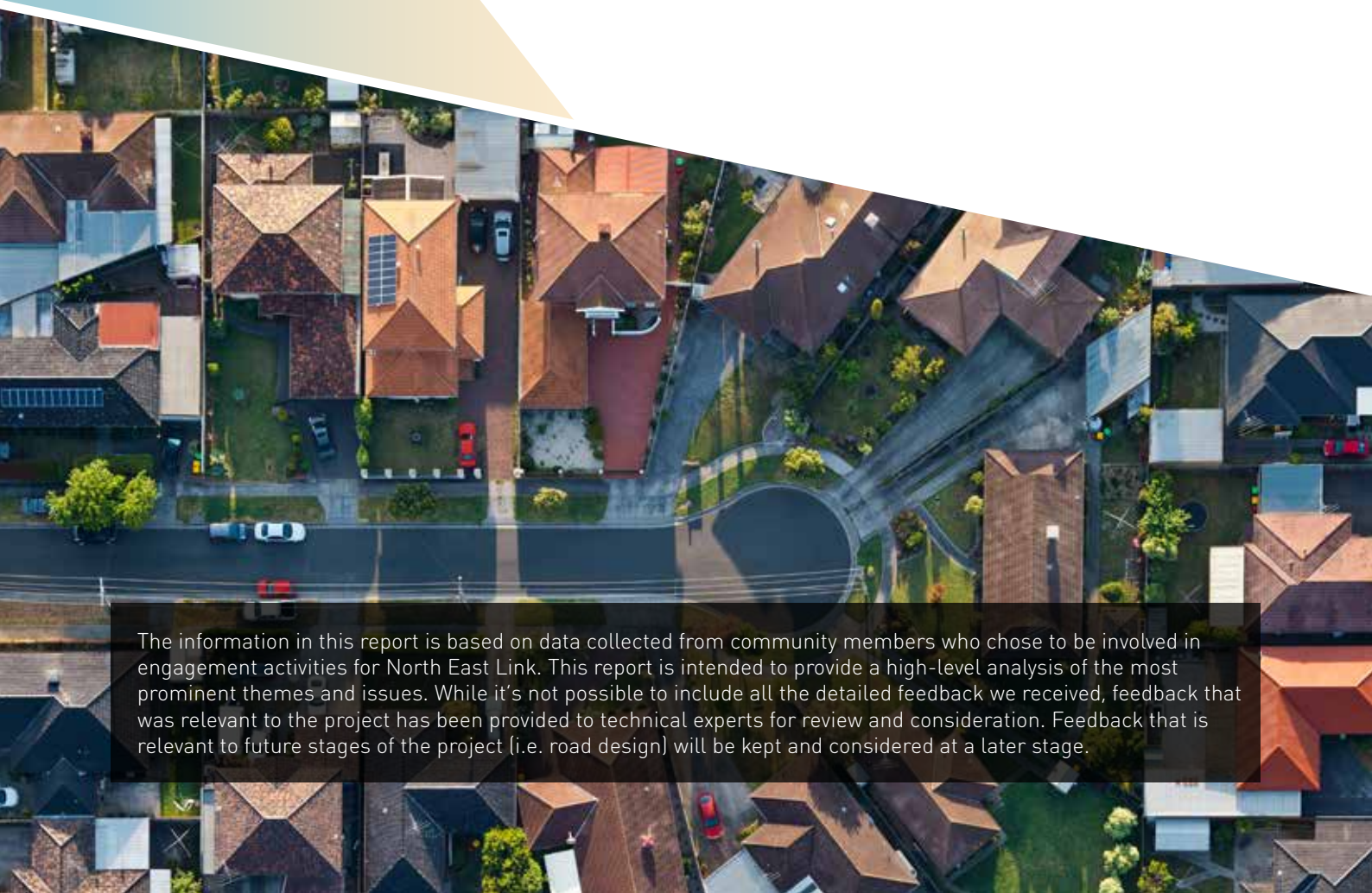




COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

AUGUST - OCTOBER 2017



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood, showing a grid of houses with various roof colors (brown, orange, grey) and green lawns. A road with a roundabout is visible in the center. The image is partially obscured by a large, abstract geometric shape in the top left corner, composed of yellow, green, and blue triangles.

North East Link will finally connect the missing link in Melbourne's road network between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway or EastLink.

This report provides a summary of community feedback received from August - October 2017 about early strategic planning work for the project.

The information in this report is based on data collected from community members who chose to be involved in engagement activities for North East Link. This report is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. While it's not possible to include all the detailed feedback we received, feedback that was relevant to the project has been provided to technical experts for review and consideration. Feedback that is relevant to future stages of the project (i.e. road design) will be kept and considered at a later stage.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Corridor options

Appendix B - Respondents by suburb



1. Project overview

The Victorian Government has committed to building North East Link – the missing link in Melbourne’s freeway network.

North East Link has been talked about for more than 50 years and is long overdue.

In 2016 Infrastructure Victoria identified it as Victoria’s priority road project.

The Victorian Government established the North East Link Authority to oversee all aspects of project development and delivery, starting with recommending a project corridor and developing a business case.

Expert engineering, environmental and social investigations are underway to determine a corridor for North East Link, with a focus on protecting existing urban areas and minimising impacts on the environment.

Community engagement is playing an important role in shaping early strategic planning for North East Link.

In August 2017 we released four potential corridors and asked communities for feedback on how we are planning the project and investigating how the corridors might perform in fixing the missing link in Melbourne’s freeway network.



The four potential corridor options for North East Link (More detail is in Appendix A)

2. Community engagement overview

There is no existing road reserve for North East Link and no easy solution to fixing the missing link. Each corridor has opportunities and challenges.

During our early strategic planning we checked with communities to make sure we had identified the right problems North East Link needs to solve, and what it needs to achieve.

We also asked communities to help us better understand and balance different opportunities and challenges so that we can recommend the corridor to Government that delivers the best solution for local communities, Melbourne and Victoria.

It's our job as a team of technical specialists to recommend a corridor for North East Link. However, communities will have helped us to get there by letting us know what is important to them and whether our strategic planning considered the right things.



Engagement timeline



Community travel and values survey

May - July 2017

We asked people how they travel around and through the north-east, what they value about their neighbourhoods and their views on improving transport infrastructure.

What we heard helped to inform some of our strategic planning work including the project objectives and principles. A report is online at northeastlink.vic.gov.au/publications



Project planning and corridor options engagement

August - October 2017

On 7 August 2017 we shared four potential corridors and our early analysis work with communities. We asked if our technical studies were looking at the right things, and for information that could help us better understand and balance different opportunities and challenges.



Report back to communities

November 2017

This report forms the next part of our engagement with communities; reporting back what we heard from August - October 2017 and how your feedback has helped shape strategic planning for North East Link.



Corridor announcement and business case

Our next step will be to recommend a project corridor to the Victorian Government by the end of the year.

Once we have a project corridor, there will be lots more opportunities for communities to get involved. This will be around areas like urban design, walking and cycling connections and the environment.

We'll also commence detailed planning and impact assessments. Communities will be able to give more feedback as part of this process. You can read more at planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria



2.1 What we asked communities from August to October

We asked communities to give us feedback on two areas of our strategic planning work.

1: The project objectives and principles

Why we asked for feedback

The project objectives and principles guide how we are planning for North East Link.

The **objectives** tell us what North East Link must achieve. The **principles** tell us what impacts we should minimise.

The corridor we recommend to Government will be the one that best meets the project objectives and principles.

What we asked

- How important are the project objectives and principles to you?
- Is there anything else you think we should include?

2: Findings about the corridors

Why we asked for feedback

We shared the early findings about the corridors to see if our studies to investigate how they might perform were looking at the right things.

It was important for us to do this early on so we could incorporate community feedback into the work we are still completing to recommend a project corridor.

What we asked

- What do you think of what we've found so far?
- Have we missed anything important?
- What more work do you think we need to do?

Why not just have a vote?

Through our early discussions with communities, we heard it was important to people that we recommend the project corridor using a process informed by technical studies and analysis rather than a popular vote or a poll. Many people did choose to send us votes, or to tell us which corridor they want. Where possible we looked at the reasons people preferred one corridor over another to understand what mattered to them and why. We didn't record votes.

2.2 How we let people know about the project

<p>How we let people know about the opportunity to get involved...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We posted a newsletter to 308,000+ homes and businesses in the project area • We sent an email to our 5,500+ email newsletter subscribers • We talked to the media and attracted TV, radio and newspaper coverage • We reached 1.2M people through Facebook and Twitter posts and advertising • We advertised in six local newspapers with a combined readership of 267,855+ people • We advertised on five major radio stations and on 13 mobile roadside billboards • We hosted 12 community drop-in information sessions in Balwyn North, Bulleen, Eltham, Greensborough, Ivanhoe, Lilydale, Ringwood, Rosanna, Warrandyte, Wantirna South and Melbourne CBD • We hosted pop-up stalls at six local markets and community events • We live streamed an information session with VicDeaf on our Facebook page • We spoke and answered questions at public forums organised by four local councils (Nillumbik, Banyule, Boroondara and Manningham).
<p>How many people were interested in finding out more...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63,000+ people visited our project information website • 20,000+ people visited our community engagement website • 2,300+ people attended one of our 12 community drop-in information sessions • 1,600+ more people started following us on Facebook and Twitter • 2,000+ more people signed up to receive our e-newsletters • 160+ people called our 1800 community hotline • 20+ community groups and organisations met with us.
<p>How many people gave us feedback...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,075 people completed a survey online • 510 people posted 2,048 comments in our online discussion forums • 434 people completed a hardcopy feedback form at a drop-in information session • 237 people used our online Q and A tool • 588 people sent us an email or a letter • 16 community groups and organisations and 10 councils sent us a written response.

2.3 Who we heard from

We heard from people living in the north-east as well as people likely to use North East Link.

