

## High Street Upgrade

As can be seen from the minutes of the recent Gibson Park Precinct meeting, the upgrade of High Street between Stirling Highway and Carrington Street is seen as a major problem to residents in the area. This area of High Street has become increasingly dangerous since the elimination of plans for the Fremantle Eastern Bypass (FEB).

The FEB was first included in the Metropolitan Region Scheme as a Controlled Access Highway Reservation in 1973. Even in the years previous to this, when buying property in the area, buyers were advised that Main Roads had a reserve on part of the property and of the proposal of the FEB which would probably result in many properties in the area being resumed.

Local opposition to the FEB resulted in the City of Fremantle objecting (from the late 1970's or early 1980's) to the construction of the FEB south of High Street due to unacceptable social, environmental and planning consequences.

In November 1991 the FEB was deleted from MRS by parliamentary amendment. (MRS Amendment 880/33A)

At the change of government in 1993 FEB was back again. In April 1993 Planning Control Area No 26 was declared and the Eastern Bypass was reinstated.

In 1994/5 there was a plan by main roads to drop High Street from the Stirling H'way intersection back to the Golf Course, but this came to nothing as they could not work out access for the houses along the cut.

Finally, in 2001, again with a change of government, the FEB was deleted and declared dead. The accepted transport corridor from the Fremantle Port would be Stirling Bridge, Stirling Highway, High Street, Leach Highway and Stock Road and the government made an undertaking that, due to the ongoing level of heavy traffic, that part of High Street between Stirling Highway and Leach Highway would be upgraded.

Subsequent to this action much of the land already purchased for the FEB was sold. (Part of this disposal of land allowed for an area of Clontarf Hill to be used by Fremantle Council as open green space.) Due to this sale of land it was not reasonable to reinstate the FEB when the Barnett government came to power as the cost would have been prohibitive and, therefore, the upgrade of High Street became even more essential.

In 2006 a reference group comprising representatives from DoT, Main Roads, Freo Port, WA Transport Forum, Freo Council and the broader Community was formed to compile and assess a range of upgrade solutions. This process included one focused day-long workshop where all affected parties were invited to comment on the range of proposals initially formulated by the reference group, and one subsequent, open public meeting in 2009, where DoT presented the reference group's preferred option, which took into account the findings of the initial workshop. The outcome of this public meeting was a 57% acceptance of Option 4 as the best solution to the High St problem.

Option 4 proposed a four lane, divided highway with a large curve at the intersection of High St and Stirling Highway. This highway would be 'sunk' below current ground level, (in much the same way as West Coast Hwy/Servetus St was reconfigured in Swanbourne) and aligned to run to the south of the current High Street, cutting through the private and public golf courses. This would mean the existing High Street would become a local road, moving the noise and exhaust pollution away from the existing houses on the north of High Street. Option 4 is also rated very highly for traffic flow and safety. It would also incorporate better parking and access to Gibson Park for the Netball participants. A flyover would provide access to the private golf course.

The impacts on the golf courses have been the major concern. The public course, in particular would 'lose' the 3 fairways along High St. Interaction between golf course operators, community and DoT arrived at a solution to this problem which involved reconfiguring the course, preserving, if not improving its 9-hole status and also creating an improved, safer driving range. This configuration requires a small amount (about 3%) of Booyembarra Park to become part of the driving range. The golf course operators formulated this new design and have expressed support for the reconfiguration conditional on access to the tiny part of Booyembarra Park, and, of course, due compensation for the disruption during the construction period.

There are a number of refinements desirable and achievable for Option 4 and these have been acknowledged by DoT. The current status is that Freo Council has not formally considered the High St issue in general business and the Council representatives on the High St reference group have rejected Option 4 as a suitable solution. Freo Council, contrary to the wishes of DoT, has pursued a program of gauging support of affected High St residents for voluntary sale of houses which would allow the upgraded carriageway to be located through these houses and closer to the remaining residential areas. It has also asked DoT to provide independent studies on a number of cheaper, short term remedies for the noise, pollution and traffic hazard situation on High St. End July 2011 is targeted for resolution of Freo Council's objections to Option 4. If no resolution is found, the federal governments \$34million agreed contribution to the High St upgrade is likely to be forfeited.