

DOMAIN PARKLANDS MASTER PLAN

Submission by

Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group Inc.

Prohibition of road closures – Metro Rail Project (MRP)

It is impossible to predict what the traffic and parking requirements will be until the Metro Rail Project (MRP) is completed in 5 – 10 years by which time our population will also have increased significantly.

This must be explained in the Master Plan and also that the Master Plan will be revised following completion of the MRP and that in the meantime there will be no road closures.

This explanation should be set out in a prominent position at the beginning of the Plan in words to the following effect.

METRO RAIL PROJECT

AS IT IS IMPOSSIBLE AT THIS TIME TO KNOW WHAT IMPACT COMPLETION OF THE METRO RAIL PROJECT WILL HAVE UPON TRAFFIC AND PARKING IN THE DOMAIN PARKLANDS AREA

- 1. ALL STATEMENTS IN THIS POLICY ABOUT POSSIBLE CHANGES OR CLOSURES OF ROADS ARE CONCEPTUAL ONLY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE,**
- 2. AFTER THE METRO RAIL PROJECT HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND ALL APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC, PARKING AND POPULATION SURVEYS HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN AN AMENDED MASTER PLAN WILL BE PREPARED, PUBLISHED AND DISCUSSED WITH THE COMMUNITY BEFORE BEING CONCLUDED, AND**
- 3. UNTIL THAT TIME THERE WILL BE NO ROAD CLOSURES OR CHANGES.**

Parkland Purpose

The primary purpose and function of this Parkland is to provide a peaceful, green, restful and attractive open space where people can relax.

The character and history of the Domain Parklands is of wide open grassed areas and trees and this must not be changed.

No Road Closures

While there is merit at an appropriate time in considering how all or parts of Linlithgow Avenue and Birdwood Avenue should be incorporated more effectively as part of the Parkland now is not the time and it should be deferred until well after completion of the MRP.

Furthermore, in the meantime, these roads and Alexandra Avenue must be kept open and not changed for at least the following reasons.

1. The only east-west through roads between Commercial Road and the river are:
 - a. Toorak Road which has become a traffic jam as a result of the relocation of the No 58 tram;
 - b. when Domain Road reopens it will be under enormous pressure because of Toorak Road problems and its access to Park Street;
 - c. Alexandra Avenue which has its problems which will increase with some of the work being proposed in this Plan.
2. Access for the 605 bus, which has been necessary because of the loss of the No 8 tram, is essential.
3. The left slip lane from Alexandra Avenue should also be retained to improve traffic flow.

None of these roads should be closed or changed until after completion of the MRP.

Edmund Herring Oval

This is a small community playing field which plays an important part in the Domain Parkland and is completely unsuited to become a significant sporting venue for a number of reasons.

1. As a green open space close to the Shrine and Latrobe's cottage it is a significant element and part of the Domain Parkland.
2. To protect traffic and people in Domain Road and Dallas Brooks Drive permanent nets would be required on two sides.
3. There is inadequate parking in this already heavily utilized area.
4. The addition of lighting towers and synthetic grass would totally alienate this space from the parkland and Shrine precinct.

The Domain Parkland is a critical park for Melbourne, not a sporting venue as is now being contemplated. Such changes would further diminish Melbourne's parks and in this location would be unacceptable.

Residents strongly oppose the changes in the Plan.

Domain South – Precinct 05

The narrow strip of parkland opposite the Domain Village bounded by Domain Road, Birdwood Avenue and Dallas Brooks Drive should not be changed from being open parkland and trees in the current format.

No barbecues, picnic tables or other built infrastructure should be installed in this area. A picnic rug on the grass is to be encouraged.

The park should not be cluttered and spoiled with such things which will also bring more people into what is already a very congested area with limited parking close to shops and residences.

Any exercise equipment, which should be inconspicuous and limited in number, should only be located next to the Tan. Council will be aware that this has been tried before but was removed for lack of use.

Commercial operators conducting group personal training should continue to be prohibited in this area.

An understory of native species should not be introduced here or anywhere else in the Domain Parkland as entirely incompatible with the character and history of these parklands.

