

**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

***NORTHERN CENTRAL CITY  
CORRIDOR STUDY***

**DRAFT STUDY PROCESS**

April 2001

# Contents

FOREWORD by the Minister for Transport .....	iii
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Study Process Objectives .....	2
2 STUDY SCOPE AND PROCESS .....	3
2.1 Scope .....	3
2.2 Study Area .....	3
2.3 Administrative Structure .....	5
2.4 Study Process .....	7
3 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION .....	9
3.1 Facilitator .....	9
3.2 Group Meetings .....	9
3.3 Community Updates .....	9
3.4 Study Reports .....	9
3.5 Study Web Site .....	9
4 SPECIALIST STUDIES .....	10
4.1 Land Use and Planning .....	11
4.2 Transport Planning and Modelling .....	11
4.3 Engineering Studies .....	11
4.4 Environmental Studies .....	12
4.5 Heritage, Landscape and Urban Design .....	12
4.6 Social Effects .....	12
5 STUDY TIMETABLE .....	13
5.1 Work Program .....	13
5.2 Meeting Cycles .....	13
6 COMMENTS INVITED .....	14
6.1 Contacting the Study Team .....	14

APPENDIX A Ministerial Press release, November 2000

## Foreword

By the Hon. Peter Batchelor, Minister for Transport

A core commitment of the Bracks Government is to deliver better services and facilities that meet the needs of the Victorian community within a climate of social, environmental and economic responsibility. To this end, we are taking an integrated approach to delivering a sustainable, effective and efficient transport network.

As part of this approach, the Government has initiated the Northern Central City Corridor Study to identify jointly with the community measures for improving the transport system within this busy part of the metropolitan area. A key aim of the study will be to determine how best to interweave the transport network with the planning and management of land use in the corridor.

The study is a partnership between the Government and the city councils of Melbourne and Yarra and will be overseen by a Minister/Councillor Group that will meet regularly to discuss directions and developments. A Community Reference Group is also being established and will include residents, business and other key stakeholder representatives to advise and provide feedback at the various stages in the process.

Further details about the study, its structure and how it will be undertaken are outlined in this scoping document.

Unlike our predecessors in the Kennett Government, the Bracks Government is not entering into this process with preconceived proposals or options. Instead we will work with local government, community groups, businesses and individuals to develop a balanced approach that fully considers all transport options. We want to investigate a range of initiatives for improving services and facilities for public transport, cycling, walking and roads. Throughout the project, we will consult with the community on transport and land-use issues and opportunities.

During coming months, there will be many opportunities for the community to participate in the process. I greatly encourage the public to make use of these opportunities and the information that will be provided to contribute to this important program that, in turn, will contribute to the sustainability and liveability of Melbourne's inner north.



**PETER BATCHELOR MP**  
**Minister for Transport**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Concerns have been raised by the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra and community groups about the adverse effect of traffic to and from the Eastern Freeway and other major road links on the amenity of the inner northern suburbs.

Traffic congestion on the road network west and south of the Eastern Freeway/Hoddle Street intersection is believed to be causing delays to on-street public transport and other traffic movements.

### *Government Context*

The Government's four key pillars for governing Victoria underpin the delivery and further development of policies, strategies and services. These four central principles are:

- Responsible financial management to maintain and enhance Victoria's financial position
- Growing and promoting the whole of the State
- Delivery of improved services, particularly health, education and law and order
- Restoring democracy and increasing transparency and accountability.

The Government's outcomes build on the four pillars, and are to be informed by the Government's social, economic and environment frameworks currently under development. A number of key strategies will give direction to investment decisions. These include:

- Linking Victoria, the State Planning Agenda and the Ports Agenda
- Metropolitan, Rural & Regional, Public Transport and Freight & Logistics strategies currently under development.

Of these, the Metropolitan, Public Transport and Freight & Logistics strategies will probably be most directly relevant to the inner northern suburbs.

### *Metropolitan Strategy – A Vision for Melbourne*

Metropolitan Melbourne is one of the world's most livable and dynamic cities. The region is continually changing. To assist in planning for change the Department of Infrastructure is developing a new, integrated transport and land use strategy – the Metropolitan Strategy – which will help shape the future of metropolitan Melbourne and enhance the unique characteristics of the city and our quality of life. Many of the issues being addressed Melbourne-wide by the Metropolitan Strategy, have their counterparts in the inner northern suburbs.

