

Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 7.1

7 June 2022

Notice of Motion, Cr Leppert: Future Streets Framework for the Hoddle Grid

Motion

1. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 1.1. Requests that public consultation and completion of the 'Future Streets Framework' as described in the *Transport Strategy 2030* be finalised and presented to this Committee for endorsement by March 2023.
 - 1.2. Requests that recommendations for the future staging of works to implement the 'Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan' be presented to this Committee for consideration by March 2023.
 - 1.3. Requests that a report on the extent to which the objectives of the 'Little Streets transformations' project have succeeded, as well as any recommendations for improvements to the Little Streets treatments over time consistent with the 'Future Streets Framework', be presented to this Committee for consideration by March 2023.
 - 1.4. Requests that any recommendations from management necessary to ensure that the policy and consultation work mentioned above is adequately resourced in 2022-23 be presented to the Special Future Melbourne Committee meeting to be held on 23 June 2022.

Background

This motion brings together three closely related projects for consideration, and should be read in conjunction with agenda item 6.9 "Implementation Update: City of Melbourne Transport Strategy 2030 and Transport Program to Aid City Recovery and Reactivation".

The March 2023 reporting date for all three components is chosen to ensure that there is enough time, in advance of the 2023-24 budget process, to consider any recommendations that may have operational or capital expenditure implications for 2023-24.

Future Streets Framework for the Hoddle Grid

The future of streets in the central city is a key consideration of Council's *Transport Strategy 2030*. Outcome 1 and Action 1 both relate to the creation of a 'Future Streets Framework'. Action 1 reads:

Develop a Future Streets Framework to design and deliver streets in the Hoddle Grid based on the 2030 Proposed Integrated Network established in this strategy.¹

The *Transport Strategy 2030* makes it clear that this task is not only about transport. The future of our streets is primarily an economic consideration. As Melbourne City Councillors seeking to articulate a vision for the future of central Melbourne, we should be asking what the future economic and environmental function of our streets will be:

- If outdoor dining parklets to aid hospitality businesses are to become a permanent feature of our streets, what design and policy frameworks should be in place?
- If the Council is taking a precincts approach to economic activity, what design and policy framework should be in place to enable a place-based approach (for Chinatown, the Greek Precinct, Bourke Hill, Hardware Lane, etc)?
- What is the role, opportunity and value of using street space for activities and activations which attract people to the city and support other Council programs including arts and tourism?

¹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/transport-strategy-2030-city-of-melbourne.pdf>

- How else do we improve the city economy through public realm investments and how do we maximise the economic uplift delivered by our street space?
- As new central city train stations are built, and public transport usage increases throughout the network, what will the economic impact be on the businesses in the vicinity of train stations, and what design and policy interventions will be necessary to manage neighbouring streets and footpaths?
- How do we improve the environmental performance of central city streets?

We should also ask if there are new opportunities post pandemic to align Council and State expectations and policies about the future of our central city streets using the Movement and Place approach.

A May 2021 Working Draft of the 'Future Streets Framework' shows that a draft framework is mostly completed, and is nearly ready for formal consultation.

Making decisions about the future of our city through the lens of post-pandemic economic growth should be informed by robust policy and published plans, to make government intentions transparent and accountable. The City's 'Transport Program to Aid City Recovery and Reactivation', informed by the *Transport Strategy 2030* and the Independent Transport Review, the subject of the report at agenda item 6.9, is an important program to inform this policy work. Completing this policy work in 2022-23 and producing a 'Future Streets Framework,' while the City returns to a post-pandemic 'normal' and as construction work on new bicycle/micromobility lanes is paused inside the Grid (if the recommendation at agenda item 6.9 is carried), should be a well-timed undertaking.

Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan

The 'Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan',² endorsed in May 2019, has as its vision "To celebrate and enhance Elizabeth Street as the core retail precinct in the central city by creating a greener, safer, people friendly street."

It noted that Stage 1 (Flinders St to Flinders Lane) was underway for completion in 2020, that Stage 2 (Little Collins St to Little Bourke St) would be completed in 2020-21 subject to budget, and that Stage 3 (Lonsdale St to La Trobe St) would be completed after 2026, to align with the City West Water Sewerage Strategy.

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the aspirational timelines for Stages 1 and 2 being met, and Council has not budgeted for the completion of Stage 2 (or the further review of Stage 1), or any other works consistent with the Strategic Opportunities Plan, in the proposed 2022-23 budget or the forward estimates.

The motion seeks recommendations from management as to when (and if) the 'Elizabeth Street Strategic Opportunities Plan' should be completed, in stages. The motion seeks that these recommendations can be considered alongside the final Future Streets Framework, so as to be influenced by the most up to date policy, and in advance of the 2023-24 budget-setting process, to enable Council to make any funding decisions (if there is the financial capacity to do so).

Little Streets transformations

The 'Little Streets transformation' project³ was a COVID-19 fast-tracked project "designed to create vibrant, fun and inviting spaces for our residents and to encourage people to come back to the city and to our businesses." Council committed to installing the stencils, street furniture and planter boxes at low cost for an initial 12 month period, with a view to making them permanent if considered successful.

Councillors have received feedback from members of the public sharing opinions on what has and has not been successful. While the slower speed limits have contributed to safety improvements for all road users, there have been mixed reports on the extent to which the stencils, and the removal of pedestrian crossings to ensure consistency with regulatory requirements for shared zones, have facilitated low speeds and the prioritisation of pedestrian movement.

² <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/elizabethstreet/>

³ <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/little-streets/>

It is incumbent on Council to ensure that its design interventions are meeting safety objectives, and to make decisions about permanent interventions that are based on robust data and evidence. To that end, this motion seeks to time the formal review of the 'Little Streets transformations' with the 'Future Streets Framework' finalisation, and in doing so it ensures that enough time will have passed to enable Council to observe and analyse post-lockdown traffic behaviour on Little Streets.

Mover: Cr Rohan Leppert

Seconder: Lord Mayor Sally Capp