

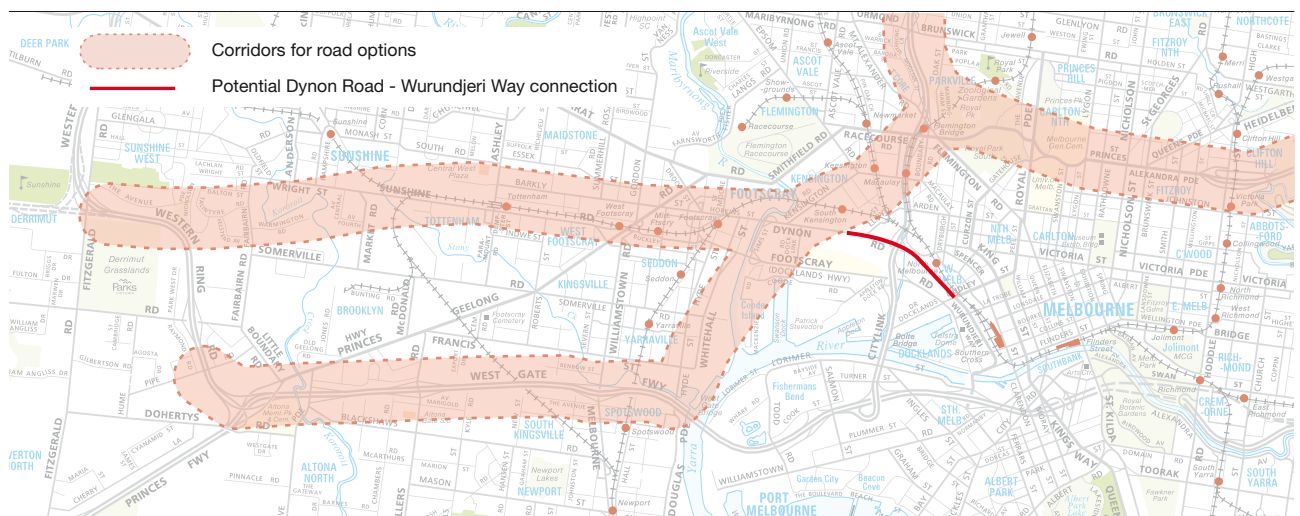
new east-west road connection

RECOMMENDATION 4

Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection extending from the western suburbs to the Eastern Freeway.

The EWLNA has identified a strategic need for a new road transport link from the west to the east of Melbourne.

The EWLNA has identified two options for a second river crossing that could be constructed as part of an 18 km freeway-standard transport link that would provide an alternative to the West Gate Bridge while also meeting long-term social and economic objectives for Melbourne and Victoria.



Project benefits

- Provides a long-term alternative to the West Gate Bridge
- When completed, will carry more than 150,000 vehicles per day, relieving surface roads of this traffic
- Delivers another freeway standard river crossing from the west that has connections across the north of the CBD from the western suburbs (Yarraville or Footscray) to the Eastern Freeway, with connections to the Port of Melbourne
- Provides enhanced port connectivity and freeway connectivity, encouraging more trucks on to the appropriate freeway network and improving freight efficiency
- Helps to relieve congestion at the end of the Eastern Freeway by removing through traffic
- Provides more road space beneath the north of the city, creating the potential to improve public transport, create more walking and cycling opportunities and improve amenity
- Creates the opportunity to improve north-south public transport movements on some of Melbourne's busiest tram routes
- Provides separated and dedicated bus lanes on either Johnston Street or Alexandra Parade, enhancing bus service travel times
- Reduces travel time volatility by providing network alternatives to the West Gate corridor and by increasing capacity
- Greatly enhances the connectivity of Melbourne and Avalon airports
- Delivers a significant boost to amenity in the inner west by diverting through traffic and stimulating the Footscray Transit City

Project costs

Estimated cost Stage one: \$2 billion

Estimated cost Stage two: \$5.5 billion

Estimated cost Stage three: \$1.5 billion

Project details

The Study Team identified two possible routes that commence in the western suburbs and continue to the start of the Eastern Freeway at Hoddle Street.

