

Cr Nicole Johnston

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17 April 2014

BaT Project
Department of Main Roads
GPO Box 673
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to make a submission to the State Government's Reference Design for the Bus and Train Tunnel (BAT).

1. Dutton Park Station

I do not support the State Government's decision to close the Dutton Park Rail Station. I urge the State Government to modify the design and/or adjust the proposed construction methods to include the station.

With minor design, construction and cost impacts this vital rail station could be retained.

The reference design must include retention of the existing Dutton Park Rail Station or provision for a new station in the design. The project announcement includes removal of the station which is not supported due to the adverse impacts on hospital patients, workers and visitors, university students and local residents.

The Station has serviced the inner south side since 1884. Rail passengers and residents in this area will be significantly disadvantaged by the loss of their primary public transport services with the planned removal of this station as it will there is a distance of 2.1kms between Fairfield and Park Road Rail Stations.

At the public consultation session held at Dutton Park State School on Saturday, 29 March I was advised by the project engineers that one of the problems with the retention of Dutton Park Station relates to the size of the tunnel.

The diameter of the tunnel requires very large tunnel boring machine which generates greater energy than an ordinary size machine. This in turn requires the tunnel to be deeper than and convention road or rail tunnels to minimise the vibration and movement on the surface buildings. As a result, the track gradient is increased requiring a long descent. This is the reason given for removal of Dutton Park Rail Station.

Changes the construction methods for example use of the road header as opposed to a giant TBM could be used to lessen the depth of the tunnel under the surface thus decreasing the track gradient.

This is just one suggestion. Engineers are innovative and clever professional and with the right political leadership and will I believe they can find a viable design solution that includes retention of Dutton Park Station, within the project site.

I also understand that rail traffic constraints at the southern portal (existing location of Dutton Park Station) are a driver for the station's removal. I find it unusual that this information has not been included in the project documentation.

Having directly spoken to Transport Minister Scott Emerson, and seen correspondence from him to my constituents, he states that redesign or inclusion of the Dutton Rail Station is simply a matter of cost. Funding should be allocated to maintain rail services to this vital station.

It is a retrograde and unnecessary step to remove public transport from inner city areas.

The design as proposed fails to provide any direct pedestrian or cycle links to Park Road station for Annerley or Fairfield Residents, other than along the existing street network either to Park Rad Station or the end of Peter Doherty Drive to connect the station.

The proposed reference design does not provide any detail about pedestrian or cycle links within PA Hospital, other than the bridge link at the end of Peter Doherty Drive.

Residents, their visitors and hospital workers will be severely disadvantaged by the circuitous and vague pedestrian links in the proposed design.

The project has proposed Annerley Road bus routes as an alternative transport option for Dutton Park Station users. I do not agree that on-street buses are an equivalent substitute for rail public transport.

I note that in recent weeks media reports that that the project design is being altered at the northern end to accommodate a connection with the Legacy Way tunnel. No doubt this will add millions of dollars to the cost of the project. If there is a political will to provide better connections at the northern end of the tunnel, the same respect and political will must be exercised to ensure that south side public transport users are not disadvantaged by demolition of Dutton Park Rail Station.

2. Bus Access

The reference design needs to give consideration to bus access to and from CBD streets. A straight through option stopping only at William and Roma Streets will significantly disadvantage bus patrons travelling to central and eastern parts of the city if no mid-city egress point is provided.

Elderly and disabled residents should not be disadvantaged by having to walk significant distances across the CBD to access bus services via the tunnel. Translink and Council have consistently demonstrated their intention to re-route local services to bus tunnels, thereby reducing the number of local bus services in the southern suburbs. I am concerned that the design as proposed may lead to a further loss of localised bus services, with frequent and accessible stops for residents.

The proposed reference design does not indicate whether there is bus access to the tunnel at the PA Hospital from Ipswich Road or whether that will continue via the Woolloongabba portal near The Gabba. The design mentions buses from the Eastern Busway. Presumably the existing link will also provide access off Ipswich Road to the BAT tunnel but this is unclear in the reference design.

The EIS should include early information about which bus services including timetable and routes are likely to be affected so residents can make an informed decision about the value of the tunnel. Bus tunnelling to the detriment of inner city surface street routes is not supported. It is a problem that this information is not available as part of the project design phase.

The project includes no additional pedestrian or cycle facilities to mitigate against the loss of the rail station for the surrounding community. This is an obvious oversight as it will leave residents to deal with the loss of a rail station without alternative active travel connections, bus routes and or improved bus access.

3. Tunnelling Operations

The reference design must include staging and construction space within the Dutton Park/PA Hospital precinct to ensure that all spoil from tunnelling and other waste is removed via rail NOT via road. Or from the northern portal work site. All possible provision must be made to preserve the amenity of local residents, businesses and community facilities during construction eg covered loads, haulage time restrictions through residential areas. The adverse impacts of hundreds of trucks per day upon local streets and connector roads such as Fairfield, Venner and Ipswich Road are significant and not supported.

All spoil removal operations (both rail and road) must include the use of load covers and/or veneering technology to reduce dust creation.

4. Parking

The reference design must include provision for all worker parking onsite and regulated parking areas revised or extended to protect residents from mass parking in local streets. The Dutton Park regulated parking area covers a significant area around the Dutton Park rail station but this may require further assessment.

Finally, without a business case, any cost-benefit studies, sufficient option comparison information, and full disclosure of the design decision making process it is very difficult to determine whether the tunnel design as proposed is in fact the best option.

Yours sincerely


Nicole Johnston
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