To make sure we were hearing from a range of community members across the entire project area we asked people to tell us a bit about themselves.

It wasn't possible for us to ask everyone, and not everyone we asked chose to tell us.

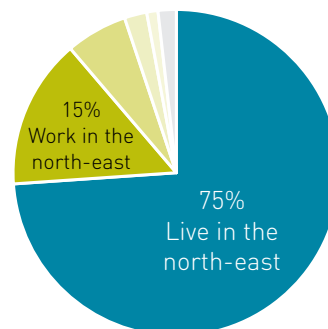
Where you live

Top 20 suburbs	
1. Eltham (8%)	11. Heidelberg (2%)
2. Bulleen (8%)	12. Yallambie (2%)
3. Balwyn North (7%)	13. Watsonia (2%)
4. Greensborough (5%)	14. Donvale (2%)
5. Rosanna (4%)	15. Bend of Islands (2%)
6. Warrandyte (4%)	16. Doncaster East (2%)
7. Macleod (3%)	17. Templestowe (1%)
8. Viewbank (3%)	18. Ivanhoe (1%)
9. Diamond Creek (3%)	19. Montmorency (1%)
10. Eltham North (2%)	20. Park Orchards (1%)

A complete list is provided in Appendix B.

How you describe yourself

- I live in the north-east (74%)
- I work in the north-east (15%)
- I own a business in the north-east (6%)
- I study in the north-east (2%)
- I drive a truck in the north-east (1%)
- Other (2%)



2.4 Summary of key findings

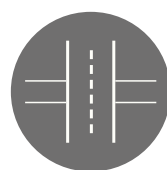
Community engagement this early is rare for an infrastructure project like North East Link.

Usually community engagement begins after strategic planning is complete. We were impressed with the number of people who got involved in strategic planning for North East Link and by the quality of the responses we received.

Key findings overall



Many of you feel that North East Link is a critical infrastructure project for Melbourne and is long overdue. You told us you've waited a long time for this project and you want us to get it right.



You want us to plan how North East Link will connect into the existing road network and not create new problems in solving the ones we've identified.



You want evidence we are planning for population growth and considering how North East Link can support and help shape how Melbourne grows.



You want assurance we are planning an integrated transport solution that includes public transport and walking and cycling connections and succeeds in getting trucks off residential roads.



You want our early planning to carefully consider impacts on communities and the environment.



You don't want the cheapest solution, you want the best solution. But you do want to know how much the options will cost, what the costs will include and for taxpayers to get value for money.

Key feedback on the objectives and principles

Overall we heard that the objectives and principles we've developed for North East Link are on the right track.

Of the 60 measurement areas we asked you to rate, you scored 58 as 'Important' or above.

Those you scored as most important were getting trucks off residential roads and preparing for population growth.

Other performance areas you consider to be among the most important are related to:

- Improving travel times and public transport
- Minimising impacts on communities by maintaining local character, minimising reductions in property values, minimising impacts on places communities value and balancing overall benefits and disbenefits as equally as possible
- Minimising impacts on the environment, particularly on waterways, groundwater, places of environmental significance and wildlife.

Key feedback on the corridor findings so far

The objectives and principles most important to you were strongly connected to the areas you want us to investigate in more detail.

The main areas you want us to do more work on before we recommend a project corridor are:

- Traffic studies and modelling to make sure we get the traffic solution right for cars and trucks
- Population growth modelling to make sure North East Link is future proofed
- More investigations into possible community impacts
- More investigations into possible environmental impacts.

We're working on these areas and will provide more information in an options assessment report which will be published with the announcement of the project corridor.

Feedback on the engagement process

While some appreciated being involved early on in the project, many who live near the proposed corridors were frustrated we started talking to them before we had a design for the road and could answer detailed questions.

From our perspective, asking communities to contribute to strategic planning has been worthwhile. It has let us understand if our work is looking at what matters to communities, and what else you want us to consider.

We appreciate that communities want more information as soon as possible and are working hard to keep our commitment to recommend a project corridor to government by the end of the year.

3. Feedback on the objectives and principles

Our engagement on the project objectives and principles helped us make sure we had identified the right problems North East Link needs to solve, and what impacts we need to minimise.

Engagement objective

Our engagement in August-October built further on what we had heard in our first community survey in May-July. It was an opportunity to check back in with communities to see if our objectives and principles had accurately captured what you want North East Link to achieve.

It also gave us a chance to dig deeper and ask which elements were most important to you and to ask if we had missed anything important.

Feedback tools

We asked for feedback using:

- An online survey
- A hardcopy feedback form
- An online discussion forum.

Some people preferred to use the online discussion forum and some sections of the survey to talk about the corridor findings.

To make sure this feedback was properly captured, we included it with the rest of the feedback we received on the corridor findings. Feedback on these areas is in Section 4.

What are the North East Link project objectives and principles?

Our objectives for North East Link are to

1. Connect more businesses to workers, customers and other businesses
2. Connect more people to jobs and education
3. Make freight move more efficiently
4. Make neighbourhoods in the north-east safer and easier to get around. This includes outcomes like reducing congestion, getting trucks off residential roads, improving public transport services and improving walking and cycling connections.

Our guiding principles for North East Link are to

1. Minimise impacts on communities. This includes considering fitting in with local character and values, maintaining or improving access to open spaces and community facilities and minimising acquisition
2. Minimise impacts on the environment and places with cultural or heritage value, including by minimising visual, noise and air impacts
3. Minimise impacts during construction including disruptions to the existing road network, public

transport services, how visible the work could be and changes to power, gas, water and sewer services

4. Use resources efficiently so that any money we spend now will deliver good returns now and in the future.

3.1 Feedback on the project objectives

Objective 1: Connect more businesses to customers and workers

Overall communities told us that connecting business to customers and workers is an important outcome for North East Link.

Areas considered most important were those related to improving travel times and consistency. 80% of respondents rated these areas as 'Important' or above.

Feedback on this objective

Many people chose to comment on the need to cut travel times.

- "Make it more convenient for those that work in the south to traverse to work, 20km currently takes well over an hour."

Others commented on the need to improve travel times between key areas.

- "Extend accessibility to the north and west for Dandenong and Yarra Valley businesses. Travel times

to distribution and warehouse centres in Laverton, Tullamarine, Sunshine, etc. are way, way too long. Transport costs are getting out of hand."

Supporting planned business growth areas was also mentioned as being important.

- "Awareness of future business placement rather than current or immediately planned business areas. This project needs to balance between existing issues and providing support for a future that we haven't even imagined yet."

Public transport was mentioned by many as an opportunity to support connections between businesses, customers and workers.

- "Improved public transport would take many workers/customers off crowded roads and enable delivery vehicles to get places faster."

Improving public transport will be a key part of our work and is reflected in Objective 4.

A few said that connecting businesses, customers and workers should not be an objective for North East Link.

- "I don't care about businesses, what I'm concerned about is reducing the amount of traffic that cuts thru my suburb from the eastern fwy to the northern ring rd!!!!"

Our investigations will look at travel times between key business areas as well outcomes for businesses in key areas.

Objective 1: Connect more businesses to customers and workers

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Increasing the number of workers that businesses in the north east can have access to	20%	18%	25%	20%	14%	2%	3.1
Cutting overall travel times between businesses	41%	19%	20%	12%	7%	2%	3.8
Making travel times between businesses more consistent and reliable	38%	21%	21%	11%	7%	2%	3.7
Creating opportunities for new commercial development in existing business areas	17%	19%	26%	20%	16%	2%	3.0
Creating opportunities for new commercial development in new areas	20%	17%	23%	20%	17%	3%	3.0
Supporting the growth of key business areas in the north and north-east	22%	20%	25%	16%	14%	2%	3.2

Objective 2: Connect more people to jobs and education

Increasing the number of jobs and university places people can access within 45-60 minutes from their home was considered to be 'Important' or above by more than 80% of respondents.

Increasing access to jobs was considered to be more important than increasing access to education.

Feedback on this objective

Similar to Objective 1, many people commented on the need to reduce congestion and travel times.

- "Better travel times and reliable travel times is what we need, achieve that and the rest will follow."

Integrating better public transport services, as well as improving walking and cycling connections was mentioned by many as an important option to connect people to jobs and education.

- "Create more bicycle path options to get more cars off roads and to allow more people to ride to work/university."
- "...I think it is reasonable that people living in the suburbs have a 45-70 minute journey...North East Link with public transport upgrades, level crossing removals and appropriate interchange works should try to achieve this."

There was a common view that students are more likely to need public transport than workers.

- "Students are not exactly wealthy and they would be unlikely to use tollways."
- "Add Park and ride for unis. Dedicated bus routes for people at unis (through tunnel)."

We've looked into your feedback about students and public transport.

Part of this objective includes improvements to public transport access and walking and cycling connections throughout the north-east, which are being pursued. It also considers reductions in traffic volumes on roads used by public transport, improving service time and reducing delays to existing services.

In order to understand existing and future demand for travel, we have consulted with major institutions across the north east, including universities and hospitals, and have used travel origin and destination data from observed vehicle journeys. According to La Trobe University's *Campus Transport Strategy*, 69% of journeys to its Bundoora campus are by car. The plan also pursues sustainable transport strategies that rely on good road access, including the use of express buses to link to other areas of Melbourne, car-sharing and car-pooling.

Objective 2: Connect more people to jobs and education

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Increasing the number of jobs that people can get to within 45-60 minutes	43%	20%	20%	10%	6%	1%	3.8
Increasing the number of university places that people can get to within 45-60 minutes	28%	22%	22%	15%	12%	2%	3.4
Making travel times between where people live and where people study or work more consistent and reliable	51%	16%	19%	8%	5%	1%	4.0

Objective 3: Make freight move more efficiently

Improving travel times and closing the gap in the existing freight network were considered among the most important performance areas.

