes and businesses.

Selected design – rail trench with one, premium station

Extensive engineering and technical assessments have determined that the best way to remove these level crossings is with a rail trench and one new premium station, with entrances at each end to maintain convenient access for the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert communities.

Less visual impact

A rail trench solution has less visual impact than elevated rail and can be constructed without compulsory acquisition of homes or businesses.

Less impact to the surrounding area

The combined station delivers the best outcomes for the community overall – building only one set of platforms reduces the impact on the surrounding area compared to a two-station solution.

A premium station, with premium facilities

The new station will provide both Surrey Hills and Mont Albert with access to a premium station, which will allow for more frequent services.

When the station opens both communities will have access to premium facilities with toilets, a kiosk and staff present from the first to last train.

Convenient and more accessible

The Surrey Hills entrance will be less than 150m from the current Surrey Hills Station and the Mont Albert entrance will be less than 400m from the current Mont Albert Station.

Unlike the stations that they replace, the new entrances will be fully compliant with disability access standards. There will be ramps and stairs into each entrance, and lifts and stairs to the platforms. There will be two lifts for each platform so that access is maintained even if a lift breaks down.

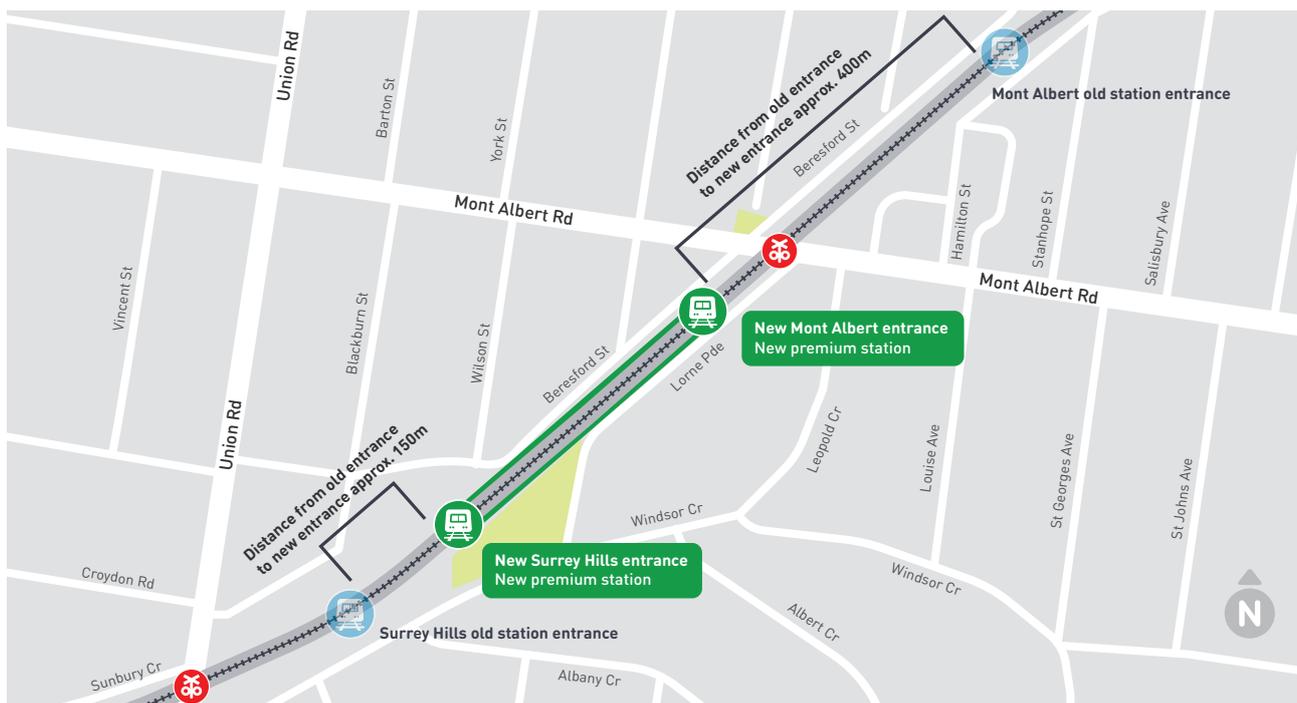
Safer for everyone

Removing the boom gates means safer journeys and the new station will have straight platforms removing the dangerous gaps between curved platforms and trains. There will be new cycling and pedestrian links and an additional set of pedestrian lights at Mont Albert Road to provide a safer connection between the Mont Albert shopping village and the Mont Albert station entrance.

In addition, a new pedestrian bridge at Mont Albert will allow people to cross the rail corridor at ground level – providing a safer, more accessible connection than the existing underpass.

