

West Gate Freeway connection and Hyde Street access

During 2015 we spoke to the community about where and how the Western Distributor tunnel could connect with the West Gate Freeway. We're continuing these discussions through April and May 2016 and looking in more detail at the different options available.

Each option has different community impacts and engineering challenges. These will be explored in detail through the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process, in consultation with communities, councils and industry.

What is the Western Distributor?

The Western Distributor will provide a much-needed alternative to the West Gate Bridge by providing a vital second river crossing, enhancing freight connections and helping get trucks out of local streets in Melbourne's inner west.

The project includes extra lanes on the West Gate Freeway, between the M80 and Williamstown Road; a tunnel under Yarraville; a bridge over the Maribyrnong River; and an elevated road above Footscray Road connecting to the Port of Melbourne, CityLink and the city.

The objectives of the project are to:

- reduce congestion in the M1 corridor
- reduce reliance on the West Gate Bridge
- improve freight access to the Port of Melbourne and greater Melbourne
- take trucks off local streets and improve community amenity on local streets in the inner west

About the tunnel and Hyde Street connections

A tunnel under Yarraville is a key part of the project's design. It will provide:

- an efficient transport connection below ground while protecting land, homes and amenity above ground
- a direct freight route to the Port of Melbourne to help take trucks off of local streets

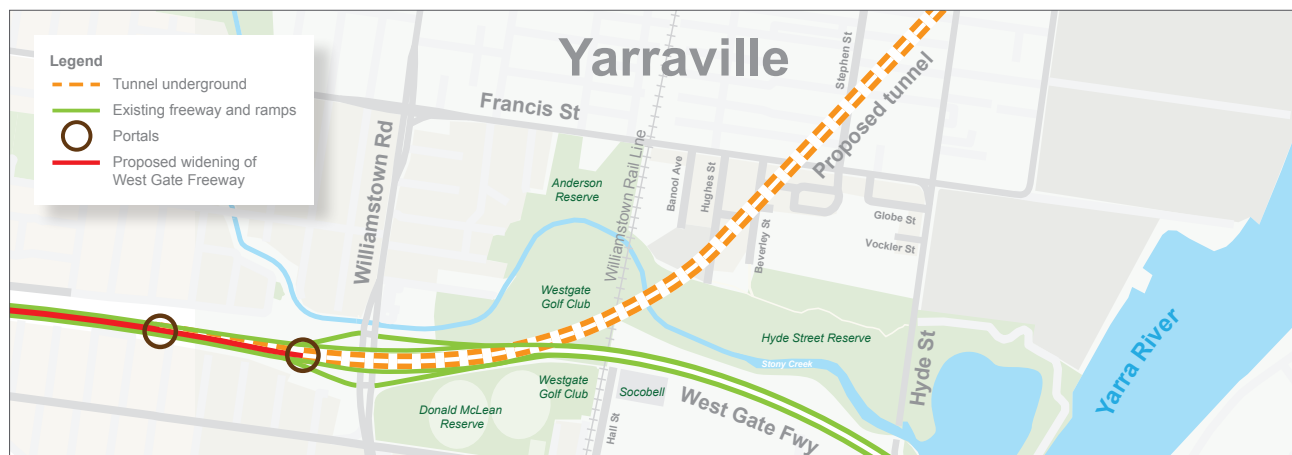
A connection to Hyde Street is needed to:

- get petrol tankers from the local refineries straight onto the freeway and off residential streets
- provide an alternative route for dangerous goods and other trucks that cannot use the tunnels
- support truck curfews and bans on residential streets in the inner west

West Gate Freeway connection

Two options are being considered to connect the West Gate Freeway and the Western Distributor tunnels. A connection to Hyde Street will also be built and options for that connection are shown separately over the page.

Long tunnel option



In response to feedback that new road infrastructure should be kept close to the existing freeway, we have been working to identify a solution that can deliver both the Hyde Street connection and a tunnel portal very close to the existing freeway area.

This option is different to the initial proposal in early 2015 because it 'splits' the tunnel portals – placing one near Williamstown Road and the other further west – making best use of the limited space and enabling a connection to Hyde Street.