Creating opportunities for industrial development in existing areas and new areas was considered to be less important.

Feedback on this objective

Of the respondents who chose to comment further, many gave feedback on the need to give trucks an alternative to residential roads.

- "Traffic for heavy vehicles will be more efficient through a freeway than a suburban street with traffic lights."

- "Keep it [freight] off suburban roads that were never designed to handle it."

Many commented that improving travel times and designing North East Link to be an attractive route for trucks is important.

- "In order for business efficiency to be achieved, travel times must be consistent from one destination to the next. Traffic congestion results in trucks taking longer to make deliveries and higher labour costs for businesses meaning there are fewer opportunities to expand a business and increase the workforce."
- "I think it is important that North East Link accommodates high

productivity freight vehicles if possible as this will improve the efficiency of freight operations as more roads become toll roads in future."

Objective 3: Make freight move more efficiently

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Increasing the number of suppliers that freight and logistics businesses can reach in a reasonable travel time	26%	22%	24%	14%	12%	2%	3.4
Cutting travel times for trucks between key freight locations	29%	23%	21%	13%	13%	2%	3.4
Making travel times more consistent and reliable for trucks	29%	21%	24%	13%	13%	1%	3.4
Creating opportunities for new industrial development in existing industrial areas	15%	21%	25%	19%	18%	2%	3.0
Creating opportunities for new industrial development in new areas	15%	18%	22%	22%	22%	22%	2.8
Giving trucks an alternative to the Monash Freeway/CityLink when traffic incidents occur	33%	18%	19%	14%	14%	2%	3.4
Closing the gap in the freight network for bigger, heavier trucks (Higher Productivity Freight Vehicles)	36%	16%	20%	12%	14%	3%	3.5

Objective 4: Make local neighbourhoods safer and easier to travel in

Of the four objectives, respondents scored areas within this objective as the highest overall for 'Very important' or 'Fairly important'.

94% of respondents scored getting trucks off residential roads as 'Important' or above.

Improving public transport services, cutting travel times and keeping communities connected also scored highly.

Feedback on this objective

Public transport was commented on by many.

A few people suggested that public transport should be prioritised over road projects however many more commented on opportunities to integrate public transport with North East Link.

- "Public transport infrastructure that separates public transport from the road network should be a major component of the overall mix. Reducing traffic on routes used by buses is essential if reliable public transport is to become a viable alternative to private motor vehicle usage."

Many also commented on the importance of reducing congestion in local areas.

- "The huge amount of traffic currently on roads in the area is dividing communities and prevents easy movement within suburbs."

Improving walking and cycling connections was also mentioned.

- "Put in dedicated cycle pathways so cyclists can get to and from

work safely and don't put drivers in situations that they have to deal with cyclists on roads."

Some suggested that fire evacuation routes for residents in high risk areas should be included.

We're consulting with emergency services, government agencies and local government to understand the policies and strategies to be considered in the development of North East Link.

Objective 4: Make local neighbourhoods safer and easier to travel in

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Getting trucks off residential roads in the north-east	70%	12%	11%	4%	2%	0%	4.5
Cutting travel times to get to key public transport stops and stations	51%	21%	15%	7%	4%	1%	4.1
Improving public transport services on existing roads	56%	18%	14%	7%	4%	1%	4.2
Prioritising public transport services on North East Link	45%	20%	17%	10%	7%	1%	3.9
Providing better connections for walking and cycling	37%	16%	20%	14%	12%	1%	3.5
Cutting travel times between where people live, work, shop and access services and recreation facilities	54%	19%	15%	7%	4%	1%	4.1
Connecting areas that may currently be disconnected	42%	21%	18%	10%	8%	1%	3.8
Not dividing areas that are currently connected	48%	16%	17%	10%	7%	2%	3.8

3.2 Feedback on the project principles

Principle 1: Minimise impacts on communities

Overall respondents considered areas within this objective to be among some of the most important to consider and measure when planning North East Link.

Areas respondents scored as most important were those related to maintaining local character, minimising reductions in property

values and minimising situations where improving conditions in one area results in reducing conditions in another.

Minimising impacts on places communities value, community services and acquisition of public open space were also considered to be important measures.

Minimising acquisition of public space was considered to be marginally more important than minimising acquisition of private property.

Feedback on this principle

Many people commented on the need for balance between potential benefits and impacts.

Principle 1: Minimise impacts on communities

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Creating potential to use land for community benefit after construction	35%	22%	23%	13%	5%	2%	3.7
Minimising reduction in property values	53%	16%	14%	10%	7%	1%	4.0
Maximising increases in property values	36%	13%	16%	16%	18%	2%	3.3
Minimising situations where improving conditions in one area results in reducing conditions in another area	48%	21%	19%	8%	4%	1%	4.0
Maintaining local character	56%	14%	16%	8%	5%	1%	4.1
Improving access and opportunities for disadvantaged communities	26%	23%	28%	14%	7%	2%	3.5
Compatibility with local government strategies and vision	22%	18%	27%	17%	14%	2%	3.2
Compatibility with state government strategies and vision	15%	19%	32%	17%	13%	3%	3.1
Minimising impact on community services	37%	24%	24%	10%	3%	2%	3.8
Minimising impact on places communities value	47%	20%	20%	9%	3%	2%	4.0
Minimising the number of residential properties acquired	40%	14%	20%	13%	11%	1%	3.6
Minimising the number of businesses acquired	36%	15%	20%	15%	14%	1%	3.5
Minimising the amount of public open space acquired	46%	14%	16%	13%	9%	1%	3.8

A few felt that any impact on communities would be unacceptable however the majority commented on the need to minimise impacts while achieving the most benefit overall.

- *"Any impact should be offset by a better benefit to the community."*
- *"You need to do it properly for the broader benefit of Melbourne."*

Acquisition was a topic that generated much input. Some commented that any acquisition would be an unacceptable outcome. Others felt that while minimising acquisition is important, some acquisition would be acceptable as long as people are adequately compensated. Some commented that voluntary acquisition should be considered.

You also gave us feedback that noise and air quality impacts, as well as visual impacts, should be included as measurement areas for this principle, particularly for schools.

Feedback from community helped us recognise that assessments relating to potential air quality, noise and visual effects could be considered under Principle 1 or Principle 2.

For the final analysis, the assessment of these issues is now included against Principle 1.

Principle 2: Minimise impacts on places with cultural and historic value and the environment

Overall, communities considered minimising impacts on the environment to be a high priority.

Minimising impacts on waterways, areas of environmental significance and wildlife were considered to be the most important areas followed closely by minimising impacts on native vegetation.

Feedback on this principle

Some respondents said minimising impacts on the environment is their highest priority.

- "Make it a priority to eliminate options with the highest effects on the environment. The environment should be the first consideration."

A few felt that any impact on the

environment would be unacceptable. Others commented that balancing other impacts, or giving consideration to other outcomes is important. Tunnels were mentioned frequently as a way to achieve this balance.

- "Environment is a very important consideration but direct community impact outweighs it. If there was a way of keeping both that would be awesome, but if the visual impact of the structure is increased to make way for the Yarra then it should be a tunnel so both the community and the environment are protected."

Many gave ideas on how to minimise environmental impacts.

- "It's hard to hide a freeway not in a

tunnel but lots of vegetation helps. I prefer vegetation to artificial "decorations".

- "Faunaducts, faunashelters, grass areas to turn into native green, carbon neutral operations: integration of newest technologies on solar, LED etc."

Although we still have more work to do before we can start designing the road, we'll consider the ideas you've already given us about design and new technologies.

We'll also ask you for more input and ideas, particularly around urban design as the project progresses.

Principle 2: Minimise impacts on places with cultural and historic value and the environment

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Minimising impacts on areas of environmental significance	54%	15%	16%	10%	5%	1%	4.0
Minimising impacts on wildlife	54%	16%	15%	10%	5%	1%	4.0
Minimising impacts on native vegetation	49%	17%	14%	12%	7%	1%	3.9
Minimising impacts on wildlife corridors	55%	15%	15%	10%	5%	1%	4.0
Minimising impacts on waterways	58%	15%	15%	8%	4%	1%	4.2
Minimising impacts on groundwater	55%	16%	16%	8%	4%	1%	4.1
Minimising the visual impact of any new road infrastructure	45%	19%	17%	11%	7%	1%	3.8
Minimising impacts on places with Indigenous significance	42%	15%	17%	11%	13%	2%	3.6
Minimising impacts on places with historical significance	39%	20%	22%	11%	7%	1%	3.7
Minimising greenhouse gas emissions during construction	36%	15%	20%	14%	15%	1%	3.4
Minimising power consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions during operation	40%	16%	19%	12%	11%	2%	3.6

Principle 3: Minimise impacts during construction

Minimising travel disruptions to commuters was the highest priority area to minimise for respondents.

Respondents were divided as to how important it should be to minimise visual impacts during construction and to minimise how complex North East Link is to build.

People were divided on this topic; many felt these areas were only 'Slightly important' or 'Not at all important', while some thought they were 'Very important' or 'Fairly important'.

Feedback on this principle

Many people who commented on this principle said that short-term construction impacts would be acceptable if long term benefits and a good outcome are delivered.

- "The vision and offset of the long term benefits should be tangible

so the project justification should be evident to all."

- "I don't mind impacts during construction as long as the outcome at the end doesn't destroy my community long term."

Some commented that the project should be fast-tracked to make the duration of any impacts as short as possible.

- "Build it, build asap. We can mop up later. I would prefer two or three years of pain to a decade of a thousand cuts."

Others offered ideas on how to minimise impacts including timing construction to avoid peak travel times and at night. Traffic delays and noise were the top concerns.

- "Time construction outside of peak travel times for commuters. Minimise noise for construction

near residential areas."

- "Depending on route, complete in stages to ensure road is not gridlocked."