Each station entrance will be designed to be open and inviting, with good visibility and no dark corners. As a premium station, staff will be present from the first to the last train.

The car parks at Surrey Hills will also be completely rebuilt. The existing car parks are poorly configured, and vehicles often block each other. The new car parks will have a better layout that complies with modern standards, new lighting and CCTV, and no net loss of spaces.



Designs that were ruled out

The following is a summary of designs that were considered and ruled out.



Key challenges:

- Both stations need to move to straight track, pushing them closer together.
- Fitting two stations means the rail corridor needs to be widened in two locations, with more impacts.
- A station north of Mont Albert Road would likely require acquisition of homes
- Poor user experience at Mont Albert, and limited scope to improve facilities or services.

To fit platforms into the rail trench, we would need to widen the rail corridor into the adjacent roads.

Detailed technical investigations and engineering assessments found that building a station north of Mont Albert Road is highly impractical.

To fit the extra width of the platforms north of Mont Albert Road, the trench would need to be wider and would use the full width of Beresford Street.

This would likely require full closure of the road and acquisition of the homes that lose access.

The only alternative would be to build a cantilevered road, partially overhanging the trench - a complicated and costly solution that would still mean residents would need to move out for around 10 months during construction.

Given that Surrey Hills Station platforms would also need to move closer to Mont Albert, the two stations would be very close together - in fact, the platforms would be just 400m apart.

Moreover, the low patronage at Mont Albert Station means it would remain a local station without premium facilities, and there would be no opportunity to provide more frequent services.

The depth of the trench in that location would also mean the stairs would be 12 metres high - almost twice the height of the stairs at Mitcham Station, and equivalent to climbing the stairs in a four-storey building.

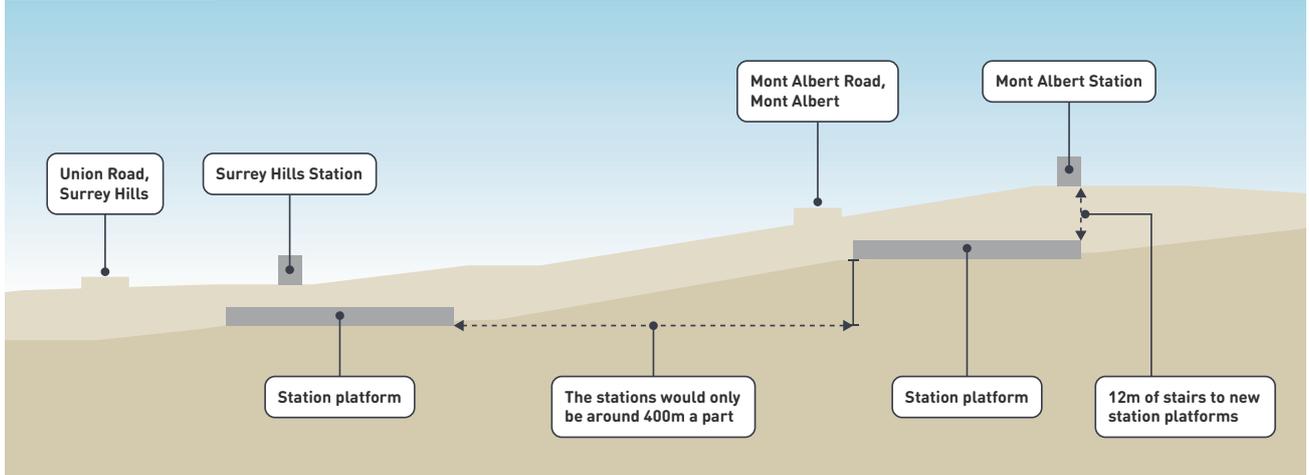
Temporary impacts would also be greater - with more excavation required, meaning a longer construction time and more trucks carting the excavated soil and rock through the area, as well as more road works and tree removal.

Overall, a two-station solution offers limited benefits, but significantly increases the negative impacts to the local community.

Taking a deeper look

Topography

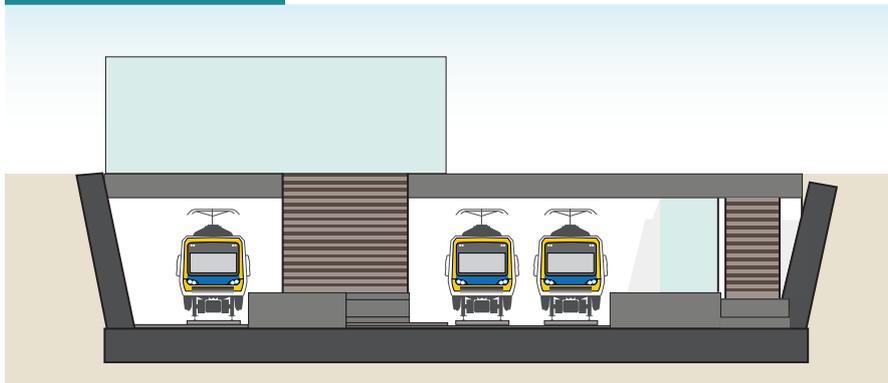
A wider and deeper trench would be required at Mont Albert, resulting in compulsory property acquisition and a daunting 12m from the station platform to ground level.



