

**What we
heard**

**Urban Design and
Landscape Plan**



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About this report

The M80 Ring Road Completion in Greensborough will deliver new lanes and a seamless connection to the North East Link tunnels – fixing the missing link in Melbourne's freeway network and taking 19,000 cars and trucks a day off Greensborough Road.

We'll also build new interchanges at the M80 Ring Road and Grimshaw Street, more than 10 km of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, better local connections to Watsonia Station and shops and new noise walls to meet a tougher traffic noise standard of 63 decibels during the day, and a quieter 58 decibels at night.

From 9 to 29 October 2023, we asked the local community to share their thoughts on the Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP).

We asked for feedback on key local elements including the new walking and cycling paths, bridges and underpasses, wetlands, noise walls and improvements to local roads.

The plan also explained how the UDLP meets strict requirements developed through community consultation for the Project's Environment Effects Statement including an Urban Design Strategy and Environmental Performance Requirements.

This report includes a summary of what we heard, and how it helped further refine the UDLP, ready for major construction to start.

You can see the final Urban Design and Landscape Plan at bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/m80-ring-road-completion

Community consultation timeline

2017

Deciding where to build North East Link

Understanding the traffic and transport problems North East Link needs to solve, including completing the M80 Ring Road and overhauling the Eastern Freeway.

10,000+

pieces of feedback

2018/19

Environment Effects Statement (EES)

Developing a reference design and setting requirements the final project design must meet for the M80 Ring Road Completion, North East Link and Eastern Freeway Upgrades.

3500+ **870+**

pieces of feedback

submissions

2023

Urban Design and Landscape Plan

Showing how the project design for the M80 Ring Road Completion meets the requirements community helped develop through the EES, and refining local elements, ready for construction to start.

477

submissions

Other UDLPs

As we deliver the M80 Ring Road Completion, North East Link and Eastern Freeway Upgrades we're preparing UDLPs as we go.

The UDLP for North East Link was exhibited for community comment in 2022, and approved in early 2023. Construction is well underway.

The UDLP for the first stage of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades from Burke Road to Tram Road was exhibited for comment in 2023 and approved by the Minister for Planning in September 2024. UDLPs for the remaining stages of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades will be exhibited as we bring builders on board from 2025.

Cover image: Artist's impression of Ring Road interchange, Greensborough
This page: Artist's impression of new noise walls and walking and cycling path at Gillingham Reserve, Watsonia North

Engagement

Communication

How we let people know the M80 Ring Road Completion UDLP was on exhibition

2+
million

people reached through social media and online advertising

25,600+

postcards sent to residents and businesses in the local area

3500+

letters sent to residents and businesses close to where works will be happening

10,000+

subscribers received email updates

80+

residents visited at home

3

newspaper advertisements

Engagement

Who was interested to know more about the project design and the UDLP

13,600+

visits to the UDLP online

8000+

visits to the online map

670+

people came to an information display and spoke with our team

Submissions

Who made a submission

456

local residents

3

local councils

2

government agencies

3

local community groups

12

local businesses and trader groups

1

local school

Key changes made

In response to submissions received, the UDLP now includes

Improved connections to Watsonia Station and shops

Two extra walking and cycling crossings at Elder Street and Watsonia Road, with paths on both sides of the landscaped bridges.

A better location for the Elder Street bridge path for a greener crossing on the south side.

A greener gateway to Watsonia shops through the Watsonia Road bridge.

Extra parking for local traders and street trees for Watsonia Shops.

More trees and plants and better green spaces

More trees and plants for a greener road corridor.

Improved design for the lawn and play area at Trist Street Reserve.

An improved wetland design at the M80 Ring Road.

Better walking and cycling connections to the M80 Trail

At Enterprise Drive, Bundoora to help fix the missing link to Uni Hill Town Centre.

Three new connections with local streets in Greensborough at Worcester Crescent, Dublin Green and Waterford Place.