Good planning, consulting with communities and keeping people informed was suggested by some as being important.

- "Consult and progressively inform affected communities on engineering works and potential disruptions to enhance opportunities for ameliorating impacts."

Before construction starts we will speak with communities likely to be affected to identify ways to help minimise disruptions.

We'll also keep commuters informed and look at ways to minimise travel delays and disruptions.

Principle 3: Minimise impacts during construction

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Minimising impacts on public transport services	41%	23%	22%	8%	5%	1%	3.9
Minimising travel delays for drivers	42%	20%	23%	10%	4%	1%	3.9
Minimising the amount of construction-related traffic on the road	32%	21%	25%	15%	6%	1%	3.6
Minimising visual impacts during construction	19%	12%	21%	22%	26%	1%	2.7
Minimising how complex North East Link is to build	23%	14%	19%	17%	24%	3%	3.0
Minimising impacts to power, gas, sewer and other services	32%	17%	25%	15%	9%	2%	3.5

A technical issue in an early version of the online survey for this question was detected and corrected. It affected a small number of responses only and has been factored into the data analysis.

Principle 4: Use resources efficiently

Getting value for money now, and into the future as Melbourne continues to grow, were important performance measures for most respondents.

Preparing for future population growth was considered to be the most important way to use resources efficiently, followed by getting the best return on investment.

Feedback on this principle

Many people gave us more feedback on the need to prepare for future population growth.

- “No matter what this project is going to cost money to build, so it is worth adopting the best option that considers future growth even if it is more expensive initially.”

Many also commented that value for money and getting the best outcomes are more important than cost.

- “Return on investment should not just be about quantitative figures e.g. \$ but more about

outcomes and long term benefits which will be a combination of both quantitative and qualitative measures ...it's a significant challenge”

A few commented on the costs of not getting North East Link right.

- “It doesn't matter the cost if the wrong corridor is chosen. If the wrong corridor is picked the problems will not be solved.”

For this principle, we will use measures such as how well the different corridor options can cater for future freeway connections and public transport improvements to make sure North East Link is future-proofed. We will also measure time of day flexibility and explore the possibility of travel direction adjustments for peak periods.

You gave us more feedback about planning for population growth when talking about the different corridor options. This is covered in section 4.2 of this report.

Principle 4: Use resources efficiently

	Very important 5	Fairly important 4	Important 3	Slightly important 2	Not at all important 1	Prefer not to say 0	Mean score
Keeping the overall cost as low as possible	21%	15%	24%	21%	19%	1%	3.0
Keeping the overall operating costs as low as possible	29%	21%	24%	14%	11%	1%	3.4
Getting the best return for any money spent	43%	17%	21%	11%	8%	1%	3.8
Unlocking unused capacity on other roads	25%	25%	26%	13%	9%	3%	3.4
Making sure the road allows for future population growth	66%	14%	12%	4%	4%	1%	4.3
Being prepared for new technology (like driverless cars)	34%	18%	19%	12%	15%	2%	3.4

4. Feedback on the corridor findings so far

Our engagement with communities on our early findings about the corridor options helped us to better understand potential opportunities and challenges for each.

Engagement objective

Engaging early with communities on our technical work let us ask:

- Are our technical studies and investigations looking at the right things?
- What more work do you think we need to do to investigate the corridors?
- Are there things about your local area you want us to know? Have we missed anything important?

We are using what we heard to inform our further investigations into the corridors.

We also received lots of feedback that will be useful when we move into designing the project next year.

Feedback tools

We asked for feedback using:

- An online survey with free text questions
- A hardcopy feedback form with free text questions
- An online Question and Answer tool
- An online discussion forum
- A 1800 telephone hotline and community contact email address.

We also spoke with community members at 12 information sessions across the north-east and met with community groups and stakeholders one-on-one.

16 community groups and organisations and 10 councils sent us a written response. These included Banyule, Boroondara, Darebin, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra and Yarra Ranges.



Feedback themes

Overall, you gave us feedback around nine key themes. We used these to code, count and analyse all your responses. Some pieces of feedback contained multiple themes - each was counted.

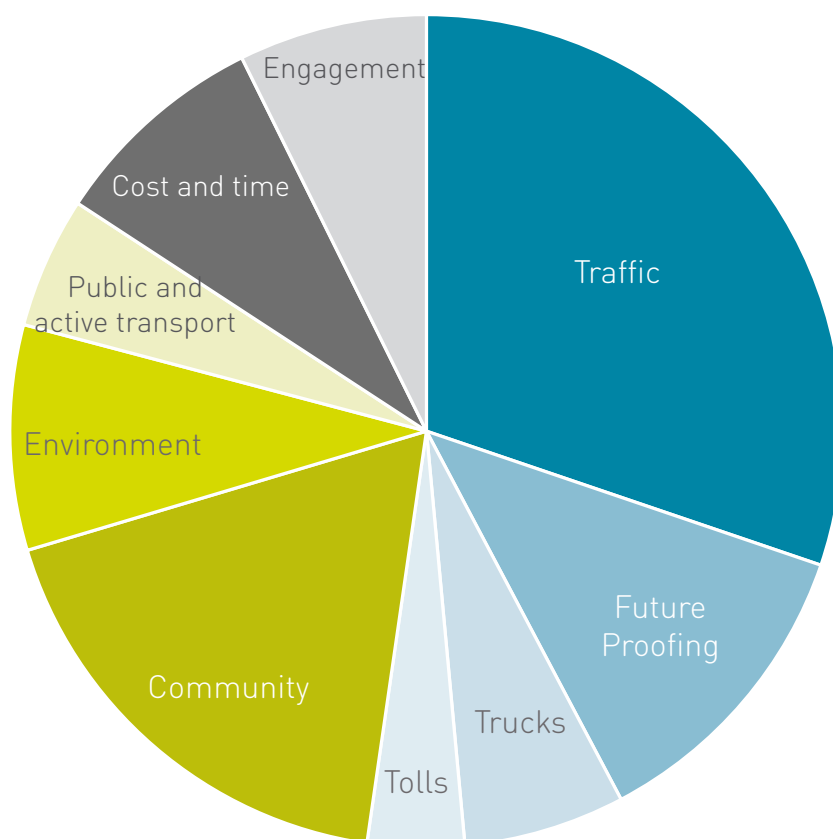
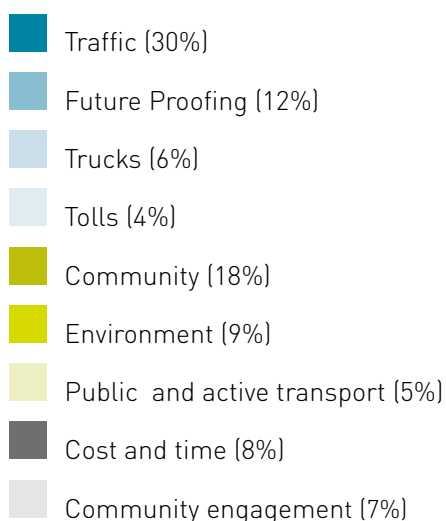
There was a strong connection between the objectives and principles you told us are most important to you and the issues you raised about the corridor options.

Getting the traffic solution right, minimising impacts on communities, future-proofing the solution and minimising impacts on the environment were the top feedback themes.

We also received feedback on trucks, tolls, project costs and timing and public and active transport. You also gave us feedback about our community engagement.

While we received lots of positive feedback on our findings and the work we are doing, this report focuses primarily on the issues communities raised and the areas people told us they want us to do more work.

Feedback themes



4.1 Traffic

We heard you say you want us to get the traffic solution right. This includes making sure we plan appropriately, identify the right complementary projects and don't create new problems.

Community feedback	Project response
1. New traffic problems North East Link could create	
<p>1.1 Increased traffic on the Eastern Freeway</p> <p>We heard you are concerned we aren't adequately planning for traffic increases on the Eastern Freeway, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cars travelling from the north and north-east to the CBD via the Eastern Freeway and Hoddle Street or Alexandra Parade • More cars and trucks between Bulleen Road and EastLink • More cars and trucks through the EastLink tunnels. <p>You also wanted to know how we are considering any increases as part of measuring how the corridors perform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic across the whole transport network is factored into assessing the options. For example, assessing changes to network performance considers how the Eastern Freeway, Monash Freeway and other roads affect access, travel times etc. • The strategic transport modelling we're doing looks at how traffic will change as a result of North East Link at a high level. Modelling shows little or no additional trips to the CBD. Some traffic previously using local arterial roads like St Georges Road, High Street and Upper Heidelberg Road would choose to use North East Link. • Should an option proceed that would increase traffic on the Eastern Freeway, upgrades would be included. The upgrades would address the existing operational issues on the Eastern Freeway as well as accommodate the additional traffic volumes. • The EastLink tunnels are predicted to be able to manage the extra traffic. We are doing extra modelling and data collection to confirm how traffic flows south of the tunnels on EastLink and in Ringwood. We are also working with VicRoads, ConnectEast and local government to establish if other works outside North East Link would help with congestion. The proposed upgrades on the Eastern Freeway also assist in improving traffic flow through the tunnels, removing constraints which cause some of the existing congestion.
<p>1.2 Increased traffic on local roads</p> <p>You asked us if we are looking at whether each of the corridor options would increase traffic on local roads, particularly those connected to North East Link by interchanges.</p> <p>Key roads frequently mentioned were Lower Plenty Road, Main Road, Fitzsimons Lane, Reynolds Road, Ryans Road and Grimshaw Street. You also asked if traffic would increase in the broader Boroondara Council area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local arterial roads are considered in the strategic transport model and changes are measured for each corridor and various interchange configurations. The strategic model does not specifically look at traffic on smaller roads but it picks up where there would be changes through use of origin destination data. Where there are apparent increases further modelling is done. • The principles require North East Link not to shift a problem from one place to another. This does not necessarily mean no traffic increases, but that if any increase translates to a problem (i.e. not simply a change) it must also be solved during design. This may mean changes to North East Link's design or complementary works in addition to those already identified. • The degree of change and its potential effects is evaluated for each corridor and will be considered in the final assessments.

