

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.4

Swanston Triangle Greening Tram Track Renewal Opportunity

9 April 2024

Presenter: Evan Counsel, General Manager Strategy, Planning and Climate Change

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to present the final concept design for the expansion of the existing green space at the corner of Swanston and Victoria streets, Melbourne.
2. Yarra Trams (YT) and the Department of Transport and Planning are renewing existing tram tracks along Victoria Street, between Elizabeth Street and south into Swanston Street.
3. As part of these works, the existing tram tracks through the triangular parcel of road opposite Melbourne City Baths (Triangle) will be removed. YT's original scope was to replace the tram tracks within the Triangle with asphalt and new kerbs to tie into the existing footpaths on Victoria and Swanston streets.

Key issues

4. Management identified an opportunity to avoid more asphalt, by expanding the existing green space to include the Triangle into an expanded pocket park. YT has agreed in principal to increase their scope of works to include the expanded park within their program of works subject to Council providing funding towards the additional costs.
5. The development of the concept design has been accelerated to meet YT's construction delivery window between July and October 2024. This has resulted in a compressed timeline for approvals and stakeholder engagement.
6. A draft concept (refer attachment 1 of report from management) was used as part of external engagement led by YT. In person feedback was received from building managers, traders and residents fronting the Triangle.
7. A final concept design (refer attachment 2 of report from management) has been prepared in consideration of all community and stakeholder feedback. The final concept includes a much larger lawn space (502m²) for local residents, students and visitors to enjoy with additional tree canopy, seating options for individuals and groups and a more flexible interface with the heritage tram building.

Recommendation from management

8. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 8.1. Endorses the final concept (refer attachment 2 of report from management) for the triangular parcel of road opposite Melbourne City Baths, and commencement of design documentation to align with Yarra Trams delivery timeline.
 - 8.2. Authorises the General Manager Strategy, Planning and Climate Change to approve any further minor changes to the design during documentation and delivery of the project.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (page 2 of 5)
2. Draft Concept (page 4 of 5)
3. Final Concept (page 5 of 5)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. To remove the road status over the Triangle will require a discontinuance of the affected road in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act).
2. Sections 206, 207A and clause 3(a) of the Act require Council give public notice of the proposal and consider all submissions received prior to making its decision.
3. If the road is discontinued, management will request the Triangle be reserved in accordance with the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and the Council appointed committee of management.

Finance

4. A cost estimate of approximately \$1.5 million for proposed works that go beyond the YT scope is included in the draft concept plan.
5. Funding for the proposed works beyond the YT scope will be allocated from the existing Climate Adaptation Urban Landscapes New Works (CASP) program in FY 2024-25, pending project change request approval and re-phasing of expenditure within the approved 4-year funding from the Public Open Space Reserve.

Conflict of interest

6. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

7. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

8. External engagement on the draft concept design was undertaken together with YT on the changes to the tram renewal and road infrastructure works.
 - 8.1. In mid-February 2024 a notification flyer was sent out to all adjacent properties with information about the project including key dates and contact details.
 - 8.2. The following week officers from the Council's project team joined YT officers on site and visited each property facing the Triangle to discuss the project and draft concept. This included conversations with building managers, traders and residents.
 - 8.3. Feedback was positive in response to the proposed greening and improvements to the public space.
 - 8.4. The community raised concerns regarding the overall impact of the broader track renewal project, including removal of parking along Victoria Street and impact of constant construction across the precinct. Feedback and subsequent action relating to the mitigation of car parking loss will be developed by YT with input from Council as part of its works and does not impact the concept design for the Triangle.
 - 8.5. During verbal conversations with traders and building managers, the consistent theme of rough sleeping and vandalism was reported as a problem across the precinct. Surface water runoff and localised flooding was also reported as an issue that will be considered as part of the design process.

9. Yarra Trams are seeking relevant approvals from the Department of Transport and Planning for traffic signal changes on Victoria St.
10. Yarra Trams have consulted with Melbourne Water in relation to flood impacts. The area of works for the triangle are outside of the Elizabeth St flood overlay.

Relation to Council policy

11. The expansion and changes to the land reservation for this project will increase the quality and quantity of public open space within this section of Swanston St across from City Baths and the new Metro Tunnel Station entry. This project aligns with strategic objectives of the Open Space Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy and relevant city greening strategies.

Environmental sustainability

12. In developing the concept design for Triangle, a number of environmental sustainability issues and opportunities have been considered including
 - 12.1. inclusion of water sensitive urban design solutions to help manage surface run off within the broader Elizabeth Street catchment
 - 12.2. removal of impervious concrete pavement and replacing with porous pavement, lawn and garden bed areas to capture water on site for passive irrigation
 - 12.3. additional canopy trees and understorey vegetation to improve local biodiversity inviting birds, insects and pollinators back into the city
 - 12.4. a new green space for local residents, students and visitors to engage with nature and socialise.

SWANSTON STREET TRIANGLE - DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGN

Amenity Snapshot

685m² - Permeable surfaces (204% increase)

- 205m² - Lawn
- 165m² - Garden Bed
- 100m² - Permeable Pavement
- 215m² - Deck

1000m² - Impermeable surfaces

- 860m² - Existing Bluestone
- 140m² - Existing Heritage Asphalt

8 New Trees

Key considerations

- Introduce permeable surfaces around existing trees to provide better growing environment
- Select planter edges to be removed in a sensitive way to avoid damage to tree root systems
- Provide clearance along building edge for timed deliveries / loading
- Introduce water theme into the design of permeable pavement space to celebrate the water story, provide opportunity to hold water during flood events to transform the area into an interactive live stream for people to enjoy.
- Make sure the timber deck seamlessly integrates with the current topography and provides DDA access.

