



FERGUSON STREET

Consultation Report

MAY 2020

levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

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PROJECT OVERVIEW



Current level crossing at Ferguson Street

As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to remove 75 dangerous and congested level crossings, we're removing the level crossing at Ferguson Street in Williamstown.

Ferguson Street is a key east-west link, with about 25,000 vehicles and more than 110 trains passing through the level crossing each weekday. Removing this level crossing will make the area safer and easier to get around for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The level crossing will be removed in 2022.

Investigations have narrowed the decision down to two feasible designs for removing the Ferguson Street level crossing: a rail under road, or a rail over road design.

The project is currently in the design development phase. The final design will be confirmed in mid 2020.

Project benefits

By removing the Ferguson Street level crossings, we will deliver many benefits to those who live and travel along the Williamstown line.



Improved safety – by separating rail and road traffic at Ferguson Street.



More reliable roads – by eliminating long waits at the boom gates.



Boosting the economy – by creating hundreds of jobs during construction.



Unlocking opportunities – by enhancing and creating vibrant areas for the community to enjoy.

Community consultation challenges

Based on health advice in response to coronavirus, we cancelled the Ferguson Street community information sessions planned for late March.

Thank you for your patience and for continuing to provide your valuable feedback. The health and safety of our workers and the community is our key priority as we continue to deliver the Ferguson Street Level Crossing Removal Project.

We worked hard to ensure you could still engage with us on this project through our online engagement hub, via our social media channels, or by getting in touch with our contact centre. We also mailed surveys to the Williamstown community to ensure everyone had a chance to get involved, and we created some additional online resources, including video interviews with project experts.

FEEDBACK ON THE FEASIBLE DESIGNS



In this phase of consultation, we showed the community the two designs – rail under road or rail over road. We asked for your thoughts on the benefits and challenges of each design, as well as what factors relating to the project are most important to you.

Feedback was open from Tuesday 10 March to Friday 3 April. Feedback during this phase of consultation came via two main channels:

- Feedback surveys – online and hard-copy
- Feedback via the engagement hub and call centre.

Levels of feedback

There was a high level of community interest in this consultation phase.

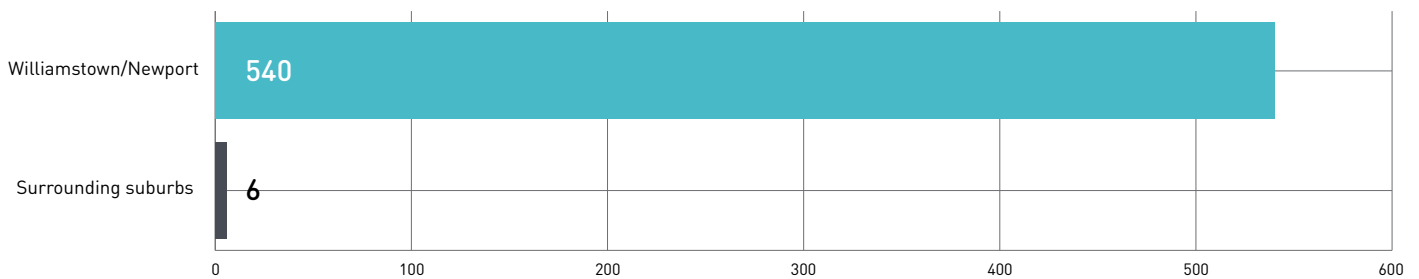


WHAT WE'VE HEARD

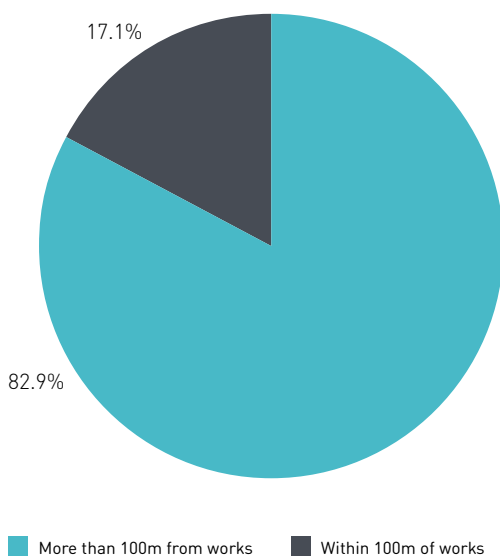
Most respondents were property owners living in Williamstown.



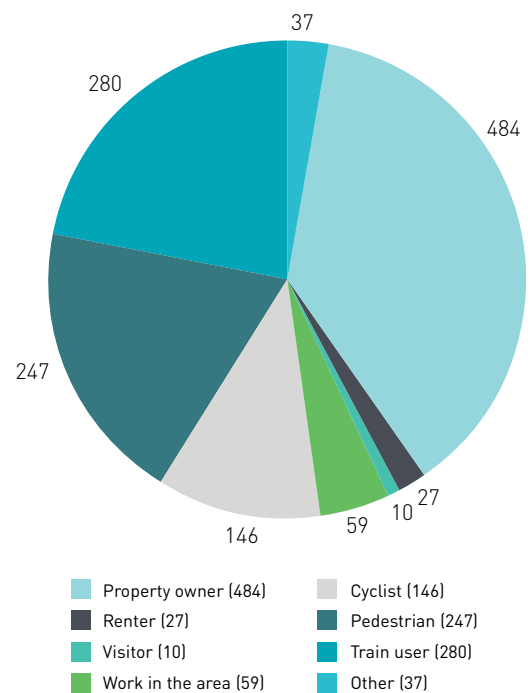
Suburbs



Proximity to project works area



Interest in project



FEEDBACK ON THE DESIGNS



Rail under road

Top three benefits

Reduced visual impacts

- 63% of people told us that a rail under road design is the best solution to reduce the visual impact of the new rail infrastructure.
- We heard that the community likes the way this design looks, and believe it would provide a good fit for the area.

Maintains Williamstown's village feel

- 38% of people said a rail under road design will help maintain Williamstown's valued heritage and 'village feel'.
- People told us that this design would be in keeping with the low-rise nature of Williamstown while maintaining the valued sightline between the Rifle Club Hotel and the old Bristol Hotel.

'Williamstown is the oldest suburb in Melbourne and despite the passing of time retains much of its old-world character and that is a valuable thing, worth preserving. A line under the road contributes to maintaining that character.'

Reduced long-term impacts

- 25% of people said they think this design would create fewer long-term impacts for both the neighbouring residents and the broader area.
- The community told us that they liked that a trench design would eliminate privacy concerns for homes along the rail corridor.

Rail under road

Top three concerns

Road network and pedestrian movements

- 12% of people said they were concerned about the current road network and crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists.
- We heard that the community would like more information on how a rail under road design could address these issues.

Construction disruption

- 11% of people said they were concerned with construction impacts, including noise and truck movements from the work site.
- However, we also heard that the community is willing to tolerate prolonged construction impacts.

'Major ongoing construction work but am happy to put up with it for the end result.'

Impact to station buildings

- 11% of people were concerned about the loss of the station building(s) at North Williamstown Station.
- Many people said that every effort should be made to retain the buildings if possible.

Rail over road

Top three benefits

Shorter construction timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9% of people noted that a possible benefit would be the shorter construction timeframe to build a rail over road design.
Creating open space and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8% of people commented that a rail over road design would unlock new open spaces under the elevated rail.We heard that new open spaces would be well-utilised by the community and that it would unite the suburb. Some people had suggestions for the use of the space. <hr/> <p><i>'Opening of space beneath the rail line will unify the suburb.'</i></p>
Minimise disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5% of people said a benefit of a rail over road design would be minimised disruptions to road, rail and homes during construction.

Top three concerns

Visual impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">67% of people said they were concerned about the visual impact of a rail over road design in Williamstown.There is concern that an elevated structure will look undesirable and stand out in an otherwise low-rise area.
Compromise heritage and village feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">36% of people were concerned that a rail over road design would compromise Williamstown's village feel and would not be in keeping with local heritage.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">21% of people said they were concerned about a rail over road solution increasing noise from trains.We heard that some members of the community would prefer to not hear the trains, and feel that elevating the rail line would mean louder and more widespread train noise.

