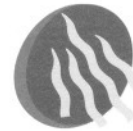




Hon. Paul Lucas MP



Queensland
Government

Our ref: MC 20578

26 OCT 2006

Minister for
Transport and Main Roads

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Re: Petition No. 596-06: Eastern Busway

I refer to a petition lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Michael Caltabiano, the former Member for Chatsworth, on 15 February 2006 about the Eastern Busway.

The Eastern Busway is an integral part of the Queensland Government's long-term plan to meet the transport needs of Brisbane's growing eastern suburbs and the Redland shire by providing faster and more reliable public transport options. Traffic congestion will worsen along Old Cleveland Road and its adjoining streets as travel demand increases with population growth. By attracting more trips onto public transport, the Eastern Busway would help manage growth in car travel along Old Cleveland Road and neighbouring streets. An Eastern Busway would have the ability to absorb travel demand growth for many years, and reduce the increase in congestion along the corridor.

TransLink has no plans to construct a "freeway-style" bus corridor along Old Cleveland Road. The Eastern Busway will be custom-built for the eastern suburbs and Redland shire. The draft alignment that was displayed for consultation between June and August showed an urban busway that will be designed with the input of local residents to fit in with the look and feel of the local area. Some of the busway will be in tunnel, with no visible impacts from the surface. Some sections will be on the surface, on an elevated bridge structure or slightly below street level.

The Eastern Busway will have attractive, landscaped stations. Rather than simple bus stops, the busway will feature architecturally-designed stations with 24-hour security, landscaped gardens and 'real-time' electronic bus information. Each station will be designed individually, with the help of local residents and businesses, so they fit in with the areas they serve. Glass will be used extensively for safety and visibility, and where possible, busway stations will be open to the air to allow natural light. Over the coming months, TransLink will look at how it can incorporate other features into the design to make the busway as user-friendly and community-friendly as possible. This includes such things as investigating the provision of noise barriers (if needed), landscaping, anti-vibration measures, the latest in urban design features and public art.

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TransLink is currently preparing a Concept Design and Impact Management Plan (CDIMP) to investigate the potential benefits and impacts of the Eastern Busway, both during and after construction. A range of technical and environmental studies are underway to look at ways to minimise noise, vibration, flooding and other potential impacts. The information from these ongoing studies will help TransLink custom build the Eastern Busway to maintain acceptable environmental standards for busway users as well as those who will live, work or study nearby.

The Eastern Busway will be a vital part of a new busway network for Brisbane that will eventually span the city. TransLink has learnt from the South East Busway that quality public transport attracts passengers – more than 100,000 journeys are made on the South East Busway every day. TransLink wants to offer residents across Brisbane a high quality busway network to complement our existing rail network. When it is completed, the Eastern Busway will connect up with other new busways and train services across Brisbane, so it will be quicker and easier to get to where you need to go.

All feedback will be considered for the final CDIMP, which is expected to be presented to the Queensland Government for consideration in early 2007. The preferred alignment and CDIMP are due to be displayed for public consultation in early 2007. The project team will continue to engage with local residents to ensure that the design can be guided by local knowledge and that comments and suggestions can be made to improve the scheme.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely _____

PAUL LUCAS MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads