

Background

The Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan (Master Plan) was adopted by Council in June 2017. The Master Plan conceptualises and itemises the potential redevelopment of the Shepparton Railway Precinct to provide an attractive and practical gateway into Shepparton.

A key short-term objective of the Master Plan is to improve accessibility and connectivity to the Shepparton Railway Station for pedestrians and cyclists. Two of the actions specified to achieve the objective are:

- construction of a pedestrian overpass connecting the existing railway station to the Shepparton Central Business District (CBD).
 This will enhance amenity for public transport users, and promoting mixed-use development of the area; and
- implementation of shared walking and cycling pathways linking the station with the Maude Street Mall and the new Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) site at Victoria Park Lake. This will increase the ease of wayfinding between key destinations for residents and visitors, as well as augmenting the user-experience of public transport.

Council initiated these projects by commissioning Arcadis Pty Ltd and Liesl Malan Landscape Architects Pty Ltd to create the *Draft Shepparton*Railway Station Pedestrian Overpass Concept Plan October 2018 and the Draft Shepparton Railway Station Shared Pathway Linkages Concept Plans June 2018.

June 2017 - Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan endorsed by Council Mid-2018 to November 2018 - Overpass design process undertaken with input from key stakeholders. Preliminary design prepared and costings calculated December 2018 to March 2019 -Community engagement & consideration of feedback Consideration of submissions and the final concept plans at the Ordinary Council Meeting to be held on 21 May 2019 Advocacy to State Government for construction funding

Preliminary Consultation

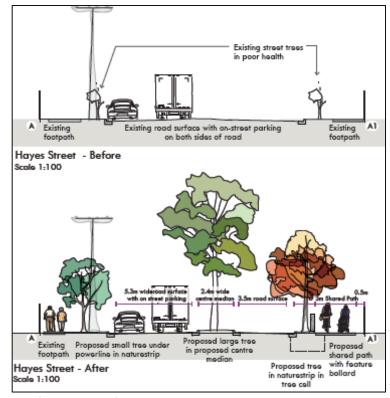
The design of the overpass concepts was overseen by a Project Working Group which included representatives of key stakeholders VicTrack, V/Line, Transport for Victoria and Rail Projects Victoria, as well as, Council officers. Engineering and architectural specialists from Arcadis Pty Ltd and MGS Architects Pty Ltd advised the Working Group. Workshops were held on 26 June 2018 and 8 October 2018.

The Working Group considered available options and provided technical specifications for the Overpass, including:

- feasibility of an underpass/subway;
- access requirements for a variety of users;
- current and future track uses;
- appropriate colours and materials for safety and maintenance;
- necessary vertical clearance of 7.1 metres from top of rail track to underside of bridge;
- the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme; and
- future-proofing the design against potential changes to platform configuration.

Council's Disability Advisory Committee and Positive Ageing Advisory Committee also provided feedback in support of the project, identifying access and integration with surrounding residential and commercial areas as both challenges and opportunities in its development.

On 8 October 2018, the Working Group agreed that the draft concept design prepared by Arcadis Pty Ltd satisfied both design objectives and technical requirements.



Detail from the Draft Shared Path Linkages Concept Plans June 2018

For the Shared Pathway Linkages, Council officers worked closely with Liesl Malan Landscape Architects Pty Ltd, and Heil Engineering Consultants Pty Ltd, to maximise amenity and safety for both pedestrians and cyclists. Consideration was given to the inclusion of appropriate plantings, street furniture, lighting and public artworks, as well as considering kerb and drainage requirements, service and utility infrastructure, and road and railway crossings.

Community Engagement Process

At the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 18 December 2018, Council authorised for exhibition the *Draft Shepparton Railway Station Pedestrian Overpass Concept Plan October 2018* and the *Draft Shepparton Railway Station Shared Pathway Linkages Concept Plans June 2018* from 7 January to 18 February 2019. The concept plans were immediately uploaded to a dedicated page on the Council's external website, and made available in hard copy in the foyer of the Council offices in Welsford Street.

