



Banyule

CITY COUNCIL

North East Link Online Event Questions and Answers

13 August 2020

Moderator Announcement

If you've got a question, please ask it here.

Pre-Event Questions & Answers

Slide 14 – Environmental Effects Statement

Q: Why have the EPBC Act and the FFG Act provided such limited protection for biodiversity and the environment?

A: Council represented its position to the EES and PER process for the State and Federal Government to consider.

Q: How can the project planners and Daniel Andrews blatantly say that the noise will be better than it is now when they are going to build a noise ditch near the Watsonia Station?

A: The Project must satisfy the specific noise criteria Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs). This will likely include sound wall infrastructure and ongoing noise modelling after the project has been completed.

Q: What is the update on environmental protections to be put in place for the creeks, billabongs and rivers being affected by the tunneling?

A: Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) set the requirements that must be followed by the Project.

Slide 16 – Presentations to bidding consortium

Q: Is Council advocating for the TBM not to be launched at Borlase Reserve? If so, please advise where this item sits in Council's priority list with NELP?

A: Excluding tunnel boring machine launching from Borlase Reserve is one of Council's top six major improvements that are needed.

Slide 19 – Early Works – Current & Future

Q: Why, if the early works are to move major services - gas, water from one side of Greensborough highway to the other - is there tree destruction taking place? Taking out trees not mentioned on the Hub windows

A: The relocation of services as part of the Early Works involves removal of vegetation in some instances, in order for works to take place.

Council has no influence on information outlined in the Hub, which is managed by NELP.

Q: What is the purpose of the drilling that has been occurring in Greville Rd, Anderson Street, River Gum Walk, the Warringal Parklands and Banyule Flats?

A: This is borehole testing to confirm ground condition information that was previously captured by NELP.

Q: In regards to the removal of 30,000 established trees which are home to large numbers of birds and wildlife - what is being done to support these animals as this destruction occurs?

A: Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) set the requirements that must be followed by the Project, including Early Works. There is an EPR that requires wildlife handlers to be present and inspect trees for habitat prior to their removal. If any habitat is found, capture and relocation of the animal/s is then coordinated.

Slide 25 – How will Council engage with the local residents...

Q: North East link are not engaging well with the general community and are focusing on sporting clubs etc. How can residents have a voice?

A: Residents can make themselves heard through several methods:

- Contact North East Link directly.
- Contact your local member of parliament.
- Participate in local advocacy groups.
- Raise concerns with Council to advocate on your behalf.

Q: Do you have plans for the community consultative process and when would it start? How do we register our interest to participate? How do you envisage the means by which community groups/members will be able to assess the final plans?

A: NELP will run the consultation process and communicate this broadly. Council will share this with the broader community and directly advise registered members. We would expect that documentation will be made available at the Watsonia Hub, Council Offices, the NEL Community Liaison Group and online.

Slide 27 – Detailed designs

Q: When will there be detailed plans of the project including vegetation of the 'land bridges' near Erskine road? How deep below ground level will the tunnel be? For example, under McCrae Rd Rosanna where I live?

A: The final design has not yet been released to Council and the public. It is anticipated that NELP will release plans later this year or early next year.

Q: What has been the conclusion with the Elder St/Watsonia train station area? Is the NEL in a cutting with a green bridge and vehicle access across it?

A: A cycling and pedestrian green bridge across the NEL into Watsonia has been secured as part of the settlement of the legal challenge against NELP but detailed design is not yet available.

Q: What is Banyule's position with respect to the design proposed that closes the end of Nell Street?

A: Council advocated for local access to be retained at Nell Street.

Q: The Community Technical Discussion Group provided a report to the bidders recommending treatments and improvements. Can the Panel advise if ANY of the Reports recommendations have been now included as part of the Project?

A: This level of detail will be provided later in the year when the project has been awarded and concept designs have been released. Council has not been privy to the project bids.

Q: What will be backing onto my property once the project is completed?

A: This information is not available at the moment. We expect that property owners directly abutting the road corridor will be consulted about the final design solutions by NELP.