Not to scale - Illustrative purposes only

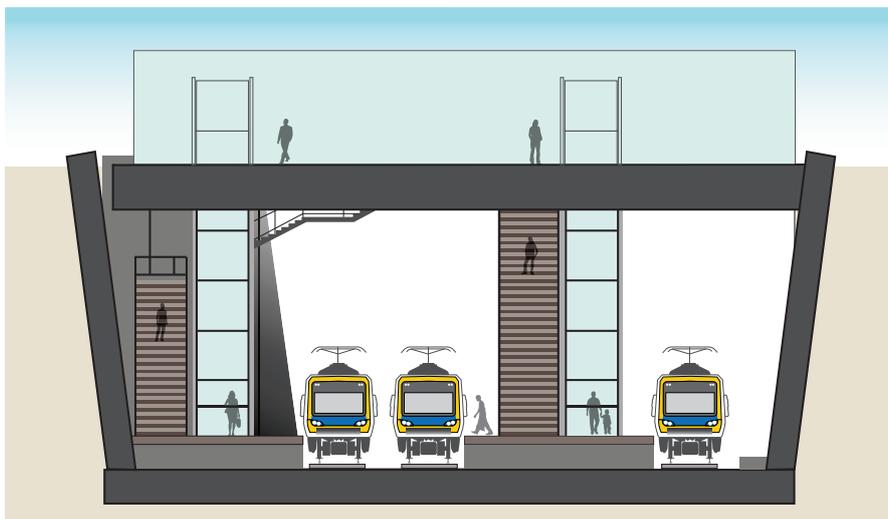
Two station option

Comparison to a typical Rail Under Road design



Not to scale - Illustrative purposes only

Example of a typical Rail Under Road solution



Not to scale - Illustrative purposes only

Example of a Rail Under Road solution in Mont Albert

Comparing the combined station solution with a two-station solution:

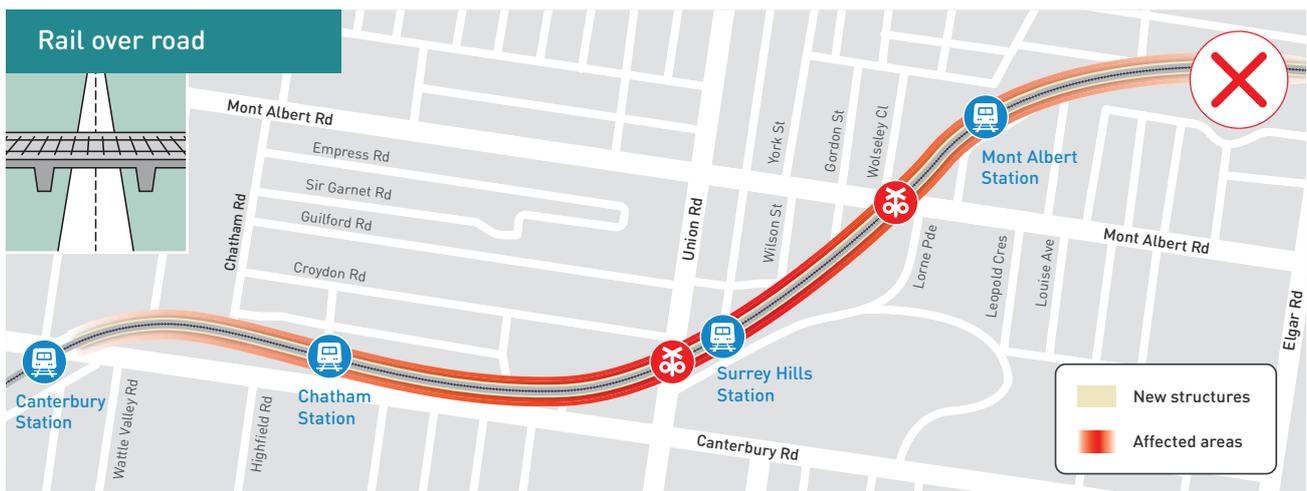
	Confirmed design: Consolidated station with separate entrances for Mont Albert and Surrey Hills	Ruled-out design: Two new stations, one in Mont Albert and one in Surrey Hills
Road closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads will need to be modified, but access to all homes and businesses will be maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roads that need to be modified for the combined station would still need to be modified in the two-station solution. In addition, the full width of Beresford Street north of Mont Albert Road would need to be used to accommodate the wider trench, requiring either compulsory acquisition of homes or extended relocation of residents. The position of the new Surrey Hills Station would also result in additional impacts to Sunbury Crescent and Lorne Parade, requiring both roads to be truncated. Access to the Coles supermarket would be impacted and it would need to be compulsorily acquired.
Compulsory acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No compulsory acquisition of homes or businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two-station solution would likely require compulsory acquisition of homes in Mont Albert due to the full closure of Beresford Street. The only way to avoid acquisition in Beresford Street would be to build a costly and challenging cantilevered road overhanging part of the trench, and residents would still need to be relocated for around 10 months during construction. The position of the Surrey Hills Station would also result in compulsory acquisition of the Surrey Hills Coles supermarket, due to impacts to Sunbury Crescent.
Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer trees removed, due to reduced impacts north of Mont Albert Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widening the rail corridor north of Mont Albert Road to fit the additional station would require additional tree removal through that area.
Premium station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Mont Albert and Surrey Hills have access to a premium station with toilets, a kiosk and staff from the first to last train. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surrey Hills Station would remain a premium station, but Mont Albert Station would remain a local station – meaning it would be unstaffed and would not have facilities like toilets and a kiosk. The station would move from its existing location onto straight tracks closer to Mont Albert Road.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new station will be fully accessible, with ramps and stairs into the entrances and lifts and stairs to access the platforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both stations would be fully accessible with ramps and stairs into the entrances, and lifts and stairs to the platforms. A deeper trench would be required at Mont Albert. This would mean the vertical distance from the station entrance at Mont Albert to the platforms would be around 12m – twice the usual vertical distance at similar train stations and the equivalent of a four-storey building. Resulting in a less convenient station to use, with several flights of stairs or a long lift ride.
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidating the stations provides the opportunity for more frequent services in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate stations close together would mean there is limited opportunity to provide more frequent services in the future to both stations.
Construction impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less excavation and shorter construction timeframe with only one set of platforms to build in the trench. To safely build the new trench and complete excavation activities, long rail closures will be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wider, deeper trench would require even more excavation in Mont Albert. In fact, we would need to remove around 3,300 more truckloads of soil and rock. To safely build the wider, deep trench and excavation activities would require more extensive construction timeframes and longer rail closures.



Key challenges:

- Ramps restrict access to shops and homes
- No room for service roads to provide alternate access
- Extensive property acquisition due to the loss of access

Raising or lowering the roads would require long approach ramps and, with no room for an additional service road, there would be no way to provide access to the existing homes and businesses along each road. As a result, a number of homes and businesses would need to be acquired compulsorily.



Key challenges:

- Wide, visually imposing structure required to accommodate the three sets of tracks
- Long bridge required to follow the slope of the land, meaning a bigger project area, more materials, and more homes and businesses impacted during construction
- Likely compulsory acquisition of homes and businesses near Chatham Station

The elevated structure would need to be wide enough to accommodate three sets of tracks and, due to the steep hill through Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, it would need to be built at a significant length and height, impacting a greater number of properties along the rail line.

In order to safely accommodate trains, the elevated rail structure would have to extend from Mont Albert to just east of Canterbury Station, and would require Chatham Station to be rebuilt as an elevated station.

Rebuilding Chatham Station would also result in the compulsory acquisition of nearby homes.

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**LEVEL
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REMOVAL**
PROJECT

LEVEL CROSSINGS FAST-TRACKED

UNION ROAD, SURREY HILLS
AND MONT ALBERT ROAD,
MONT ALBERT
DECEMBER 2020

Boom gates gone in 2023. Rail trench with new premium station providing more trains more often.

The Victorian Government has fast-tracked the removal of the Union Road and Mont Albert Road level crossings, with major construction starting in 2022 and boom gates gone in 2023.

These are of two of Melbourne’s most dangerous level crossings, with the crossing in Surrey Hills the scene of a tragic incident in 2016, where two local women lost their lives.

The two crossings will be removed with a rail trench and we’ll build one premium station with separate entrances for Surrey Hills and Mont Albert.

The premium station will have more trains more often and will be staffed from the first train in the morning until the last train in the evening.

Extensive engineering and technical investigations found removing the level crossings with a rail trench and consolidating the two stations will meet safety standards, reduce impacts and compulsory acquisition of homes and businesses.