2. Other problems North East Link needs to solve

2.1 Areas you thought we had missed

Overall we heard the roads our early work had identified as key congestion points in the north-east were right. Areas you told us we had missed were:

- Warrandyte Bridge
- The M80/Greensborough Highway interchange
- The area north-east of the M80/Greensborough Highway particularly near the Diamond Creek Road roundabout. Some suggested that should Option A or B proceed, the northern section of Option C and D could be included to help streamline connections to the M80.

- The strategic transport modelling we have performed for each corridor includes all arterial roads across Greater Melbourne. This includes locations such as the Warrandyte Bridge. As this is one of the few crossings of the Yarra River, we have used it as one of the locations to assess the performance of each of the corridors.
- The interchange of the M80 Ring Road and Greensborough is a critical location for the project as all the corridor options connect here. Our design for any of the corridor options will need to address the current performance issues at this location as well as accommodate future traffic due to local development and North East Link.
- The Diamond Creek Road roundabout is an existing constraint on the road network that will continue to be under pressure as development increases in the area. Each of the corridor options provides the opportunity to improve the operation of this roundabout.

2.2 Areas that can't wait

We know that some feel that truck traffic on Rosanna Road requires action now. You want our planning to look at solutions that can be implemented now.

- We're consulting with local government, community groups, VicRoads and the freight industry to understand the issues on Rosanna Road. We will continue to discuss these issues and are looking at ways to work out interim solutions with VicRoads regardless of which corridor is selected.

3. Traffic movements

3.1 'Ring Road' or a 'Link'

We heard from lots of people who felt that the solution we should be planning is an 'orbital' ring road.

- "A ring road should be a road that circles the metro area to take heavy traffic and heavy vehicles away from residential areas so people can get around easily from distant parts in all directions."
- "Following the true, efficient purpose of a "ring road", it would be continued in a ring around the metropolis and the traffic load would be shared out."

- Our objectives focus on providing a link that improves access in Melbourne's north, east and south east to improve efficiency, amenity and safety for communities. Our assessment of the performance of each of the corridors takes into account the ability to attract traffic away from congested areas and provide an efficient alternative for trucks. The complementary works associated with each corridor required to support the function of a ring road were published in August 2017.

4.2 Future proofing

“This link is one of the most important investments into Melbourne’s future and deserves long term foresight.”

We heard you say North East Link is vital for Melbourne’s future and you want us to think ahead, particularly to plan for population growth.

Community feedback	Project response
4. Population growth	
<p>4.1 Planning for population growth and shaping our city</p> <p>We heard you want us to plan North East Link to cater for future population growth and help shape how our city grows.</p> <p>Some suggested that options which travel further out into the eastern suburbs would best support Melbourne’s growing population. Others commented that these options could push development outside planned growth areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Melbourne is sprawled across a wide area, we need to push the road out further and give ourselves room for growth.” • “Research supports current government policy and practice of urban in-fill and limiting major Melbourne infrastructure within the current Urban Growth Boundary.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth as identified by the Victorian government in its <i>Victoria in Future</i> population forecasts is integral to the assumptions that form the basis of strategic transport modelling and economic appraisal. The methodologies are widely used and accepted. We will include an explanation of the methodologies in the business case. • Direction 4.5 of Plan Melbourne (2017-2050) requires planning for Melbourne’s green wedge and peri-urban areas to protect their existing valued features, assets and industries before other land uses. Growth is planned and managed by state and local planning authorities in accordance with this Plan Melbourne direction. • The potential pressure and impact on the Urban Growth Boundary and the green wedge is a key consideration in the evaluation of all options. Land use and transport interaction modelling will identify areas where likely demand pressures would arise as a consequence of each option. Options where demand pressures contravene the Government’s policies in Plan Melbourne would be assessed less favourably than those that would not.
<p>4.2 Road design</p> <p>We heard you want to see how we are planning for future increases in the number of cars on the road. You told us you want to avoid the need for future upgrades on North East Link and associated disruptions, particularly by building enough lanes now including through tunnels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East Link is being designed to provide sufficient capacity for the growth of Melbourne in the north and south-east. Planning and modelling for the project has adopted a 30 year horizon for forecasting demand in Melbourne including increased housing density, increased employment and changes to the transport network. • The North East Link design and modelling indicates that three lanes in each direction (including through the tunnel) provides sufficient capacity to cater for this growth and will not cause a bottleneck on the approach to tunnels.

5. More than just one road

5.2 More than just one North East Link

Many people told us they don't think one North East Link will be enough. A range of solutions were suggested ranging from building all four options now, building one now and one later and building two at the same time. Different combinations of all the options were suggested.

- *"Make sure to flag the need to have land set aside and/or purchased for future routes to integrate the outer east into the system as development increases."*

As mentioned in earlier sections, the suggestion from communities that we should be planning for future population growth and transportation issues is being passed to the relevant government agencies.



4.3 Trucks

We heard you say you want us to make sure North East Link works for trucks including by planning the most efficient route and designing a road trucks can use.

<p>6.1 Planning the most efficient route</p> <p>We heard you want us to do more origin/destination studies to plan the most efficient route for trucks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “You need to get the proper origin/destination traffic surveys done so that you don’t have a band-aid fix that isn’t used by the freight traffic.” <p>People who asked us to do more studies told us that the majority of freight is moving directly between industrial centres in the south-east like Ringwood, Dandenong and Gippsland to the M80.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origin destination data has been collected across metropolitan Melbourne and provides a thorough understanding of truck movements. Information gathering has continued since the August Technical Summary was published and much more comprehensive information will be provided in the next project stages. The new information gathered so far supports the initial findings. While improving freight efficiency is a major consideration, so is commuter and other business movement.
<p>6.2 Truck bans</p> <p>We heard you want trucks to stop using residential roads once North North East Link is built. You suggested truck bans would be a good way to make sure they stay off these routes and would like our planning to consider this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions about truck bans will remain the responsibility of VicRoads. We are in regular communication with them as North East Link is being planned.
7. Road design	
<p>7.1 Grades</p> <p>We heard you want our planning to reduce grades that could slow trucks down.</p> <p>Some suggested we should consider building a bridge over the Yarra River for Option B and C.</p> <p>Others suggested we need to do more work measuring how the grades would affect corridor performance. You told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grades would not be an issue because they would not be as steep as existing grades in the EastLink tunnels or because trucks will be more efficient in the future. Our assessment should include the grades in the EastLink tunnels because, should Option A proceed, some trucks would need to use the tunnels as part of their trip route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work since the Technical Summary was published has established that grades on Corridors B and C can be improved for freight. On Corridors B and C, bridging the Yarra is an option being considered but is subject to further understanding of environmental conditions and requirements. (It is not being considered on Corridor A) Planning for North East Link seeks to align with Australian guidelines for road design. These standards take into account the likely makeup of future transport vehicles. Our assessment of Option A includes the grades of the Mullum Mullum tunnels and their impact on freight travel time savings.

7.2 Placarded loads

We heard you want our planning to allow North East Link tunnels to carry placarded and over-dimensional loads.

We also heard you want us to do more studies to count the number of these kinds of trucks on the road. Our initial studies found they represent approximately 1% of truck traffic in the north-east. You told us this doesn't reflect your experience on the roads.

- We understand that as commuters it can seem like there are a large number of placarded loads. We have consulted with the transport industry as well as conducting on the ground surveys. Information on this will be included in the options assessment report. Further data gathered since August suggests the original findings remain accurate.
- Victorian regulations do not allow for over-dimensional and placarded loads to travel in tunnels. We are, however, consulting with international tunnelling experts so that, should regulations change, North East Link tunnels could adapt as readily as possible.



4.4 Tolls

You asked us lots of questions about tolls including why we need them, how they would work, how much they would be and if they would discourage people from using North East Link.

8.1 Does North East Link need to be tolled?	
<p>You asked if our planning can look at making North East Link toll free. Others asked if our planning could consider funding models that would allow the road to be owned by the Government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Why can’t the government borrow the money and run their own toll road.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government has stated North East Link will need to be funded by a combination of tolls and government funding. The final form of the tolling model is yet to be determined, but one option is for the state to own the toll road revenues.
8.2 How much will the tolls be?	
<p>You asked if our planning is looking at how toll pricing would work as part of the bigger road network picture, particularly for the total cost of trips that would include EastLink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “...will it be the same price as EastLink toll? Meaning cost around 10-20 dollars one way with North East Link and then EastLink?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tolls are not set. Part of our work is testing a range of tolling rates and understanding how various operating models might affect use of the road. We are considering how any new toll road will fit into the combined toll road network and the cumulative impacts of multiple toll roads.
8.3 Will existing roads be tolled?	
<p>You asked if our planning for North East Link is considering tolling existing roads. You let us know you are particularly concerned our planning is considering tolling the Eastern Freeway to pay for the cost of any upgrades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government policy is that new roads may be tolled, but existing roads will not.
9. Tolls and traffic modelling	
9.1 Will people use a toll road?	
<p>You asked how our planning is investigating whether road users, including trucks, would pay tolls to use North East Link. We heard you are concerned people may keep using their current routes, particularly if a free route runs parallel to a tolled route.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic transport modelling uses well-tested assumptions about when people do and don’t choose toll roads. The modelling shows us significant use of North East Link and reduced traffic on the non-freeway standard roads. Further information on this modelling will be included in the options assessment report. Melbourne’s existing current toll road network proves there is high demand for a well-performing toll road. The toll price structure for the project will be developed with a strong focus on making sure that the toll represents a value for money alternative against the arterial road network.

4.5 Community

Communities across all four corridor options told us about things that matter to them in their local area and issues they want considered in our planning for North East Link.

