

Delivering on North East Link commitments to Watsonia



An artist's impression of North East Link with a green lid, as proposed by Banyule Council

Large scale government-backed infrastructure initiatives have the potential to shape the future of local communities, to right wrongs and future-proof.

For the community of Watsonia, North East Link is truly a **once-in-a-lifetime project.**

While residents are deeply concerned about their community being split in half forever by a deep grey trench, they are equally excited about the chance to improve green spaces and re-unite the two halves of the community around a revitalised town centre.

In 2020, the Victorian Government recognised the need for additional design considerations for Watsonia, proposing 18 objectives in its final Urban Strategy Design.

To ensure the most optimum design of the northern section of North East Lid, Council has identified a better design option which it would like included when final designs are announced in early 2023.

This alternative design will enable the Victorian Government to deliver on what was promised for Watsonia – while providing a truly innovative public space that transforms the area and unites a community.

Banyule Council's proposal to put a lid on North East Link will enable the recommendations of the Urban Design Strategy to be fully realised.



Banyule
City Council

Victorian Government commitments

North East Link Urban Design Strategy 2020



- 2D** Enhance pedestrian and cycling connections to Watsonia Station and the Watsonia Neighbourhood Centre from residential areas to the east and south-east; to increase accessibility to an activity centre which can service everyday needs (consistent with Plan Melbourne's 20 Minute Neighbourhood strategy).
- 2E** Provide new off-road walking and cycling path in east-west direction to link from Watsonia Road to Watsonia Station.
- 2F** Provide a new cycling connection between Nell Street West linking to Watsonia Shopping Centre.
- 2G** Ensure new infrastructure supports the new off-road cycling connection parallel to Morwell Avenue (to be delivered others) which will link the existing East-West Power Easement Trail to the west with the Watsonia Neighbourhood Centre.
- 2H** Ensure new infrastructure supports a new east-west cycling connection (to be delivered by others) along Nell Street and Nell Street West.
- 2I** Replace existing Nell Street pedestrian bridge with new high quality, wider, walking and cycling crossing that connects the east and west side of the corridor. Crossing is to link into the surrounding path networks and to Watsonia Primary School.
- 2J** Provide a direct vehicle connection from Elder Street to Watsonia Station car park which could facilitate an at-grade walking and cycling crossing.
- 2K** Ensure the design of the Nell Street pedestrian bridge has regard to the setting and operational requirements of Watsonia Primary School.

Amenity, Vibrancy & Safety



- 3A** Provide additional tree planting along pathways, streets and in carparks within the project corridor wherever possible to reinforce Watsonia's leafy character, contribute to the urban forest, enhance amenity and provide shade.
- 3B** Minimise overlooking to residential properties from proposed walking and cycling bridges at Nell Street and Watsonia Station.
- 3C** Provide a planted interface with Greensborough Road to filter views of road infrastructure from adjacent residential areas.
- 3D** Enhance the quality of public open space in Watsonia where walking and cycling upgrades are being undertaken by the project.
Do not preclude the future delivery (by others) of enhancements to public open space for the shopping strip and improvements to create a high quality entrance to the station focused around Watsonia Library.

- 3E** Should project works directly impact the transmission easement between Greensborough Road and Frensham Road, improve the amenity and the quality of open space by:
 - Providing additional planting / buffer planting to residential fencing subject to the approval of the relevant Utility Service Providers.
 - Upgrading the existing East-West Power Easement Trail.

3F **Consider improvements to the amenity and quality of the open space along the transmission easement between Greensborough Road and Frensham Road by implementing Water Sensitive Urban Design infrastructure (such as vegetated swales or raingardens) to manage stormwater.*

Resilience & Sustainability



- 4A** New planting in the transmission easement must be indigenous to strengthen local biodiversity and habitat within the 'Powerline Link' biodiversity corridor.

*Opportunities which are outside the scope but may be delivered by others and/or would be beneficial for the contractor to implement.



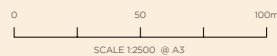
Urban Integration

- 1A Watsonia Station Precinct**
 - Maximise opportunities for land use and transport integration and ensure the project design has regard to relevant State and local government strategic land use plans.
 - The project design seeks opportunities to consolidate land parcels and minimise the fragmentation of land parcels.
 - Built form should be well integrated, provide for passive surveillance and respond to the urban setting.
 - Design the road network to accommodate vehicle and pedestrian access to residual land parcels.
 - Ensure the road configuration accessing Watsonia Station car park and bus interchange is in accordance with relevant Victorian Government transport agency requirements.
 - Ensure no net loss of vehicle parking at Watsonia Station.



