

## 7.2 OAKLEIGH TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE PUBLIC REALM DESIGN REVIEW COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY

(AS: File No ....)

Responsible Committee: Oakleigh Activity Centre Steering Committee

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

- 1 *Notes that feedback on the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018 has been sought from key stakeholders and the community as per Council's resolution on 28 August 2018.*
- 2 *Notes that the submissions received to the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018 were in the majority supportive of the proposal, particularly with regard to public realm appearance and public transport improvements.*
- 3 *Notes there is some concern regarding the availability of parking and challenges with traffic congestion, as well as appropriate development and community safety.*
- 4 *Continues to advocate for the upgrading of Oakleigh Transport Interchange Public Realm.*
- 5 *Notes that should funding be granted, the design development would progress in accordance with officer recommendations set out in this report.*
- 6 *Notes that a further consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders and the community as part of the technical design for the Oakleigh Transport Interchange Public Realm should funding be received and the project move to the next phase.*

### **PURPOSE**

To update Council on the key issues raised in the consultation on the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* and outline the next steps for the Oakleigh Transport Interchange Public Realm upgrade proposal.

### **BACKGROUND**

The *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* frames an integrated vision for the station precinct based upon four key moves:

1. **Extended Activity** – Drawing of pedestrian activity to both sides of the Station and extending Oakleigh's vibrant retail precinct to the southern side of the railway line.
2. **Station Forecourt** – Creation of high quality, attractive arrival experience and safer pedestrian environment that connects the station with the bus interchange and surrounding Oakleigh Village.
3. **Connected Pedestrian Network** – Extension of the streetscape character of the Village Centre towards the transport hub, while improving bus movements and removing barriers to walking and cycling.
4. **Consolidated Parking** – Facilitation of integrated, mixed-use developments on the substantial car park sites, while accommodating equivalent or increased commuter parking, will redress the sense of isolation and expansive asphalt areas around the transport hub and bring increased patronage for local shops and businesses, as well as increased activity on adjacent streets.

On 28 August 2018 Council endorsed the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* for public consultation and resolved:

That Council:

1. *Notes and adopts the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018, including the suggestions within the Urban Design Principles, Key Moves and Individual Site Proposals.*
2. *Notes that the Mayor will write to the Major State Political parties, including the local runners in the 2018 State election, advocating for a funding commitment and seeking a meeting to discuss the aspirations of the opportunities identified within the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018 and their associated benefits for the Oakleigh Activity Centre.*
3. *Directs officers to write to and where appropriate have discussions with key Government Departments and key land owners, such as Vic Track, Vic Roads, Vicinity and the Oakleigh Traders Association, and provide an opportunity for them to give feedback and comments on the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018.*
4. *Releases the report to the broader community for feedback including the opportunity for people to lend their support or otherwise via various means including:*
  - a. *Online;*
  - b. *Council bulletin;*
  - c. *e-newsletter;*
  - d. *Waverley/Oakleigh Monash Leader (Newspapers); and*
  - e. *handouts outside Oakleigh station in morning and evening peak periods.*
5. *Notes that the outcomes of the above consultation activities will be presented to Council at the appropriate time and provided to the major political parties as part of Council's advocacy on this issue.*
6. *Notes that if the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018 receives funding commitments in the future, it will be the subject of detailed design, traffic analysis etc. and extensive stakeholder and community consultation before any works commence.*

## **DISCUSSION**

Following the resolution from the August Council Meeting letters from the Mayor were sent to all Major State Political parties, including the local candidates in the 2018 State election, as well as key State Government Departments and land owners, such as Vic Track, Vic Roads, Vicinity and the Oakleigh Traders Association.

In addition, community feedback was sought via the following means:

- A *Have Your Say* survey, which ran on Council's website from September 10 until October 8:
  - <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Council/Have-Your-Say/Oakleigh-Public-Transport-Precinct-Proposal>
- An article in the September Council Bulletin, which was sent on September 12.
- An article in the September Council e-newsletter, which was sent on September 19.

- A Council *Listening Post*, held on Sunday September 16, from 8:30am to 1pm at the Oakleigh Market.
- Handouts (see example attached) at the Oakleigh Train Station, on:
  - Wednesday (19/09) morning, between 7am and 9am; and
  - Thursday (20/09) afternoon, between 3pm and 5pm.

Submissions were able to be lodged by phone and in writing, via email or through the online *Have Your Say* survey.

Council staff, along with Cr James and Cr Fergeus, promoted and informed members of the community about the online survey, by individually handing out approximately 1600 flyers, handed out at the at the Oakleigh Market and Oakleigh Train Station.