Both routes form an alternative to the West Gate Bridge and provide connections to Footscray Road, Dynon Road, the port and CityLink.

While the western section of the project (from the western suburbs to the port) has two possible routes, the EWLNA identified a single alignment from the port area to the start of the Eastern Freeway.

Sequencing of the full connection would be a decision for the Victorian Government; however, the EWLNA has concluded that the most pressing need is an alternative to the West Gate Bridge – in this instance, a tunnel under or a bridge over the Maribyrnong River, connecting to a northern bypass of the city.

In the short- to medium-term, the EWLNA has identified two stages within the project.

1. The inner west to the port – 3 to 3.3 km

This is the EWLNA's preferred first stage. As noted above, two options have been identified to provide an alternative to the West Gate Bridge at this point.

- (a) Construction of tunnels connecting Geelong Road and Sunshine Road to the port area, running under Footscray and the Maribyrnong River along the alignment of Buckley Street, with a new interchange in the port area connecting to Footscray Road and Dynon Road.
- (b) Construction of an elevated road over the Maribyrnong River connecting the West Gate Freeway near Williamstown Road to Footscray Road and Dynon Road. The new road would also include a connection to Hyde Street, providing a new route for truck access into the port and allowing the extension of truck bans in Footscray and Yarraville.

Under both options, stage one would emerge at a major interchange in the port precinct, providing connections to Footscray Road and Dynon Road at a new linking road connecting Footscray, Dynon and Ballarat Roads.

In the longer term, for the link to fulfil its potential as an alternative route to the West Gate Freeway, both options would need to be extended west a further 6 km to the Western Ring Road (**Stage 3**). If option 1(a) was adopted, a direct connection from the tunnel at Geelong Road and Sunshine Road to the Western Ring Road at the Deer Park Bypass would be required. If option 1(b) was adopted, the West Gate Freeway would be widened from Williamstown Road to the Western Ring Road. Property acquisitions would be required to implement either connection.

Construction of the connection to the Western Ring Road would begin after stages one and two were completed, around 2019.

2. West Melbourne to the Eastern Freeway – 8.9 km

West Melbourne to Flemington/Parkville

This section would require a mix of bored tunnel and cut-and-cover construction, in order to traverse the developed inner city areas of North Melbourne and Kensington. From the port interchange, the route would follow a north-east alignment adjacent to Kensington Rd, with J.J. Holland Park required as a staging point for deep tunnelling (to be fully restored at the end of construction).

Tunnels in this section are likely to be two or three lanes in each direction.

Flemington/Parkville to Eastern Freeway

This section would carry the most traffic, with volumes of 80,000 to 100,000 vehicles each day (assuming tolls apply). The alignment for this connection would follow a route under Royal Park, Cemetery Road, Princes Street and Alexandra Parade. At the western end, the tunnels would diverge to provide long, two-lane connections to CityLink for north-bound traffic.

This section would provide three lanes in each direction. Tunnelling for this section would be a major undertaking, and it would be necessary to use a western corner of Royal Park as a staging point for construction (with the park being fully restored and enhanced at completion of the construction stage). There would also be significant temporary interventions from the surface near Nicholson Street and at the Eastern Freeway.

It would also require some widening of the existing Eastern Freeway to allow the lane configuration necessary for traffic to enter the tunnel or exit to Hoddle Street and Alexandra Parade. Westerly ramps would be included near Hoddle Street and Queens Parade to facilitate local access.

While there is clearly a desire for city access for traffic leaving the Eastern Freeway, the EWLNA has found sound operational, functional and strategic reasons for this section to act as a northern city bypass, and city access ramps have not been included. No significant demand was identified for a southerly connection to CityLink.

The Study Team also recommends that the government reserve a new road corridor to allow the connection of Dynon Road to Wurundjeri Way, including a planning overlay to widen Dynon Road to six lanes.