



8.9

WESTGATE TUNNEL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS STATEMENT SUBMISSION

WARD:

GATEWAY

GENERAL MANAGER:

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PREPARED BY:

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TRIM FILE NO:

30/21/16

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City of Port Phillip Officer's Submission on the Westgate Tunnel Environmental Effects Statement ESS

PURPOSE

To seek endorsement of the City of Port Phillip's Environmental Effects Statement (ESS) submission to the West Gate Tunnel Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee on the anticipated environmental, social and transport effects of the proposed West Gate Tunnel Project (Project).

I. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1.1 Endorses the Officer's submission, included as Attachment 1 dated 10 July 2017, to the West Gate Tunnel Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee on the environmental effects of the proposed Project.
- 1.2 Notes
 - 1.2.1 City of Port Phillip's Environmental Effects Statement (EES) submission demonstrates Council's commitment to minimising the negative impacts of the construction and operation of the Project on the community;
 - 1.2.2 There is a lack of justification or rationale for implementing the Project and it will ultimately reduce the funding pool for other, more critical projects, such as Melbourne Metro 2 and trams to Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area (FUBRA);
 - 1.2.3 The Project does not meet the goals of the State Government's *Plan Melbourne* or *Fishermans Bend Vision* documents prioritising sustainable transport and creating 20 minute Neighbourhoods;
 - 1.2.4 The Project should include Transport Demand Management measures to lock in capacity for high value goods and people movement such as freight and public transport.
 - 1.2.5 When operational, the Project will provide a short term decrease in the



number of vehicles using the West Gate Freeway Bridge but will ultimately encourage driving and provide little long term benefit for commuters. The project will reduce air quality, add greenhouse gases, result in loss of valuable inner city development land, reduce liveability, reduce the amount of in quality open space and increase regional transport inequality.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The \$700M West Gate Distributor was announced as a 2014 election promise and justified primarily as a way of providing a freight connection between the Swanston Dock and Westgate Freeway while removing trucks from roads in the inner west.
- 2.2 In March 2015 the State Government announced that Transurban had submitted an unsolicited bid for a new freeway linking the Westgate Freeway, Swanston Dock, Tullamarine Freeway and the CBD.
- 2.3 Community consultation, design modification, detailed design and probity checks were conducted by the State Government and the projects proponent Transurban throughout 2015 and 2016.
- 2.4 In May 2017 the Project's EES was released by the State Government which provides information about the environmental, social and health impacts of the project for the community to comment on. The community was given 30 business days to review and provide comment on the 10,000 pages of technical information.
- 2.5 A City of Port Phillip Council Officer's submission was lodged on 10 July 2017 as an interim submission until Council could formalise an endorsed position. The Officer's submission was lodged as a result of the short 30 business day timeframe. This timeframe did not allow sufficient time to seek formal endorsement or consult with the community prior to submission.

3. KEY INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Project modelling shows that its' benefits for the City of Port Phillip will be short-lived and won't be the 'congestion buster' that is being promoted. Other projects and policies can deliver more sustainable long term benefits, better accessibility for users of the corridor and better freight access, while having less negative impacts.
- 3.2 The cost of the Project is estimated at \$5.5B, which is anticipated to be largely funded through a Victorian Government grant and extension of the existing CityLink toll contract. The \$5.5B cost of the Project represents a significant opportunity cost for Melbourne and its future legacy of liveability, especially for the Western suburbs of Melbourne and the FUBRA.
- 3.3 FUBRA, which is Australia's largest urban renewal, and the western suburbs are going through rapid population growth with a lack of quality public transport: routes and frequent services that limits modal change. The \$3B funding that the Victorian Government is contributing to the Project could be redirected to bringing forward catalytic extensions to the public transport network such as the 'Melbourne Metro 2'.

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- 3.4 The forecast benefits of the Project to achieve a major east-west commuter capacity boost for residents of both the Western suburbs and FUBRA can be achieved through bringing forward delivery of Melbourne Metro 2.
- 3.5 Council can see that Victorian Government funds proposed to be invested in the Project could be better spent in bringing forward:
 - 3.5.1 Locating residential development near employment hubs helping to create the 20 minute neighbourhood outlined in Plan Melbourne;
 - 3.5.2 Bringing forward the construction of the 'Melbourne Metro 2' project linking Clifton Hill, the CBD, FUBRA to Werribee increasing train capacity to the Western suburbs; and
 - 3.5.3 Construction of the two proposed tram lines to FUBRA, providing a catalyst for redevelopment of the area as mixed use.



FURTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 4.1 The Project does not align with the following Council policies such as:
- 4.1.1 The *Council Plan 2017-2027*, which has one of the 6 key directions relating to transport accessibility. It states that 'demand for parking and car travel is moderated as our city grows'. The proposed Project promotes and induces car travel, thus compromising the ability to deliver the above outcome. It reinforces the role of the transport network being to provide solely for car travel rather than supporting making our City's streets and places for people.
 - 4.1.2 Council's 'Road User Hierarchy' in which walking, bike riding and public transport are the highest priorities, whilst the Project is prioritising moving cars.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 No community consultation has been undertaken by Council due to the tight 30 business day timeframe for the ESS submission.
- 5.2 Council Officers have spoken to City of Melbourne Officers and Council representatives at the Melbourne Transportation Forum (MTF).

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No legal or risks to Council have been identified.

7. SUSTAINABILITY – Triple Bottom Line

7.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1.1 In a broad sense, the project will decrease the overall environmental sustainability of Victoria's transport system by allowing and encouraging additional car trips, a mode shift from public transport to private vehicles, while further embedding car use into the western suburb transport system. It will have commensurate decrease in environmental externalities such as greenhouse gases, liveability, noise, air pollution, etc. that are associated with car travel.
- 7.1.2 The Project has a core aim on reducing congestion on the Westgate Freeway corridor, which will be a short term positive outcome as car travel will be faster and more efficient this reducing fuel consumption. Unfortunately due to the increased capacity and faster travel times the Project will induce new and longer car trips to be undertaken thus increasing the amount of total amount of greenhouse gases that are released and provide additional negative environmental outcomes.
- 7.1.3 The construction of the Project will delay the Melbourne Metro Rail 2, which will provide additional public transport capacity and improved services, because:



7.1.4 The increased vehicle capacity along the West Gate Freeway Corridor will compete directly with Melbourne Metro 2 for the same passenger catchment and delay the need for increased transport capacity; and

7.1.5 The use of government funding for the project will sap the scarce funding available for transport infrastructure upgrades for the western suburbs.

7.2 SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 The Project will contribute to social inequity of people who are carless with the old, young or disadvantaged unable to benefit from the delivery of the project. The Project will delay funding and justification for the Melbourne Metro 2 project that will contain a train station in FBURA, providing an accessible rail connection for these people from the city, western suburbs and FBURA.

7.3 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

7.3.1 The construction of the Project and the resultant implementation delay of the Melbourne Metro 2 and tram lines to FUBRA will impact on development by lowering density, reducing the implementation rate of new developments and result in a poorer land use mix in FUBRA. This ultimately impacts on the Council's rate base, the precincts economic vitality and rate of urban renewal for FBURA.

7.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.4.1 There are no financial implications for Council

8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

8.1 TIMELINE

The planning approval process for the project is as follows:

8.1.1 EES public exhibition and opportunity for public comment closed on 10 July 2017;

8.1.2 A Directions Hearing will take place from 19 July 2017;

8.1.3 Inquiry hearings will commence on 14 August 2016 and run for approximately 5 weeks, where Council will have the opportunity to present; and

8.1.4 The inquiry is to submit its report to the Minister by 23 October 2017 where the Minister of Planning will assess the Planning Application.

It is anticipated that the Project will begin construction in 2017. The project's construction is expected to take 5 years and finish in 2022.

8.2 COMMUNICATION

Once endorsed by Council, the Submission will be provided to Westgate Tunnel Inquiry and Advisory Committee, as well as being available on Council's website.



9. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 9.1 An Officer involved in the preparation of this report has an indirect interest in the matter. The Officer lives and owns a property in the City of Maribyrnong that is approximately 100m from Moore Street which is a designated Heavy Vehicles Route. The State Government has announced that there will be truck bans implemented on Moore Street in tandem with the opening of the Project. The Officer's home will receive amenity improvements due to the truck ban and the subsequent removal of heavy vehicles from the adjacent streets.