



Upgrade and duplicate the Upfield Rail Corridor

Moreland acknowledges the State Government's investments over recent years towards removing dangerous level crossings in Glenroy (\$285 million) and Coburg (\$542 million). When combined with the State's Metro Tunnel Project's completion by 2026, these projects will help create room for 45,000 passengers every week, or 71% more capacity, along the Upfield Line during peak periods for passengers, and save around five minutes time on the journey to the CBD¹.

However, the reality is far more will be required, and before 2026, to urgently address a range of longstanding and ongoing challenges and constraints along the remainder of the Upfield Rail Corridor, and to help us build a more sustainable city.

Moreland Council is calling on priority investments towards the Upfield corridor to:

- duplicate the Upfield line between Gowrie and Upfield Stations
- modernise Batman, Merlynston, Fawkner and Gowrie Train Stations as part of any duplication works
- re-configure the City Loop to separate the Upfield and Craigieburn lines
- create transport interchanges adjoining each of the Upfield line's stations that make provision for train, bus, tram, pedestrians, cycling and cars
- take a partnership approach with the Moreland community around the design and delivery of an enhanced Upfield corridor

Moreland

Our ask:

Invest in and bring forward the upgrade and duplication of the Upfield Rail Corridor.

Our aim:

Improve train frequency, accessibility, passenger experience and station amenity, and support job and socio-economic outcomes for Moreland and Melbourne's growing northern region.

- extend and integrate the Upfield line with Melbourne's growing northern communities, including through innovative means
- ensure local job, skill and procurement pathways are provided for Moreland residents and businesses to support construction works.

¹ Victorian Government (2021) '[Metro Tunnel Rail Line Benefits- Upfield](#)' [Online]

Key issues

Key issues that continue to compound poor outcomes on the Upfield rail line include:

- Single track service between Gowrie and Upfield Stations, creating significant bottlenecks and constraints for the length of Upfield line.²
- The Upfield Rail Corridor having the poorest peak frequency in the rail network, with train services historically running every 20 minutes during peak periods.
- The Upfield and Craigieburn train lines continuing to share the same City Loop tracks, which has been identified by Infrastructure Victoria as an ongoing constraint to improved capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers along both lines³.

Low-rated and infrequent services

According to RACV's '2019 On Track Survey', Upfield's four northern train services beyond Coburg were among the lowest rated for commuter experiences prior to COVID, including Batman (rated 4.45 out of 10), Merlynston (rated 4.05 out of 10) and Fawkner (rated 3.88 out of 10); with Gowrie (3.64 out of 10) ranking the lowest for train services⁴.

Concerningly, the stations identified to have the most infrequent train services in the State included Fawkner (77%), Merlynston (76%), Gowrie (73%), Batman (65%) as well as Coburg (60%), with several of the stations being also identified as some of the least punctual including Fawkner (77%), Merlynston (67%), and Batman (63%)⁴.

RACV specifically acknowledged that "Gowrie Station had the lowest rated service in 2019... and that other services on the Upfield line also rated poorly". RACV identified that "it is evident there are significant issues with the train network along the Upfield line"⁴.

RACV also detected key concerns throughout the Upfield line's southern stations in Brunswick, including Anstey (rated 5.34), Brunswick (rated 5.45) and Jewell (rated 6.04), with infrequent train services, poor station lighting and amenity being raised as areas of key matters for passengers⁴.

Projected passenger growth

The Upfield line has previously been projected by Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to experience the largest yearly rise in passengers of all city trains between 2021 and 2031, with patronage set to grow by 5.3% a year over the decade.

With Metro Trains having previously called for upgrades to the Upfield line², along with many other local community groups including the Upfield Corridor Coalition⁵ - now is the right time for Federal and State Governments to partner with the Moreland community to support a new and improved Upfield line that meets community expectations, demands and patronage needs, and which can be a catalyst for investment in urban renewal and jobs.

Opportunities

Infrastructure Victoria's 2021-2050 Report recognised the need for, and opportunities associated with, upgrading the Upfield line. Whilst the Metro Tunnel will enable new services along the Upfield line, Infrastructure Victoria's report indicated "they will reach capacity by the mid-2030s, particularly in the absence of a coordinated and timely reconfiguration of the City Loop, which could also allow for the line to be extended further north to Wallan".

Infrastructure Victoria's modelling has also suggested that upgrading the Upfield corridor can "encourage greater development and investment along the corridor, attracting more suburban jobs closer to people's homes"³.

Rail Future's *Melbourne Rail Plan Strategy* has identified the need for the Upfield corridor to be duplicated between Gowrie and Upfield as a priority by 2024, as well the opportunity to extend and electrify the Upfield line to connect with Roxburgh Park (Craigieburn Line), enabling some Craigieburn trains to also travel via Upfield³.

Other innovative opportunities also exist to connect the Upfield line with growing neighbouring communities to our north. The recent \$6 million announcement by the Federal Labor Opposition for planning trackless tram connections between Rowville and Caulfield Station is noteworthy in this regard⁶, and along with improved bus connections, may be an efficient option in helping connect the Upfield line with growing communities such as

² The Age (2018) '[Sluggish Upfield upgrades still years away](#)' [Article published 6/11/18] [Online]

³ Infrastructure Victoria (2021) '[Infrastructure Victoria 2021-2051 Strategy](#)' [Online]

⁴ RACV (2020) '[On Track Survey Results \(and Presentation\)- November 2019 to March 2020](#)' [Online]

⁵ Upfield Corridor Coalition (2020) '[Upfield Corridor Coalition Website](#)' [Online]

⁶ The Age (2021) '[Labor commits to plan for trackless trams \\$6m](#)' [Article published 4/11/21] [Online]

Donnybrook, Kalkallo, Beveridge, Walla, Wollert and even Mernda.

With the level crossing removal works in Coburg having provided rail over road outcomes at the intersections of Moreland Road, Reynard Street, Munro Street and Bell Street, and two new modern stations at Moreland and Coburg Stations, investment is now required to ensure the remainder of the line is also upgraded.

As identified in the North and West Melbourne City Deal Plan, the Upfield Rail Corridor can be a catalyst for generating economic, job and skill outcomes as part of ongoing regional COVID-19 recovery efforts, whilst facilitating longer term outcomes to support the needs of a growing population for Moreland and Melbourne's booming northern region.

Each of these initiatives can help significantly improve transport and amenity outcomes along the corridor for our community, as well as facilitate greater job and socio-economic opportunities for our region.

To find out more:

If you would like further information about this project, or would like to request a briefing, please contact:

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