Project factors and what's important to you

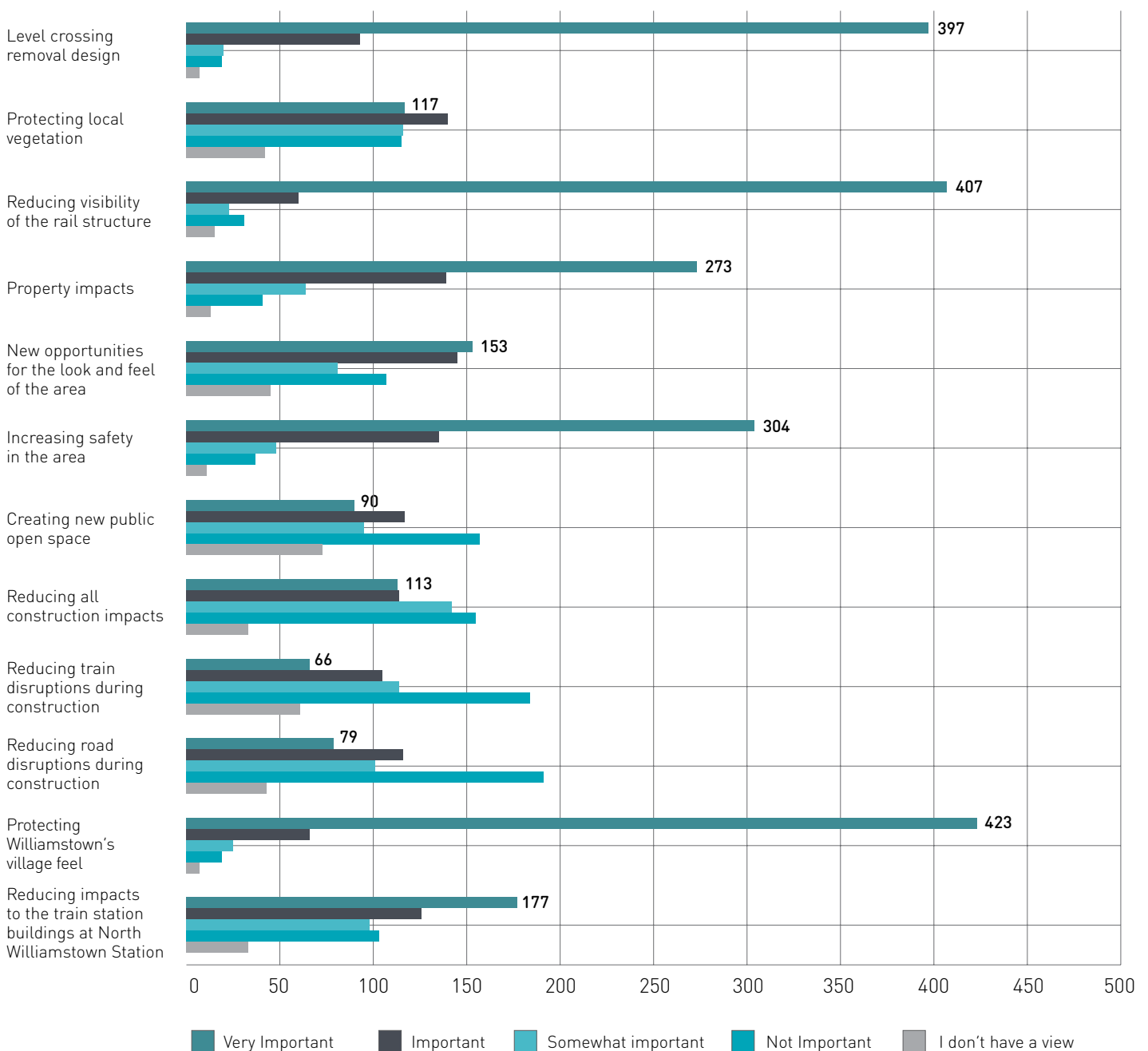
What is the single most important factor we should consider when removing the level crossing?

Retain heritage assets and valued village feel

- We heard that maintaining the heritage and village feel of Williamstown is what matters most to the community.

'Fitting with Williamstown's heritage. We are one of Melbourne's oldest suburbs and we should be preserving it as such.'

What's important to you



THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



How your feedback is used

Community considerations

At each development stage we ask for your input.



Environmental considerations

For example:

- loss of trees and bushes
- underground water levels.



Technical considerations

For example:

- utilities along and below the road and rail line
- ground conditions and natural features
- narrow rail corridor.



We consider all these factors when making assessments on the potential designs at each location and as we move towards a preferred design.

Usually, no single factor is decisive in selecting a design, rather a combination of factors and an assessment of how each benefits or impacts the local area. We want to find the solution that best meets the needs of the site.