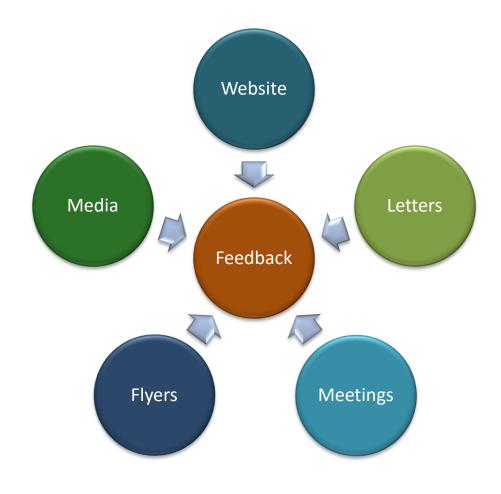
Submissions were invited via an online submission form, by email and by post.

A total of 598 letters were sent to land owners and occupiers of properties adjacent to the Railway Station and the prospective routes of the shared path linkages on 2 January 2019, offering the opportunity to submit their comments.

Printed flyers advertising the submission process were distributed to Shepparton Railway Station and the Visitor Information Centre in Nixon Street, and placed in the foyer of the main Council office.

A media release was issued on 29 January 2019, to remind the public that feedback was invited.

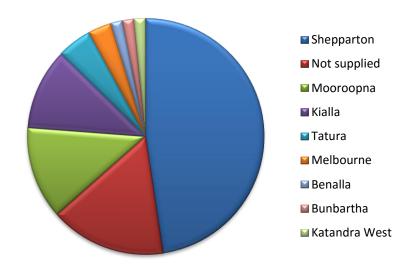
To obtain additional clarity and address respondents' concerns, Council officers arranged one-on-one meetings with submitters to discuss the project. Meetings were held with twenty parties over the four week period to 1 March 2019.



Who did we hear from?

A total of 63 submissions were received by Council during the public consultation process¹.

Submissions were received from organisations and community groups as well as individuals, coming from as far afield as Melbourne:



What did we hear?

Of the responses received, 57 related to the Pedestrian Overpass, while 10 referred to the Shared Path Linkages.

In summary:

Pedestrian Overpass

Sixteen of the related submissions supported the Pedestrian Overpass in part or in full.

In addition to support of the design, the main points were:

- improvement to cyclist and pedestrian safety;
- improvement to the amenity and aesthetics of the CBD;
- improvement to the functionality of the station and CBD;
- increasing ease of wayfinding; and
- preparing for improved rail services.

There were 43 submissions that were not in favour of the pedestrian overpass. Of these, 32 asserted that an overpass is unnecessary, largely basing this view on current usage patterns. The estimated cost was also a key issue, with 34 responders considering it unwarranted or excessive.

Other submitters contributed technical suggestions or concerns, and raised potential issues for user safety or vandalism. Five responders did not think the design was suitable for Shepparton. There were 17 suggestions that the station should be moved to another location, and many recommendations for other projects were provided.

Shared Path Linkages

All except one of the submitters responding to the Shared Path Linkages supported the concept design, expressing support for improvements to pedestrian safety, approving of the increased amenity of the station surrounds, and acknowledging the pathways as their preferred option for accessing the station.

The sole objection to the shared path linkages was in regard to the estimated cost.

¹ Note that some submissions contained more than one comment or point of view, and some addressed both Plans, while others addressed only one. Consequently, overall figures may not be the sum of themed comments.

Consideration of Feedback

The following table collates the points made in the feedback received on the Pedestrian Overpass:

Submission #:	Feedback:	Response:
3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53, 57, 60, 62, 63	There is not enough current station usage to make an overpass necessary.	Council officers acknowledge that an overpass would not be warranted on the basis of present usage; however, future requirements must also be anticipated. As a starting point, the Victorian Government has committed \$356 million to improve rail services to Shepparton, which is likely to result in significantly increased patronage. It is envisaged that the overpass will be used by a wide variety of people, not just those arriving by train. The preparation of concepts for an overpass responds to the demand for improved and safer travel options for cycling, walking and public transport. These needs have been expressed during public consultation undertaken as part of Council's on-going development of a Movement and Place Strategy. These active transport modes have health and wellbeing benefits, as well as enabling access to services and facilities for people who do not drive, including children and young people, recent migrants and seniors. An overpass will diversify opportunities to connect the existing railway station and the eastern residential areas to the CBD, as part of Council's broader strategic vision which encompasses: • Redevelopment of the Court House precinct; • Expansion of the Health and Tertiary Education Precinct; • Maude Street Mall and Bus Interchange; and • Streetscaping at the eastern end of Vaughan Street (from Corio Street to Hoskin Street). These projects also enhance and encourage walking in the CBD, in turn prompting use of the overpass.

6, 11, 12, 15, 41, 43, 49, 50, 51 (shared paths only), 54, 55, 58, 59, 61	Support for overall concepts and/or design. Support for improvements that benefit the Shepparton community.	Council officers acknowledge these submissions. Council endeavours to achieve the best outcomes for the local community, improving overall quality of life.
7, 8, 11, 44, 58	As Shepparton is a rural regional city, the design is not appropriate. The design doesn't blend with its surroundings. The station is a transitional facility, not a destination, so the design is excessive.	Shepparton is a significant regional city in the Victorian context, providing services to residents across a broad area of the Goulburn Valley, and has an international reputation due to its status as an immigration destination and its agricultural practices. The overpass design aligns with Council's commitment to maintain and increase Shepparton's future economic prosperity and residential amenity on an increasingly globalised stage. The scale of the overpass means that it will be visible from outside of the railway precinct, to passers-by not just to users of the station, so it has been designed by highly reputable architects to provide a visual landmark for the surrounding area. Once constructed, the overpass will be in place for many years, so must be of high-quality design and construction. An attempt to replicate the period architectural style of the existing station would not be appropriate, undermining its heritage significance. It is envisaged that the construction of the overpass and increased rail services will encourage further development of properties surrounding the railway precinct. As a transitional space, the station would provide an immediate and lasting impression that is not softened by familiarity, so it is important that its impact is positive and welcoming.
15, 41, 43	The overpass will provide much-needed connection for the local community, especially properties to the east of the CBD.	Council acknowledges these submissions. Council strives to ensure that services and facilities are accessible and equitable.

24, 35, 45, 57, 62	The previous footbridge was demolished so there is no need for another one.	The previous footbridge was demolished around 50 years ago, in response to the needs and priorities of the time. Since then, many physical and societal changes have occurred, including the development of transport and communication technologies that have had profound impacts on lifestyle and recreational activities, enabling wider travel and mobility. Analysis of current and future needs have indicated that there is now a demand for an overpass. Even if the previous footbridge had remained in use, it would have required replacement to comply with current safety and access standards. In addition, like the existing station, the previous footbridge was positioned to suit the layout of the precinct at the time, which is not optimal for today's
10, 51, 62	People won't travel by train to visit the SAM.	usage. The new SAM building has been designed by leading Australian architects to become a Victorian landmark. Both its permanent collection and its potential for hosting contemporary international exhibitions will draw art and culture enthusiasts from Melbourne and beyond. Cities such as Bendigo
		with established art galleries receive a significant number of day-trip and weekend visitors who travel by train. These visitors make a substantial contribution to the local economy, particularly in hospitality and dining industries.
		The provision of rail infrastructure at this time will support current plans to increase services, and encourage on-going improvements, promoting future liveability and prosperity opportunities for the Shepparton community.
7, 14, 22, 25, 28, 36, 37,	People don't walk to and from the Railway	Significant demand for improved walking and public transport infrastructure
40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53, 57, 63	Station, especially with luggage, opting to drive, be picked up, or use bus and taxi services.	has been expressed through Council's public consultation, prompting development of the overpass and the shared path linkages.
	SELVICES.	Pedestrian access is not intended to replace vehicular access, but it allows
		people to choose which mode they prefer, depending on their own circumstances. Facilitating walking to reduce car use has long-term