The beauty, style and history of the Domain Parkland is of large open green spaces dotted with trees and that appearance and history must be retained.

Residents strongly oppose to all of the changes to this small area suggested in the Plan.

Bicycle Paths

We agree it is important to provide bicycle paths to encourage commuters but we think a great deal more work needs to be undertaken before finalizing proposals for the area between Morrell Bridge and Princes Bridge

We make the following suggestions.

1. Until the MRP has been completed changes to the area from the Tan to the river should be kept to a minimum as, for example, the best place for a dedicated bicycle path may be on Alexandra Avenue.
2. Do not duplicate paths by adding further so-called “dedicated” cycling and walking paths between Alexandra Avenue and the river. “Dedication” is almost impossible to achieve.
3. For the moment just widen the existing riverside path to make it a more suitable shared path.

4. Remember that the path on the north side of the river is already a busy and essentially dedicated bicycle path so consider how that might be improved for the commuters.
5. Design into the bicycle and shared paths mechanisms such as “rumble strips” to slow cyclists down.
6. Bicycle paths around the boat sheds and through Southgate need further consideration.

Parking

The Draft Plan proposes the removal of parking in Alexandra Avenue, part of Linlithgow Avenue and possibly Birdwood Avenue if the same changes were to be made in the future.

We agree there should be no all-day parking in Linlithgow Avenue, Birdwood Avenue and Alexandra Avenue or Anderson Street and Domain Road. These streets should not be parking lots but preserved for visitors to the gardens, arts complex, riverside barbecues and sporting events on the north side of the river.

However, parking spaces in Alexandra Avenue, Linlithgow Avenue and Birdwood Avenue must not be significantly reduced although that could be part of the traffic and parking review when the MRP has finished.

Any reduction of that parking it will increase the pressure on nearby residential streets which at the very least will need additional protection.

Public events

The number of fun runs and public events on and around the Tan and parklands is increasing and must be controlled and limited.

They impact not only upon the parkland but also the ability of others to enjoy the area and nearby residents who have to deal with the traffic and parking consequences.

We support moving some of these events away from the Tan and out of the Domain Parkland and perhaps to the north side of the river which generally seems to be under used but well serviced with toilet facilities.

Paths, signs, barbeques and other clutter

As we have said a number of times the character and history of the Domain Parklands is of green expanses and trees.

The Plan proposes adding further paths which in our view unnecessarily divide the lawns and break up the areas to the detriment of the park.

It is not necessary to have additional paths that take people directly to a particular place when there are paths that will already take them there.

The Plan (and council) must resist the temptation to add more paths, signs, barbecues, exercise equipment and the like which divide, clutter and diminish the essential character of the Domain Parklands.

Native Species Planting

The planting of a native species understorey is incompatible with the character and history of the Domain Parklands and should not be introduced in Tom's Block or anywhere else.

The Domain Parklands are not Royal Park.

The introduction of an understorey also provides places for felons to hide.

Music Bowl

We agree more must be done to reduce the visual and physical impact of the Bowl on the park.

This is particularly so on the south side of the Bowl where the ticket boxes, building and work area should be better integrated and screened.

Bridges and river landings

We strongly oppose another bridge over the river. It is unnecessary as the Swan Street Bridge is nearby and it would visually spoil the vista from the river into the city.

We think a footbridge over Alexandra Avenue is unnecessary. St Kilda Road and the existing pedestrian crossing at Linlithgow Avenue are adequate.

Construction of another river landing for the purpose of access to the Botanic Gardens is completely unnecessary as the existing ones are adequate.

Conclusion

While a great deal of work has gone into preparation of this draft, because of the impact of the MRP the timing could not be worse **and that must be clearly stated in the Plan from the outset.**

We hope our comments are useful and that they will result in changes being made to the Plan.

We also hope, however, that where we express strong opposition to certain parts of the Plan those parts will be removed altogether as anything left in the Plan may carry with it some sense of approval that might encourage council in the future.

If there are any queries or uncertainties, please contact Michael Butcher

Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group Inc
24 October 2018.