Key benefits

- Increase in permeable surfaces has potential to improve tree root system by increasing total permeable area for root growth
- Encourages dwelling in the space, rather than simply facilitating through movements
- Creative adaptive reuse potentials
- Multiple space quality create a diverse experience
- A raised timber deck offers the advantage of ensuring usability during flood events, as the floodwaters can pass underneath the deck, allowing the space to remain functional.

Legend

- Proposed kerb alignment by metro
- - - Existing kerb to be removed
- ▼ Building entries adjacent to public realm upgrade
- Shrine view vantage point
- Existing stormwater to be replaced
- - - Land subject to inundation
- Existing Contours
- Bluestone paving - existing retained and kerb extension delivered by metro
- Victorian Heritage Register Land
- Timber deck with terracing, seating and custom lighting. Continuous permeable surface below decking.
- Permeable pavement
- Bluestone retaining wall
- Bike racks
- Proposed bike lane to be delivered by metro
- Tables and stools
- Drinking fountain
- Existing lighting to be upgraded for public realm use
- Existing trees to be retained
- Proposed trees
- Proposed trees Metro Works
- Raised lawn
- Mounded garden beds
- Existing public toilet

Material Reference

Note: Refer to City of Melbourne Design and Construction Standards for other furnitures and materials



Circular stools and tables with various sizes and heights - used at Leicester Street and Southbank Boulevards



Permeable pavement - waste tyre permeable pavement products by Porous Lane



Timber deck bridge with timber edges - used at Royal Park over swales

- PROPOSED KERB EXTENSION, BIKE LANES & BLUESTONE BY METRO
- VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER BUILDING WITH OPPORTUNITY TO RETROFIT INTO RETAIL
- WSUD TREE PLOTS FOR PROPOSED TREES
- RAISED DECKING WITH DDA ACCESS, TREES, SEATING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVATION. PERMEABLE SURFACES TO BE INSTALLED UNDER DECK TO ALLOW FOR EXISTING TREE ROOT GROWTH AND FLOOD MITIGATION
- PERMEABLE PAVEMENT WITH WATER THEMED SURFACE DESIGN AND FURNITURE
- SPACE FOR OUTDOOR DINING
- EXISTING BLUESTONE RETAINING WALL TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING BIKE RACKS TO BE RELOCATED
- WSUD TREE PLOTS FOR PROPOSED TREES



CONCEPT DESIGN

PROJECT
SWANSTON STREET TRIANGLE

CONTENT FOR
DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGN

PASSED
EZ

APPROVED
DJ

DRAWN
DB / KX

DATE
15/12/23

SCALE
1:300 A1

PROJECT No.
904223

DRAWING No.
SD-01



SWANSTON STREET TRIANGLE - FINAL CONCEPT DESIGN

Attachment 3
Agenda item 6.4
Future Melbourne Committee
9 April 2024

Amenity Snapshot

Surface:

- Lawn - 502m²
- Garden Bed - 27m²
- Permeable Pavement - 45m²
- Bluestone Pavement - 54m²

Permeable surfaces in total - 574m²

91% permeable surface within project updated zone

156% increase compared to existing condition

Trees:

- Removed trees - 4
- New trees - 13 + 6 (By CYP)

Key Considerations + Opportunities

- Enhance the site to be a space for socializing and rest
- Introduce a large lawn area to provide passive recreation, connection to landscape, trees and shade
- Incorporate diverse shrub species around existing trees to foster a healthier growing environment and promote biodiversity
- Implement a new raised garden bed in the south to create a lush and inviting entry to the open space
- Increase the permeable surface area to help manage stormwater runoff, promoting integrated water management practices
- Accommodate outdoor dining along the western footpath and potential future opportunity surrounds the heritage building to activate the site

Legend

- Proposed kerb alignment by metro
- - - Existing kerb to be removed
- ▼ Building entries adjacent to public realm upgrade
- Shrine view vantage point
- ▨ Future outdoor dining for heritage building activation
- ▨ Outdoor dining for existing restaurants
- Existing stormwater to be replaced
- - - Land subject to inundation
- Existing Contours
- Bluestone paving - existing retained and kerb extension delivered by metro
- Victorian Heritage Register Land
- Permeable pavement
- Bluestone seating wall
- Proposed bike racks
- Proposed protected bike lane to be delivered by CYP
- Benches
- Proposed drinking fountain
- Existing lighting to be upgraded for public realm use
- Existing trees to be removed
- Existing trees to be retained
- Proposed trees (WSUD plots)
- Proposed trees Metro Works
- Raised lawn
- Mounded garden beds
- Existing public toilet/heritage building

- 3 NEW LOADING ZONE AND DROP OFF SPACES ON VICTORIA STREET
- LARGE RAISED LAWN FOR TREES AND PASSIVE RECREATION
- RAISED BLUESTONE SEATING WALL WITH INTEGRATED BENCHES
- POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTIVATION OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HERITAGE BUILDING
- OUTDOOR DINING ZONE FOR SURROUNDING RESTAURANTS
- PERMEABLE PAVING TO BUILDING ENTRY
- SEATING AT ENTRY TO OPEN SPACE SURROUNDED BY SHADE AND GREENING



CONCEPT DESIGN

PROJECT
SWANSTON STREET TRIANGLE

CONTENT FOR
FINAL CONCEPT DESIGN

PASSED
EZ

APPROVED
DJ

DRAWN
DB / KX

DATE
14/03/24

SCALE
1:300 A1

PROJECT No.
904223

DRAWING No.
SD-01