22, 23, 47	Shepparton is flat so it is easy to walk to existing crossing points. People would not climb stairs instead of walking around to the existing crossing points. Using the overpass instead of walking would not save much time.	sustainability and wellbeing benefits. The railway line is a perceived barrier to accessing the CBD as much as a physical one. The overpass will add a sense of convenience and safety that will increase the viability of walking as well as enabling physical access. It is envisaged that the overpass will be used by a wide variety of people, not just those arriving by train with luggage. For those with mobility limitations,
33, 37, 40, 42, 47	There are not enough trains to be a hazard for people using the existing track crossing at High Street.	walking longer distances to the existing crossings may be a considerable barrier to accessing facilities and services, particularly if they don't drive. The lifts will assist use by people such as young children and older people. The existing crossing is also used by cars and trucks, which can be disconcerting or alarming as well as potentially dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists. The rail tracks themselves can also be a hazard. While the shared path linkages will provide a safer, separated passage for pedestrians and cyclists, some people may still be reluctant to venture so close to a major thoroughfare.
2, 5, 48	In favour of improving pedestrian and cyclist safety by separating paths from vehicles.	A key Council objective is to provide public spaces, open space and community facilities that are safe and accessible for all.
18, 41, 43, 48	In favour of the additional convenience provided to pedestrians. The overpass and shared path linkages will enable much-needed improvements to wayfinding for rail travellers.	According to the 2016 Census, 5.3% of households in Shepparton do not have a car. Council aims to provide a safe, inclusive and liveable environment for all residents, as well as encouraging active transport modes for wider, long-term community benefit.
4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44, 47, 51, 53, 54, 59, 60, 62, 63	The overpass is too expensive; there won't be enough benefit to justify the expense. An underpass would be a less-expensive option.	Alternative options for both configuration and alignment of the overpass were considered by the Working Group in the initial stage of concept development. When considering an underpass, VLine and VicTrack representatives expressed concerns regarding safety in both the construction and operational phases, and regarding track disruptions during construction. Preliminary costings indicated an overpass to be a more cost-effective option.

		The costing process was undertaken by Arcadis Pty Ltd after rigorous design and location analysis and planning. The overpass must span five tracks and allow for a clearance of 7.1 metres above the track for to allow for future uses, so it is significantly longer than overpasses constructed in other localities.
		The design also includes 2 lifts at each end, to allow consistent access for users with mobility constraints, even in case of breakdown.
		Further, the costings include a 40% contingency, which is an appropriate and robust approach to costing infrastructure.
		Once built, the overpass will be in place for many years, so the materials and methods used must be high-quality and durable. Public consultation on the concept plans provides valuable information that will guide and refine further design processes.
		It is envisaged that the overpass will be used by a wide variety of people, including those with mobility constraints, those unable to drive due to age or other limitations, and those who are unable to afford a private vehicle.
51	The cost of the shared path linkages is too expensive, especially as construction costs are likely to escalate by the time it is constructed.	The design of the shared path linkages includes thorough consideration of the project requirements, to ensure a high-quality, safe, and enduring environment for Shepparton's residents and visitors. Costings include paving, plantings, bollards, fencing, street furniture, rubbish bins, drinking fountains, wayfinding, lighting and artworks, as well as less-visible elements such as kerb engineering, and underground tree cells that help to maintain healthy and attractive greenery.
		The costing process was undertaken by Liesl Malan Landscape Architects Pty Ltd with input from Heil Engineering Pty Ltd, and includes a 40% contingency, and projected cost escalations over a five year period if construction is delayed. Council will begin advocacy for funding as soon as the designs have completed the approval process, to minimise cost

		increases.
6, 12, 54, 61	Suggesting points to consider in the next phase of design.	Council notes the suggestions made in these submissions, which will be considered when detailed design work gets underway.
8, 10, 13, 16, 21, 25, 33, 37, 42, 46, 62, 63	Train services are inadequate and should be improved before constructing an overpass.	The State Government has announced \$356m for the upgrade of the Shepparton line, which will allow for five 'VLocity' services per day between Shepparton and Melbourne (return). A business case is also being prepared to increase this to nine services per day. These improvements to passenger services are expected to increase the necessity of an overpass. Given the time frames involved in developing and constructing rail infrastructure, it is appropriate to begin planning and design at this stage so that construction and implementation coincide as much as possible.
9, 41, 55	Supports thinking ahead to anticipate the future needs of Shepparton's community. The overpass is a logical first step towards a more sophisticated rail service for the city.	Council officers acknowledge these submissions.
7, 10, 14, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 42, 52	The funding required could provide a free bus or taxi service, instead of an overpass. Improved/increased bus connections would be more useful/make the overpass unnecessary. A bus terminal should be built on the west side of the tracks. Improvements and awareness of bus timetables would enable better connections, particularly for users with disabilities who require support. An overpass won't address the issues that make public transport use difficult, such as lack of timetabling coordination.	State Government funding will be sought to construct the overpass and potentially the shared path linkages. This funding is allocated for specific purposes and is not transferrable to other projects. There are ongoing discussions between the various public transport providers regarding the coordination of services. The overpass may provide opportunities for additional bus stops and/or services through improved access from Hoskin Street. Council does not have authority to determine how operators make passengers aware of services, but will recommend to the providers that they provide better information.

