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MONT ALBERT – SURREY HILLS LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL PROJECT (LXRP)

Following on from our written submission dated 13 February, we enclose a concept plan to illustrate our submission and the measures we believe are necessary to support the railway project.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The attached concept plan summarises the submission made by the Surrey Hills Progress Association (a community group of both Mont Albert and Surrey Hills residents) to the Level Crossing Removal Project.

The Association's submission accepts the position put by the LXRA that the rail-under –road trench design and single station concept is non-negotiable, for engineering and safety reasons.

However the Association notes that this rail design solution – by removing two existing stations from their historic village sites and building a new station adjacent to narrow residential streets – creates negative impacts, unique to this project, at key locations along the rail corridor.

There are negative social and economic effects for the two shopping villages, at Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, which lose their railway stations.

Liveability and amenity issues also arise for residents living in Lorne Parade and Beresford Street, opposite the new station that is to be shoe horned into a narrow railway/residential corridor.

It is therefore critical that the project adopt measures to mitigate the impacts at these locations.

We believe these should include creating a village square as a new focal point in each shopping village, over the railway line in place of the two stations, with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safe pathways leading directly to the new station entrances.

The Association also seeks a Mont Albert Road frontage for the new station, with parkland over the railway line integrated with the drop off area. Station entrances to the residential side streets must be avoided. Space must also remain for on street parking and canopy vegetation along Lorne Parade and Beresford Street, provided by selective decking and/or cantilever sections as part of the station design.

Finally, Lorne Parade Reserve, zoned 'Public Park & Recreation' and the only significant reserve in the area bounded by Canterbury, Elgar, Whitehorse and Union Roads, must be retained with limited building intrusion and as much recreation space as possible, including established trees.

In summary the Surrey Hills Progress Association's support for the LXRP concept is contingent on these negative impacts being addressed within the overall scope and budget of the project. The Association, in good faith, has developed a set of practical and achievable proposals (summarised in the attached concept plan) that carefully respond to community concerns and should ensure an acceptable final plan for this significant infrastructure and urban renewal project.