Greener views of noise walls and bridges for residents

Climbing plants, more garden beds and screen planting, and anti-graffiti coatings for the community side of noise walls in key locations.

Improved screening for walking and cycling bridges at Macorna Street and Nell Street.



Artist's impression of Watsonia Road bridge with improved shared use paths, trees and plants, Watsonia



We urge you to choose colours or materials for the sound walls that harmonise with the plantings.

Bundoora resident

M80 Ring Road interchange precinct

New lanes, wetlands and walking and cycling connections

In response to community feedback received through the project's planning approvals process, including submissions to the Environment Effects Statement, the UDLP exhibited for comment included:

An improved design for the M80 Ring Road interchange with fewer ramps and more space for trees and plants.

A better location for the Macorna Street walking and cycling bridge further away from homes.

A wide, bright walking and cycling underpass at Yando Street instead of a long, high bridge.

Overall, people felt most positive about the new noise walls to meet a better traffic noise standard, improved walking and cycling connections and selection of indigenous trees and plants. People also gave ideas for how to improve these elements of the project design.



Artist's impression of upgraded M80 Trail and climbing plants for greener noise walls, Greensborough

In response to your feedback, we'll be planting more trees and plants, and making further upgrades to the M80 Trail.

What you asked us to consider

Noise walls to suit the local area

Designs that fit in with the local green, leafy look and feel of surrounding suburbs.

Materials or other treatments that help prevent graffiti and are easy to maintain.

Keeping noise walls as close to the road, and as far away from homes as possible.

Additional walking and cycling upgrades

Joining the M80 Trail to Enterprise Drive in Bundoora and local streets in Greensborough.

A cycle connection at Sellars Street between Gillingham Reserve and the Yando Street underpass in Watsonia North.

A new walking and cycling bridge over the Plenty River in Greensborough.

Upgrading sections of the M80 Trail that need repairs.

More trees and plants

To soften the look and feel of the road, noise walls and the Macorna Street walking and cycling bridge.

Using native and indigenous species to support wildlife habitat.

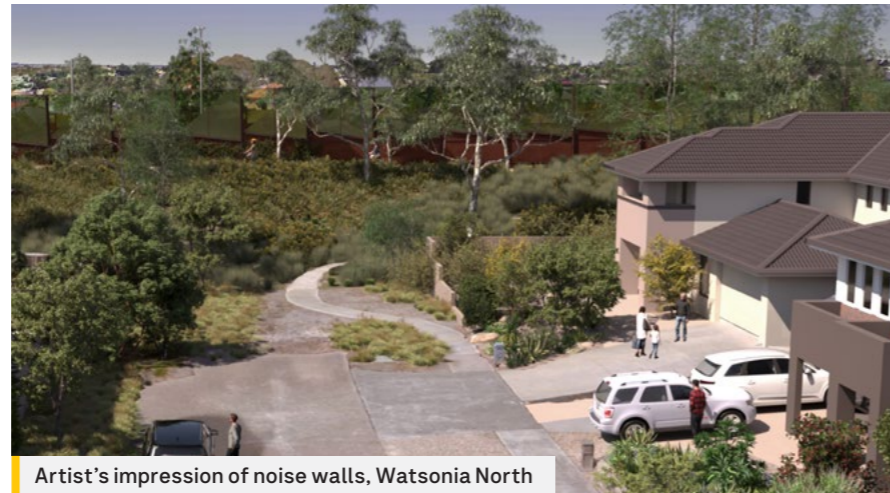


For the acoustic walls, serious consideration should be given to graffiti resistance. A drive along the M80 will demonstrate how a lack of maintenance will degrade the local area when these panels are vandalised.

Macleod resident

Other concerns we heard from you

How the new traffic noise standard will be monitored.



Artist's impression of noise walls, Watsonia North



Delivering a better noise standard

New and upgraded noise walls will meet the toughest traffic noise standard in Victoria – 63 decibels during the day and a quieter 58 decibels at night.