11, 20, 28, 39, 47, 52, 56	The station is likely to be/should be moved to	Scoping for a new station building on the west side of the tracks is identified
11, 20, 20, 33, 47, 32, 30	the west side of the tracks, so the overpass	as a long-term action in the Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan 2017,
	would be unnecessary.	anticipated to occur from 2025-2029. Construction will be contingent on
		many preceding actions and allocation of significant funding, which will
11, 17, 19, 21, 25, 27, 33,	Instead of building an overpass, a new station	largely be governed by outside agencies. Council is neither the land owner
47, 50	should be constructed:	nor the operator of rail services and, therefore, cannot provide certainty
	Adjacent to the site of the new SAM;Close to the Greater Shepparton College	that the project will be feasible or determine when it might be completed.
	(interim name);	Similar processes and constraints apply to other locations.
	 On the sites of the former petrol depots; 	Neither VicTrack nor VLine have indicated intentions to relocate the station.
	or	Relocation would require extensive analysis and planning, including the
	 Incorporating both sides of the rail line. 	following:
		Repositioning associated services and infrastructure, including maintenance shade and assets belonging to other agencies such as
		maintenance sheds, and assets belonging to other agencies such as Goulburn Valley Water;
		 Finding and acquiring a suitable location that would not unduly impact
		on the amenity of surrounding properties;
		Securing funding from the State Government for land acquisition, and
		relocation of services and infrastructure, as well as a new station
		building; and
		Possibly a planning scheme amendment (including notification) to
		facilitate the construction of a station building on a new site.
		In the absence of any appetite on behalf of either the land owner or the
		operator to move the station, Council officers have sought the best available
		option to increase the connectivity of the station to the CBD.
		Relocating the station would not remove the need for the overpass. It is
		likely that the existing station would remain operational in some capacity,
		requiring safe access between the two buildings. It is envisaged that the
		overpass will be used by a wide variety of people, not just those arriving by
		train, whose needs would not be fulfilled by a new station. The overpass
		concept has been designed to accommodate a station built on the west side
		with minimal disruption. Future station planning will integrate the overpass.

8, 16, 21, 25, 39, 45, 51	Upgrades to the existing station should be made before constructing an overpass.	The existing station is owned by V/Line, which is responsible for its maintenance. The building is protected by a Heritage Overlay, which requires careful consideration of its significance before any change to the building occurs. The construction of a new waiting room addition is expected to begin in the coming months.
43, 48	The overpass will enable increased car parking access and more convenient pick-ups in Vaughan Street.	Council officers acknowledge these submissions.
14, 25, 27, 39, 51, 52, 59, 60, 63	The overpass will connect people to an unattractive/unsafe area of the town that is still a fair distance from the CBD. There will be no benefit to the CBD. The west side of the tracks should be cleaned up.	The overpass and shared path linkages are key elements of Council's overall vision for revitalising the CBD and surrounding areas, that includes the Court House Precinct redevelopment, the Maude Street Mall upgrade, relocation of the bus interchange and the Vaughan and Maude Streets redevelopment. Council is also currently developing a plan to provide streetscaping to the
9, 18, 22, 43, 54, 55	In favour of measures to improve the amenity and aesthetics of that area of the city, and the functionality of the CBD.	eastern end of Vaughan Street, between Corio Street and Hoskin Street. The plan will encompass a shared path that will connect the overpass with the bike path on Corio Street, shade and ground plantings, seating, lighting, public artwork, and other features.
		It is envisaged that increased rail services and construction of the overpass will create opportunities for commercial and mixed use development around the railway precinct, encouraging further regeneration.
60	The overpass will have a detrimental impact on business, requiring relocation of premises.	Council notes that this submitter would be considerably impacted by the construction of the overpass. As the subject property is owned by VicTrack, the submitter would need to consult with VicTrack.
3, 7, 10, 16, 25, 30, 36, 37, 39, 42, 51, 56	Funding allocation would provide more benefit if used for another project/service: Upgrades to Mooroopna Station; Reinvigorating the CBD; Removing parking meters in the CBD;	Council officers acknowledge and note the contents of these submissions. Government funding will be sought to construct the overpass and potentially the shared path linkages. This funding is allocated for specific purposes and is not transferrable to other projects. Funds budgeted to

Addressing homelessness, drug use, health	Greater Shepparton for rail infrastructure would be redistributed to rail
issues, education needs;	services in other areas, not allocated to other local projects.
 A new bridge over the Goulburn River; 	
 A pedestrian crossing outside Coles; 	
 Hard rubbish collection; 	
 Road improvements; 	
 Developing the river frontage; and 	
Bike paths.	

