

A Better Option for West Parkville & North Melbourne

“I don't know what the final design will be or what impact it will have on my neighbourhood or my home and there is nowhere left in the system for me to officially ask for help, have input or express my opinion.” -
- Dr Olivia Smith, West Parkville resident.

On 30th June 2014, the Planning Minister, Mr Matthew Guy approved the East West Link project with a three pertinent conditions:

1. Delete Elliott Avenue tunnel access from the design
2. Investigate the inclusion of an off ramp to Flemington Rd
3. Investigate moving the tunnel opening from the Upfield railway line to Oak St.

The community welcomes the removal of the Elliott Avenue interchange from the proposal.

However, the inclusion of a Flemington Road access point has obviously created community anxiety. Large questions now exist as to which residents will be impacted by this new project element and which areas of parkland will be forever lost to the toll road. Michael Francis is one of the many residents who may be affected; “I am dumbfounded as to how a major element of the East West Link project - the link to Flemington Rd - is being designed after the Minister has given approval, particularly given that we have no idea where it will be located and whether we will have any input into the final decision.” Francis went on to say that “Rather than being a minor element of the plan, the effect of a rushed, ill informed decision on residents of North Melbourne and West Parkville could be catastrophic, as could be the destruction of much of the Flemington Rd boulevard”.

TULLAMARINE FREEWAY OPTION = LOWEST IMPACT

Three options for a Flemington Rd access were proposed at the recent EWL Public Hearings, which the Linking Melbourne Authority (LMA) and bidders may now be considering. The ‘*Tullamarine Freeway*’ option connected to a relocated tunnel opening at Oak St, is likely to have the lowest impact. The *Tullamarine Freeway* option was included in the alternative design developed by the Safety Net for Royal Park (Safety Net) community group but this option could also be delivered by adapting the City of Melbourne’s alternative design, which proposed a series of tunnel openings (portals) at Oak St.

The plan here highlights the location of the three published options for the Flemington Rd access and the table summarises an assessment of their likely impacts. The *Tullamarine Freeway* option consistently betters the alternatives, which indicates that the tunnel opening should be moved to Oak St to accommodate this access point given that it could not be delivered with the tunnel opening being high up beneath the Upfield railway line, which is shown as a dotted line on the plan.



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How do the options stack up?	Curran Street ¹	Racecourse Road ²	Tullamarine Freeway ³
Extra visual impact on residents?	Yes	Yes	No
Extra noise impact on residents?	Yes	Yes	No
Extra property compensation?	Yes	Yes	No
Extra vent stack required?	Yes	Yes	No
Additional tunnelling through park?	Yes	Yes	No*
Fragmentation of Royal Park?	Yes	Yes	No
Extra traffic light in Flemington Rd?	Yes	No	No
Impact on boulevard character?	Yes	Yes	No
Extra tunnel length?	~500m	~500m	~150m
Extra cost?	High	High	Low

The Tullamarine Freeway option is doable

Images have been included as an attachment to this release that present the urban design developed by architects Atelier Red + Black for the Safety Net’s Oak St tunnel opening proposal. While the Safety Net’s preferred design would have avoided Royal Park altogether by having the tunnel opening in the Arden Macaulay precinct, this alternative to the Reference Design could save 55 homes, a large area of remnant vegetation and four sports fields. However, it would have significant impacts on wetlands, highlighting the compromised nature of this alternative design.

Architect and Co-Director of Atelier Red + Black, Michael Smith said that, “The Safety Net has demonstrated that by engaging the community in infrastructure planning and through careful design, West Parkville and North Melbourne could be spared from the worst of the proposed impacts”. On the proposed urban design, Smith said that “the connection with CityLink is crucial given the iconic nature of Melbourne’s ‘Cheese Stick’ Gateway; our proposal has been crafted to respect the unique qualities of this precinct”.

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The residents of West Parkville and North Melbourne believe that they deserve to be treated better and so expect that they will be genuinely consulted during the final design stage and receive the full support of the City of Melbourne to deliver the best possible outcome for their communities and for Royal Park.

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¹ Curran Street option based on design by TTM Consulting for City of Melbourne

² Racecourse Road option linked to proposal by AILA to close Elliott Ave to through traffic

³ Tullamarine Freeway option based on the SNRP Option 2 design by Safety Net for Royal Park

* Exit would include tunnel beneath Trin-Warren Tam-boore storage pond, west of an Oak Street tunnel opening