

Meeting minutes - Endorsed

Benalla Working Group #6

Date / Time

17th June, 2021
6.00pm – 8.30pm

Location

Benalla Senior Citizen's Centre

Facilitator

Cath Botta

Minute taker

Carrie Donaldson

Distribution

All

Attendees (Show organisation if not ARTC)

- Cr. Justin King (Benalla Rural City Council)
- Susan Pearce (Better Benalla Rail)
- Philip Rees (Better Benalla Rail)
- David Blore (Independent)
- Graeme Paul (Independent)
- Pamela O'Connor (Independent)
- Bill Parris (independent)
- John Dennis (Independent)
- Rowan McEwan (Independent)
- Margaret Richards (Independent)
- Dinesh Batra, ARTC, Project Director, Victoria Projects (via zoom)
- Marisa Feher, ARTC, Environmental Manager (via zoom)
- Angeline Daniels, ARTC, Stakeholder Engagement Lead
- Carrie Donaldson, ARTC, Stakeholder Engagement Advisor

Apologies (Show organisation if not ARTC)

- Cr. Gail O'Brien (Benalla Rural City Council)
- Janette Anderson (Independent)

Discussions

NO.	ACTIONS
1	<p>Opening and Welcome 6:02pm</p> <p>Cath formally welcomed all in attendance and noted apologies from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cr. Gail O'Brien, and - Janette Anderson <p>Cath outlined the proceedings for the evening's meeting and that the purpose was to explore the two options being considered for Benalla – track realignment and station bridge replacement. The purpose of fully exploring both options is to develop the business case for Benalla. Cath advised that due to the current travel restrictions in place for Greater Melbourne to regional Victoria, Dinesh Batra and Marisa Feher from ARTC will be joining via zoom.</p>

NO.	ACTIONS
2	<p><i>Endorsement of Minutes from the previous meeting</i></p> <p>The following amendments to the minutes for meeting #5 were requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 5 UDF <p>Sessions had been held with the BWG, Council along with five community consultation sessions at Nunn Street Drop In location. These were held on Thursday 11th March and Monday 15th of March and were attended by 22 participants including a mix of residents and local community representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 7 Project Scope Discussion <p>That the following revision be made “Dinesh advised that the draft concepts <i>for</i> both design solutions for Benalla will be developed and presented at the next working group meeting to be considered by the BWG and provide initial feedback.”</p> <p>There was also a request that page numbers be included in all future minutes shared with the Group.</p> <p><i>Action: ARTC make amendments and publish on the ARTC website under the Benalla Working Group</i></p>
3	<p><i>Actions arising from the previous meeting</i></p> <p>The combined actions register was circulated with the minutes. It was noted that some additional work needs to be done on the formatting for this register.</p> <p>Action items closed since the last meeting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing of the new Benalla Reference Guide on the ARTC website with edits addressing the formatting issue. At the time of the meeting, ARTC were awaiting delivery of the new print version. • PSA submission period had closed. Marisa Feher will provide an update on the submissions in this meeting. • Follow up regarding UDF feedback. Cath confirmed she had followed up with both Suzie Pierce and Cr Justin King to ensure their feedback was captured. <p><i>Action: ARTC to update and refine the format of the Actions Register</i></p>
4	<p><i>Group Reflection</i></p> <p>The Chair provided an opportunity for group members to make any reflections or updates since the last meeting.</p> <p>Phil Rees – Clarified he was misrepresented in the recent article in the Ensign that was critical of the Working Group process to date. The article should have referenced him as a Better Benalla Rail spokesperson rather than a Benalla Working Group spokesperson. All were in agreement that while individuals can represent their own views, the Chair is the only authorised spokesperson on behalf of the group.</p> <p>Phil also advised the Group that Warren Truss – Chairperson for ARTC, Ed Walker – General Manager Victoria Projects and Dinesh Batra – Project Director ARTC visited the Benalla station and met with station staff who provided input on their preferred solution in Benalla of a track realignment. It was agreed by those in attendance that signalling was recognised as a potential issue in Benalla.</p>