Community feedback	Project response
10. Impacts to property	
<p>10.1 Acquisition</p> <p>People, businesses and communities along each corridor let us know they are concerned about possible acquisition. Overall we heard you are frustrated and anxious we can't provide more detail during the strategic planning stage.</p> <p>We also heard you want to know how we are measuring acquisition as part our investigations into how the corridors perform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property acquisition is appropriately one of the most sensitive issues for the community. While we aim to minimise private acquisition, we have established and been upfront about the fact that there will be some acquisition on each of the corridors. As per our first guiding principle, when we have a project corridor identified our first priority will be consulting with people who may be affected. Even then, we won't know exactly which properties will be affected because further design work will be needed. Our discussions at that point will be based on a corridor larger than what the actual road will require. There still won't be a reference design and elements are likely to change in response to further assessments addressing potential impacts. Our first step will be to let residents and businesses know they are in an area of interest. Final acquisition numbers won't be known until we have a reference design. We will publish a fact sheet with broad information about types of acquisition for those who would like to learn more about the process and legislation. When we meet with potentially affected landowners and tenants we'll provide information relevant to their particular circumstances on acquisition and compensation. Anyone in that position will have a personal contact at NELA.
<p>10.2 Other impacts on properties</p> <p>Some people wanted to know if our planning was considering whether compensation would be offered to landowners affected by other impacts like noise and visual impacts. Some asked if we would offer voluntary acquisition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the reference design will be informed by a range of impact assessments. Addressing noise and visual impacts will be a key focus in the design development which will apply relevant state policies and draw on the experience of recent projects. On recent government projects where impacts have been seen to be unacceptable for directly adjacent residential properties, a voluntary purchase scheme has been introduced. It's too early to tell if this type of scheme would be required for North East Link.

11. Community spaces, facilities and cultural assets

11.1 Open spaces, parks and schools

Communities along each corridor wanted to know more about how we are measuring impacts on community spaces. Parks, schools and sporting facilities were mentioned frequently.

- We recognise the value of community spaces throughout Melbourne. We are working hard to reduce the potential impacts each of the corridors would have on these spaces as much as possible. These are considered through social, business and environmental assessments and were a large part of the decision on minimum tunnel lengths. In the initial assessment for the August Technical Summary, the potential impacts (in terms of numbers of facilities or extent of public open space) were similar across each corridor.
- We have had and will continue to have discussions with many businesses, environmental groups, schools and administrators of public lands to help with the corridor assessments.

11.2 Places with cultural value

You wanted to know more about how we are considering places with cultural value in how we investigate the corridors. Bolin Bolin Billabong was mentioned frequently.

- We are consulting with Traditional Owners, local government and other agencies specifically about Bolin Bolin Billabong and other sensitive sites not already protected by the minimum tunnel lengths.
- Should Option A proceed, no surface works would be permitted in the billabong area west of Bulleen Road.

12. Environmental impacts

12.1 Visual, air and noise impacts

Communities across all corridors wanted to know how we are measuring visual, air and noise impacts. Noise and air impacts near homes and schools were raised frequently.

- The potential for visual, noise and air quality impacts has been considered in the options assessment, by investigating the proximity of residential and other sensitive land uses. Detailed assessment of visual, noise and air quality impacts will be important as we progress planning within the project corridor. These potential impacts would occur in any corridor. Therefore assessments would not help determine the project corridor. Studies for the Environment Effects Statement (EES) will consider the project area with and without North East Link to determine the potential impacts of the project.

13. Connectivity

Communities across all corridors wanted to know how we are considering maintaining local connections as part of our early planning for North East Link.

We heard you want to be able to walk, ride and drive around your local area without losing the connections you have now.

We also heard there are opportunities for North East Link to help improve connectivity by removing bottlenecks on local roads and intersections.

- Maintaining and improving connectivity is a key project objective.
- Since August we have been working on high level options that look at existing and potential connectivity issues on each corridor.
- Improving public transport (bus) congestion points and connectivity between communities will be taken into consideration for the project corridor.

4.6 Environment

We heard you want our early planning work to carefully consider possible environmental impacts.

Community feedback	Project response
14. Water	
<p>14.1 Yarra River</p> <p>All four corridor options will require tunnelling under the Yarra River. Communities want our planning work to assess the impacts of this carefully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Get a good grip on all the pros and cons about each option, especially with the tunneling, where the Yarra flow, wetlands, and groundwater are concerned.” <p>Some mentioned the new Yarra River Protection Act (YRPA) and wanted to know if our planning for North East Link is considering it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We understood from the outset that people in Melbourne’s north east are passionate about the environment. We have teams of surface water, groundwater and aquatic ecology specialists looking at the options. They work together so we understand clearly how each section of North East Link would work. We are considering the provisions of the YRPA in our assessments and are working with DELWP and Melbourne Water to understand how North East Link will interact with the YRPA strategic planning work. We are also working with Melbourne Water and Yarra Valley Water so their requirements and future plans are able to be incorporated into our planning and design.
<p>14.2 Other waterways</p> <p>We heard that communities want assurance we are investigating and considering possible impacts on other waterways, catchment areas and wetlands. Plenty River, Banyule Creek and Koonung Creek were mentioned frequently. Some also raised concerns that tunnelling under the Banyule Flats could disturb the water table.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “There would probably be severe disturbance to the Creek Bend Reserve. Banyule Swamp and Billabong will be negatively effected by disturbances to the flow and water table resulting from works on the Northern end of the Link.” 	



15. Flora and Fauna

15.1 Sensitive areas and protected species

We received lots of helpful feedback about flora and fauna in local areas including protected and endangered species.

15.2 Wildlife corridors

Communities also told us about wildlife corridors in their area. A few living in rural areas asked us if we are considering the potential for native animals to be hit by cars.

15.3 Air and noise

We heard communities want to know how our early planning is considering potential air and noise impacts on flora and fauna, particularly in the Nillumbik Green Wedge.

- As with water, we have teams of specialists working on the environmental assessments. Their methodology is to assume a species is in an area if this information is not already available. This is the most conservative way to assess ecological conditions. Their early input is clear in the areas of minimum tunnel already determined. Their further work will help determine other areas which may need more tunnelling, or where environmental protection is required during construction. Because smaller projects not subject to an EES are rarely required to do the level of research North East Link will complete, major projects are often the means by which information is gathered about flora and fauna.
- It is not practical to do full site survey work on all four corridors; but the most sensitive areas are being investigated in 2017. By the time this report is published people may have seen our ecologists in many of the areas mentioned. The results of preliminary ecology surveys will be included in the detailed options assessment – but their main body of work is still to be done during 2018 as the EES is prepared.
- The issue of kangaroos being hit by cars is as much a safety issue as an environmental issue. This will be managed regardless of which corridor is selected.
- We have teams of air quality, noise and vibration specialists working on the environmental assessments. They are considering the impacts of these issues on communities in both the green wedge areas, as well as non-green wedge areas. Air and noise impacts on wildlife are also being considered, including investigating potential impacts on breeding and habitat.

4.7 Tunnels

Many suggested that more tunnels should be used to minimise impacts on communities and the environment. The most frequently mentioned areas were:

- A tunnel starting at Grimshaw Street
- A tunnel between Banksia Street and the Eastern Freeway

- A tunnel north of the Ryans Road interchange under Currawong Bush Park.

We've committed to building large sections of North East Link using tunnels to protect urban and environmental areas. The early information we shared about each of the options show minimum tunnel lengths.

Our work since August has included looking at increasing tunnel lengths and assessing the transport and traffic impacts and requirements, costs, construction complexity and community and environmental impacts.

4.8 Public and active transport

Overall, we heard you want public transport, walking and cycling connections to be considered in our early planning for North East Link. You also don't want to lose existing connections.

16.1 Public transport instead of roads	
<p>We heard that some of you want us to plan more public transport in Melbourne's north-east instead of North East Link.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I would like to propose Corridor E. Corridor E is a non-road, public transport solution. It does not involve building a large road that will be full of traffic. Rather, the people of the North East will have access to high quality, frequent, and interconnected public transportation." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NELA has been formed to plan and deliver North East Link and the government has other authorities established to deliver key public transport projects such as the Metro Tunnel. Feedback has been conveyed to the relevant government, planning and public transport authorities.
16.2 Public transport, walking, cycling and North East Link	
<p>Many commented on the need to integrate public transport, walking and cycling connections into a transport solution for the north-east.</p> <p>We heard that overall communities want a transport solution that includes North East Link, public transport and active transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Whatever NEL alignment is decided upon, it ABSOLUTELY must be accompanied by a real effort to improve public transport, cycling and pedestrian options in the areas which are currently impacted by traffic congestion in the NEL." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for public transport, walking and cycling connections is included in our project objectives and in our early project planning for each corridor. They will remain a key focus in design development. Once a project corridor is determined we will be working with community, local government and Victorian Government authorities to achieve the best possible outcomes.
17. Existing and unplanned future transport options	
17.1 Existing walking and cycling connections	
<p>We heard some of you are concerned about impacts to existing walking and cycling trails, particularly along Koonung Creek.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We note the importance of the public open space along both sides of the Eastern Freeway. In the event that freeway upgrades impact existing open space we will work with the community to understand exactly how the space is used, how we can maintain maximum access and whether there are opportunities for us to help improve trails.
17.2 Doncaster Rail	
<p>We heard you want us to make sure our planning doesn't exclude Doncaster Rail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No option will preclude a future Doncaster Rail.

4.9 Cost

How much North East Link should cost and how important cost should be in recommending the project corridor were important issues for some.

While we still haven't completed or presented costings for the four corridor options, figures prepared by journalists generated a lot of discussion and debate.