Development of a strategy for the inner north will inevitably and desirably overlap with the Metropolitan Strategy, and the Northern Central City Corridor Study will take the emerging directions of the Metropolitan Strategy into account as it proceeds.

### *Previous Work*

The Kennett Government completed a technical review of tunnel options linking the Eastern Freeway to City Link and/or the CBD. The report highlighted the high cost of these proposals and identified significant problems in achieving satisfactory interchange layouts at the City Link end. The work also concluded that further analysis of travel was required to review changes in travel patterns following the opening of City Link. The summary report is available on request from the study team, however it should be noted that the Bracks Government has not endorsed its findings or conclusions.

### *This Study*

There is a need to study transport issues in the inner northern suburbs to develop an integrated strategy to meet road and public transport needs, and to identify urban design and land use opportunities.

As a result, the Minister for Transport, Peter Batchelor, has requested an integrated planning study of the Northern Central City Corridor. The Minister's media release is in **Appendix A**.

The study will be conducted by the Department of Infrastructure (DOI).

### **1.2 Study Process Objectives**

The objectives of the Northern Central City Corridor Study are to:

- consult with the community over transport and land use issues and opportunities in the inner northern suburbs
- review and document existing and projected transport patterns and the consequent impacts of these on the amenity of local communities;
- identify and evaluate road and public transport needs and manage impacts;
- identify opportunities for urban design and land use planning initiatives; and
- develop and present alternative strategies for public comment.

**There are no preconceived ideas at this stage.** We are starting with a 'clean slate', and seeking feedback from the community on the transport/land use issues and possible responses to them. We aim to establish agreement on:

- **objectives** for improved amenity and mobility in the inner northern suburbs;
- **measures** to form part of an integrated strategy;
- **criteria** to assess options against (using a 'triple bottom line' approach) and finally,
- **selection** of a preferred strategy and its various components.

Strategy components will be determined through the study process, but could include measures such as:

- Public transport initiatives (eg. heavy/light rail lines, on-street bus/tram priority measures, new or improved transport interchanges, park and ride, service revisions, fleet and infrastructure upgrades).
- Road transport initiatives (eg. new routes, road widenings, intersection treatments, traffic management and calming measures, vehicle pooling schemes, express lanes, bus lanes).
- Non-motorised transport initiatives (eg. bicycle/shared use paths, crossing facilities, interchange facilities with other modes, parking facilities, changing facilities).
- Intelligent transport measures (eg. signal coordination, variable message signs, in-vehicle information and guidance systems, real-time public transport information systems).
- Education and promotion initiatives (eg. promoting public transport use, providing information and incentives for reducing unnecessary car use).
- Land use planning/urban design initiatives (eg. improving livability and amenity of the area, increasing or renewing residential development, development around public transport interchanges, employment opportunities closer to residential areas).

It is expected that a successful strategy will need to include elements from all of these broad measures to provide an integrated and more sustainable solution.

## 2 Study Scope And Process

### 2.1 Scope

The scope of the study, as set out in this paper, responds to the matters raised in the Minister for Transport's request. The study is designed to:

- develop an understanding of the:
  - current operation of traffic and public transport in the area (demand levels, traffic flows, congestion, diversions);
  - driving factors of travel demand (origins and destinations, land use patterns); and
  - environmental and social concerns/aspirations (traffic noise, air quality, splitting of communities, transport accessibility for all users).
- establish through community and stakeholder involvement:
  - objectives for transport in the inner northern suburbs;
  - issues to be assessed;
  - a range of transport and land use initiatives responding to metropolitan, regional and local aspirations.
- develop a range of future scenarios, made up of complementary initiatives, and test these against objectives utilising a range of specialist skills.
- prepare an assessment report to present the findings of the study for community comment prior to consideration by the Government.

The study approach and structure is deliberately open, and will be kept as flexible as possible to respond to changing needs as the work (particularly the community input) progresses.