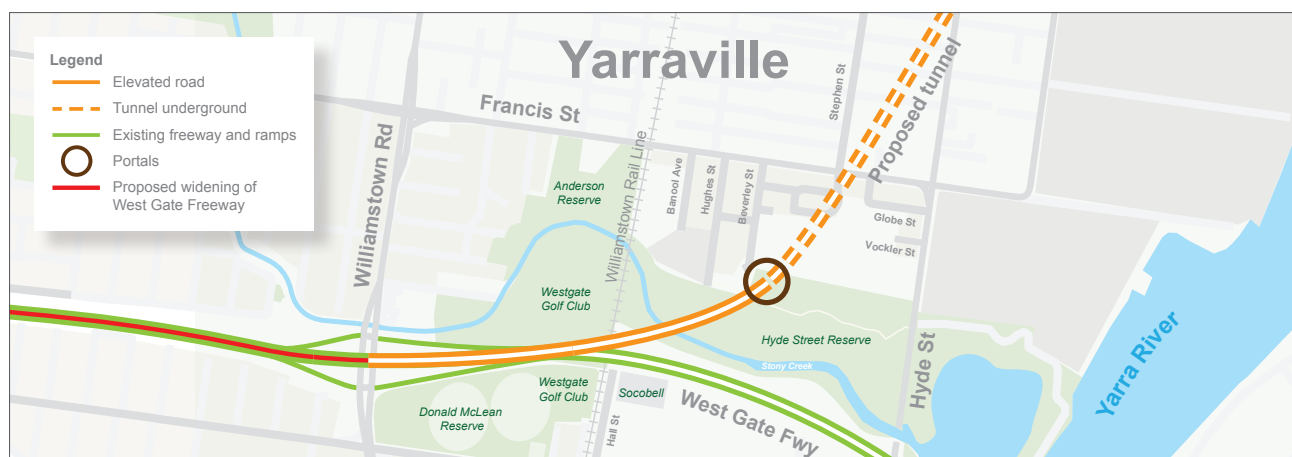
Key advantages:

- Avoids impacting open space
- Keeps new road within or close to existing freeway
- Minimises visual and amenity impacts

Key disadvantages:

- Construction close to residents living next to the freeway
- Additional traffic disruption during construction
- More expensive

Short tunnel option




This option was released to the public in September 2015. It places the tunnel portal in Hyde Street Reserve north of the West Gate Freeway with flyovers connecting the freeway and the tunnel portal. Industrial land to the north of the portal will be returned as new public open space.

Key advantages:

- Construction is simpler and overall construction time shorter
- Less traffic disruption during construction

Key disadvantages:

- Impacts on open space
- Visual and amenity impact
- Construction close to residents living near the portal location

 In your opinion, what other advantages or disadvantages does each option offer?

Hyde Street access

Options to connect the West Gate Freeway/Western Distributor with Hyde Street are being developed. There are many factors to be considered in designing this connection. There is little available space, surrounding land is of high community value and used for sport and recreation. There is existing rail, road and utility infrastructure in place, and designs must consider Stony Creek and potential for flooding.

A number of possible options are presented here, for further discussion with the community, councils and industry. We want to hear from people so that we can continue working to find the most suitable connection.



Option 1 Hyde Street Reserve

Designed for short tunnel, connects next to AusNet site

Key advantages:

- provides a safe, high-quality traffic connection
- minimises impact to Stony Creek (single crossing)
- no land required on south side of freeway

Key disadvantages

- impacts Hyde Street Reserve
- elevated ramp needs to cross above existing West Gate Freeway



Option 2 North

Designed for long¹ tunnel, connects next to Stony Creek

Key advantages

- provides a direct and efficient traffic connection
- no land required on south side of freeway

Key disadvantages

- impacts Hyde Street Reserve and Stony Creek
- impacts sporting facilities north of the West Gate Freeway*

1. Could be adapted for short tunnel, further design work required



Option 3 South

Designed for long tunnel, connects via Simcock Avenue

Key advantages

- provides a direct and efficient traffic connection
- no impact to Hyde Street Reserve or Stony Creek

Key disadvantages

- impacts sporting facilities south of the West Gate Freeway*
- elevated ramp needs to cross above existing West Gate Freeway



Option 4 North-South

Designed for long tunnel, ramps run either side of the freeway

Key advantages:

- provides a direct and efficient traffic connection
- no elevated ramps above existing West Gate Freeway

Key disadvantages

- impacts sporting facilities*
- impacts Hyde Street Reserve and Stony Creek



Option 5 Hall Street

Designed for long tunnel, connects via Hall Street and Simcock Avenue

Key advantages

- no elevated ramps above existing West Gate Freeway
- no impact to Hyde Street Reserve or Stony Creek

Key disadvantages

- impacts sporting facilities*
- more expensive
- subject to full safety assessment for heavy vehicle movements

* Should the final design impact on the Westgate Golf Club or on the cricket and football facilities at Donald McLean Reserve, we will work with the affected sporting clubs and council to find alternative land for these facilities.

Your questions answered

Will you acquire any homes?

We think that all options can be built without acquiring homes, although there may be some impacts during construction which we are looking at in more detail. It will be necessary to use all available space in the existing freeway reserve. Avoiding acquiring homes has been, and continues to be, a key consideration of our designs.

Why are we discussing different options for this location?

It is important that everyone has an opportunity to understand the options being considered and to provide input to inform decisions. All infrastructure projects have local impacts that affect people – some are positive and others are negative. This is particularly true for projects in built-up urban areas where we are trying to balance a number of objectives in a highly developed environment.

What is the final design?

We're not there yet – at this stage the project is still evolving and we are looking at a range of options for key aspects of the project. We won't move forward with any one option for the West Gate Freeway connection and Hyde Street access until we've explored all the technical considerations and heard from communities, councils and industry.