In addition to the responses listed above, submitters expressed the following points in regard to the process that has been followed in developing the Concept Plans:

Submission #:	Feedback:	Council Response:
3, 25, 28, 31, 35, 42, 53, 57	Has sufficient research into usage of the station been conducted?	The overpass concept plan which was presented during the consultation phase was the outcome of a thorough design process, overseen by a steering committee including representatives from VLine, VicTrack, Public Transport Victoria, Rail Projects Victoria and Transport for Victoria. These agencies provided input on technical and safety constraints that have shaped the project. The location of the proposed overpass was determined during the preparation of the Shepparton Railway Precinct Masterplan 2017, which was informed by extensive public consultation. The Master Plan was adopted by Council in June 2017.
		Council acknowledges that a railway user survey was not undertaken during the initial design process for the overpass, as a survey of current users would only reflect current practices. The State Government's commitment of \$356 million to increase and improve rail services to Shepparton will inevitably impact these practices. The aim of the overpass project is to future-proof the station by anticipating and considering both these and broader potential

		changes.
17, 25, 28	Has sufficient cost analysis been conducted?	In its initial discussions, the Steering Committee considered a number of key factors in determining the location and configuration of the project, building on analysis of the entire railway precinct undertaken during the development of the <i>Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan 2017</i> . Both safety and cost were important factors in shaping the project. The costings include a 40% contingency, which is an appropriate and robust approach to costing infrastructure. Further analysis and revision of costings will be conducted as the design process progresses.
1, 7, 8, 16, 17, 20, 25	There has not been enough public input into the Concept Plans. Public consultation should have taken place earlier in the process.	Extensive public consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan 2017, which forms the basis of the overpass and shared path linkages projects. The initial design process was required to consider the specialised constraints of the site and its infrastructure, including rail services, Australian Standards, safety issues for overpass users and trains, and disability standards, against the available options and locations. This information was provided and considered by the Steering Committee, to develop an appropriate concept for assessment by the wider community. The concept plans were authorised for public release after passing through Council's standard approvals process. It was not possible to release the concept plans earlier. Feedback was accepted over a period of nine weeks, extended from the mandated minimum of four weeks to compensate for the Christmas and New Year period. Feedback was invited from any interested party during public consultation, with responses received from across Greater Shepparton and further afield. Comments received are considered by Council and recommendations made as appropriate. Council is also considering feedback on the consultation process, to inform future engagement strategies.

28, 50, 54	Appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback.	Council officers acknowledge these submissions.
30	Council should monitor online comments, do less consultation, and get on with making decisions.	Council operates under the provisions of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> , which includes the requirement to undertake public consultation, and specifies procedural requirements for submissions.
55	Appreciates the inclusion of feedback provided during the consultation on the Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan.	Council officers acknowledge these submissions.
1, 29, 59	Have alternatives such as an underpass been considered, especially in terms of cost?	During the development of the <i>Shepparton Railway Precinct Master Plan 2017</i> , and at the initial stages of the design process, all feasible options were considered. An underpass/subway was discounted due to safety concerns both during the construction phase and the operational phase, the extended disruptions to track use required during construction, and higher cost estimates than other options.
32, 35, 58	There has not been enough information given to the public. Information is not sufficiently accessible for all residents, especially those without Internet access. Information presented in the Shepparton News was not sufficient.	Council officers acknowledge and note the contents of these submissions. Council is currently conducting an internal review of its consultation practices. The feedback on consultation processes provided in submissions to the overpass and shared path linkages will inform this review. The public will have the opportunity to contribute over the coming months. Full sets of both concept plans were published on a dedicated page on Council's website and were available for inspection at Council offices. Council officers regret that an article in Shepparton News did not include appropriate links to these plans.

Next steps

Council is currently considering all of the feedback received in relation to the overpass and shared path concept plans, and will make recommendations as necessary. This Conversation Report will form part of the Project Report to be tabled for consideration at the Ordinary Council Meeting to be held on 21 May 2019.