Community feedback	Project response
18. Cost	
18.1 What role should cost play <p>We heard that some of you feel that if the quickest and most affordable solution works, this will be a good outcome for tax payers. Others are very concerned that the decision about which solution is recommended will be based on cost alone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "MAINTAIN THE GOAL that we want the BEST SOLUTIONS not the cheapest."• "What is important to us is the most efficient outcome in terms of cost, relative to benefits."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our initial consultation aimed to help us better understand the views of the community on key issues related to each corridor and the problems that we are trying to resolve. At this stage, cost was not a key factor in our technical work.• When we first looked at each of the corridors, there were a number of design decisions that could not be made without more detailed technical investigation and design work, as well as a better understanding of the issues important to communities and how we might respond to these in the further development of solution.• Cost will play a role in decision making, along with the other triple bottom line measures relating to economic, social and environmental impacts.• All costs associated with making sure the North East Link fully integrates with the existing road network, including upgrades as well as connections to the M80, will be included in the project costs within the business case. If other major works are identified (for example, modifications to existing roads at interchanges) they would also be included. For Option A this includes the full cost of Eastern Freeway upgrades.
18.2 How will the options be costed <p>Although communities don't want cost to be the deciding factor, we heard it's still important for you to know how much each option will cost.</p> <p>Some of you let us know you are frustrated we can't provide costs until we complete more technical studies.</p> <p>We also heard some of you are very concerned that our costings won't be transparent and won't include important things, particularly upgrades to the Eastern Freeway.</p>	



4.10 Community engagement

Overall, we heard you want community engagement to be an ongoing part of planning and building North East Link. We also heard we can do a better job explaining the project stages, what role you can play in decision-making and what kind of feedback we are asking for.

Community feedback	Project response
19. The process	
<p>19.1 Feedback</p> <p>We received a wide range of feedback about our community engagement. Some were very positive about being involved early in the strategic planning for North East Link and felt they were able to develop a good understanding of the work we are undertaking. Others living near the corridor options were frustrated we were not able to share detailed information about potential local impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I would like to see more details... so that residents can see more clearly how each option is going to affect them.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East Link is the first major road project in Victoria which has engaged in such extensive community consultation while a business case is being developed. We recognise this caused some confusion, with some people thinking the project is much further advanced than early strategic planning, or that this would be the only opportunity they would have to be involved as the project develops. • From our perspective it was worth it. We received very relevant feedback from the community, interest groups and local government which has been extremely helpful in the options assessment. • We understand it is easier to provide feedback on tangible project information, so we look forward to receiving more responses as the project develops. • We're very grateful to the people who took the time to share their views with us.
<p>19.2 Next steps</p> <p>While a very small number of you felt community engagement was slowing the project down and asked us to 'just get on with it' many more said you want us to keep engaging with communities as the project progresses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue community engagement for the rest of 2017 and throughout 2018 including the statutory planning and environmental assessment phase.

5. Next steps

Community engagement will continue to play an important role in planning for North East Link.



Corridor selection

Late 2017

We aim to recommend a project corridor to the Victorian Government this year.

We'll let communities know how this corridor best meets the project objectives and guiding principles.



Community values and design

Early 2018

We'll ask communities to provide input into key areas to help shape the design for the project. These areas will be based on things communities have already told us they are interested in like urban design, walking, and cycling and the environment. We'll also ask if there are other areas you are interested in.



Start planning and approvals

Early/Mid 2018

During this stage, we'll be talking to communities to refine the design and complete planning studies.

Planning and approvals for North East Link will be through an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process.

An Environment Effects Statement (EES) usually contains:

- A description of the proposed development
- An outline of public and stakeholder consultation undertaken during investigations and the issues raised
- A description of the existing environment that may be affected
- Predictions of significant environmental effects of the proposal and relevant alternatives
- Proposed approaches to avoid, minimise or manage adverse environmental effects.

There are opportunities for community involvement during the EES process. You can read more here planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria



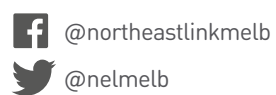
Start tender process

2019

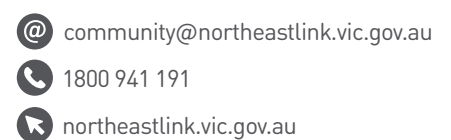
We'll release the project to market, select a preferred builder and ask them to complete the final design.



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

AUGUST - OCTOBER 2017

APPENDICES



Appendix A - Corridor options

Option A

Option A would use the existing road reserve to link to the M80, follow the Greensborough Bypass south to connect with the Eastern Freeway near Bulleen Road. It provides a motorway solution that connects the northern and north-eastern growth areas and activity centres and employment / innovation clusters (particularly La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster - NEIC) to communities and businesses in the east and southeast.

Initial development of design solutions for this corridor indicates that:

- It is approximately 11 kilometres in length from the M80 to Eastern Freeway
- It will necessitate approx. 15 km of upgrades to the Eastern Freeway to increase its capacity in

both directions to accommodate merging between Bulleen Road and Chandler Highway and additional capacity and merging between Bulleen Road and Springvale Road

- Up to 50% of its length would likely be in tunnel, particularly under significant areas such as the Yarra River and Banyule Flats
- It provides the potential for a number of interchanges with the key arterial roads on the existing network including Grimshaw Street, Lower Plenty Road and Banksia Street; enabling a good level of connectivity to a range of areas in Melbourne's north-east
- It provides good access to the La Trobe NEIC
- Indicative modelling suggests that Corridor A may carry between

100,000 to 120,000 vehicles per day, 10 years after opening, with the volumes largely consistent along the length of the corridor

- It enables good gradelines to be achieved to accommodate heavy vehicles along the length of the corridor
- It provides good opportunities to connect to cycling routes due to its proximity to existing paths.



Option B

This option would provide a direct connection from the M80 at Greensborough to EastLink at Ringwood. It provides the functionality of an orbital motorway section that connects the northern and north-eastern growth areas to south-east Melbourne via EastLink, with connectivity to the La Trobe NEIC.

Initial development of design solutions for this corridor indicates that:

- It is approximately 24 kilometres in length from the M80 to EastLink
- It will necessitate significant works along the EastLink corridor to provide adequate connections
- It will require approx. 14 km of additional works including

upgrades to Springvale Road, north of the Eastern Freeway and an extension to Reynolds Road to provide operational connectivity to the existing road network

- Up to 70% of its length would likely be in tunnel, particularly in significant areas such as the Yarra River
- It is challenging to achieve good gradelines that will accommodate heavy vehicles along the length of the corridor
- It provides potential for a number of interchanges with existing roads including Grimshaw Street, Lower Plenty Road and Reynolds Road, enabling connectivity to a number of areas in outer Melbourne's north-east

- Indicative modelling suggests that Corridor B may carry between 60,000 to 110,000 vehicles per day, 10 years after opening, with the lower volumes on the southern sections of the corridor.



Option C

The northern end of this option would connect to the M80 using a previous road corridor that runs from the Greensborough Bypass / Diamond Creek Road roundabout to Ryans Road. Its southern end would connect to EastLink at Ringwood.

Initial development of design solutions for this corridor indicates that:

- It is approximately 26 kilometres in length from the M80 to EastLink
- It will necessitate significant works along the EastLink corridor to provide adequate connections
- It will require approx. 15 km of additional works including upgrades to Ryans Road, Springvale Road north of the

Eastern Freeway and an extension to Reynolds Road to provide operational connectivity to the existing road network

- Up to 55% of its length would likely be in tunnel, particularly in significant areas such as the Yarra River
- It is challenging to achieve good gradelines that will accommodate heavy vehicles along the length of the corridor
- It traverses outside the Urban Growth Boundary
- It provides potential for a limited number of interchanges with existing roads including Diamond Creek Road, Ryans Road and Reynolds Road; however these

roads are not key arterial roads, thus providing limited connectivity in Melbourne's north-east

- Indicative modelling suggests that Corridor C may carry between 50,000 to 110,000 vehicles per day, 10 years after opening, with the lower volumes on the southern sections of the corridor.



Option D

This option would connect with EastLink south of Ringwood and travel east using part of the proposed Healesville Freeway Reserve and travel east to Lilydale. It would then turn back and head west to the M80 travelling through Bend of Islands and Kangaroo Ground. It provides a longer distance orbital solution using some existing reservations that connect the northern growth area to south-east Melbourne via an eastward orbital route largely outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Initial development of design solutions for this corridor indicates that:

