

**Report to the Future Melbourne (Transport) Committee**

**Agenda item 6.2**

**Opportunities for Elizabeth Street South**

**2 August 2016**

**Presenter:** Kate Vinot, Director City Strategy and Place

**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's endorsement for management to conduct targeted stakeholder engagement on design opportunities for the southern end of Elizabeth Street (Flinders Street to Flinders Lane) as part of the Draft Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan.
2. The Council Plan includes an action for 2016-17 to consult on the Draft Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan and consult on design options for the southern end of Elizabeth Street.

**Key issues**

3. Despite being one of the most important entry points to the central city and the retail core, the area is characterised by poor urban design, an absence of trees and constrained walking space making it difficult for pedestrians to move through this part of the city safely and conveniently.
4. Traffic analysis shows that there are very low motor vehicle volumes in this section of Elizabeth Street, especially southbound. Almost all the destinations for vehicles which currently drive south on this section of Elizabeth Street can be accessed relatively easily by other routes. In contrast, pedestrian volumes are high and growing exponentially, driven in part by growth in public transport patronage.
5. This creates an opportunity to reallocate space currently used for the southbound vehicle carriageway and parking to provide a more generous space for pedestrians on the east side. There are a range of design improvement possibilities that extend from street lighting, tree planting, landscaping and furniture placement that need to be considered in line with best practice Safer by Design considerations. Making streetscape improvements in this area is intended to provide many benefits including supporting the walking economy whilst improving the amenity and presentation of this historically and culturally important part of Melbourne. An artist's impression of how the space could potentially be transformed is shown in Attachment 2.
6. Public Transport Victoria (PTV) is required to replace some tram tracks in the southern end of Elizabeth Street and plans to do this in early 2017. Council officers are working with PTV to better understand the opportunities to take advantage of the track works to improve the surrounding area.
7. A program of targeted stakeholder consultation is proposed to be undertaken from 3 to 31 August 2016. The aim is to understand all the issues pertinent to developing a robust design outcome for the space. Issues are likely to include loading and deliveries, property access, stormwater management, the condition of subsurface infrastructure, bicycle access, accessible tram boarding and alighting, and other matters. An outline of the engagement program is shown in Attachment 3.
8. The outcomes of the consultation along with a recommendation for the next steps on the project are expected to be presented to the Future Melbourne Committee following the 2016 council elections. This would include implications for the remainder of Elizabeth Street to inform the Draft Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan.

**Recommendation from management**

9. That the Future Melbourne Committee endorses a program of targeted stakeholder consultation on opportunities for the southern end of Elizabeth Street as outlined in this report.

**Attachments:**

1. Supporting Attachment (page 2 of 5)
2. Initial artist impression of potential improvements (page 3 of 5)
3. Summary of stakeholder consultation plan (page 3 of 5)

## Supporting Attachment

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### Legal

1. Should the consultation lead to a recommendation for the southbound carriageway to be converted into a pedestrian plaza, there would be a requirement for the Council to follow the legal procedure for a road discontinuance for the section to be closed.

### Finance

2. The costs of consultation for this project will be drawn from the existing 2016-17 budget. Future costs for construction would be the subject of a capital works budget submission.

### Conflict of interest

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

### Stakeholder consultation

4. The program of stakeholder consultation is outlined in Attachment 3.

### Relation to Council policy

5. The recommendation in this report is consistent with the Transport Strategy 2012, the Walking Plan, the Road Safety Plan, the Urban Forest Strategy, Total Watermark: City as a Catchment Strategy, Aboriginal Heritage Action Plan 2015-2018 and other Council strategies.

### Environmental sustainability

6. Environmental sustainability issues and opportunities have been considered in developing this proposal. The project area is located at the lowest point of the Elizabeth Street catchment so consideration for storm and flood water management is a critical aspect of this project. The project is guided by the Elizabeth Street Catchment Plan and work in this area will be developed in close collaboration with Melbourne Water. Opportunities to integrate water sensitive urban design elements are proposed to be investigated in conjunction with Melbourne Water to identify what improvements could be achieved in the southern portion of Elizabeth Street.
7. The potential inclusion of street trees will increase the permeable ground area and is in keeping with the objectives and aims of the Urban Forest Strategy.
8. The project will be developed in line with the key directions of the Walking Plan and the Transport Strategy both of which are designed to increase the amount of travel by sustainable travel modes.



## STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PLAN - SUMMARY

July 2016

### Stage one - Targeted stakeholder engagement

Undertake targeted stakeholder engagement to investigate options for improvements to the area. This includes supporting communications around Council's intention to discontinue access for vehicular traffic to the eastern side of Elizabeth Street between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane, including the detailed rationale for doing so.

Through a series of stakeholder workshops and face-to-face engagement, City of Melbourne will engage with local stakeholders including (but not limited to):

- Government/external agencies (PTV, Yarra Trams, Melbourne Metro Rail Authority, Melbourne Water, VicRoads, Major Projects Victoria (Flinders Street Station) and Aboriginal Victoria (amongst others))
- Business and traders directly impacted and nearby e.g. adjacent traders, CAE, Victoria University
- Owner/occupiers that are directly impacted e.g. residents, owners and body corporates
- Relevant community groups/committees e.g. Committee for Melbourne, disability groups
- Transport groups and associations e.g. RACV, walking and cycling associations including Bicycle Victoria, Melbourne BUG, Victoria Walks and Disability Advisory Committee and others.
- Cultural heritage stakeholders, including Aboriginal group representatives and agencies
- Local service providers e.g. homelessness support and service providers; youth services in area
- People using the area for walking, cycling etc through intercept surveys
- Emergency services, including Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and the MFB
- Other users identified through the process.

To assist with these activities, materials explaining the rationale for the project and the existing site conditions will be produced.

The purpose of the stage one engagement is to help us to:

- Share with the community our intention to proceed with the road discontinuance
- Explain the site's complexities, constraints and opportunities
- Collect stakeholder insights and information
- Understand and address the concerns raised
- Investigate further the site conditions/constraints
- Maximise City of Melbourne's ability to collaborate to ensure the best possible outcome for the site.

The feedback from stage one will help us develop achievable design options for Elizabeth Street South which have broad support from key stakeholders. Additionally, it will assist us in developing an optimal phase two engagement process into which the wider community can have input.

A report detailing the outcomes of the stage one engagement will be prepared and presented to Future Melbourne Committee in late 2016.

## **Stage two - Broad community engagement**

A series of design options will be developed and the broader community will be engaged to provide feedback on these in early 2017. This will provide input to assist with the finalisation of the new streetscape design for Elizabeth Street South.