

**14 June 2022**

**Notice of Motion, Cr Leppert: North Melbourne Town Hall public open space**

**Motion**

That the Future Melbourne Committee:

1. Notes calls from the community for new public open space adjacent to the North Melbourne Town Hall on Queensberry Street.
2. Notes the purposes of the \$100m *North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Docklands Transport and Amenity Program* (TAP), and that Queensberry Street traffic calming and open space opportunities is a project for future consideration, subject to a series of State/Council approval and funding decisions.
3. Notes calls from the community for the nomination of a place within the City of Melbourne, preferably a public and civic space in North Melbourne, to properly honour the legacy of Ruth and Maurie Crow.
4. Acknowledges the potential alignment of Council open space policy, TAP objectives and community sentiment and, without yet committing to any open space, traffic or place-naming projects, requests that management:
  - 4.1. Assess the benefits, opportunities and impacts of changes to the Queensberry Street traffic configuration and construction of a forecourt or park adjacent to the North Melbourne Town Hall, considering a variety of options within the study area being the Queensberry Street road corridor between Errol and Leveson Streets;
  - 4.2. Consider opportunities, and their merits, to bring forward a Queensberry Street-based TAP project that would potentially enable a project;
  - 4.3. Provide advice for the process for naming of a section of a new park, or other location within North Melbourne, for Ruth and Maurie Crow; and
  - 4.4. Present a report to this Committee by April 2023 which brings together the work mentioned above and makes any appropriate recommendations.

**Background**

The most recent program update for the *North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Docklands Transport and Amenity Program* (TAP) was presented to the Future Melbourne Committee on 15 March 2022.<sup>1</sup> That report described the TAP and its objectives as follows:

The North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Docklands TAP is a suite of streetscape improvement projects that will help to alleviate and leverage some of the effects and benefits of the West Gate Tunnel Project, specifically on local and arterial roads in the City of Melbourne (CoM).

TAP projects are co-funded by the Department of Transport (DoT) in a matched-funding arrangement (50% CoM, 50% DoT), up to a maximum of \$100 million over the next four years.

CoM and DoT work collaboratively to identify and scope projects that should be considered for inclusion in the program. The projects must then meet three stages of approvals: each project requires approval from the joint CoM and DoT Steering Committee, as well as each organisation's regular funding approval processes to confirm their financial contribution.

Potential changes to Queensberry Street are on the long list of potential TAP projects. A variety of considerations are necessary before the TAP Steering Committee would be able to advance a project on

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/MeetingAgendaItemAttachments/971/17301/MAR22%20FMC2%20AGENDA%20ITEM%206.3.pdf>

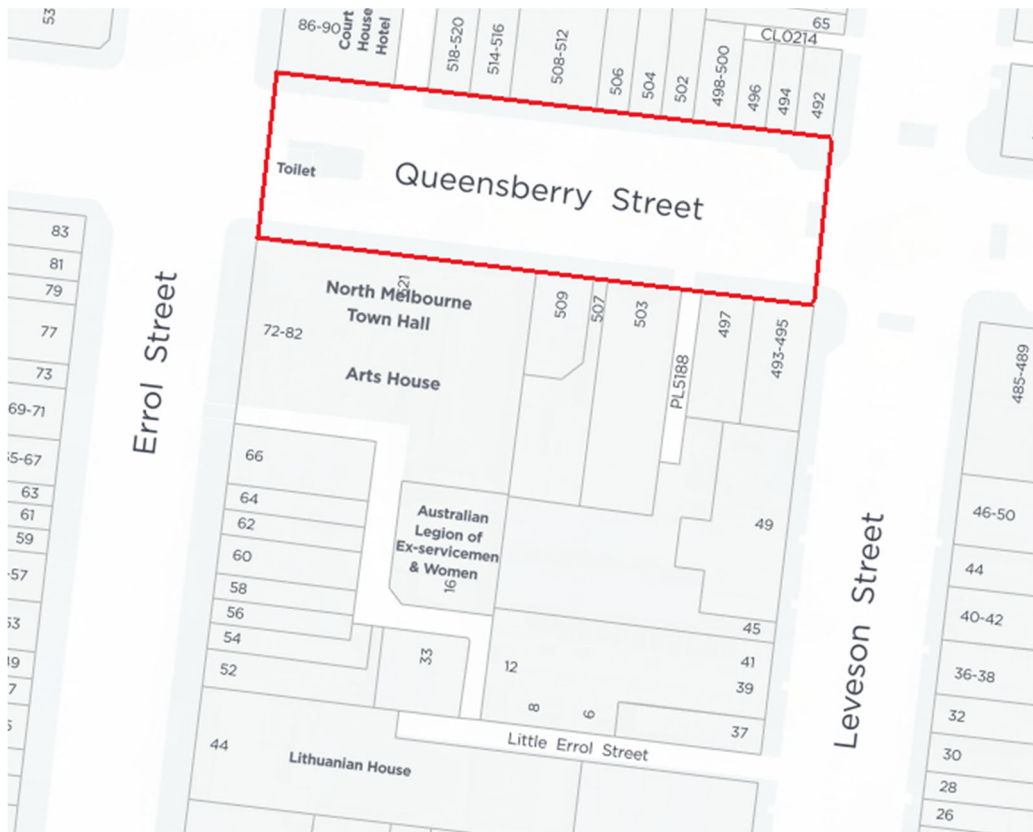
Queensberry Street, including Metro construction times, West Gate Tunnel construction times, and changes to traffic patterns caused by both major transport projects. The City of Melbourne would also need to consult on any proposal or proposals with community, residents, businesses and Traditional Owners, before any proposal would be agreed to in principle. The motion does not seek to pre-empt any of these future decisions or any required processes independent of Council.