Fast-tracking the project will bring hundreds of jobs and see the boom gates removed earlier than originally planned.

By 2023, there will be no more level crossings between the city and Ringwood on Melbourne’s second busiest rail line.

Removing these dangerous level crossings will improve safety for tens of thousands of local drivers, pedestrians and cyclists every day.

Why these level crossings need to go



22,000 vehicles use these two level crossings each day



Boom gates down for **40% of the morning peak**



61 trains travel through these crossings during the morning peak



Around **860,000 passengers** travel between Lilydale and Hawthorn each week



Two fatalities and at least 8 near-misses at these crossings since 2005



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A NEW PREMIUM STATION

A premium station with separate entrances for Mont Albert and Surrey Hills will mean more trains more often.

Curved platforms leave dangerous gaps. We will build the new premium station on straight tracks, improving safety and accessibility.

A premium station means more trains will stop at the new station increasing services for Surrey Hills and Mont Albert residents.

Moving the stations to straight tracks would have required moving them closer together – so close that it makes more sense to combine them.

The station will be staffed from first train to last, improving safety and service.

With roads, businesses and homes so close to the rail line, building two new stations would have meant:

Following 18 months of technical and engineering assessments, we found that a single station design is the best way to meet modern rail safety and accessibility standards.

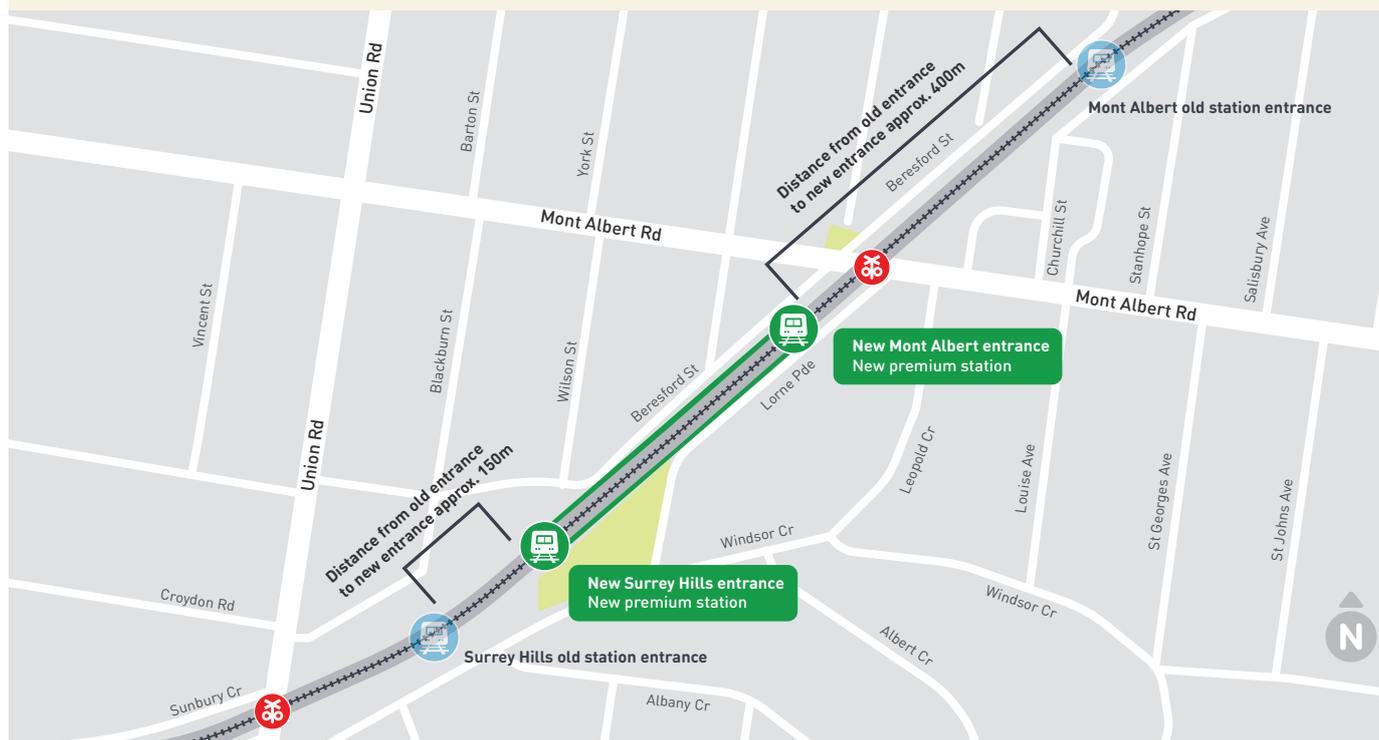
- Compulsory acquisition of homes in Mont Albert and the Coles supermarket in Surrey Hills
- Permanent closure of local streets
- More tree removal
- More excavation, and more trucks on local roads for months
- A daunting 12m climb from platform to ground level at Mont Albert Station – equivalent to the height of a four-storey building. The new station entrance at Mont Albert will meet all accessibility requirements.