A 'reference design' will be issued to the construction market later this year. Bidders will use this as a basis for their own 'tender design'. You will be able to comment on further designs through the formal planning process.

Will one of the options shown here be chosen as the final?

Work by the project team has identified these as feasible options. However the option/s we move forward with could be a variation or combination of these designs.

The design is evolving in response to feedback

The Western Distributor is being developed through a consultative process. Consultation with councils, communities and industry has played a key part in this process and will continue to do so. The table below provides a summary of how the design has evolved in response to feedback.

Early 2015 Proposal design	Mid 2015 Proposal design update	Now Concept design
<p>The initial project design placed the southern tunnel portals (entry and exit points) in the centre of the West Gate Freeway, just west of Williamstown Road, and did not include a Hyde Street connection. Through an extensive consultation process, it emerged that developing a long term solution to get trucks off local roads and enable improved efficiency for the heavy vehicle industry were key priorities.</p>	<p>A design update released for discussion in September 2015 addressed these priorities by moving the tunnel portals into industrial land north of the West Gate Freeway in the vicinity of Hyde Street Reserve, with flyovers connecting the freeway with the tunnel portal and Hyde Street. The revised design involved new impacts on Hyde Street Reserve and surrounding areas.</p>	<p>In response to community concerns about the impact on open space and a desire to see new infrastructure kept as close as possible to existing freeway areas, a second southern portal design that integrates the freeway-tunnel connections within the existing West Gate Freeway area has been developed. As a result, two tunnel options (the 'long' and the 'short' tunnel option) and several different options for the Hyde Street connection are being considered.</p>

See the [Design discussion paper](#) for more detail about how the project design is being developed.

Key design considerations

There are a number of challenges and constraints to consider in locating and designing the tunnel portal and Hyde Street connection:

- Amenity – what are the visual, noise and air quality impacts on residential and recreation areas?
- Connectivity – does this option provide the right connections to the West Gate Freeway, Western Distributor and Hyde Street?
- Construction cost – what will this option cost?
- Construction disruption – what impact will construction have on local residents and road users?
- Environment – what are the impacts on open space and ecological values?
- Emergency services requirements – does this provide safe access in the event of an emergency?
- Safety, security and restrictions – what are the existing road, rail and utility infrastructure?



- Freight – how to move freight safely and efficiently while managing community impacts?
- Flood levels – would this option be affected by flooding?
- Functionality – how would this option function, taking into account geometry, height restrictions, gradients and design speed?
- Space constraints and land requirements – what space is required during construction and permanently? What is the current and future land use?
- Traffic performance and safety – does it cater for all necessary movements, improve traffic flow and safety
- Tunnel safety and operation – does this option deliver a safe and secure tunnel?



Thinking about the southern tunnel portal and Hyde Street connection, which considerations are the most and least important to you?

Companies bidding for the project may identify an innovative construction method or new technology that would allow them to improve the design or build it in a different way, as long as it meets the project objectives and all necessary requirements.

We will be challenging bidders to put their specialist expertise to work in developing their designs and planning construction to realise benefits and minimise negative impacts as much as possible.

How will you decide on a preferred option?

It's important to use robust, tested assessment methods which take account of all considerations. Some of the criteria used to assess different options will be technical (such as tunnel safety requirements) and others will be influenced by stakeholder and community feedback (such as social impacts).

Read more about how designs are developed and assessed in the **Design discussion paper**.

How will all the impacts be considered before approval is given to start work?

Major infrastructure projects usually have both positive and negative impacts – this is true for roads, rail lines, hospitals and the many other pieces of major infrastructure that we all rely on every day.

The advantages and disadvantages need to be clearly understood and carefully weighed up when deciding how to proceed. Many decisions require trade-offs: what looks like a good outcome to one person may be viewed differently by another. Technical considerations will decide many key issues.

Right now, we are discussing design options and possible impacts with local communities, council and industry, to ensure that we understand and consider different points of view. What we learn through these discussions will help inform the next design – the 'reference design'.

A final decision to grant planning approvals is made by Government. This decision is informed by evidence collected and presented through the EES planning processes and by recommendations made by an independent planning inquiry whose job it is to understand all the potential impacts and make informed and objective recommendations.

Further reading

If you're interested in the West Gate Freeway Connection and Hyde Street access, you might also like to read:

- **Design discussion paper** – for information about how we develop and assess designs
- **Tunnel design and construction discussion paper** – for information about the construction of major projects and how tunnels are designed, built and operated
- **Engagement and project development fact sheet** – next steps and how to be involved in developing the project until construction.



Get involved

Consultation has played an important role in developing the Western Distributor proposal, and will continue to do so throughout the project planning and development phase.

We are providing this design update to encourage discussion about key elements of the project's design, as well as other aspects of the project's construction that are important to people.

We encourage you to get involved at this important stage of the project's development and have your say about Melbourne's Western Distributor.

Contact us

You can keep in touch with the project team and be informed of the latest news by subscribing to updates via:

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