Slide 33 – Impacts on our streets

Q: What traffic management activities are going to be implemented to stop our back streets becoming a 'rat run' during the construction program?

Q: What will be impact on the local roads in Macleod?

Q: What will be the impact on local roads during construction phase?

Q: I am concerned about the impact to local traffic while the work is going on. Eg people trying to bypass the construction by using back streets.

Q: What will the access issues to Grimshaw Greensborough to the shopping centre?

A: Road monitoring for vehicle speed and volume will be undertaken. Appropriate measures will be implemented (if required) in consultation with the community.

Slide 35 – Longer Tunnel

Q: Why is the NEL so adamant that building the second tunnel is cost prohibitive when the cost offsets and long term benefits are clear?

Q: Will the tunnel on Greensborough Road be lengthened to Grimshaw Street?

Q: How can Council influence the long tunnel design if awarded contract based on short tunnel design. Starting the tunnel back towards Grimshaw Street would eliminate a lot of the problems posed by the trench. What is the status of a longer tunnel?

A: Council successfully demonstrated a longer tunnel was achievable at the EES Panel Hearing.

- Council secured the support for a longer tunnel with the IAC recommending an extension.
- The Planning Minister didn't support it as a requirement of the project, but encouraged the bidders to explore this recommendation.
- The bidders received Council's advocacy for an extended tunnel.
- The Community and Council can continue to advocate to NELP to pursue an extended tunnel solution.
- Further details to be revealed by NELP when the project is awarded.

Slide 37 - Reserves

Q: Have NELP determined when they will need to take over the use of Gabonia Avenue Reserve, Gabonia Avenue, Watsonia?

Q: What is Winsor Reserve being used for? And for how long? Can a deadline be put in that the oval gets returned to the public? When will residents around Winsor Reserve be notified of anything that will be happening to Winsor Reserve? And, is the playground end

being updated with the basketball half before they take the oval as a compound construction site?

Q: What assurances and plans for AK Lines reserve during and after the construction phase?

A: Once the contract for project delivery has been awarded and the design is finalised, there will be greater clarity on the extent of use for the reserves, which will determine plans, construction schedules etc. Residents will be notified prior to the commencement of works at these locations.

End of the slideshow

Q: There is red and white tape on some trees on River Gum Walk Rosanna, near Banyule Road heading toward the Rosanna Rd intersection (but closer to Banyule Road). What is happening there? Will those trees stay?

A: This is unrelated to the North East Link Early Works. Trees may be 'tagged' for a number of reasons, such as for pruning, tree protection etc.

Q: Will there be regular construction occurring between 10pm-6am?

A: We would expect some night works as part of the NEL project. The successful contractor will be required to notify and communicate with affected properties for any night works.

Q: Will there be houses removed from Greensborough Road?

A: Some dwellings are identified in the EES documentation as being removed. This includes houses on the east side of Greensborough Road, between Yallambie Road and Lenola Street. This will be subject to the final design.

Q: Why has the project lingered on for so long?

A: North East Link is the largest road project in the history of Victoria and is required to undergo various planning, design, consultation and tendering phases before construction begins.

Event Questions & Answers

Q: How many community members are here tonight?

A: More than 100 people have registered for tonight's meeting.

Q: So is the alternate design locked in at all or could the winner of the tender just revert back to the original design?

A: It is expected that the Watsonia alternate design would be improved by the successful bidder. The elements of this design should be incorporated into the final design.

Q: Any further information about what was influenced by way of impacts to residents - e.g. noise, dust, potential exposure to contaminated soil?

A: The EPRs have been strengthened during the panel hearing to ensure these potential impacts to the community are avoided or mitigated. The construction of the Early Works and Main Contract Works must comply with EPRs.

Q: If the 4 Councils were jointly involved in the legal action why wasn't there an agreement at the start that the Councils couldn't withdraw without agreement by the other 3 Councils?

A: The legal challenge was set up to ensure that the councils could individually and collectively argue merits of the case. For Banyule specifically, the outcomes of the Western Highway EES panel hearing was a determining factor in withdrawing from the legal challenge.