Once the M80 Ring Road Completion is built, we'll monitor noise levels and publish the results online. If the measured noise is higher than the required level, we'll take action to reduce it at affected properties.

What we're doing

More improvements to the M80 Trail

1. Upgraded walking and cycling connection to Enterprise Drive to help fix the missing link to Uni Hill.
2. New walking and cycling connections at Worcester Crescent, Dublin Green and Waterford Place.
3. Upgrading extra sections. To minimise disruption and vegetation removal, where long sections of the trail (500 metres or more) wouldn't otherwise be affected by M80 Ring Road Completion works, we'll leave these areas undisturbed.

We looked at whether it was possible to build a walking and cycling bridge over Plenty River. This would require a significant structure with substantial impacts.

Greener noise walls with more protection from graffiti

4. Climbing plants will help green noise walls, improve views for residents, and protect against graffiti. Where there isn't enough space for plants, an anti-graffiti coating will be used.

More trees and plants

5. More trees and plants for the Ring Road interchange and an improved design for the new wetlands.
6. More planting in more median strips for a greener road corridor.

A better design for Macorna Street bridge

7. Cladding to help screen ramps on the south side near homes. An additional type of screen to help manage overlooking has also been included in the design.

Ongoing design work for a cycle connection between Gillingham Reserve and the Yando Street underpass at Sellars Street

8. Building an underpass at Yando Street instead of a long, high bridge meant we also removed large ramps that ran behind homes on Sellars Street. This is a better outcome for these residents and avoids a long route for cyclists. The space behind homes on Sellars Street is narrow and enclosed, so is not safe for a walking and cycling path. We'll keep working on a suitable connection for cyclists between Gillingham Reserve and the new underpass.



In response to your feedback, we've improved the design for Trist Street Reserve.

Artist's impression of returned Trist Street Reserve after construction, Watsonia North

“

Increase grassed space at Trist Street Reserve for kids to play like the current space.

Watsonia North resident

Grimshaw Street interchange precinct

Congestion eased, priority lanes for buses, new walking and cycling connections and improved green spaces

In response to community feedback received through the project's planning approvals process, including submissions to the Environment Effects Statement, the UDLP exhibited for comment included:

Improvements to areas of open space at AK Lines Reserve and Trist Street Reserve used to support construction.

A better location for the Nell Street walking and cycling bridge for a shorter, more direct crossing than the reference design.

Nell Street East kept open for local road access in both directions.

Overall, we heard people felt most positive about the new walking and cycling connections at Grimshaw Street and improvements to AK Lines and Trist Street Reserves. You also gave positive feedback about the new arrangements for local roads around Nell Street including the cul-de-sacs for Thompson, Temby and Nepean streets.

People raised concerns about, or gave ideas for how to improve, the design for Nell Street bridge, AK Lines and Trist Street reserves, views for residents and made suggestions for additional walking and cycling connections.

What you asked us to consider

Improving designs for open space

At Trist Street Reserve, you let us know the trees, lawn area, basketball hoop and playground are important and need to be returned after construction.

Providing additional upgrades to AK Lines Reserve.

Better views for residents

Improving views of the Nell Street bridge, particularly on the east side.

Designing noise walls to allow natural light and deter graffiti, particularly on the east side of Greensborough Road between Teresa Street and Elder Street and at Sellars Street.

Additional, or easier to use, walking and cycling connections

Replacing the noise wall maintenance track behind homes on Sellars Street with a shared use path and creating public space with more trees and plants.

Improving the ramps for Nell Street bridge to make them easier for people to use. Some of you suggested ramps facing in both directions, straightening the ramps for a shorter, more direct crossing or building an underpass.

Changes to the Grimshaw Street interchange

More trees and plants, particularly greener crossings for pedestrians.

Moving the bus stop at Grimshaw Street off the traffic island.

Other concerns we heard from you

Issues with existing traffic congestion at Grimshaw Street, particularly from people queuing to turn right to the Ring Road, and concerns this will become worse.

Concerns the new underpasses at Grimshaw Street will not be safe or pleasant to use.