#### Have Your Say Survey

The survey provided a brief summary of the proposal, along with links to:

- Proposal: Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design (pdf, 68MB); and
- Report to Council Meeting 28 August 2018 (pdf, 177KB)

The feedback sought via the survey was a simple selection of “*Agree/Disagree*” with the proposal, followed by a free text field seeking detailed comments.

Community members were also directed to contact relevant staff to talk about any queries or issues.

#### Monash Oakleigh Leader

As a result of the community engagement and high degree of community interest in Council’s proposal, the project was featured on the front page of the Oakleigh Monash Leader, on September 25.

### **Summary of responses**

#### Response to Mayoral Letters

From the letters sent, Council has received formal responses from Mr Steve Dimopoulos MP, Member for Oakleigh, and Mr Andrew Edmonds, State Liberal Party Candidate for Oakleigh. However, at the time of writing, no meetings has been held, however, these are likely to ensue over the next few weeks.

In addition, the following organisations have sought meetings between their technical staff and key council officers, to discuss in more detail the ideas, suggested in the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018*:

- Transport for Victoria,
- VicRoads,
- VicTrack, and
- Public Transport Victoria.

*Oakleigh Traders Association*

Council officers have met with the Oakleigh Traders Association on September 26 and answered questions about the proposal. The Oakleigh Traders are supportive of the proposal and welcome the project to move into the next stage.

*Vicinity Centres (Oakleigh Central)*

GTA Consultants were commissioned by Vicinity Centres, who own Oakleigh Central, to undertake a review of the proposal and provide a submission to Council. The following points summarise the views presented in the GTA submission, on behalf of Vicinity:

- They welcome the opportunity to be involved in shaping the proposal as part of a working group.
- They support elements of the urban framework but believe many details remain unresolved, and the interchange plan is too preliminary to be supported at this stage.
- Vicinity strongly support an excellent customer experience for public transport users interchanging at Oakleigh station.
- They are concerned that elements of the urban framework may have a detrimental impact on the current and future accessibility of Oakleigh Central.

*Response to Have Your Say Survey*

Council received 176 responses to the survey.

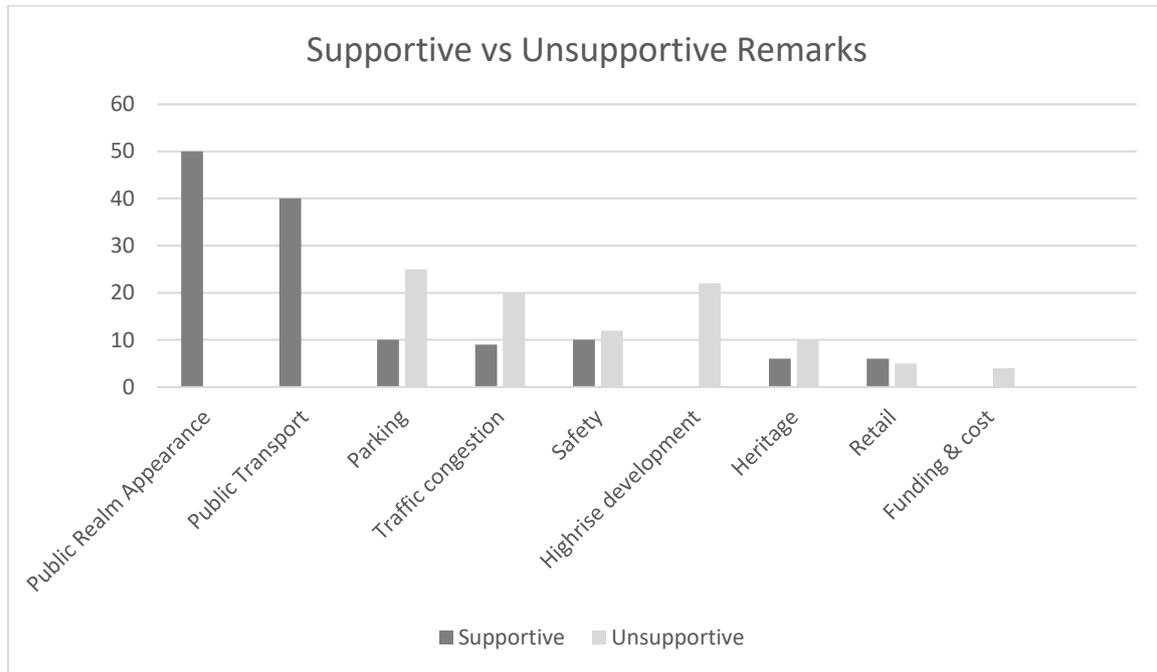
From the 176 responses received, 105 agreed with the proposal and 64 disagreed and 7 did not say.