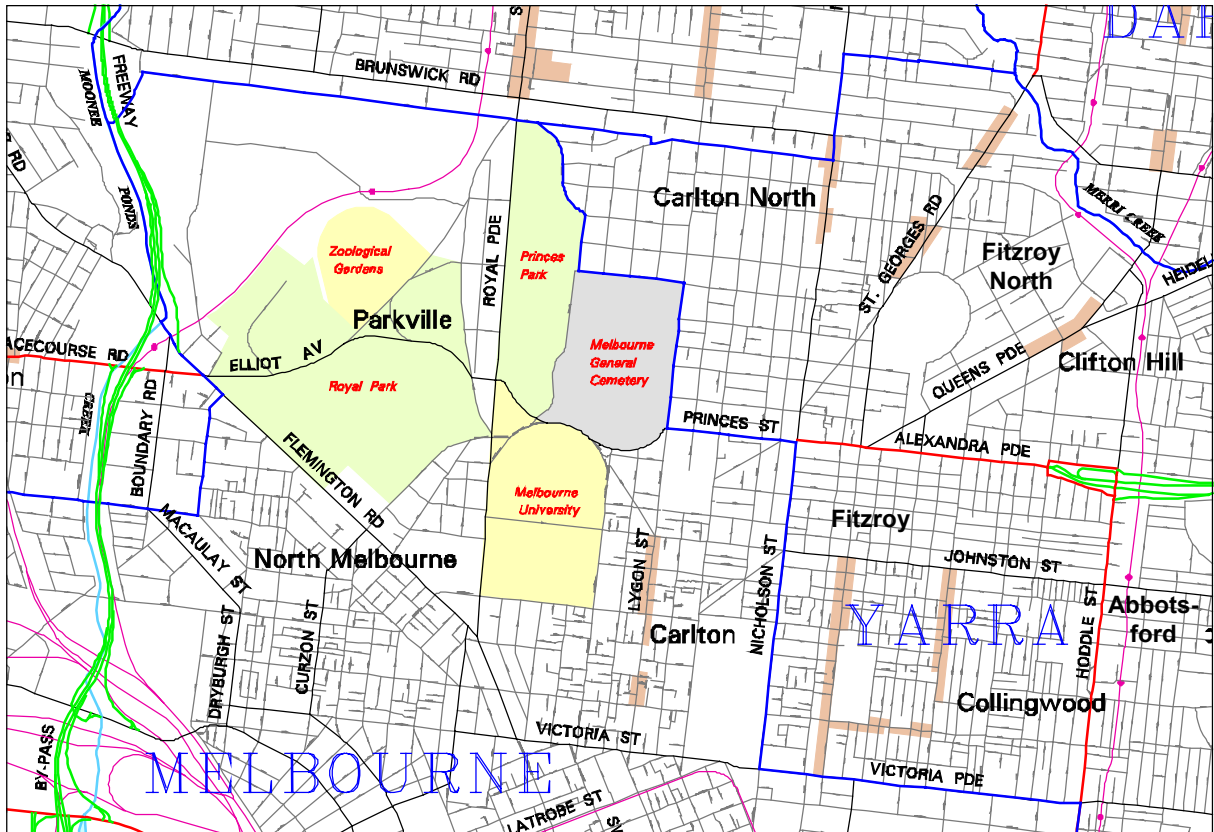
### 2.2 Study Area

The immediate area of study extends east-west from the Yarra River near the western end of the Eastern Freeway to the southern end of the Tullamarine Freeway, and north-south from the northern part of Melbourne city centre to the general vicinity of Brunswick Road. This area is in the City of Melbourne and the City of Yarra, and roughly equates to the inner northern suburbs of:

- Abbotsford;
- Carlton and Carlton North;
- Clifton Hill;
- Collingwood;
- Fitzroy and Fitzroy North;
- North Melbourne;
- Parkville; and
- Princes Hill.

This area is shown in Figure 2.1. However it is fully expected that the study will need to take a much wider area into account in considering the effects of transport and land use issues and initiatives. In particular, the neighbouring councils of Banyule, Boroondara, Darebin, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Moreland will be consulted.