The existing stations are located on curved sections of track which obscure sight-lines for train drivers and create a dangerous gap between the carriages and platforms. Rebuilding two stations on curved sections of track would be a breach of rail safety standards and cannot be considered.

A new premium station for Mont Albert and Surrey Hills:

-  More trains more often
-  Safer and more accessible
-  Less impact from construction
-  Premium facilities for both communities
-  Staffed from first train to last

To learn more about the selected design visit engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert





Help shape your new station precincts

As we continue planning to remove these dangerous and congested level crossings, we want to hear from you.

Share your ideas about different aspects of the project design, including:

- 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.

We will consider community feedback as we further develop the project design.

Surveys are open until 14 February 2021. To complete a survey, head to engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert

Be part of the Community Reference Group

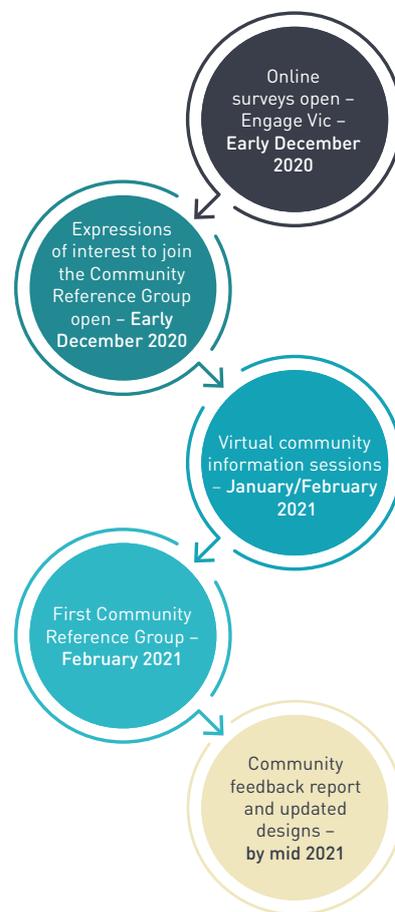
We're establishing a Community Reference Group to workshop ideas for the precincts around the new station entrances.

The group will work with our project team to gather feedback and ideas in a series of workshops in early 2021.

To view the key selection criteria and register your interest, visit our online engagement portal – engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert
Expressions of interest will be open until **Sunday 24 January 2021**.

