

1.8 SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP UPDATE & MIXED USE MULTI-LEVEL CAR PARK, MONTCLAIR AVENUE, GLEN WAVERLEY

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes that the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) has not announced the preferred location for its stations in the Clayton/Glen Waverley Activity Centres, nor the Monash University area.*
2. *Notes that that the investigative works by the SRLA to identify the preferred locations for all its stations in Monash including the Glen Waverley Activity Centre (GWAC) is progressing.*
3. *Notes that the State Government's Strategic Assessment for the Suburban Rail Loop project is based on overall precinct integration, urban renewal opportunities, value capture and generally encouraging growth in activity centres.*
4. *Notes that Council officers will continue with preliminary discussions with the SRLA regarding possible location options for the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) station in the GWAC including identifying potential issues and opportunities for any location and present further updates to Council. And that Council continues to seek and expect meaningful participation as well as deliberative engagement on the project*
5. *Writes to The Hon. Jacinta Allen MP, Minister for Transport Infrastructure and the Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop and to the Acting CEO of the Suburban Rail Loop Authority, Tom Considine, to:*
 - a. *Again request that the State provide funding assistance to Council to:*
 - i. *assist Council is developing and co-ordinating its meaningful participation in the SRL project; and*
 - ii. *enable Council to undertake and coordinate the planning for urban areas and activity centres at and immediately around the proposed station locations.*
6. *Notes that in relation to Project 2019147 – Principal Consultancy Services - Detailed design for a mixed-use multi-level car park, 31-39 Montclair Avenue, Glen Waverley, that a letter of suspension was sent to the Consultant – Warren & Mahoney Architects Pty Ltd on 03 April 2020.*
7. *Due to resolutions 2 & 4 above, Council agrees that Project 2019147 – Principal Consultancy Services - Detailed design for a mixed-use multi-level car park, 31-39 Montclair Avenue, Glen Waverley will be further suspended and that Council will reconsider project in light of any progress with the SRLA no later than the April 2021 ordinary Council meeting, or earlier should any announcements be made on the preferred location of the SRL station in Glen Waverley.*
8. *Writes to the Consultant – Warren & Mahoney Architects Pty Ltd to extend the suspension of the Contract to April 2021.*
9. *Direct offers to write to key stakeholders providing a further update on the project and prepare a media release regarding the same.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project and the consequential effects of the SRL project on the Montclair Mixed Use Multi-level Car Park project within the GWAC.

The report notes that Council will continue with its discussions with the SRLA regarding potential station options, as no announcements regarding station locations have been made. The report recommends that Council further suspend Project 2019147 – Principal Consultancy Services - Detailed design for a mixed-use multi-level car park, 31-39 Montclair Avenue, Glen Waverley until April 2021 or earlier if any announcements regarding the SRL stations are made.

BACKGROUNDSuburban Rail Loop

Council will recall that an officer's report to the Tuesday 30 July 2019 Council meeting provided an update on the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project and the implications for the City of Monash. In committing to the SRL project, the Government has set a number of objectives and criteria for the project to assist in assessing the project and contributing to the development of a more polycentric city. The SRL project is also required to deliver against the objectives of Plan Melbourne.

Officers have had a range of discussions with the SRLA from the announcement of the project and these have continued through 2020, although COVID-19 has protracted the discussions with discussions recommencing more recently.

Council will also recall that in March this year Nick Foa, acting CEO of the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) provided a briefing to Council. This briefing included an overview of the Suburban Rail Loop project, its objectives and a commitment from SRLA to engage with Council in an open and meaningful way throughout the project.

Montclair Avenue Project

At the Ordinary Council meeting held on 31 March 2020, Council received a report on the status of three Council projects within the Glen Waverley Activity Centre that are exposed to a potential risk of not progressing at this stage due to the investigative work underway by the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) within the Glen Waverley Activity Centre (GWAC). The report recommended next steps to re-prioritise three Council Projects in line with the investigative work of the SRLA.

In particular, the report recommended suspending project 2019147 – Principal Consultancy Services – Detailed design for a mixed-use multi-level car park in Montclair Avenue, Glen Waverley (Project) for up to six months or upon any announcement on the preferred location of the SRL station in the GWAC. The six-month suspension for the Project is due to end in September 2020.

A copy of Council's resolutions from the 31 March 2020 meeting are in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Suburban Rail Loop Project

Since the March briefing by the SRLA, there have been a number of changes at the SRLA, in particular the departure of Nick Foa, replaced by Tom Considine along with a general increase in specialist technical staff at the Authority. Recent discussions have been with new personnel at the SRLA.

In late June, the SRLA launched a community engagement website as part of broader, conceptual community consultation. Along with this, there have been further discussions with the SRLA in June through until August. Although limited information was available to Council with regard to the progress of the project and possible station locations, it is believed that further work has now progressed and the SRLA is seeking to re-engage with Council on the project.