Q: Did each Council contribute the same amount to the legal case?

A: Generally, yes. The shared costs were split evenly. There was some cost only related to a specific Council though.

Q: Can/is Council advocating for the delivery of the 'shared user bridge' over the Yarra to be delivered early so the wider community can benefit from this facility? It would be beneficial to have access to this bridge early in the NEL project.

A: Yes, we will be working with Manningham to get this delivered as soon as we can.

Q: Is Council aware of the recent burglaries that have occurred in Borlase Street due to vacancies of some properties? We are very concerned.

A: No, Council isn't aware of the burglaries. We encourage people to remain vigilant and if they notice any inappropriate behavior, it is best to contact Victoria Police.

Q: When does Council expect NEL will amend the Planning Scheme to rectify the SCO overlay to reflect the 'actual' NEL alignment as approved by the Minister?

A: Once the main contract has been awarded and a tunnel alignment is confirmed, it is expected that the SCO will be reviewed to accurately reflect the final design. It is anticipated that this will be an overall width of 120m.

Q: For these Sporting and community facilities, will the car parking around these also be checked with peak numbers as some parking might not sufficient. I can see it clogging local roads.

A: The parking provision for the sporting club location has been considered as part of the design. Council will endeavor to manage the parking of the sporting club venues.

Q: For the local roads clogging question, would the council consider using nature strips to create additional indented car parking? e.g Nepean St.

Potentially, indented car parking may be a solution. However, it depends on the extent of traffic impacts and the existing infrastructure regarding the suitability of that suggestion. There may be other ways to manage parking concerns.

Q: Where is the "Watsonia Activity Centre" as a resident for 20 years I have never heard of it?

A: Watsonia Activity Centre encompasses all the shops within the area between Tennyson Street and Richards Avenue, generally fronting Watsonia Road.

Q: Concerns about where a bus stop will be placed in Watsonia shops.

A: This will be subject to design and consultation with traders. Details of this to be considered at a future time.

Q: Is there an intention to prepare an updated structure plan for the Watsonia Activity Centre? If so, when might this process commence?

A: Council has already produced a structure plan for Watsonia, titled 'Picture Watsonia – A Vision for Watsonia Village', which was endorsed in 2014. The document includes the creation of a town square, the planning of which would likely take place after the main contract has been awarded.

Q: I couldn't find anything specifically on the Banyule website for information relating to NELP relevant to Banyule residents. How do we contact the council for topics related to NELA where the Council is proposing to advocate on our behalf? Is there a council community contact/liaison officer?

A: Our Shaping Banyule website covers a lot of the information on NELP, including details to contact relevant council officers <https://shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/northeastlink>. In terms of Council advocacy, the Council-endorsed advocacy list is available as an attachment to the NEL Council report of 17 August 2020 on the Banyule website.

Q: For transparency, were any additional financial sweeteners provided by the Government to our council that isn't covered in this presentation?

A: We currently receive \$225,000 per year to cover some staffing costs. See Council reports of 18/11/19 and 15/6/20 for some more financial information. The funding amounts for the relevant items presented in the slides was the total settlement.

Q: Will NELP be held responsible to actually replace the trees taken?

A: Yes, there is an EPR that requires the tree replacement (EPR AR3) that requires maintaining at least a ratio of 2:1 for replacement of amenity plantings.

Q: 2 for every one. Two tubestock don't make up for one hundred year old tree. I'm very sad to see mature Redgum trees being lost in Simpson Barracks. I have low confidence that NELA and its contractors will do Offsets sufficiently. What is Banyule's [process] for keeping NELA honest for remediating the loss of so many mature trees from this project? How?

A: It is acknowledged that tubestock does not replace a 100-year old River Red Gum. The project has already commenced an early planting regime and is developing a species for development, seeking to achieve a net gain by 2045 in accordance with the EPR. Council will work with the State in advancing the tree canopy replacement planting.