“ I don't want a completely solid steel wall, I would prefer this wall to have windows to allow afternoon sunsets to encompass our street.

Greensborough resident

Grimshaw Street for walking and cycling

At Grimshaw Street, we'll build two walking and cycling underpasses and new paths to and through Trist Street Reserve and AK Lines Reserve. We'll also extend Greensborough Bypass Path to Watsonia Station and shops and widen existing paths so they can be used by pedestrians and bikes – including at the Kempston Street underpass.

The underpasses will be wide and bright, with clear views through from one end to the other.

What we're doing

Improved design for Trist Street Reserve

1. A better space for the open lawn area near the playground and basketball hoop.
 2. Improved wetland designs with space for more trees.
 3. Existing trees near homes kept during construction.
- 🔍 After construction, AK Lines Reserve will be returned for local community sport with an upgraded access road around the oval, new trees and plants and a new wetland. We'll keep working with Banyule Council to explore if other upgrades are needed.

Acrylic panels for noise walls, and more protection from graffiti

4. Noise walls with acrylic panels for natural light near homes and an anti-graffiti coating.
5. More trees and plants in front of noise walls at Trist Street Reserve and AK Lines Reserve, and an anti-graffiti coating.

More screen planting for Nell Street bridge

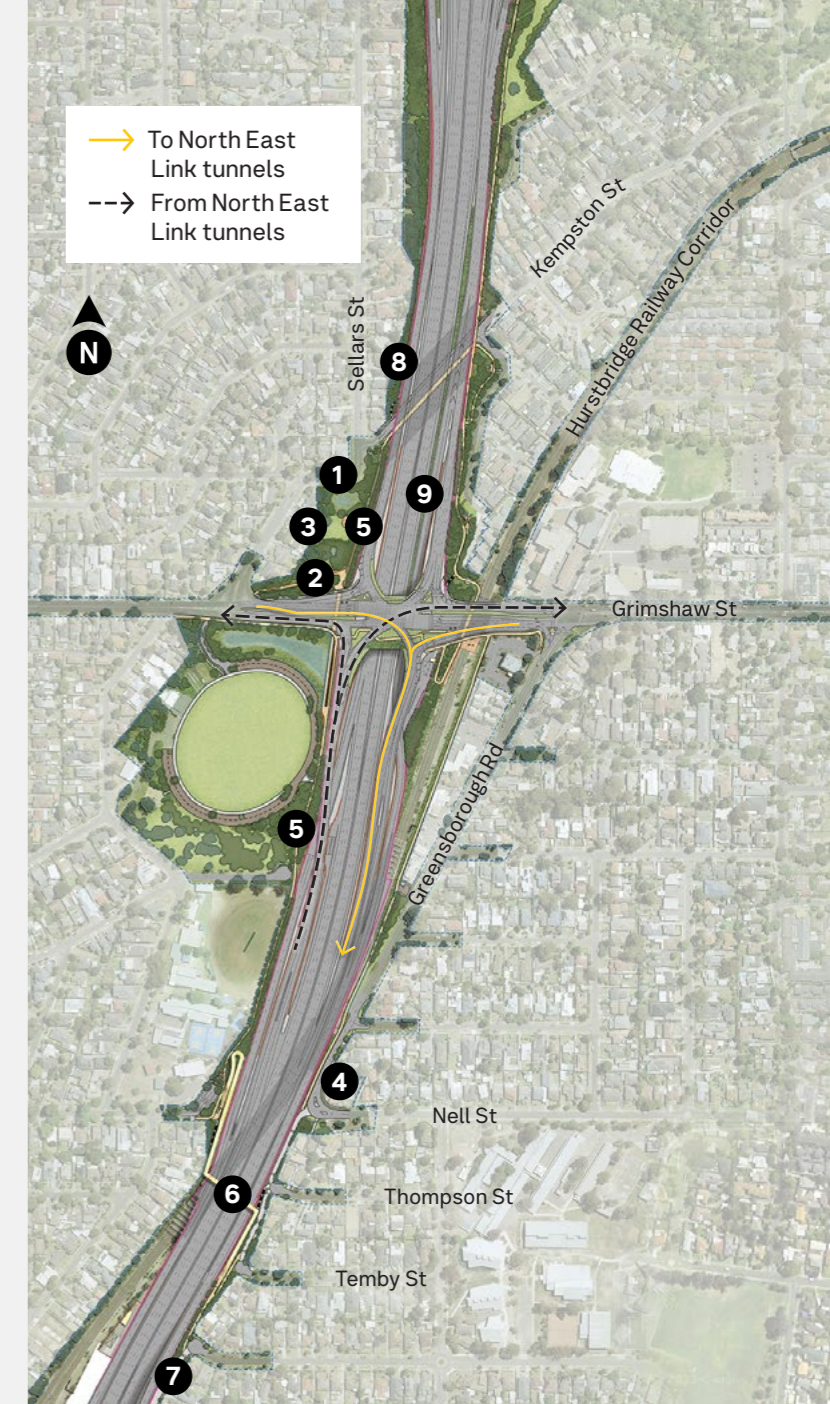
6. A greener design for the stairs and ramps with screens for trellis plants.
 7. A new garden bed for trees and plants near homes.
- 🔍 We looked at whether it was possible to change the layout for the Nell Street bridge stairs and ramps. The design exhibited in the UDLP provides the shortest, most direct crossing while avoiding the need to acquire homes. An underpass would need to go under the rail line. This would make it very deep with long ramps in and out. The ramps would be hard to use and there would also be issues with flooding.

