

6.3 FOOTPATH ENHANCEMENTS FOR OUTDOOR DINING IN OAKLEIGH

Submitting Councillors: Stuart James, Josh Fergeus & Theo Zographos

MOTION

That Council:

1. *Notes that the enhancements to outdoor dining opportunities afforded to traders in response to the pandemic, and the restrictions associated with it, have been embraced by traders and their patrons.*
2. *Notes that the temporary outdoor dining opportunities occurring on roadways had never before been contemplated but have now caused a rethink on how such spaces may be utilised for outdoor dining.*
3. *Notes that there is potential for some areas of road currently being used to temporarily accommodate outdoor dining, to be made permanent outdoor dining areas by extending footpaths.*
4. *Notes that a separate motion will be put to Council to consider either timed or permanent closure of Chester Street around Eaton Mall which needs to be fully investigated prior to looking at outdoor dining extensions in that street.*
5. *Notes that in its draft 2021/2022 budget, Council has allocated funds for traffic studies around the Oakleigh Station Precinct as a follow-up to its 2018 Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design and that it is appropriate to carry out this work prior to looking at outdoor dining extensions in Portman Street to the west of Eaton Mall.*
6. *Directs officers to undertake preliminary design works that maximise the width of the footpath to facilitate outdoor dining in the areas identified in the plan attached to this report.*
7. *Directs officers to provide the costs required to deliver the widened footpaths identified and referred to in point 6 above.*
8. *Directs officers to provide a report to Council prior to 31 October 2021 so that the proposed works can be referred to the 2022/23 budget process should Council decide to do so.*
9. *Allocates \$60k required for the implementation of points 7 & 8 of this recommendation.*

BACKGROUND

With the onset of the Covid19 pandemic, hospitality businesses were hit hard with restrictions that at times meant some businesses were unable to operate or at the very least, trade was limited to those who could provide takeaway service.

As restrictions eased, the State Government actively encouraged Councils to make footpaths, roadways and other areas available to hospitality business who would be allowed to resume trade but with limitations on the number of patrons that could be accommodated both indoors and outdoors.

For Monash this mostly resulted in traders being able to extend service on footpaths next to adjacent businesses whilst for some others, parts of the road usually set aside for car parking have been re-purposed to accommodate outdoor dining.

DISCUSSION

This report proposes that areas of roadway currently set aside for outdoor dining, and other potential sites within the Oakleigh Activity Centre, be redesigned and configured so that they be made permanent by extending the footpaths in this area.

This proposal eliminates the issues associated with the temporary occupancy of the roadway and formalises the arrangements currently in place but in a manner that can better account for urban design, infrastructure and safety considerations.

This report seeks preliminary work to be undertaken to explore sections of road where there may be an opportunity to extend the footpath in the areas identified in the plan found at Attachment A. Preliminary design work and costings are requested so that the matter can be further considered at a future Council meeting with the view to referring a proposal to the 2022/23 budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The preliminary design work is estimated to cost \$60k (\$50k engineering design and \$10k urban design) and will require investigation of pedestrian access, all traffic modes using the street, drainage and underground services. Furthermore, detailed designs will be required to ensure all road users can be safely and conveniently accommodated.

Design work can commence in July 2021, pending confirmation of \$60,000 currently not present in the draft 21/22 budget.

CONCLUSION

With the onset of the pandemic, hospitality trade has moved outdoors to maximise trading opportunities.

Currently some traders are operating food service on sections of road that have traditionally been set aside for parking.

These innovations have proved very popular with patrons and there now exists an opportunity to re-think on how such spaces may be utilised for outdoor dining in the future.

It is proposed to explore how some footpath areas in Oakleigh might be extended to make outdoor dining in these areas a permanent feature of the area.

ATTACHMENT A:

Note: the areas depicted in green represent areas where outdoor trading is currently occurring or has at least been considered for outdoor dining under the current enhanced outdoor dining regime.

Areas depicted in red are in Chester Street where a motion will be put to Council to consider either timed or permanent closure of Chester Street around Eaton Mall which needs to be fully investigated prior to looking at outdoor dining extensions in that street.

Areas depicted in yellow are in the west end of Portman Street. In its draft 2021/2022 budget, Council has allocated funds for traffic studies around the Oakleigh Station Precinct as a follow-up to its 2018 Oakleigh Activity Centre Transport Interchange Design and it is appropriate to carry out this work prior to looking at outdoor dining extensions.