Figure 2.1 The Immediate Study Area



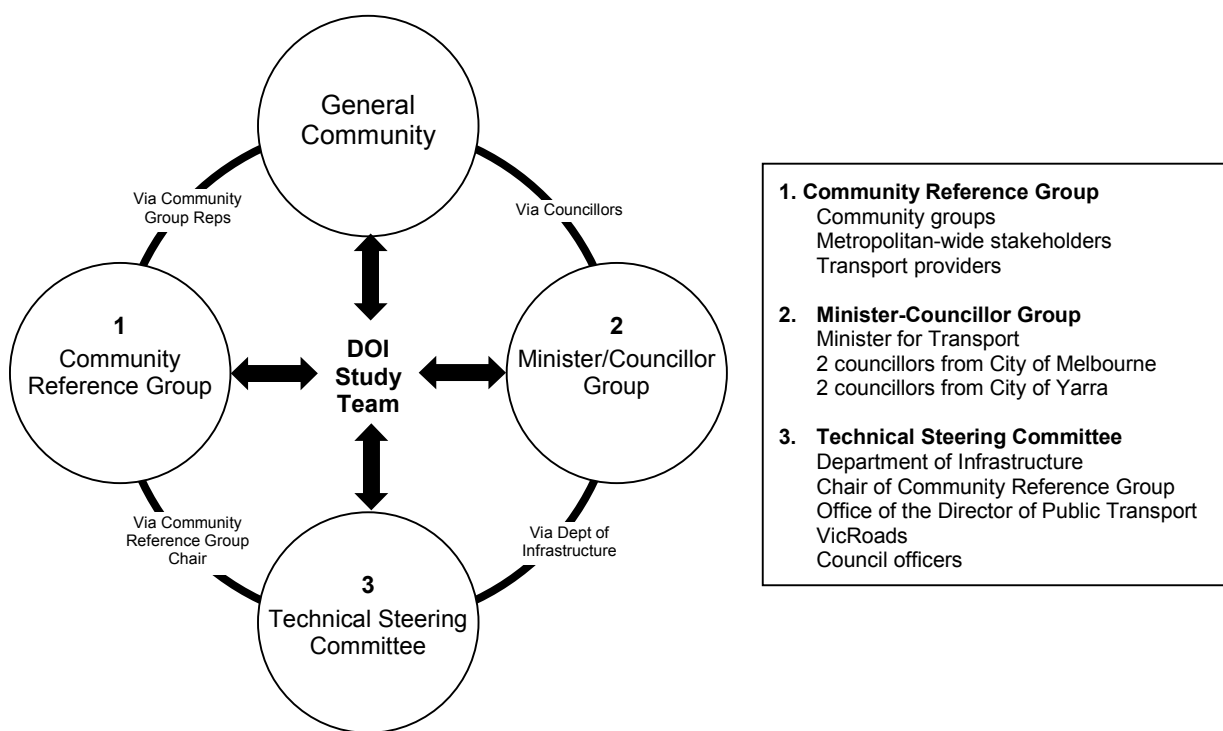
### 2.3 Administrative Structure

The proposed administrative structure for the study is shown in Figure 2.2. The main reporting line will provide for decisions and information to progress to an appropriate level while allowing the study to progress efficiently, effectively and flexibly.

Three committees will be established:

1. Community Reference Group
2. Technical Steering Committee
3. Minister/Councillor Group

**Figure 2.2 Administrative Structure**



#### 2.3.1 Community Reference Group

The focus for community consultation will be through the Community Reference Group (CRG) and the public display of study findings for discussion and comment at the completion of each phase of the study.

Membership of the CRG was by invitation from the Minister after discussion and nomination of appropriate members with council representatives. The CRG will be chaired by Professor Rodger Eade, assisted by a facilitator who will also play a broad role in advising on and implementing the consultation process. Study bulletins will be prepared and issued at key points in the process (eg. to announce scope, public displays etc). An initial planning workshop will be held with the CRG.

The following organisations were invited to join the CRG:

- Bicycle Victoria
- Bus Operators Association
- Carlton Residents Association



- Carlton Traders Association
- City of Melbourne
- City of Yarra
- Department of Education, Employment and Training (W Metropolitan School Region)
- Department of Human Services (Director of Acute Health)
- Department of Infrastructure Office of the Director of Public Transport
- Department of Infrastructure Planning and Heritage Division
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Port Phillip Region)
- East Clifton Hill Traffic Management Group
- Environment Victoria Inc
- Fitzroy Residents Association
- North and West Melbourne Association
- Parkville Association
- RACV
- Rail, Tram and Bus Union
- Rathdowne Street Traders Association
- RMIT University
- Royal Park Protection Group
- Transport Workers Union of Australia (Vic/Tas branch)
- University of Melbourne
- VicRoads
- Victorian Road Transport Association.

Meetings will also be held as required with community groups. An initial community forum will be held shortly after the release of this document for public comment.

### *2.3.2 Technical Steering Committee*

A Technical Steering Committee (TSC) has been established to oversee the study process. The TSC will consist of senior representatives of DOI, the Office of the Director of Public Transport, VicRoads, the chairperson of the CRG and nominated representatives of the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra. The study director and study manager will report to the TSC and seek guidance/direction on the process.

### *2.3.3 Minister-Councillor Group*

The workings of the Technical Steering Committee will provide appropriate information for briefing the Minister-Councillor Group. The Minister will invite nominations from the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra to join him in a Minister-Councillor Group that would meet on a regular basis to review progress and provide advice to the TSC. This arrangement allows councils to be advised from each of the three levels, and for interest groups to influence the process in the CRG and through their councillor representatives.