More trees and plants behind homes on Sellars Street

8. Maintenance track reduced from three metres wide, to one metre wide to create more space for more trees and plants.
- 🔍 We looked at whether it was possible to provide a pedestrian and cycle path with open space here. The area behind homes is long and narrow, and not suitable for public access.

A greener Grimshaw Street interchange

9. More planting in more median strips for a greener road corridor.
- 🔍 We looked at the new bus stop location. Moving the stop from the Grimshaw Street footpath to the traffic island next to the new bus lane means buses won't need to pull in and out of traffic when stopping for passengers. This will help keep traffic moving. Passengers will also have a much larger, and safer area to use.



Artist's impression of Grimshaw Street interchange, Watsonia North

More green light time at Grimshaw Street

The new Grimshaw Street interchange will keep traffic moving.

People travelling north-south will pass underneath, without needing to stop at the lights. This will give everyone else more green light time. More green light time means shorter waits, shorter queues and quicker trips through.



Artist's impression of bus stop at Grimshaw Street interchange, Watsonia North



The land bridges at Elder Street and Watsonia Road give limited access to residents.

Viewbank resident

Watsonia Station and shops precinct

Two landscaped bridges at Watsonia Road and Elder Street and new parking for Watsonia Station.

During the project’s planning approvals, including submissions to the Environment Effects Statement, we heard it was important the project design provided good access across Greensborough Road for locals, including keeping the existing connection from Elder Street to the station car park. The UDLP exhibited for comment included:

Lanes to and from the North East Link tunnels lowered under Watsonia Road and Elder Street, keeping through traffic and trucks away from the local area.

A larger 60-metre-wide landscaped bridge at Watsonia Road with more space for trees and plants.

A 40-metre-wide landscaped bridge at Elder Street, with the access to the station people let us know was important to them.

Space reserved for improvements to parking at Watsonia Station through a future UDLP process.

Overall, we heard people were concerned the design did not provide enough crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists, trees or plants. You also let us know you were concerned the lowered road would look unattractive and increase noise. Many submissions referenced a proposal by Banyule Council to build the project here as a tunnel by putting a lid on the lowered lanes to and from the North East Link tunnels.

In response to your feedback, we’re building additional walking and cycling paths along the Watsonia Road and Elder Street bridges, and planting more trees and plants at the gateway to Watsonia shops.