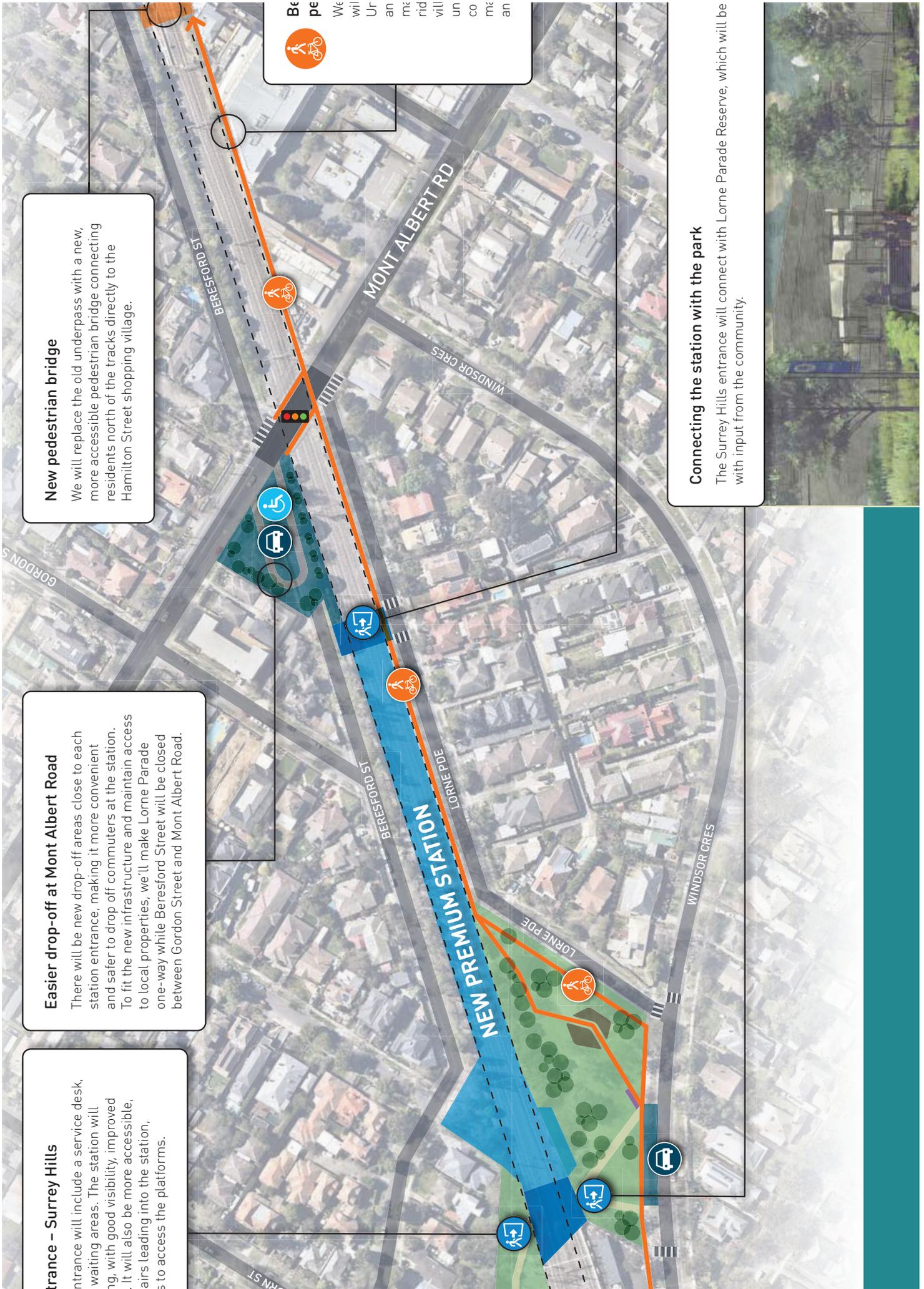
If you have any questions about the Community Reference Group or for further information about the nomination process, call us on **1800 105 105** or email contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

CONSULTATION TIMELINE



Community information sessions

We'll be holding virtual community information sessions in January and February 2021. To express your interest early, head to engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert



New pedestrian bridge
 We will replace the old underpass with a new, more accessible pedestrian bridge connecting residents north of the tracks directly to the Hamilton Street shopping village.

Easier drop-off at Mont Albert Road
 There will be new drop-off areas close to each station entrance, making it more convenient and safer to drop off commuters at the station. To fit the new infrastructure and maintain access to local properties, we'll make Lorne Parade one-way while Beresford Street will be closed between Gordon Street and Mont Albert Road.

Entrance - Surrey Hills
 Entrance will include a service desk, waiting areas. The station will be bright, with good visibility, improved lighting. It will also be more accessible, with ramps leading into the station, and stairs to access the platforms.

Connecting the station with the park
 The Surrey Hills entrance will connect with Lorne Parade Reserve, which will be designed with input from the community.





NEXT STEPS

Site investigations

Now that the design solution has been confirmed, we need to undertake further site investigations to inform detailed designs for the project.

In December 2020 and continuing into the new year, investigation teams will be working in and around the rail corridor with equipment like trucks and small drilling rigs.

We will notify nearby residences and businesses about this upcoming work.

Planning approval

Planning approval for this project will proceed under Clause 52.03 – Level Crossing Removal Project of the Whitehorse and Boroondara Planning Schemes.

We are seeking community feedback on a range of planning matters, including:

- Construction-related impacts
- Environmental impacts
- Amenity impacts
- Native vegetation; and
- Heritage.

The consultation period is now open, and we would like to provide you with the chance to formally submit your feedback.

All feedback received will be included in a public consultation summary report. This report will inform the Minister for Planning’s assessment of the project under Clause 52.03.

Planning submissions can be made online at engage.vic.gov.au/lxrp-surrey-hills-and-mont-albert by **Sunday 14 February**. If you would like a hard copy submission form sent to you, please contact us on **1800 105 105** or email us at contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

Project timeline



Timeline above subject to change

CONTACT US

contact@levelcrossings.vic.gov.au
 1800 105 105
 Level Crossing Removal Project
 GPO Box 4509, Melbourne VIC 3001

Follow us on social media
[@levelcrossings](https://twitter.com/levelcrossings)