### *2.3.4 Study Director*

The study director, Bob Evans, is an independent engineer and town planner with many years' experience in the public sector at the Metropolitan Planning Authority (then the MMBW), the Ministry of Transport and VicRoads. He is a leading practitioner in the management of multi-disciplinary studies with extensive community consultation. Significant projects assessed include the Western Ring Road, City Link and the Calder Highway corridor. He has experience in the development of integrated environmental, economic and social policies, and as a planner he was responsible for developing the Lower Yarra and Maribyrnong concept plans in the early 1980's and for the promotion and development of district centres as activity and transport nodes.

### 2.3.5 Study Manager

The study is being managed by William McDougall. William is an experienced transport planner with a strong commitment to finding integrated and sustainable solutions to transport issues. William has over 25 years' transport planning consulting experience in Australia and elsewhere, and has worked in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth since arriving in Australia in 1985 from the UK with consultants Travers Morgan Pty Ltd. Before starting his position as Northern Central City Corridor Study manager he was directing a team of transport planning professionals in the Sydney office of consultants Sinclair Knight Merz. He has conducted many multimodal transport planning studies, including:

- Randwick integrated transport study, Sydney
- Melbourne outer metropolitan regional roads study
- Sydney Centennial Parklands transport, access and parking study
- Perth Northern Suburbs rapid transit study
- Bicycle planning studies in Perth and Melbourne.

### 2.3.6 Core Study Team

The study team also includes a transport and land use planner seconded from the City of Melbourne, an administrative support person from within the Department of Infrastructure and a facilitator for the workshops and meetings.

## 2.4 Study Process

A four-step process will be followed:

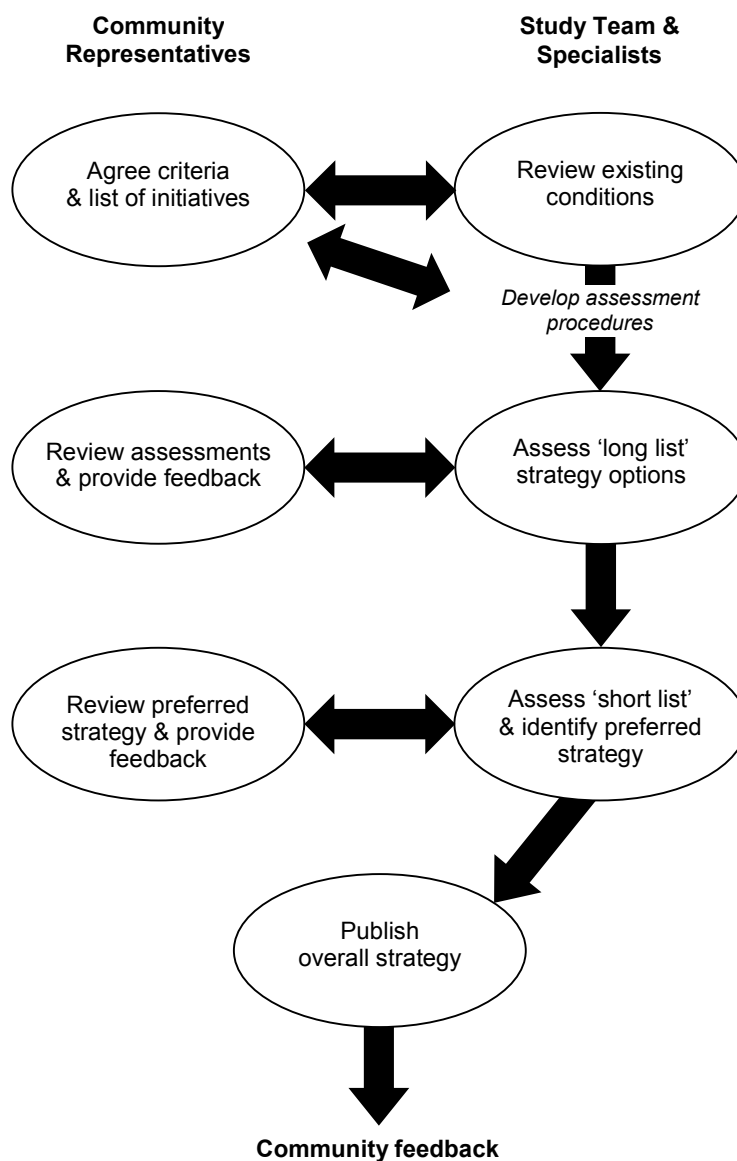
1. Start-up
  - appoint study director and study manager (this is now complete);
  - invite proposals and appoint independent specialists to prepare technical reports;
  - invite and appoint members of the Ministerial-Councillor Group, Technical Steering Committee and Community Reference Group;
  - develop and publish a draft study process paper (this report) for comment and finalise;
  - conduct workshops for Community Reference Group members and the general public, to establish community ownership of objectives, issues and evaluation criteria, and to generate an initial list of transport and land use opportunities.
2. Develop and test options
  - establish an understanding of present transport and land use conditions in the area;
  - using the outcomes from Step 1, develop, test and compare a range of opportunities and options;
  - take account of the interaction between the various opportunities to develop a number of integrated road, public transport and land use strategy options for further analysis;
  - publish the outcomes of this phase (overview report and supporting specialist reports) and seek community comments.
3. Narrow down and assess final scenarios
  - taking Step 2 assessments and community comments, refine and select a limited number of integrated strategies (ie combinations of opportunities) for final appraisal;
  - review designs, costs, transport and economic performance, environmental and heritage impacts, changes to local amenity, urban design and land use opportunities etc. of the final strategies and carry out a comparative, 'triple bottom line' assessment;
  - discuss findings with Community Reference Group; and
  - prepare final assessment report.
4. Public review and decision process
  - place final assessment report on public display and invite community comment;