Theme	Percentage of responses
Agreed	60%
Disagreed	36%
Did not say	4%

In addition 90 submitters also provided written commentary, which broadly fell into the following nine key themes, with remarks on these key themes being made both in support and not in support:

Theme	Percentage of comments
1. Public realm appearance	22%
2. Public transport	17%
3. Parking	15%
4. Traffic congestion	13%
5. Safety	9%
6. High rise development	9%
7. Heritage	7%
8. Retail	4%
9. Funding & cost	3%

These remarks within the comments on the key themes have been broadly grouped and graphically represented in the table below:



More detail on the key themes and officers’ response to these themes are found below.

Other Responses

Council also received several phone calls seeking further information, as well as several detailed written submission from the general public.

**Key theme #1: Public realm appearance**

*“It’s a great idea as it’s such a dirty depressing area around that station - good luck 😊”*  
 Survey Respondent

*“Love it. Build it now!”*  
 Survey Respondent

The responses were overwhelmingly in support of the need for work to be carried out to increase the appearance and station forecourt area. Whilst there are diverging views on how best to achieve this, the proposal has a very high degree of support from the community on this aspect.

Response

As custodian of the public realm and streets within Oakleigh, Council can facilitate an upgrade in the amenity and appearance of the areas immediately adjacent to the station in support of long-term public transport aspirations and character of Oakleigh Village. This is contingent on funding being provided by Government to realise this improvement.

**Key theme #2: Public transport**

*"It would be an awesome experience for the commuters who use public transport!!!!"*

Survey Respondent

*"It downgrades the rail connection and corridor and precludes the needed four line expansion"*

Survey Respondent

Generally the responses were in support of the proposal and acknowledged both the importance and increased patronage of public transport in this area. Some respondents were concerned by the removal of the southern, 3<sup>rd</sup> train line, however, as this is outside the scope of Council's proposal and is a matter for the State government rail authorities and agencies, it is not addressed in detail here.

**Response**

Relevant Government agencies would need to be involved to provide the relevant detail and direction on these matters. This would occur if any Government funding was announced and relevant agencies can provide the necessary detail and responses.

**Key theme #3: Parking**

*"It should be a minimal expectation that there would be no net loss of commuter car spaces at Oakleigh."*

Survey Respondent

*"This is a great and much-needed initiative to keep Oakleigh a thriving town centre. I am particularly keen on pedestrianisation and minimising cars and parking as much as possible."*

Survey Respondent

*"With a vision for the area only continuing to build in density of living, available (free) commuter parking should be increased (not just maintained). To just maintain available space would be short-sighted."*

Survey Respondent

*"Oakleigh is ALREADY difficult enough to find a car space and this proposal will make it WORSE. These people that developed the proposal obviously DO NOT live in the area!!!! It is already unable to cope with the demand/number of visitors in relation to parking spots available. There is not enough parking."*

Survey Respondent

Unsurprisingly the number of comments relating to car parking was high. The majority of these comments were fearful of a loss of parking, although there were also some sub-themes relating to where the parking needed to be located and the conflict between shopper, resident and commuter parking.

**Response**

Council will need to work with partner organisations, especially VicTrack and Vicinity to understand the current and projected parking needs of the area. Like many activity centres

experiencing growth, the ability from both a capacity and affordability point of view to maintain increased parking numbers in line with expansion, is extremely challenging. As such Council will need to take a considered position on this matter. Until recently, Council was collecting contributions from traders and providing car parking in the Centre, but this ceased with the Minister not adopting Council's proposal to continue to collect contributions and provide parking as it had done in the past.

#### **Key theme #4: Traffic congestion**

*"You need to remove the busses from the traffic as it just can't work like this."*

Survey Respondent

*"To place the entrance [to Zone 5] in Mill St will have an immense impact on Warrigal Rd, causing further congestion on Warrigal Rd. A preferred entry would be via Haughton or Johnson Sts and this would impact less on Warrigal Rd southbound turn into Mill St."*

Survey Respondent

*"I agree with the change but not the plan."*

Survey Respondent

*"the current Oakleigh station area is a \*\*\*\* hole of a place. very congested with the roundabout and buses and cars. shop keepers parking in the station carpark thus taking away parking places for transport commuters"*