Artist's impression of additional walking and cycling crossing and street tree planting at Watsonia Road bridge, Watsonia

What you asked us to consider

A covered (lidded) tunnel

Covering the section of lowered road at Watsonia with a lid (a construction technique known as cut and cover tunnelling) to improve walking and cycling access to Watsonia Station and shops and create new open space for people to use.

Improved or extra walking and cycle crossings

Shared use paths on both sides of the Elder Street and Watsonia Road bridges.

Wider, or more, landscaped bridges.

An elevated bridge over Greensborough Road.

Building the cycle connection from Nell Street bridge to the station and shops along Ibbottson Street as an off-road path.

Improvements for local traders

A gateway to Watsonia Shops at Watsonia Road.

More parking at the southern end of the shops.

More trees and plants

Boulevard style tree planting along roads.

More green buffers for pedestrians, cyclists and nearby residents.

Other concerns we heard from you

Concerns about noise from the lowered road.

“Please consider putting a green lid over the freeway to better link the two sides of the suburbs.”

Macleod resident

The North East Link tunnels extend as far north as they can go

In response to community feedback, the 6.5 km tunnels are more than double the length originally proposed and are the longest road tunnels in Victoria.

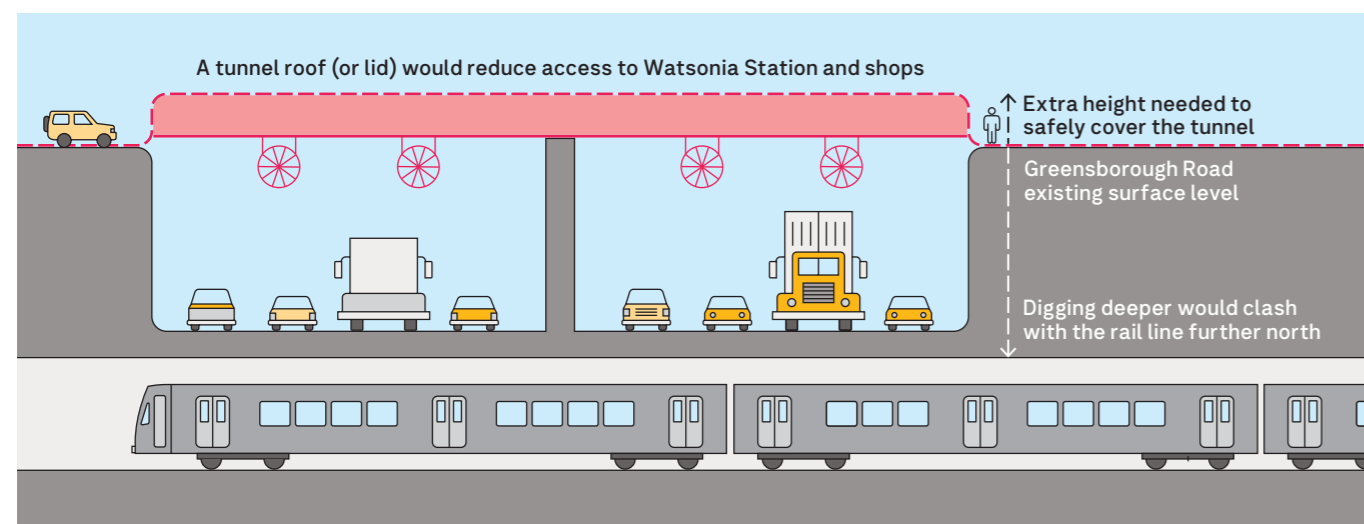
We explored building a covered (lidded) tunnel at Watsonia.

This option was put aside because:

- A ventilation structure would be needed directly next to homes and close to shops. This would be a poor visual outcome and take up space.
- A major gas main and the Hurstbridge rail line prevent us from digging deeper to create the extra space needed for the tunnel lid.

- The tunnel lid would need to be higher than the surrounding area. This would block access from Elder Street to Greensborough Road and Watsonia Station. It would also be challenging to keep access to Watsonia shops open at Watsonia Road.