- review comments and report to Minister with recommendations;
- Government to decide on outcomes and future actions.

Step 1 will conclude with a CRG workshop and community consultation in April/May 2001. Step 2, the detailed development and assessment of opportunities and scenarios, will require about six months, concluding with release of the initial overview report in October 2001. A further four months will be required to carry out the final assessments and to prepare the final report, which will be released early in 2002. Given that adequate time is required for community responses at a number of points, this program may need to be extended, depending upon the extent and intensity of community debate.

The study process is illustrated in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 Proposed Study Process**



## 3 Community Consultation

A detailed consultation and information plan will be implemented. The plan will include the components described below.

The community can get information and contribute to the study in the following ways:

- Come to the Community Forum – 7pm on ?? May at Collingwood Town Hall
- Visit the web site (<http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/innernorth>)
- email the study team on [innernorth@doi.vic.gov.au](mailto:innernorth@doi.vic.gov.au)
- Call the study team on 9655 6659 during normal business hours
- Fax any comments to 9655 8811
- Contact a suitable representative on the study's Community Reference Group
- Complete the questionnaire on the back of the first Community Update bulletin.

### 3.1 Facilitator

Bruce Turner of Fulcrum International has been engaged to assist in facilitating the consultation process. The facilitator will have three main roles:

- Preparation for and facilitation of community group meetings
- Assisting liaison between the core study team, the technical specialists and the community
- Review of study outputs (reports etc) material for consistency and continuity.

Initially, Fulcrum will facilitate the first Community Reference Group workshop referred to in section 2.4 above, with a view to ongoing involvement as required.

### 3.2 Group Meetings

Regular meetings will be held with the Community Reference Group, Technical Steering Committee and Minister/Councillor Group. A 'cycle' of meetings will be established so that each group gets the benefit of the proceedings from the others. The outcomes of meetings will be circulated (and posted on the study web site; see below) to all other groups.

If requested, additional meetings will be held with other interest groups and community groups to canvass opinion and provide information about the study.

### 3.3 Community Updates

At key points in the process, community update leaflets will be released to summarise progress and news on the study's deliberations (probably 3-4 during the study period). These will be widely distributed and will also be made available through the study web site. The first community update describes the study process, summarising the contents of this report.

### 3.4 Study Reports

The proposals from the study will be exhibited for public review and discussion at two points in the process – at the end of step 2 (report on current issues and long list of options for addressing them) and again at the commencement of step 4 (the final assessment report). Exhibition material will also be made available through the study web site.

### 3.5 Study Web Site

The study web site is at <http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/innernorth>. It contains information about the study process and contact details for the study team (including on-line email feedback forms). As the study progresses, notes of meetings, copies of press releases, study reports, and other material will be made available on-line.

## 4 Specialist Studies

Specialist assistance will be used to help assess the scope, feasibility, impacts and effects of the options that arise from the consultation process. Their work will be coordinated by the DOI study team, who will also assemble the overall 'triple bottom line' assessments from the specialists' inputs.