NO.	ACTIONS
	<p>Cr Justin King – Updated the group on Council’s position regarding the Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) and that Councillors had declined to support ARTC’s PSA application to the Minister for Planning as it felt that this undermined the Benalla Working Group process. He shared his belief that the recent article in the Ensign did not accurately reflect the intent of the meeting and was perhaps worded too strongly.</p> <p>There was a request from members of the Group for more detail on the PSA consultation process, numbers attending the session and stakeholder representations.</p>
5	<p>Planning Scheme Amendment Update</p> <p>Marisa Feher, Environmental Manager ARTC provided an overview of the PSA process and the submissions received. Marisa reminded the Group that ARTC are not formally required to exhibit the full set of planning documentation and complete a planning panel as we are requesting the Minister to utilise their powers under the Planning and Environment Act to exempt us from these requirements as we are considered a Major Project of State and National significance; however, in the spirit of our commitment to transparency and stakeholder consultation, ARTC have chosen to voluntarily exhibit the key PSA documents.</p> <p>Communication has been sent to landowners and residents within a 250-metre radius of the project area boundary across the state, representing over 7,500 properties, residents and owners. An inclusive approach has been taken to include additional properties where possible. This communication was sent one week in advance of the exhibition period opening.</p> <p>Highlights included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 submissions were received from the Benalla area. These were received both online and via hard copy. • This represented the largest response from any community along the alignment and 30% of all submissions received. <p>Key themes captured included:</p> <p>Design options: most submitters (37) expressed their support for track re-alignment option with four submissions supporting the bridge option.</p> <p>Accessibility: raised concerns regarding poor accessibility of the existing underpass and bridge and requested improvements on the accessibility to station for all users.</p> <p>Visual Amenity and urban design: concerns raised regarding potential visual amenity impacts of raised bridge. Urban design, landscaping and improving the look of station precinct requested to be considered.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARTC provide summary detail of numbers attending each PSA consultation session held in Benalla <p>Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) context discussion – David Blore</p> <p>David Blore gave a high level overview of the Planning Scheme process based on his experience and involvement in both as an Engineer and Planning Panel member. He noted that his presentation is based on his experience and views as an individual. He provided an outline of the Planning Scheme and the Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) process. A copy of his presentation is attached to the minutes.</p> <p>At the conclusion of his presentation, David sought clarification as to why the ARTC application for Benalla is going to the Minister with the inclusion of two potential options.</p>

NO.	ACTIONS
	<p>Dinesh provided context advising that for a project of this nature, we would not be able to split the PSA. All project areas must be included in the one PSA application so the Minister can consider cumulative impacts.</p> <p>Marisa added that the options are captured in the Incorporated Document and we have included a new development condition as commitment and demonstration of meaningful consultation with Council and community on the preferred option and design progress.</p> <p>In the spirit of transparency, Marisa advised that ARTC will share the draft development conditions with the Benalla Working Group once it has been signed off by DEWLP.</p> <p>Action: ARTC to share the draft development conditions with the Benalla Working Group once signed off by DEWLP</p>
6	<p><i>Draft options presentation and discussion</i></p> <p>Dinesh shared with the Group the initial concept designs for both the track realignment and bridge replacement options for Benalla. He confirmed that it is ARTC acknowledges that the track realignment option is a better option, considering the overall station development needs. The purpose of exploring both options is to continue to consider both options on their merit, Inland Rail scope requirements and broader community expectations. To manage cost impact, Track realignment option will also need separate business case to achieve confirmation of this option. ARTC is committed to work with the working group and community to address their expectations.</p> <p>It was acknowledged by all in attendance the difficulty in sharing the detail in the virtual environment and it was requested that at the next opportunity to share details of the concepts with written descriptors/notes.</p> <p>The group provided feedback on both options and identified key aspects that required additional detail and further discussion:</p> <p>Track Realignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of Required additional turnouts, and impacts • Operational functionality and requirement of a second platform • Budget estimates for the inclusion and exclusion of any proposed second platform • Alignment/Location of station access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists- from both East and West sides of the track • Details of the proposed underpass with options for compliance • Turning circles/laydown areas for buses • Parking • Exploring the best approach into the station <p>Bridge Replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment/Location of station access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists- from both East and West sides of the track • Details of the proposed underpass • Turning circles/laydown areas for buses

