

Fair-go for Footscray Rail Residents

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This is a list of questions for the Minister of Public Transport, Martin Pakula, and the Department of Transport RRL team, gathered at a meeting of more than 60 RRL-affected residents (Wed 28th July).

- This list is not exhaustive. Residents are still responding with further questions and concerns.
- Questions are listed here under broad category headings.

1 Dates and Schedules

- 1.1 What are the known, fixed dates on the pre-project and project schedule?
- 1.2 What are the best-estimate dates for the pre-project project schedule?

2 Submission Issues

- 2.1 What is the exact purpose of the submission process?
- 2.2 Are we being asked to make submissions for one or more processes? If so, what is the exact purpose and timeline of each process?
- 2.3 Will our submissions be public documents?
- 2.4 For those who are not confident in writing in English, is there another option for them? eg, provision of information in community languages (eg Vietnamese) and acceptance of oral submissions?

3 Compulsory Acquisition Issues

- 3.1 When will all residents affected by the part or full acquisitions be notified and will they be advised at the same time?
- 3.2 When will we be required to vacate?
- 3.3 What time-frame will elapse from the date of acquisitions to the actual demolition date of these properties?
- 3.4 Will we be asked to pay rent on our own properties?
- 3.5 How much time is allocated for the existing owners of these properties to vacate after their properties have been acquired?
- 3.6 Will there be any allowance provided for the likely boost to local property prices caused by so many people entering the local property market at the same time?
- 3.7 Will rental costs be covered if residents are required to rent for a period of time?
- 3.8 How is valuation handled for a combined residential and business property?
- 3.9 Who is responsible for the cost of rebuilding where partial acquisition means part demolition of a building?
- 3.10 Is there a cut-off date for property owners to apply for their properties to be considered for acquisition?

- 3.11 Will we be paid enough for our houses so that we are able to live in a similar dwelling within the same community we currently live in?
- 3.12 Will there be alternative accommodation beyond permitted occupancy or own home?
- 3.13 What sort of assistance will be given for relocation, finding similar housing in the area, residential and business?
- 3.14 Are business owners eligible for relocation assistance and compensation, whether they rent or own?
- 3.15 Are residential tenants eligible for relocation assistance and compensation? Will there be bridging assistance for ex tenants facing rent increase and/or priority for public housing list.
- 3.16 When will residents in Albert and Short Streets get to know whether their homes will be acquired or not?
- 3.17 Traders and property owners on Irving St reported unhappiness with the acquisition process - why should we be confident that it will be any better for us?
- 3.18 How does the process differ between Compulsory Acquisition and Offer to Purchase?
- 3.19 For those renting. Do they have the same rights as owners if they are going to buy a new house will they receive free stamp duty?

4 Properties Impacted, Yet Not to Be Acquired

- 4.1 How will the RRL team ensure that any other affected houses are identified and considered for acquisition? What will this process be? Will each property be considered individually on its own merits? Can we make submissions to be acquired, and to whom?
- 4.2 Will some compensation be made for devaluation of properties when the rail line is finished?

5 Liveability Issues

- 5.1 Although there is no legal requirement to install sound barriers on train corridors, will the department consider barriers or other noise abatement options in this case?
- 5.2 How high will the track be from existing track height as it crosses Victoria St?
- 5.3 How long will it take to build each bridge at Victoria, Albert and Nicholson Streets (estimated)?
- 5.4 What is the likely frequency of RRL trains when the line opens?
- 5.5 How long is it expected that Victoria St, Albert St and Nicholson St might be blocked to traffic, and will more than one of these streets be blocked at the same time?
- 5.6 Will residents living close to the track, whose properties will not be acquired, have any redress if their quality of life is severely impacted during construction? What process will be in place to provide for this?
- 5.7 Will residents living close to the track, whose properties will not be acquired, have any redress if their quality of life is severely impacted after the line goes into service?
- 5.8 Will there be night work during the construction phase?

- 5.9 Will construction involve rock blasting (eg, at Albert St)?
- 5.10 Will the elevated track serve to reflect noise back to the north side?
- 5.11 Will train services be disrupted during construction?
- 5.12 Has there been any modelling of noise impact of the additional new lines?

6 Special Needs Issues

- 6.1 Will the department organise extra care and attention for elderly residents, people with illnesses and people with limited English language?
- 6.2 What services will be provided to support and advocate for those that need it?
- 6.3 Will the RRL project appoint a Residents Welfare Officer, either through the department or through municipal council, to help vulnerable residents?
- 6.4 Will the government offer free counselling for elderly/vulnerable residents and case manage their search and relocation into acceptable housing?
- 6.5 Will special consideration in the form of financial compensation be offered to elderly residents who have lived in these homes for most of their lives and would never have voluntarily moved from them?

7 Consultation Issues

- 7.1 How and when RRL did/does the RRL identify who is the affected population for inclusion.
- 7.2 Why was there no information booklet created and distributed well in advance of the project (similar to the recent road-tunnel information booklet)?
- 7.3 Why were residents not consulted much earlier (years) about the RRL project and its potential impacts?
- 7.4 Why were alternative track route options not presented publicly – along with a discussion of the benefits/disadvantages of each?
- 7.5 Why are plans for the proposed construction of track available for viewing but not for distribution?
- 7.6 How long has this project been in planning?
- 7.7 Why is the DoT so reluctant to put anything in writing (eg, confirmation of offers of buy-out, process outlines and schedules, etc)?
- 7.8 Why did the government not provide warnings or disclosures to prospective property purchases via section-32 inclusions and/or public planning announcements?
- 7.9 Does the DoT have a stakeholder engagement policy? Is the project following the process of that policy? If not why not?
- 7.10 Can the residents be given an undertaken in writing on how they can expect to be consulted with and how the engagement policy will be implemented?
- 7.11 Given the style of process so far, how can we have confidence that the minister and DoT will treat the people of Footscray with fairness, honesty and respect by providing timely and accurate information, answering our questions, and providing opportunity for our input?
- 7.12 Footscray is going through a massive change (RRL, C90, Westlink, CAD). Is the RRL project indicative of the way other major projects will be run?
- 7.13 Will you give personal assurance that the request for proposal, the design framework and other key documents will be made public for public feedback?

8 Alternative Options Issues

- 8.1 Has this project and alternatives been reviewed by independent authorities?
- 8.2 When was the decision taken to go with the 'at-grade' option instead of the below-ground option? And when was this option recommendation made by DoT to the Minister?
- 8.3 When was the decision taken to put the tracks on the south side of existing lines?
- 8.4 What other options – if any – were considered?
- 8.5 What was the financial assessment on the other options? Was the current option the cheapest solution? How much money would have been saved by using the Bunbury St tunnel or other options?
- 8.6 What process did the Minister undertake to reach the decision on the preferred option instead of this option that involves so much change?

9 Design Issues

- 9.1 Are there any supplementary elements of the project involving construction or changes alongside the rail corridor?
- 9.2 Is West Footscray station to be relocated?
- 9.3 Will Middle Footscray station be upgraded or modified?
- 9.4 Are there any linkages between the RRL project and the Footscray CAD project?

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