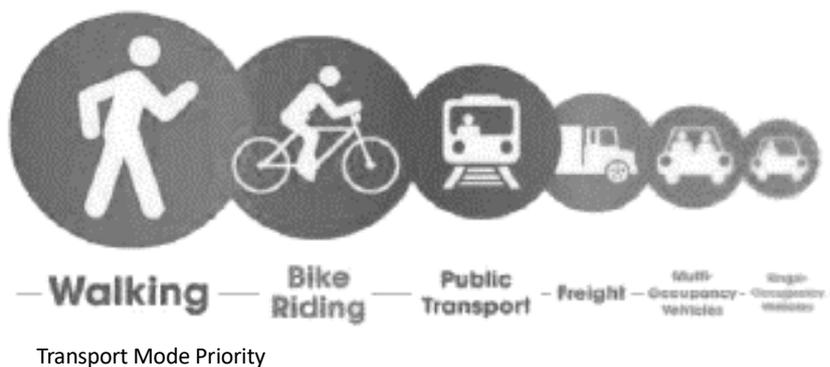
Survey Respondent

Like parking, the fear of increased traffic congestion also featured highly in respondent's commentary. Several responses raised concerns about traffic implications and the close proximity of the two schools and the church and others questioned the interface between buses, pedestrians and general traffic. Whilst some remarks considered the current situation satisfactory, the majority considered the existing situation unacceptable from a congestion point of view.

#### **Response**

The more detailed comments and suggestion will be considered as part of the further technical analysis, should the project proceed to that stage. This technical work will include traffic analysis and scenario modelling to test the degrees of congestion. It will be imperative that bus transit times are maintain or improved, as well as increasing the ease of pedestrian movement.

Again like parking, it is increasingly difficult for Councils to provide public roads that perform at optimal capacity, for all user groups, at all times. Council will again need to take a position on the user priority of the roadways round the station, noting that this may change at different times of the day. The following diagram, which was included in the report by GTA consultants on behalf of Vicinity Centres, is a widely accepted transport mode priority.



### Key theme #5: Safety

*“I reservedly agree with this proposal. The basic principle and benefits, particularly for pedestrian safety, are obvious.”*

Survey Respondent

*“Safety of the [school] children is paramount. With the number of girls coming from Sacred Heart Girls College and children from Sacred Heart Primary, there has been no consideration given to allowing them to cross safely near the corner of Johnson St and Mill Rd, and Mill and Haughton Rds”*

Survey Respondent

The comments relating to safety were primarily related to pedestrian safety and were evenly split between supportive and unsupportive depending on whether the respondent felt the proposal would increase or decrease pedestrian safety.

#### Response

Council has a commitment to safety and is in the process of making a number of pedestrian safety upgrades in Oakleigh, following community feedback in late 2017. This includes a raised intersection at the Haughton Road/Johnson Street intersection, which combines a speed table, kerb buildout and relocates the Johnson Street pedestrian crossing to the western side of the raised intersection. Continuing these safety improvement will continue to be addressed by relevant experts, during the design development with a focus on each of the specific situations / locations raised as concerns by the community. In some instances, the community has shown to have diverging views, which can be explained by the subjective nature of perceived safety and will require more thorough consultation and engagement with those concerned.

### Key theme #6: Highrise development

*“The station precinct needs an overhaul, however selling off public land (the car parks) to developers is unacceptable.”*

Survey Respondent

*“Creating high rise buildings and reducing open spaces does not contribute to a village feel.”*

Survey Respondent

*“We feel that the Council’s promise to make a more livable “village” for us is laughable, if the very things that make Oakleigh ....Oakleigh are overwhelmed and dwarfed by an*

*8 level building built .... faced with the prospect of an 8 story building being built in front of our home and we feel our right to the natural light will to be compromised by this building."*

Email submission

Approximately 9% of the comments related to this theme and all were unsupportive of development that was perceived to be at odds with Oakleigh.

#### Response

Much of these comments are out of scope of the proposal, as much of this work was addressed in the development of the Oakleigh Structure Plan, which was undertaken in 2012 and included consultation with the local community and traders. This was followed by a planning scheme amendment that was approved in May 2013.

All building masses shown within the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* are based upon the building envelopes identified in the 2012 Oakleigh Structure Plan.

In addition the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* presented does not form a view with regard to the specifics of any commercial or residential development.

The site which generated the most interest was the existing Johnston Street car park site, which is referred to as a Sub-precinct 3A in the 2012 Oakleigh Structure Plan. This site is considered by the plan to be a strategic redevelopment opportunity for commercial uses, with a height of up to 8 storeys.

