

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**



Enquiries Steve McGrath  
Telephone (03) 9262 6389  
File Ref. 52/02/006/02

23 March 2009

**Hon Lynne Kosky, MP  
Minister for Public Transport  
Department of Transport  
GPO 2797  
Melbourne VIC 3001**

Dear Lynne

**EASTERN RAIL TRAIL**

An exciting opportunity exists to provide convenient and safe bicycle travel between important destination points across the Greater Melbourne Metropolitan Area. There is significant opportunity to develop bicycle trails beside existing metropolitan railway lines on unused rail land between tracks and adjacent property boundaries.

A network of fenced off paths, at a flat, at grade level, often without car traffic conflict, could link Train Stations and destination points across Melbourne. Such a network could provide dual travel opportunities, reduce car dependency for local trips and provide a further trip-planning alternative for commuters.

The City of Whitehorse requests that the Department of Transport investigate the opportunity to establish a Greater Melbourne Metropolitan Rail Trail Network.

At a local level opportunity exists to establish a rail trail along parts of the Belgrave Lilydale Rail Line. In 1996 a feasibility study into the establishment of the Eastern Rail Trail (ERT) was undertaken. The ERT was to be either an 18-kilometre route beside the Belgrave Lilydale rail line (with associated bridges and underpasses) or a 23-kilometre route using nearby minor streets. The ERT would extend from Wantirna Road in the City of Maroondah, through the City of Whitehorse from Heatherdale Road to Union Road and then into the City of Boroondara toward the Yarra River.

On April 16 2007 the City of Whitehorse adopted its Bicycle Strategy. One of the priorities within the Strategy was the Eastern Rail Trail (ERT). Copies of the ERT Study and the Whitehorse Bicycle Strategy are enclosed.

Bicycle Victoria, the City Of Whitehorse Bicycle Advisory Committee, along with a number of local cycling groups in Whitehorse have expressed a strong interest in this project and have sent a number of emails to Councillors, State and Federal Members of Parliament encouraging a re-examination of the ERT project.



Since 1996 additional rail infrastructure and the grade separation project at Middleborough Road have been developed along the route. The planned Springvale Road grade separation and a possible third rail line between Box Hill and Ringwood may also have some planning implications for the project. Construction costs and rail operations have also changed since 1996.

A new feasibility study is needed to review the Whitehorse section of the ERT. The review would have the following scope of works;

- An assessment and discussion on the viability of the 1996 proposal in today's environment and the suggestion of alternative routes as necessary,
- Development of an updated design incorporating any required/suggested deviations from the original, and
- An estimate of costs for the construction of the updated design and a prioritised timeline for staged implementation.

It is estimated that this review would cost approximately \$40,000 to complete. The City of Whitehorse believes that the ERT feasibility study would be best undertaken as part of a holistic approach to transport in Melbourne. The City of Whitehorse offers to project manage the feasibility study and now seeks State Government support to fund this study and link it into other transport planning initiatives.

The City of Whitehorse would appreciate if you investigate the potential of the Greater Melbourne Metropolitan Rail Trail Network and support the City of Whitehorse in developing its portion of the ERT soon as possible.

If you require any further information in regard to this proposal please do not hesitate to contact Council's Open Space Planner Steve McGrath on 9262 6389.

Yours sincerely

**CR HELEN HARRIS OAM  
MAYOR OF WHITEHORSE**

Enc  
CC COWBAC, all local MPs

Whitehorse City Council

379-397 Whitehorse Road  
Nunawading  
Telephone (03) 9262 6333  
Facsimile (03) 9262 6490

All Correspondence  
Locked Bag 2  
Nunawading Delivery Centre  
Vic 3110 Australia

DX13209 MITCHAM

ABN 39 549 568 822

Service Centres  
Box Hill  
Whitehorse  
Forest Hill