Q: I'm already concerned about the early works being conducted at Greensborough college, many tree losses have already been seen in an area of the municipality I feel that community consultation was lacking for these designs because I did not see any calls for community comment. Was there an option for these designs?

A: Council will raise the concerns with NELP and CPB Contractors in relation to the removal of established trees and seek to forewarn to raise awareness to the community for future tree losses. Council will also request communication of tree removals in a public manner.

Relevant approvals for vegetation removal have been obtained by the contractor.

Q: What can the Council do to ensure the PM2.5 levels do not exceed the new state's air pollution standards?

A: The project will need to comply with relevant EPRs requiring best practice Australian management techniques and minimising health impacts from exposure to PM2.5. The EPA has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring this requirement is met.

Q: How is the case for a longer tunnel progressing during the tender phase?

A: Council continues to advocate for a longer tunnel to NELP and was presented to the bidders.

Q: Why cannot we just apply some "common sense" to the second tunnel based on the data. Something I've heard D. Andrews say many many times recently was "common sense and decisions based on data".

A: Council is supportive of a longer tunnel and presented the data and evidence at the EES panel hearing, with its use of expert witnesses. Council retains its position to advocate for an extended tunnel.

Q: Is Council still participating in the CLG?

A: Yes, Council will continue to participate in the CLG.

Q: The slide showing ongoing advocacy does not mention community advocacy. Why is this vital advocacy not included?

A: Council will continue to engage with its community like tonight's forum, and continue its advocacy to the State, NELP and the bidders.

Q: What do you yourself Mister Walker, what do you think will be the kind of acceptance of the NEL that the general population will show? Will the acceptance be a kind of resignation or a final realisation that the NEL is a good thing, one that the population will come to see as a good thing for Banyule and particularly for the people in adjoining communities?

A: Council will continue to advocate for broader and far-reaching improvements to the Project and will also seek for localised improvements to designs, endeavoring to realise the best possible outcomes for the Banyule community as well as our neighboring communities.

Q: Will BCC be setting up a hotline where we can raise concerns about adverse impacts as the project evolves?

A: Council will remain involved with the project and continue to advocate for improvements, whilst being available to residents to receive their concerns for the project. For specific issues, it is best to contact the project directly on 1800 105 105, or email NorthEastLinkEarlyWorks@cbpcon.com.au or the project website via the following link: <https://northeastlink.vic.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints>

Q: If the construction of the Greensborough College Facilities does complete in mid-2021, can the sporting clubs start using them before NELP start using the reserves named in the acquisition?

A: This may be possible for training purposes, but it is unlikely for competition. It is unclear what the return to community sport will be like due to COVID-19 impacts.

Q: Are the works currently being undertaken at Kalparrin Gardens part of the NELA Early works? If I recall correctly this Creek line was within the project boundary in the reference design. There is minimal signage regarding the "footpath upgrade" and definitely not Council.

A: The works at Kalparrin Gardens are not related to NELP. Council developed a masterplan for Kalparrin Gardens and funds have been allocated for part of the masterplan. The landscaping upgrades are being delivered by a contractor engaged by Council.

Q: Will there be an underpass for shared path on the Exit/entry ramps for NEL to Greensborough Hwy. Also will there be a shared Path underpass of Blamey Rd and Yallambie Rd

A: It is unclear about the extent of connectivity in and around project. The final design has not yet been released to Council and the public.

Q: I get what you said about the ways residents can have a voice, but many of us have tried those avenues without luck. How can I, someone who is NOT a member of a sporting club have a say on the restoration of Winsor Reserve once construction is over? I use the reserve every day. My local member has not helped, nor has NEL.

A: It is anticipated that a design solution for restoration for Winsor Reserve will involve community consultation and this is expected to include residents who are proximate to Winsor Reserve.

Q: The community has had no information from council, NELP or State Gov as to what is going to happen to AK Lines reserve, during and after construction. Are we going to get this information?

Once the successful bidder is announced and the final design is released, there will be greater clarity as to the type and extent of use for AK Lines Reserve, which can then be communicated to the wider community.

Q: Will Council revenue be impacted by the project?