Notwithstanding, this parcel of land identified as Zone C / Site 5, in the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018*, currently owned by VicTrack, would require an approved planning permit before any redevelopment of the carpark could be undertaken. Through the planning permit application process, applicants, including VicTrack, are required to provide detailed consideration, regarding suitable locations for road access, appropriateness of the height and architectural presentation, overshadowing and other amenity considerations, which would be subject to consultation.

#### **Key theme #7: Heritage**

*"Great proposal. As long as historical buildings are left alone"*

Survey Respondent

*"Oakleigh is already losing its 'village feel' as more hideously ugly eyesores of apartment buildings, with ZERO reflection of the Heritage Character of Oakleigh"*

Survey Respondent

*"Council will need to create very strict design guidelines for any new developments."*

Survey Respondent

Much of the commentary regarding heritage that was un-supportive of the proposal was in-line with the comments related to high-rise development. Where there was support for the proposal

regarding heritage, it was related to retaining and enhancing specific heritage buildings, such as the station building.

### Response

Like the high-rise theme much of the development of apartments and other buildings are governed by the structure plan and the planning scheme and will be subject to the planning approval process. As such these comments are important for Council to be aware of but out of scope with regard to this particular initiative.

Where Heritage buildings are in Council or Government ownership the proposals in each case are looking to enhance and restore the heritage value of these structures. Much of this is being led by the Level Crossing Removal Authority, with their work on the station upgrade.

### **Key theme #8: Retail**

*“with your upgrade, you are also contributing to the privatisation and 'Chadstonification' of Oakleigh.”*

Survey Respondent

*“There is NO need for further retail development at the station”*

Survey Respondent

*“I hope that this redevelopment can create an area that brings Oakleigh in line with similar vibrant areas and draws people to both sides of the station. Thank you.”*

Survey Respondent

### Response

Should the project progress, careful consideration will need to be given to the leasing and procurement aspects of any commercial or retail outlet within the public realm. Most successful public realm developments that contain commercial areas, have a curated tenancy mix for at least the first few years. This helps establish the desired culture of the precinct.

### **Key theme #9: Funding and Cost**

*“Will the monash be selling the carparks to their “preferred developers” for peanuts again like they tried to in 2014 with the Hanover st Carpark?”*

Survey Respondent

*“This isn’t progress, it’s just money going into peoples pockets*

Survey Respondent

Although very few comments related to this theme, there were enough to rate a mention, and all related to the belief that Council is somehow going to benefit greatly financially from this proposal or would be making preferential ‘deals’ to developers.

### Response

As there is no financial benefit to Council in what is proposed any future community engagement will deal and clarify this with data, infographics, on the costs of developments such as providing

car parking per car space and the redevelopment of public open space, might be useful to better inform the discussion.

### **Next steps**

The Mayor and Members of the Oakleigh Steering Committee will continue to meet with key stakeholders to advocate for funding in order to see the proposal move to the next stage.

Further, council staff will continue to engage with State Government Departments and Agencies, to assist work being delivered as part of the planned LXRA Station Upgrade works, will be carried out in alignment with the key aspects of the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018*.

Should the Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange receive funding commitments in the future, Council will be at the forefront of bringing together a technical working group to undertake a detailed design process, including traffic analysis and further stakeholder and community engagement.

### **CONSULTATION**

This report sets out the results of consultation that was undertaken for the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018*, during September and October of 2018.

There will be further opportunities for extensive community consultation, before any works commence, should Council receive funding commitments for the proposal and the project progresses to the next stage of design.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional financial implications since the report to Council in August 2018.

### **CONCLUSION**

Community consultation on the *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* was undertaken in September and October 2018. A total of 176 responses received on the online survey, of which 60% were in support, along with several technical submission from various stakeholders.

Officers are will be using the responses to assist in ongoing design development work and consultation with key stakeholders, including politicians, major land owners and state government agencies.

The *Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design Review 2018* in conjunction with the community feedback will also guide Council in its approach to advocating for public realm improvements at the Oakleigh transport hub.

Whilst there is a clear majority support for the proposal, Council needs to continue to act as both a facilitator and advocate, and to provide ongoing, in-depth engagement to ensure that the community remain informed and involved.

Oakleigh is undergoing an urban transition, underpinned by increased population growth, land value increases and infrastructure provision. It is incumbent upon Council, as custodian of the public realm, to ensure that as Oakleigh changes, the area not only remains a vibrant, safe, enjoyable and prosperous centre but also makes the most of the opportunities that regeneration brings.