The landscaped bridges are the best way to pass through traffic and trucks under local roads, and make driving, walking or riding a bike to Watsonia Station and shops safer, easier and more enjoyable.



What we're doing

Better and more walking and cycling connections to Watsonia Station and shops

1. Two extra walking and cycling crossings at Elder Street and Watsonia Road, with shared use paths along both sides of the landscaped bridges.
2. Elder Street bridge path on the south side moved to run through the centre of the landscaped area, further away from the road.
3. An improved alignment for the Frensham Reserve shared use path for a better connection to Greensborough Road and the Elder Street landscaped bridge.

More trees and plants

4. Additional street trees along the shared use paths on the Watsonia Road bridge for a greener entry to Watsonia shops.
5. Additional street trees for Watsonia Shops.
6. New garden beds for Service Road to help soften views of noise walls.

Improvements for local traders

7. Extra parking at the southern end of Watsonia Shops.
8. A better design for street planting so the shops are more visible from the road.

Ongoing design work for a cycle connection at Ibbottson Street

9. We'll keep working on a connection for cyclists between the Nell Street bridge and the new Watsonia Town Square.

What else we explored

- Adding an extra landscaped bridge for a third crossing point. Watsonia Road and Elder Street are too close together for another set of traffic lights to be added in between without congesting Greensborough Road, Elder Street and Watsonia Road.
- Building an elevated bridge over Greensborough Road. Long ramps would make it difficult to use and the crossings at Elder Street and Watsonia Road are much more direct.
- Widening the bridges at Watsonia Road and Elder Street to create more space for trees and plants. In response to community feedback through the EES, the width of the Watsonia Road bridge was increased to 60 metres, with around 20 metres of space for trees, plants and paths along each side. Building a wider bridge would be challenging. The Elder Street bridge is 40 metres wide and has been designed to provide the access to Watsonia Station for cars, buses, cyclists and pedestrians people have told us is important. A major gas main close by prevents it being made much wider.



Reducing traffic noise at Watsonia Station and shops

The lowered road will take 19,000 cars and trucks a day off Greensborough Road.

Keeping this traffic away from the local area, and passing it below Watsonia Road and Elder Street instead, will reduce traffic noise at the surface.

Watsonia Town Square, Watsonia Station, Frensham Reserve and shops along Watsonia Road will all have less noise from traffic.

New and upgraded noise walls will also provide residents along Greensborough Road with a better standard of noise protection than they have today.



Artist's impression of Watsonia Road bridge and Greensborough Road, Watsonia

Next steps: Watsonia Station car park

In submissions for the M80 Ring Road Completion UDLP, some of you let us know you were concerned how the area reserved for parking at Watsonia Station would connect with the rest of the precinct, particularly walking and cycling paths.

Similar to new parking for the Eastern Busway being built with the Eastern Freeway Upgrades, the design for parking at Watsonia Station will be prepared and exhibited through a separate UDLP process.

From talking with the community, we know easy access for cars to parking, and for people to walk to the station and rail bridge is important. We'll be including these connections in the project design for the station car park upgrades,

together with improvements to the bus stop and better access for cyclists. We expect to be able to share an update on the design for the Watsonia Station car park next year.

Construction

The final UDLP was approved by the Minister for Planning in September 2024, ready for major construction to begin.

Find out more

For more information about how we're completing the M80 Ring Road, or to sign up for construction updates visit bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/m80-ring-road-completion

To talk to us

Drop in to our Community Information Hub
17 Watsonia Road, Watsonia
Monday to Friday
10am to 5pm

Write to us at
contact@bigbuild.vic.gov.au

Call us on 1800 105 105
Our phone line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Artist's impression of Elder Street landscaped bridge, Watsonia



Artist's impression of Yando Street underpass, Greensborough

bigbuild.vic.gov.au/roads

1800 105 105 (call anytime)

contact@bigbuild.vic.gov.au



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