Therefore, it is critical that Council officers continue with discussions with the SRLA regarding possible location options for the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) station in the GWAC including identifying potential issues and opportunities for any location. Further updates will then be presented to Council, not only to understand and input into the project but also its possible impacts and benefits to the various locations. This will also allow a better understanding of the potential impact upon Council's stated objective of delivering a carpark.

Suspension of Project 2019147 – Mixed Use Multi Level Car Park, Montclair Avenue, Glen Waverley

Council has a contract with the Principal Consultant - Warren & Mahoney Architects Pty Ltd (Consultant), to deliver the Project. When a change to a project occurs such as in this instance, the contract provides Council with the following three options:

1. Suspension (clause 10.3)
2. Variation by agreement (clause 17.3)
3. Termination for convenience (clause 17.3.2)

In order to ensure Council is meeting its contractual obligations and procurement rules, we have received Legal advice from Council's lawyers on the advantages and disadvantages of these three options and the ability to extend the suspension of the contract with the Consultant to April 2021.

The advice received was that given the current environment with COVID-19, it would be acceptable for *"Council to issue a further letter to the Consultant extending the suspension until April 2021. The benefit of doing so will be to preserve the relationship (given the prior work performed by the Consultant) through until that time."*

Officers have discussed the proposal to extend the suspension of the contract with the Consultant. The Consultant has confirmed this would be acceptable to them

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The SRL project and the social, economic and environmental benefits that will come from the anticipated level of investment is consistent with Council and State Government Policies.

Consistency with Council Strategies and Policies

Monash 2021: A Thriving Community (2010)

This long term strategy states (as relevant) that our community values convenience (we are in walking distance to all we need); a balance between residential, commercial and industrial development; good connections to bus and train services, and easy access by train/freeway; we have a friendly, community based atmosphere in shopping strips; and a safe place to live and bring up a family.

Monash Council Plan (2017-2021)

The following are relevant strategic objectives and strategies from the Council Plan:

A liveable sustainable city

- Strengthening our strategic policy and local planning framework
- Advocacy for enhancement of the National Employment Cluster
- Increasing our community engagement and education about town planning

Inviting open and urban spaces

- Ensuring the walkability of our city
- Improving our green open spaces and linking up our bicycle trails
- Enhancing our activity centres with an increased focus on the moveability and prioritisation of pedestrians

An inclusive community

- Delivering integrated planning and community strengthening

Responsive and efficient services

- Enhancing community consultation and involvement in our decision-making

The Council Plan identified the following relevant priority projects:

- Improve our activity centres and pedestrian movements therein.

Other relevant Strategies

- Glen Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan
- Monash Integrated Transport Strategy
- Monash Economic Development Strategy

Monash Planning Scheme

Clauses from the Monash Planning Scheme that are relevant to Clayton include:

- Clause 11.06 – Metropolitan Melbourne
- Clause 17 – Economic Development
- Clause 21.05 (MSS) – Economic Development
- Clause 21.06 (MSS) – Activity Centres
- Clause 22.03 – Industry and Business Development and Character Policy

State Government Policy Context

Plan Melbourne

There are numerous references and policy directions throughout Plan Melbourne that highlight the importance of the MNEIC, specifically.

“Direction 1.1 Create a city structure that strengthens Melbourne’s competitiveness for jobs and investment”

“Policy 1.1.4 Support the significant employment and servicing role of Health and Education Precincts across Melbourne”

“Policy 1.17 Plan for adequate commercial land across Melbourne”

“Direction 2.2 Deliver more housing closer to jobs and public transport”

“Direction 2.4 Facilitate decision-making processes for housing in the right locations”

“Direction 3.1 Transform Melbourne’s transport system to support a productive city”

“Policy 3.1.2 Provide high quality public transport access to job rich areas”

The three projects are a result of the Glen Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan and / or are consistent with themes of the Monash Council Plan (2017-2021) as follows:

Monash Council Plan (2017-2021)

The following are relevant strategic objectives and strategies from the Council Plan:

A liveable sustainable city

- Strengthening our strategic policy and local planning framework
- Increasing our community engagement and education about town planning

Inviting open and urban spaces

- Ensuring the walkability of our city

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funds allocated to the Montclair Mixed use Project have been requested to be carried forward in the FY20/21 budget.

In the medium to longer term, the SRL stations will likely be a catalyst for significant increases in land value and consequently increased development expectations in these hubs. It is therefore important that precinct planning for the “place” around these stations commence as early as possible. To facilitate this the State Government and their agencies should be providing direct financial assistance to Council undertake and co-ordinate the precinct planning in and around the station locations.

CONSULTATION

Information on the extended suspension of the Montclair Avenue project will be provided on Council's website and by writing to Council's key stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

It is critical that Council officers continue discussions with the SRLA regarding possible location options for the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) station in the GWAC including identifying potential issues and opportunities for any location and present further updates to Council.

Given the uncertainty with the above SRL Station location, it is recommended that the planning for the mixed-use multi-deck carpark be further suspended to allow Council to evaluate the next steps with the SRLA.