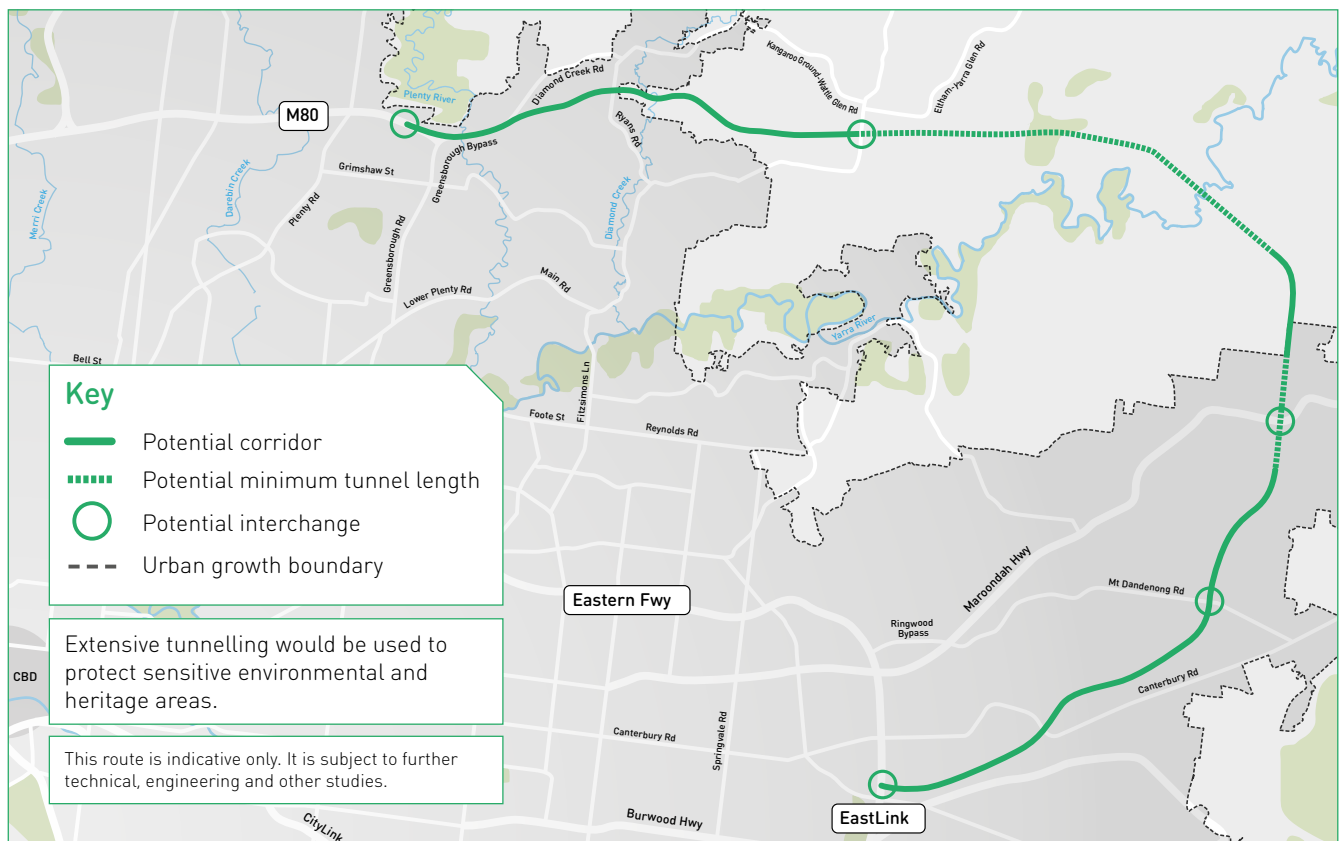
- It is approximately 40 kilometres in length from the M80 to EastLink
- It will necessitate works at

EastLink interchanges to provide adequate connections

- Up to 40% of its length would likely be in tunnel, particularly in significant areas such as the Yarra River
- It is challenging to achieve good gradelines that will accommodate heavy vehicles along the length of the corridor
- It traverses primarily outside the Urban Growth Boundary
- It provides potential for a limited number of interchanges with existing roads including
- Diamond Creek Road, Ryans Road, Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Maroondah Highway and Mt Dandenong Road, however these

roads provide limited connectivity in Melbourne's northeast

- Indicative modelling suggests that Corridor D may carry between 45,000 to 90,000 vehicles per day, 10 years after opening, with the lower volumes on the southern sections of the corridor.



Appendix B - Respondents by suburb

SUBURB	%	TEMPLESTOWE LOWER	1%	CRAIGIEBURN	<1%
ELTHAM	8%	WARRANWOOD	1%	CRANBOURNE	<1%
BULLEEN	8%	WATSONIA NORTH	1%	CRANBOURNE EAST	<1%
BALWYN NORTH	7%	WATTLE GLEN	1%	CRANBOURNE NORTH	<1%
GREENSBOROUGH	5%	ALPHINGTON	<1%	CRANBOURNE SOUTH	<1%
ROSANNA	4%	ALPHINGTON	<1%	CROYDON	<1%
WARRANDYTE	4%	ARTHURS CREEK	<1%	CROYDON NORTH	<1%
MACLEOD	3%	ARTHURS SEAT	<1%	CROYDON SOUTH	<1%
VIEWBANK	3%	BALWYN	<1%	DANDENONG NORTH	<1%
DIAMOND CREEK	3%	BALWYN EAST	<1%	DONCASTER HEIGHTS	<1%
ELTHAM NORTH	2%	BANYULE	<1%	DOREEN	<1%
HEIDELBERG	2%	BAYSWATER	<1%	ELWOOD	<1%
YALLAMBIE	2%	BAYSWATER WEST	<1%	ENDEAVOUR HILLS	<1%
WATSONIA	2%	BELGRAVE	<1%	EUMEMMERRING	<1%
DONVALE	2%	BELGRAVE SOUTH	<1%	FAIRFIELD	<1%
BEND OF ISLANDS	2%	BELLFIELD	<1%	FERNTREE GULLY	<1%
DONCASTER EAST	2%	BENALLA	<1%	FERNY CREEK	<1%
BAYSWATER NORTH	1%	BENTLEIGH EAST	<1%	FITZROY	<1%
BUNDOORA	1%	BERWICK	<1%	FITZROY NORTH	<1%
CHIRNSIDE PARK	1%	BEVERIDGE	<1%	FOOTSCRAY	<1%
CROYDON HILLS	1%	BLACKBURN	<1%	FOREST HILL	<1%
DONCASTER	1%	BLACKBURN NORTH	<1%	FRANKSTON	<1%
EAGLEMONT	1%	BLACKBURN SOUTH	<1%	FRANKSTON NORTH	<1%
EPPING	1%	BORONIA	<1%	FRANKSTON SOUTH	<1%
HEATHMONT	1%	BOX HILL	<1%	GEELONG	<1%
IVANHOE	1%	BOX HILL NORTH	<1%	GLEN IRIS	<1%
KANGAROO GROUND	1%	BOX HILL SOUTH	<1%	GLEN WAVERLEY	<1%
KEW EAST	1%	BRIAR HILL	<1%	GRUYERE	<1%
KILSYTH	1%	BRUNSWICK	<1%	HADFIELD	<1%
LILYDALE	1%	BUDGEREE	<1%	HAMPTON NORTH	<1%
LOWER PLENTY	1%	BULLEEN SOUTH	<1%	HAMPTON PARK	<1%
MILL PARK	1%	BURWOOD EAST	<1%	HASTINGS	<1%
MITCHAM	1%	CARLTON NORTH	<1%	HAWTHORN	<1%
MONTMORENCY	1%	CARNEGIE	<1%	HEALESVILLE	<1%
MOOROOLBARK	1%	CARRUM DOWNS	<1%	HEIDELBERG HEIGHTS	<1%
NORTH WARRANDYTE	1%	CAULFIELD SOUTH	<1%	HEIDELBERG WEST	<1%
PARK ORCHARDS	1%	CHRISTMAS HILLS	<1%	HEIDELBERG WEST	<1%
RESEARCH	1%	CHUM CREEK	<1%	HODDLES CREEK	<1%
RESERVOIR	1%	CLIFTON HILL	<1%	HOPPERS CROSSING	<1%
RINGWOOD	1%	CLYDE NORTH	<1%	HUGHESDALE	<1%
RINGWOOD EAST	1%	COBURG NORTH	<1%	HURSTBRIDGE	<1%
RINGWOOD NORTH	1%	COLDSTREAM	<1%	ILUKA, NSW	<1%
ST HELENA	1%	COLLINGWOOD	<1%	IVANHOE EAST	<1%
TEMPLESTOWE	1%	COTTLES BRIDGE	<1%	IVANHOE NORTH	<1%

JACANA	<1%
KALKALLO	<1%
KEILOR EAST	<1%
KEW	<1%
KILMORE	<1%
KINGLAKE	<1%
KINGLAKE WEST	<1%
KINGSBURY	<1%
LALOR	<1%
LANGWARRIN SOUTH	<1%
LEONGATHA NORTH	<1%
LYSTERFIELD SOUTH	<1%
MACLEOD WEST	<1%
MELBOURNE	<1%
MERNDA	<1%
MIDDLE PARK	<1%
MILLGROVE	<1%
MONT ALBERT	<1%
MONT ALBERT NORTH	<1%
MONTROSE	<1%
MORNINGTON	<1%
MOUNT ELIZA	<1%
MOUNT EVELYN	<1%
MOUNT MARTHA	<1%
MOUNT WAVERLEY	<1%
MULGRAVE	<1%
NARRE WARREN	<1%
NORTH MELBOURNE	<1%
NORTHCOTE	<1%
NUNAWADING	<1%
NUTFIELD	<1%
OFFICER	<1%
OLINDA	<1%
PAKENHAM	<1%
PANTON HILL	<1%
PASCOE VALE	<1%
PEARCEDALE	<1%
PLENTY	<1%
PRESTON	<1%
RESERVOIR EAST	<1%
RESERVOIR NORTH	<1%
ROSEBUD	<1%
ROSEBUD PLAZA	<1%
ROSEBUD WEST	<1%

ROWVILLE	<1%
ROXBURGH PARK	<1%
SAINT HELENA	<1%
SCORESBY	<1%
SCORESBY BC	<1%
SEAFORD	<1%
SMITHS GULLY	<1%
SOUTH MORANG	<1%
ST ANDREWS	<1%
SUNBURY	<1%
SURREY HILLS	<1%
TARRAWARRA	<1%
TAYLORS LAKES	<1%
THE BASIN	<1%
THOMASTOWN	<1%
THORNBURY	<1%
TOORAK	<1%
TOOTGAROOK	<1%
TRAVANCORE	<1%
TRUGANINA	<1%
TYABB	<1%
UPWEY	<1%
VERMONT	<1%
VERMONT SOUTH	<1%
WALLAN	<1%
WANDILIGONG	<1%
WANDIN NORTH	<1%
WANTIRNA	<1%
WANTIRNA SOUTH	<1%
WARBURTON	<1%
WARRAGUL	<1%
WERRIBEE	<1%
WHITTLESEA	<1%
WOLLERT	<1%
WONGA PARK	<1%
WOOD WOOD	<1%
YARRA GLEN	<1%
YARRAMBAT	<1%
YERING	<1%