

6.1 NOM NO.1-2023: UPGRADES TO THE MOUNT WAVERLEY STATION PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS -

(SMC: File)

Submitting Councillors: Cr Anjalee de Silva, Cr Brian Little, Cr Rebecca Paterson

NOTICE OF MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes that the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan identifies upgrading the pedestrian underpass at the Mount Waverley Station as a priority project.*
- 2. Notes that residents, traders and users have provided feedback to Council over many years about feeling unsafe and uncomfortable using the underpass.*
- 3. Notes that the existing underpass does not contribute to a sense of connection between the northern side of the railway line and the Hamilton Place section of the activity centre, creating a barrier that limits the community's utilisation of these spaces which sit only moments apart.*
- 4. Writes to both the Minister for Transport Infrastructure and VicTrack advocating for and requesting that upgrading of the Mount Waverley Station pedestrian underpass, including reviewing the type of connections between the two sides of the railway line and whether an underpass is the best method of access, in line with the vision of the Structure Plan to provide greater engagement with all parts of the activity centre and greater sense of place in the community be prioritised and seeks to work closely with them on any designs to review and upgrade the space.*
- 5. Writes to local members of parliament advising of the above and requesting their support to obtain the improvements to the underpass and creating better connections between the North and South of the railway line.*

INTRODUCTION

The Mount Waverley train station underpass is an owned and managed by VicTrack. It provides the most direct access between the civic precinct on the north side of the railway line and the main commercial area on the south side. The nearest alternative crossing is Stephenson's Road, approximately 180 metres away.

The underpass was constructed between 1955 when the second platform was constructed, and 1958 when the line was duplicated between Mount Waverley and Syndal.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

The current underpass is no longer suitable for contemporary times and requires substantial upgrading. People feel unsafe using the underpass, and it is often dirty and smelly.

The current underpass has a poor sense of connection between the civic and main commercial areas of the activity centre. Residents, users, and traders often complain about the space not feeling clean, or safe to use.

The ramps to access the underpass are not compliant with Australian standards for wheelchair access, limiting access to the station for some users. The underpass is also narrow with a low roof with limited lighting which all contribute to the feeling of being unsafe for users.

Feeling unsafe in the train station or when traversing to and from the station contributes to lower numbers of people using public transport.

The community does not identify the Mount Waverley activity centre as including anything north of the railway line, limiting engagement at our library and community centres, gallery and gardens that exist there. This railway line barrier that is both physical and visual needs to be addressed to ensure greater engagement with all parts of the activity centre and greater sense of place in the community. This could include reviewing whether an underpass is the best method of access between the two spaces.

The Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan recommend improved connections between the civic and the commercial areas, and the construction of a green pedestrian pathway through the activity centre from the Library south to Woolworths. Improving the underpass is a key component of this linkage.

The Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan also included two specific priority projects relating to the underpass:

- Upgrading the pedestrian underpass at the train station, with consideration of how the underpass can integrate into the new Station Forecourt/ Hamilton Place public space and the Miller Crescent precinct, and
- Advocating for improvements to the pedestrian underpass.

The underpass is owned and managed by VicTrack who will ultimately be responsible for any works to upgrade it. Council can work with VicTrack to have them prioritise its upgrading and start the design process for an upgrade as soon as possible.

The first step in doing so is to formally write to VicTrack, and the Minister for Transport Infrastructure (the Hon. Jacinta Allan) to request and advocate for the upgrading of the underpass and ask that it is included on VicTrack's future work program as a priority project.

Following this, once design work commences Council is able to assist VicTrack with any information required and community engagement activities at the design stage.

CONCLUSION

The current pedestrian underpass at Mount Waverley Station is no longer fit for purpose. It requires upgrading to meet contemporary needs including accessibility requirements consistent with Australian standards and improving safety and the amenity for users. This also presents an opportunity to partner with VicTrack on a design response that alleviates the disconnection between the North and South of the railway line.

As the underpass is owned and managed by VicTrack, the first step is to write to VicTrack and the Minister for Transport Infrastructure to highlight the current issues and to request and advocate for its upgrade and ask that it is included on Vic Tracks future works program as a priority project.

UPGRADES TO THE MOUNT WAVERLEY STATION PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS - OFFICERS REPORT

Submitting Councillors: Cr Anjalee de Silva, Cr Brian Little, Cr Rebecca Paterson

Responsible Officer: Peter Panagakos, Director City Development

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Notes that the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan identifies the upgrading the pedestrian underpass at the Mount Waverley Station as a priority project.*
2. *Notes that residents, traders and users have provided feedback to Council over many years about feeling unsafe and uncomfortable using the underpass.*
3. *Notes that the existing underpass does not contribute to a sense of connection between the northern side of the railway line and the Hamilton Place section of the activity centre, creating a barrier that limits the community's utilisation of these spaces which sit only moments apart.*
4. *Writes to both the Minister for Transport Infrastructure and VicTrack advocating for and requesting that upgrading of the Mount Waverley Station pedestrian underpass, including reviewing the type of connections between the two sides of the railway line and whether an underpass is the best method of access, in line with the vision of the Structure Plan to provide greater engagement with all parts of the activity centre and greater sense of place in the community be prioritised and seeks to work closely with them on any designs to review and upgrade the space.*
5. *Writes to local members of parliament advising of the above and requesting their support to obtain the improvements to the underpass and creating better connections between the North and South of the railway line.*

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant budget implications from this Notice of Motion. The actions called for are primarily the responsibility of VicTrack.

Internal resourcing will be required as outlined below.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

Improvement works to the underpass are also likely to drive community interest in other related actions of the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan, such as improvements to the station forecourt area (largely again on land owned by VicTrack), and progress on the north south spine connection further south through to Woolworths. These further actions will have resourcing implications, however all the actions are contained in the adopted Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan.

Internal resourcing will be required to engage with VicTrack as any designs are prepared, and to assist and represent Council at any engagement activities VicTrack undertake with the community.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The Notice of Motion is supported by the Council Plan – Enhanced Places. Upgrading of the underpass will enhance a key pedestrian connection in a major activity centre in Monash.

The Notice of Motion is also supported by the Council Plan – Inclusive Services. Upgrading of the underpass will assist in providing access to the library and other community services located around the library to users who may not be able to access it by car, or from the other side of the railway line.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

The Notice of Motion proposes advocacy to facilitate a priority project identified in the adopted Mount Waverley Structure Plan.

Council has received conditional authorisation to undertake a planning scheme amendment to implement the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan and will be engaging with the community later in the year.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The improved amenity and accessibility of an upgraded pedestrian underpass will remove one of the barriers to some people who currently do not use it. Improving the underpass will also improve connectivity between the 2 parts of the activity centre. Particularly when combined with other recent or identified improvements such as the new EV charging point at the Mount Waverley Library, or enhancements to the station forecourt may lead to an incremental increase in awareness and users of the underpass.