A: It is not anticipated that Council revenue will be impacted at this stage. In case of impacts, it will be resolved with NELP directly.

Q: Considering the major changes to travel patterns due to Covid, has new traffic modelling done taking this into account so that the whole project can be re-evaluated on the basis of this radically different scenario that is likely for the future?

A: It is Council's understanding that new traffic modelling has not been undertaken due to COVID-19 impacts.

Q: Covid has caused a fundamental change in human behaviour, (possibly permanently) with respect to working/commuting habits. Is this likely to be looked into by Council and form part of their reasoning with future advocacy?

A: It is unclear what the long term changed habits are, due to the current COVID-19 changes. This will be considered on its merits when there is a quantifiable change in a more permanent manner.

Q: Would you be able to organise a session with the Community and NELP that is facilitated but not moderated to this extent so that real community voice can be heard?

A: The forum under Stage 4 restrictions has necessitated moderation of a highly attended event like tonight's event. It is expected that with easing of restrictions, the opportunities for future engagement will have more open and free dialogue.

Q: For the longer second tunnel, what was the overall additional cost estimate including considering the costs offsets for not having to do things like rebuilding car parks and building new green bridges?

A: Council did not have access to the costings of tunnel. NELP indicated during the panel hearing that a longer would cost an extra \$1.49B.

Q: What is Council's position on the proposed multi storey carpark at Watsonia station that will block the views from the shops to the Dandenongs?

A: Council will seek to influence this design of the multi deck car park to limit a restriction of the views of the Dandenongs.

Q: Who will maintain green bridges? Why aren't green bridges made bigger ie into a tunnel?

A: The green bridges are likely to be maintained by the public-private partnership that is also responsible for the NEL. Council is advocating for an extended tunnel that could effectively have green space over the alignment of the NEL.

Q: At the ESS hearing there were alternatives to some of the main interchanges. Some alternatives were better than others. How do ensure we get the best outcome?

A: The IAC made recommendations to improving interchanged designs, in particular reducing their footprint. All the alternatives were also made available to the bidders for their consideration for tender submissions. It is expected that the successful tenderer will propose interchanges that are improved from the reference design.

Q: What will be the future of BAAG and The Greenery and associated business adjacent to the Yarra River?

A: The impact on these businesses will be better understood upon release of the final design.

Q: What is being done to support the businesses negatively affected by the project - particularly those along Manningham Road?

A: Both Banyule and Manningham Council will undertake this work to support local businesses. There are EPRs that requires NELP to provide mechanisms that support businesses.

Q: Impact of construction is going to be significant on the community. What measures have been considered to minimise this? Has this been discussed with the State Government?

A: There are specific construction management EPRs that are required to be followed by the contractors. Council is in regular dialogue with CPB Contractors and NELP, raising community concerns and providing assistance where possible to avoid or minimise construction impacts on community.

Q: Will you do this forum again in a couple of months? For mine its working well.

A: Thank you for your support. Council will endeavor to keep its community as up-to-date as possible in relation to the progress of the project via the channels available. This forum may be revisited in the future.

Q: Is Council concerned about impacts at Heidelberg Park and Banksia St?

A: Council will endeavor to influence design to minimise impacts. Any impacts will be clearer once the final design is released.

Q: What is being done with all the wood from the 30,000 trees being cut down? It is a waste for them to be woodchipped.

A: Council has requested for reuse of felled trees for retention of habitat in biodiverse areas, for use in active play spaces, to make furniture etc. Trees will be used to build playground equipment by Banyule City Council and given to Banyule Nillumbik Tech School to build habitat boxes for local schools in the area. Remaining trees will continue to be mulched and given to not-for-profit organisations.

Q: Is there likely to be an all weather connection between the new Watsonia station commuter car park with the station box?

A: It was not shown in the reference design. We are advocating for an entirely upgraded station, including all weather solutions.

Q: How does BCC decide on a position where the community members may be split?

A: Council considers all the views expressed on subjects and ultimately decides on its position that provides the broader community with the maximum benefit.