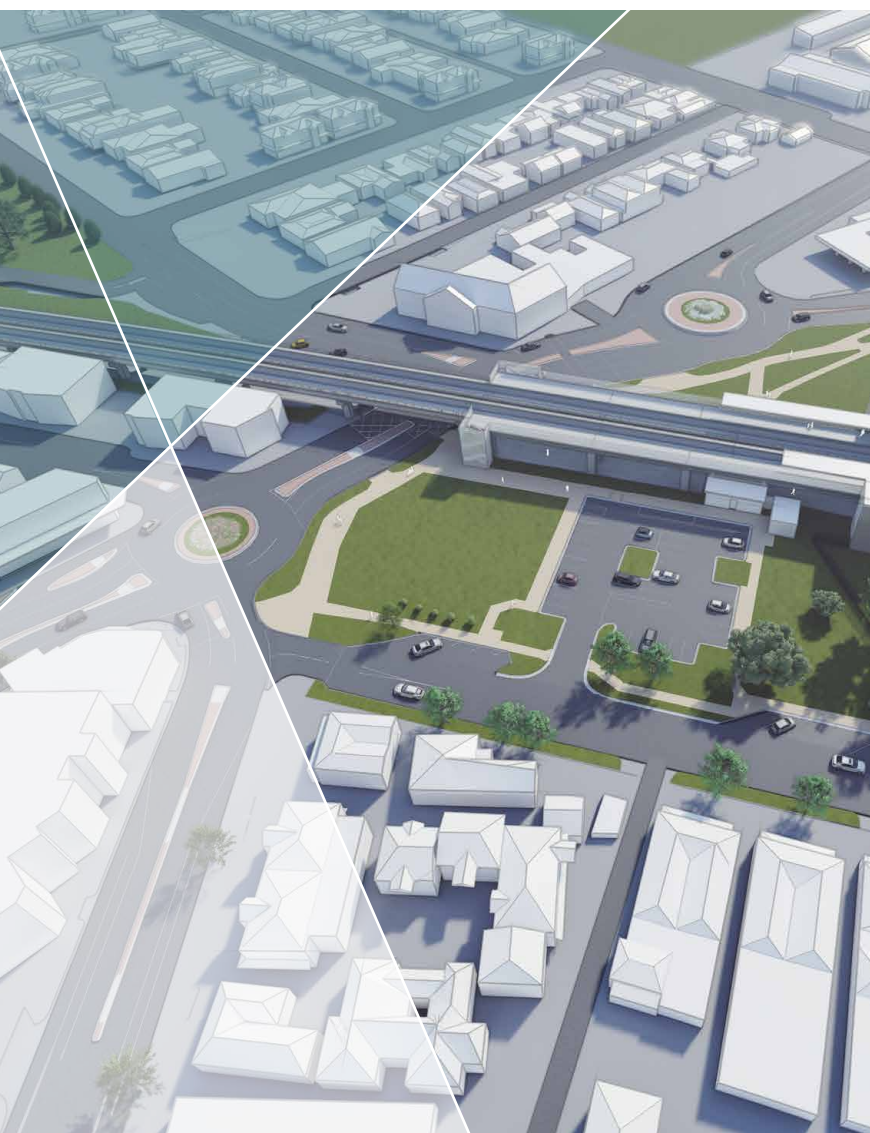
WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that we have heard your feedback about the two designs, work will continue to determine the preferred design to remove the Ferguson Street level crossing.

Critical site investigations are now underway in and around the level crossing area. These works will help paint a clear picture of the environmental conditions in the rail corridor. This information, along with previous site investigations, technical assessments and community feedback will determine the level crossing removal design.

We will back out in the Williamstown community in mid 2020 with a preferred design. We'll be asking for your help to shape the final design and share your thoughts on key look and feel negotiables.

**Construction will begin in early 2021,
and the level crossing will be gone in 2022.**



What stage are we at?

✓ November 2019

Getting to know the area

Community input at this stage helped us understand what is important to local communities.

✓ Early 2020

Preliminary assessment

Investigations at this stage help us gain an understanding of each area and tell us what additional detailed investigations are needed as we further refine the designs for this site.

✓ March 2020

We explain the potential designs and seek feedback. This helps us determine the preferred design.

Detailed investigations

We undertake detailed investigations at this stage.

○ Mid 2020

Preferred design recommendations

A preferred design will be selected at this stage.

○ Late 2020

Present final design

The final design will be showcased to the community, and we will start getting you ready for the construction phase.

○ 2021-2022

We will remove the level crossing

We will also seek your feedback on how things are working and if there is anything we can do to make the construction phase easier for the community.

**Timeline above subject to change*

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