

4.2 VICINITY CENTRES AND MONASH UNIVERSITY TRACKLESS RAPID TRANSIT OPTIONS

[FILE NO. TRAF201]

Responsible Director: Ossie Martinz

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes the current progress of the transport option being developed and promoted by Vicinity Centres and Monash University as a Stage 1 connects Caulfield Station to Chadstone Shopping Centre, Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster [NEIC] and Monash University Clayton, with Stage 2 proposing a connection to Rowville.*
2. *Supports officer involvement in the ongoing discussions and development of the project.*
3. *Notes previous Council in principle support for proposals for heavy rail from Huntingdale to Rowville and light rail from Caulfield to Rowville.*
4. *Notes that the trackless rapid transit proposal includes the option of sustainable transport in the form of electric vehicles.*
5. *Restates the need for enhanced public transport options through the Monash National Employment Cluster and the immediate region, noting that these options could include Heavy Rail, Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit and/or Trackless Rapid Transit.*
6. *Notes the officers will provide regular updates to Council on the progress of this project.*
7. *Provides in principle support for the Trackless Rapid Transit Project.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and seek in principle support for officer involvement with Vicinity Centres (co-owner and operator of Chadstone) and Monash University who are undertaking strategic work on transport improvement options to connect Caulfield Station, Chadstone Shopping Centre and Monash University (The Project). The Project may also improve local active transport options along it's route and a second stage out to Rowville.

BACKGROUND

Vicinity Centres and Monash University have been collaboratively considering options for developing an improved transport corridor between the Monash campuses (Caulfield and Clayton) and the Chadstone Shopping Centre. Their investigations to date indicate a preference for a Trackless Rapid Transit (Trackless Tram or Bus Rapid Transit) option. They are currently presenting this option to

State and Federal Governments in order to gain their support for the proposal. Council officers have been involved in some of the design detail to date.

Vicinity Centres have also recognised the importance of reducing the reliance on cars for access to Chadstone and have set up a working group to assess options for improved facilities for buses, walking, and cycling.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the Project and to seek in principle support for ongoing officer involvement in the Project. Further reports will be provided as necessary to update Council as the project progresses.

The Projects preferred technology option is the Trackless Rapid Transit which is comparatively cheaper option to either heavy rail or light rail and can be rolled out in a quicker time period.

The Projects preferred route for Stage 1 is from Caulfield Station to Chadstone Shopping Centre along Princes Highway, along Ferntree Gully Road to Monash University Normanby Road/Blackburn Road. Stage 2 would then run along Wellington Road to Rowville.

The Normanby/Blackburn Road terminus has the potential to provide an east-west connection to the proposed Monash Suburban Rail Loop Station.

Vicinity Centres is also seeking Council officer involvement in a Stakeholder Working Group. As this project travels through significant areas of the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster it is important that Council contribute to the Project.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Project has the potential to provide a transport alternative to cars and reduce congestion on the roads.

The Project has a built in expectation around the increasing of density of development along the proposed corridor in order to make the best use of the infrastructure and contribute to the projects viability.

While it is expected that the project can be accommodated mainly in the road reserve, any impacts on adjacent properties will need to be closely monitored and considered.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The projects support the Integrated Transport Plan, which seeks to improve opportunities for public transport, walking and cycling..

The Project is consistent with the broader State and Council policy objectives of improved transport options and access to employment in the Monash NEIC.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no immediate human right considerations but the provision of public transport offers good opportunity for transport choice and any designs should incorporate fully accessible stops.

CONSULTATION

Vicinity and Monash University are currently presenting their proposals to Councils along the route, State and Federal Governments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for council apart from officer time at this stage. Vicinity and Monash University are seeking funding from State and Federal Governments initially to further investigate the feasibility of the project.

CONCLUSION

The Project proposal by Vicinity and Monash University is worthy of further consideration and investigation as it provides a potentially viable and deliverable option to improve non-vehicular transport to Monash University and the Monash NEIC. Stage2 of the Project has the potential to extend the link to Rowville which has been long supported by Council. In principle support for ongoing officer involvement is sought from Council.