Connectivity, Wayfinding & Accessibility

- 2A** Provide a new north-south walking and cycling route to the eastern side of the corridor, connecting to the existing Greensborough Bypass Trail to the north, and the Banyule Trail to the south.
- 2B** Provide a new north-south off-road walking and cycling path to the western side of the corridor which links Watsonia Shopping Centre and Watsonia Station to the southern end of the station carpark.
- 2C** Provide a new walking and cycling link from the east side of the road corridor across Greensborough Road and connecting to the Watsonia Station and the Watsonia Neighbourhood Centre. Ensure there are pedestrian connections to Watsonia Station platforms that addresses key desire lines, enhance sightlines, wayfinding and legibility for walking and link to the walking and cycling paths/bridge.











Putting a Lid on it

How Banyule's plan will help deliver Victorian Government commitments in Watsonia

A green lid over the grey trench that is proposed to cut through Watsonia will deliver short- and long-term improvements to people and places within Watsonia and the broader Banyule area.

Through the small but impactful changes proposed by Council, the Urban Design Strategy's objectives will be greatly achieved, improving Watsonia now and into the future.

Banyule's proposal provides a better design option for more than 50 percent of the State Government's objectives included in the Urban Design Strategy. These are included below.

Urban Design Strategy Objectives			Banyule's design proposal
Urban Integration	1A	Watsonia Station Precinct Maximise opportunities for land use and transport integration. The project design seeks opportunities to consolidate land parcels and minimise the fragmentation of land parcels.	 Provides greater opportunity for land use and transport integration through consolidation of land parcels. By significantly reducing the asphalt footprint it provides more developable land that can accommodate mixed use opportunities that can integrate with the existing commercial precinct, rather than fragmented development parcels.
Connectivity, Wayfinding & Accessibility	2A	Provide a new north-south walking and cycling route to the eastern side of the corridor, connecting to the existing Greensborough Bypass Trail to the north, and the Banyule Trail to the south.	 A green lid creates an improved amenity for cyclists and pedestrians, providing a green buffer along the North East Link for new routes and reducing the impact of noise and emissions.
	2C	Provide a new walking and cycling link from the east side of the road corridor across Greensborough Road and connecting to the Watsonia Station and the Watsonia Neighbourhood Centre. Ensure there are pedestrian connections to Watsonia Station platforms that addresses key desire lines, enhance sightlines, wayfinding and legibility for walking and link to the walking and cycling paths/bridge.	 A green lid provides a user-friendly, accessible, continuous east-west connection for pedestrians. Rather than access the station via a narrow bridge at Elder Street, residents on the east side of Watsonia will have many crossing opportunities and can access the station via access the station via buildings adjoining the station. The need to 'walk around' will be significantly reduced.
	2D	Enhance pedestrian and cycling connections to Watsonia Station and the Watsonia Neighbourhood Centre from residential areas to the east and south-east; to increase accessibility to an activity centre which can service everyday needs (consistent with Plan Melbourne's 20 Minute Neighbourhood strategy).	 Improved accessibility and connectivity will reduce the need for vehicles, as residents will have direct entry to Watsonia Station from a number of access points.
	2G	Ensure new infrastructure supports the new off-road cycling connection parallel to Morwell Avenue (to be delivered others) which will link the existing East-West Power Easement Trail to the west with the Watsonia Neighbourhood Centre.	 A smaller expanse of the trench will provide the opportunity for a cycling overpass to link east and west sides of Watsonia and provide a continuous pedestrian / cycling path that links with other cycling trails.
	2J	Provide a direct vehicle connection from Elder Street to Watsonia Station car park which could facilitate an at-grade walking and cycling crossing.	 A proposed drop off bus zone will improve the east-west bus link and provide much-needed connectivity across Watsonia. This prevents buses having to be diverted through Greensborough as they currently do.
Amenity, Vibrancy & Safety	3A	Provide additional tree planting along pathways, streets and in carparks within the project corridor wherever possible to reinforce Watsonia's leafy character, contribute to the urban forest, enhance amenity and provide shade.	 Continues the tree-lined Greensborough Boulevard through Watsonia, creating a greater buffer between houses and the North East Link and providing more opportunities for greening the municipality.
	3C	Provide a planted interface with Greensborough Road to filter views of road infrastructure from adjacent residential areas.	 An increased green surface over North East Link will enable the planting of an extra 700 trees, helping to improve the aesthetic of the area and create natural habitats for local fauna.
	3D	Enhance the quality of public open space in Watsonia where walking and cycling upgrades are being undertaken by the project. Do not preclude the future delivery (by others) of enhancements to public open space for the shopping strip and improvements to create a high quality entrance to the station focused around Watsonia Library.	 Provides more public space opportunities, including the potential for art installations, pedestrian and cycling connections, habitat and wildlife links.