The calming of East-West traffic within North Melbourne is the core purpose of the TAP, given the West Gate Tunnel project envisages a significant increase in such traffic on local roads post-construction. Council, with the Department, needs to plan for these changes. Whether traffic calming interventions can be coupled with new open space opportunities is an open consideration.

There is a potential opportunity to combine a TAP project with other Council and community objectives: to meet open space requirements for a growing North and West Melbourne population; to induce footfall for local businesses; to better define the curtilage and civic precinct of North Melbourne Town Hall, one of the municipality's most important heritage buildings; and to facilitate the Arts House Strategic Plan, which calls for greater community connections through art.

The motion seeks dispassionate advice from management on the merits, opportunities and impacts of potential future projects.

The proposed study area is shown in red:



**Mover: Cr Rohan Leppert**

**Secunder: Cr Davydd Griffiths**

Excerpt of proposal from Mary Featherston, Jane Miller and Angela Munro  
to all sitting councillors and candidates for election in 2020

We propose a tangible and fitting memorial to two legendary figures in metropolitan Melbourne's planning and development, chiefly in the 1970s and 1980s – namely Maurie and Ruth Crow. The significant impact of their unremitting activism, without power base or institutional resources, was attributable to rigorous and farsighted argument, persuasively made and ultimately strongly supported. In response to such argument, it was during Sir Rupert Hamer's Liberal premiership that the green wedges, the so-called 'lungs' of Melbourne were set aside. Again, the couple made a decisive and inspirational contribution through the formal consultations producing the City of Melbourne's award-winning Melbourne Strategy Plan (1973), led by eminent Melbourne architect, Peter Macintyre and substantially implemented in 1984.

The Crows' capacity to work cooperatively across political divides was exemplary. Their personal needs were minimal: they devoted their lives to the public domain, social and environmental, and to ecological sustainability, ahead of their time. The neighbourhood in which they chiefly lived, were best known and highly respected, was North Melbourne.

Our proposal is that a public space, ideally in the vicinity of the North Melbourne Town Hall, be set aside to represent and champion the values and outcomes that Maurie and Ruth stood for. We are aware of opportunities which arise as population increase, urban densification and infrastructure upgrades drive inner city land-use changes. We envisage a celebratory and passive recreation space, complementing Arts House and the nearby branch library, well served by public transport and by local cafes and restaurants. We believe the Crow legacy should be remembered by the whole community, not simply by those of us fortunate to have been contemporaries. As active and altruistic citizens they could, in this way, continue to inspire and promote imaginative community connection and creativity, especially of children in Ruth's case: 'if they could do it, we can do it!'. This proposal is timely, being one by which the community, post pandemic, would be excited and benefit from in perpetuity.

As three proponents with first-hand knowledge of Maurie and Ruth's influence, in innumerable ways and over many years, we seek your in-principle support for the ideas outlined.