Specialists will be appointed for the following areas of expertise:

- strategic land use, urban systems and related local and macro-economics;
- transport planning and modelling, including public transport, traffic demand analysis, bicycle and pedestrian movements and transport economic analysis;
- engineering feasibility, preliminary design and costing of a wide range of transport infrastructure proposals;
- key environmental issues including noise, air quality, greenhouse emissions and environmental sustainability;
- heritage (including historical sites, landscapes, cemeteries and significant trees), landscape assessment and urban design; and
- social effects.

Registrations of interest have been sought from interested specialists via public advertisement. Over sixty submissions were received from 29 organisations. Of these, 15 have been shortlisted to respond to a detailed brief. Their submissions will be assessed comparatively and the successful specialist from each area will be selected to join the study team.

Each specialist study will include the following elements as required:

- Reviews of existing data
- Field inspections and any supplementary observations (surveys etc)
- Reports on:
  - analysis of existing and possible future conditions;
  - options, strategies and opportunities; and
  - evaluation of selected options/packages
- Response to community input on above reports
- Attendance at study meetings – presentations to committees, workshops, specialist team meetings and administration/project management meetings
- Assistance in and review of main report preparation.

It will be important to ensure that the specialist studies are conducted openly, and are also informed by the public consultation process itself. To this end, specialists will be prepared for their assessments and ideas to be guided not only by the core study team, but also by community comment.

The technical reports from each specialist study component will be reviewed by the Community Reference Group and will be appended to the final assessment report when it is published for comment.

Evaluation of strategy options will follow the 'triple bottom line' (economic, environmental and social effects) approach, and will be finalised by the Department's study team from the findings of the specialist study components.

#### **4.1 Land Use and Planning**

The land use and planning study will provide three main outputs:

- Existing and planned/anticipated land use and urban development trends in the study area, and in the greater Melbourne context.
- Possible land use planning initiatives in the study area to manage travel demand and promote less car use, either in conjunction with transport initiatives or stand-alone.
- Opportunities in land use development as part of the transport strategy options.

The study will include assessment of the factors that influence trends in changing land use, covering socio-economic, lifestyle, community and environment issues.

#### **4.2 Transport Planning and Modelling**

Transport planning and modelling study work will provide:

- Statements of existing transport conditions (road and public transport provision, traffic levels and movement patterns, public transport usage patterns, etc).
- Projections of future movement patterns in the light of planned/anticipated land use and travel trends, and the implications for traffic and public transport service levels.
- Projections of same with a range of transport, land use and urban design strategy options in place.
- Transport economic analysis of strategy options, including valuation of ‘externalities’ (eg. economic impact of noise and air pollution changes, etc)

Existing conditions will need to show the effect of recent major projects such as City Link. Future conditions will need to anticipate the possible effects of planned projects like the Airport Transit Link, the Eastern Freeway extension to Ringwood and the development of the Scoresby Transport Corridor.

Transport computer modelling used in the study will need to be capable of reflecting the interaction between different modes of transport, and also the effects of induced demand for travel in response to transport and land use initiatives, now and into the future.

#### **4.3 Engineering Studies**

Engineering studies will be undertaken to provide assessments of all transport infrastructure proposals, large and small, identified during the study, including:

- engineering feasibility;
- preliminary design; and
- costing.

The engineering studies will establish the physical feasibility of implementation of any infrastructure proposals, including identifying any constraints or other major influences on their engineering viability.

Preliminary designs will be prepared to depict the proposals and allow a broad assessment of their effects (impacts). The designs will include plan view representations, longitudinal and cross sections as appropriate to give a full but preliminary view of their physical and operational features.

The costs of infrastructure proposals will be estimated, including as appropriate:

- land acquisition, site preparation and relocation of services;
- construction of the infrastructure elements;
- acquisition of vehicle fleets;
- ongoing maintenance and operations costs; and
- contingency allowances reflecting the level of detail of the designs.

#### **4.4 Environmental Studies**

Key environmental issues such as traffic noise, air quality, greenhouse emissions and environmental sustainability will be studied to enable full appreciation of the various effects and impacts of transport options and strategies. The environmental studies will have two main outputs:

- Identification of existing environmental conditions, including variations with time and with location, throughout the study area.
- Assessment of impacts and effects of transport initiatives on environmental indicators and in the general sense of environmental sustainability

#### **4.5 Heritage, Landscape and Urban Design**

The area of study contains historic sites, urban parks and other important features. It represents a significant part of Melbourne's urban heritage and character. For this reason, heritage, landscape and urban design considerations have been combined into one study stream. These studies will have three main outputs:

- Assessment of existing heritage, landscape and urban character of the core study area;
- Identification of urban design and heritage conservation opportunities to enhance the amenity and character of the area; and
- Evaluation of the effects of transport initiatives on the existing situation, including identification of both impacts on and opportunities to improve the appearance and amenity of the area as part of the transport proposals.

#### **4.6 Social Effects**

Assessment of the social effects of transport initiatives will cover likely changes to the following factors:

- community links and severance;
- accessibility to and from goods, services and community facilities;
- viability of business and commercial undertakings; and
- general community well-being and health.

The social study stream will firstly identify the main considerations in this regard (primarily considering those not covered by the environmental, heritage, urban design and landscape studies), and will subsequently provide assessments of the effects of different options.

## 5 Study Timetable

### 5.1 Work Program

An outline study work program is shown in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 Outline Work Program**

	2001												2002					
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	
1. Start-up <i>Initial CRG workshop</i>	■																	
2. Develop & test options <i>Release existing conditions report</i> <i>Release overview report</i>					■													
3. Select & assess final scenarios and prepare final report											■							
4. Public review of final report and decision process															■			
Ongoing community input	■																	
MAJOR MEETINGS (indicative only)																		
Minister/Councillor Group				•						•					•		•	
Technical Steering Group			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Community Reference Group			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Specialist Teams					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	

Note: Time line subject to meeting reasonable community consultation and response time lines.

The program aims for display of the study findings in two stages; an overview report at the end of Step 2, and a final report at the end of Step 3.

The following key dates will apply:

- Initial Community Reference Group workshop April 2001
- Community display of Overview Report October 2001
- Community display of Final Report March 2002

### 5.2 Meeting Cycles

It is proposed to hold regular meetings of the Community Reference Group, the Technical Steering Committee and the Minister/Councillor Group as the study progresses. Appropriate meeting frequency will be decided as the study proceeds, but it is proposed that the Technical Steering Committee should meet every four weeks, with Community Reference Group meetings to test the findings and progress at suitable intervals.

Meetings can be held more or less frequently as desired, at any stage in the process. The principle will be to ensure that all groups are kept informed of the study progress and are given adequate opportunity to comment on any issues arising.

Notes of meetings held will be made available to members of all the other groups, and also posted on the study web site for general community access.



## 6 Comments Invited

The study team would appreciate comments on the study process, and on issues to be addressed during the study.

### 6.1 Contacting the Study Team

Contact details are as follows:

Study Manager: (William McDougall) – **9655 6659**

Study Director: (Bob Evans) – **9655 6629**

Facsimile: **9655 8811**

Postal Address: **Northern Central City Corridor Study Team**  
Strategic Planning Division  
Department of Infrastructure  
80 Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

E-mail: **[innernorth@doi.vic.gov.au](mailto:innernorth@doi.vic.gov.au)**

Web site: **<http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/innernorth>**

# **APPENDIX A**

Media Release from the Minister for Transport

# Media release



## From the Minister for Transport

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Thursday, November 16, 2000

### **NORTHERN CENTRAL CITY CORRIDOR STUDY**

The Minister for Transport, Peter Batchelor, today announced the commencement of an integrated planning study of the Northern Central City Corridor.

Mr Batchelor said the study has arisen because of concerns by the Cities of Melbourne and Yarra about the impact of traffic to and from the Eastern Freeway on the amenity of the inner northern suburbs.

Mr Batchelor said he was concerned that congestion on the arterial road network caused traffic to divert into residential areas, particularly during peak periods. Road congestion also had a significant impact on bus and tram services, resulting in delays and frustration to public transport users.

A specialist study team is being assembled by the Department of Infrastructure and Council to carry out the study in close consultation with the local community to ensure that issues of concern are fully considered.

Mr Batchelor said the study would result in an integrated strategy for the area to meet road and public transport needs and to identify urban design and land use opportunities. The study will also include a review of the technical work on tunnel options undertaken by the previous Government.

The study will commence shortly. It will be directed by a steering committee with Government and Council representation. A community reference group will be established to work with the consultant team.

Mr Batchelor said that at the conclusion of this process, an assessment report would be prepared to present the alternative strategies. This report will be made available for public comment before it was considered by the Government and a strategy adopted for future implementation.

It is anticipated that the assessment report will be available for comment in late 2001.

**Media contact: Paul Conroy 9651.5799 [www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au)**