NO.	ACTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Consideration of Inclusion of the XPT platform as currently non-compliant. <p>It is the belief of the Working Group that although the bridge option does not require ARTC to touch the platform, the same could be said of the underpass and that ARTC and DOT have an obligation to bring access to both the Station and Platform to DDA compliance standard.</p> <p>Concerns were raised concern regarding ARTC’s inclusion of a second platform in the track realignment option. The Group believe that a second platform is not required at the Benalla Station based on current usage. The group are concerned about the potential budget impact and also the operational requirements of manning two platforms.</p> <p>Concern was raised as to the impact of noise, vibration and light levels on local residents with the commencement of double stacked trains along the alignment.</p> <p>Application of UDF Design Objectives for Benalla The group assessed both options against the design objectives in the Urban Design Framework. The Group agreed the following: The track realignment option appears to meet all the design objectives in the UDF, however further details would be required as to any additional structures that may be required to service any new platform. The group raised concerns regarding impact on the visual amenity and line of sight of the Heritage station.</p> <p>The current bridge replacement option face strong challenges to meet the UDF design objectives.</p> <p>General questions were raised in terms of the anticipated number of additional trains on the network with the introduction of double stacked freight trains. Marissa advised that current modelling anticipates up to an additional three train movements per day on the alignment.</p> <p>Action: ARTC to seek clarification of position of XPT platform and underpass compliance as part of any proposed Bridge replacement option</p> <p>ARTC to circulate explanatory notes with the next version of visualisations</p> <p>ARTC to provide additional details on noise, vibration and lighting level modelling for both options.</p> <p>ARTC to present back to the group the environmental sustainability modelling and targets for the Inland Rail Project.</p> <p>The Department of Transport (DOT) be invited to the next BWG meeting to outline the agency’s scope requirements for options being considered for Benalla.</p>
7	<p>General business</p> <p>The following items were submitted for General Business;</p>

NO.	ACTIONS
	<p>1. Phone list distribution There had been a request from a working group member for phone numbers to be included in the contacts list for the Group. This was agreed by those present.</p> <p>2. Invitation to MPs to attend There had been a request from a Member of Parliament to attend one of the Benalla Working Group sessions. It was agreed that the Working Group process was an important forum for the local community. The interest of MPs was appreciated and the Group believed it was in the interest of the Group to engage with MPs in a controlled environment. It was agreed that the Working Group issue an invitation to all MPs to attend a dedicated session prior to the agenda of the Working Group. The timing of this session will be determined by the Working Group.</p> <p>Action: ARTC to seek permission from absent members their consent to share phone numbers and circulate an updated contacts list including phone numbers.</p> <p>Action: BWG to issue an invitation for MPs to attend a session prior to the commencement of a Working Group meeting. The timing of this session is yet to be determined.</p>
8	<p><i>Working Group Reflections and Check In</i></p> <p>The ARTC representatives left the room and Cath invited reflections from the Group. Themes discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about potential budget constraints on what can be achieved for Benalla • The agreed design objectives were a useful criteria for assessment of the options • Disappointment in the number of Community submissions in response to the PSA • The “stationeers program” might be useful for Benalla to explore • Really need to see the concepts fleshed out more with more detail such as the long section view with elevations and costings • Need to remain mindful of the station precinct as a whole not just the half that is facing into town • Would be good to consider the opportunities that may come from the land that will become available with the track realignment option
10	Close meeting: 8.08 pm

Next meeting

Monday 12th July TBC

4.00pm – 8.00pm