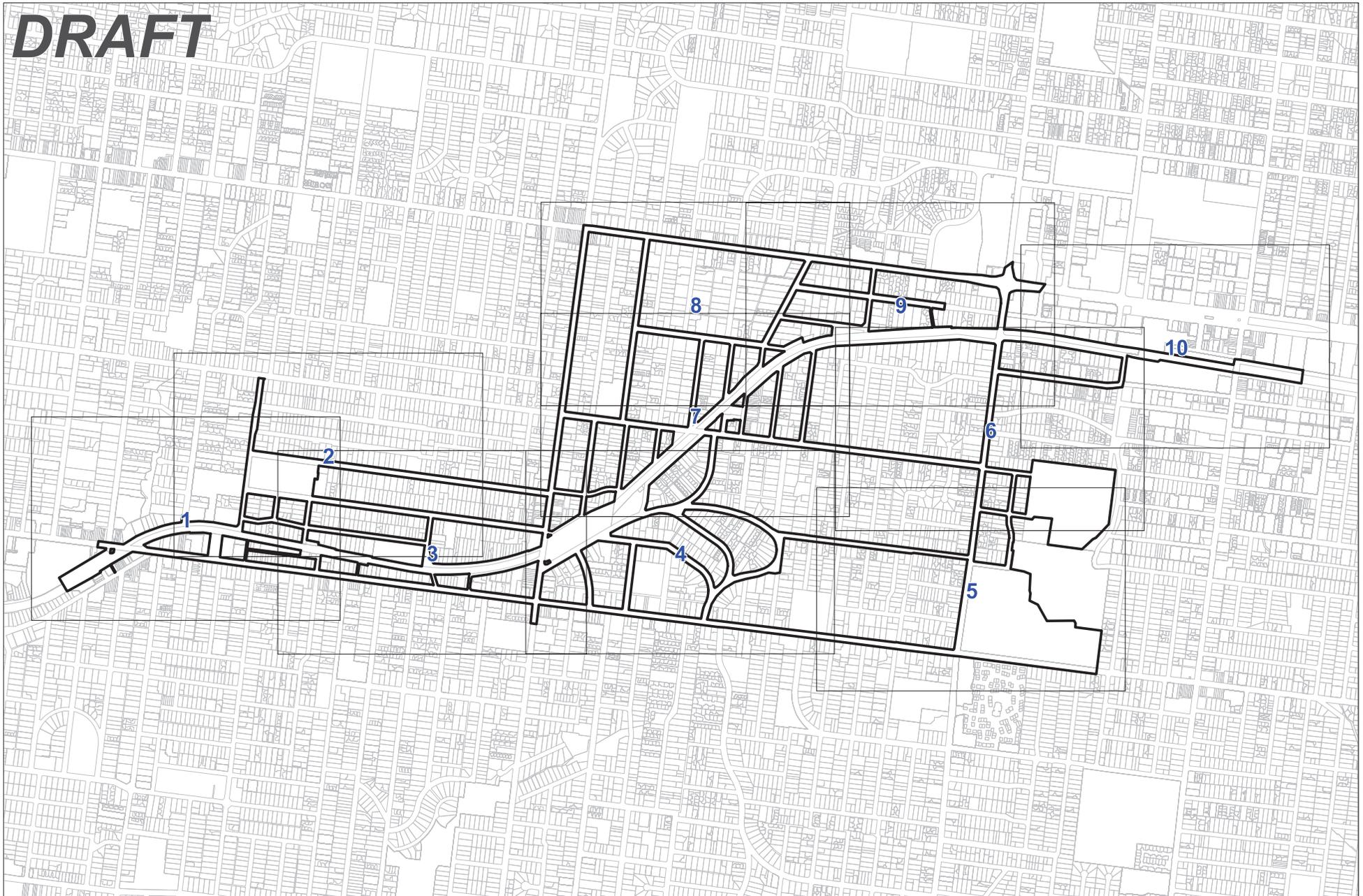


Translation service – For languages other than English, please call 9280 0780.

Please contact us if you would like this information in an accessible format.

If you need assistance because of a hearing or speech impairment, please visit relayservice.gov.au

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Index Date: 08/12/2020

LEGEND

- Planning Project Boundary
- VicMap Cadastre

**UNION ROAD MONT ALBERT ROAD LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL
PLANNING PROJECT BOUNDARY**

FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES ONLY

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LEGEND

- Planning Project Boundary
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**UNION ROAD MONT ALBERT ROAD LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL
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**LEVEL CROSSING
REMOVAL
PROJECT**

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St J
View St
Grange Sr
Blenheim Av
Windsor Cr
Tower St
Embroke St
Ton St

LEGEND

- Planning Project Boundary
- VicMap Cadastre

St J
View St
Grange Sr
Blenheim Av
Eggar Rd
Federation St
Standard Av
Charles St
Willcyrus St
Gladstone St
Arthur St
Godfrey Ct
Surrey Dr
Parkside Av
Cante
son St

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