

1.5 FOOTPATH ENHANCEMENTS FOR OUTDOOR DINING IN PORTMAN STREET, OAKLEIGH

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes that the further planning and design work has been completed for the two design options (brick infill or granite pavement) to maximise the width of pavements to facilitate outdoor dining in Portman Street between Eaton Mall and Station Street (**Project**).*
2. *Notes that updated cost estimates for the construction of the Project has resulted in a much smaller gap between the two design which were initially around a \$900k but are now closer to a \$500k difference, owing to increased drainage works that must be undertaken with the brick paving option. The estimated cost of the granite option has not altered significantly.*
3. *Endorses that the granite option (Option 2) is the preferred option to proceed to community consultation as it:*
 - a. *Is the superior outcome compared to Option 1 as it offers the best long-term treatment for the public realm; and*
 - b. *Delivers a high-quality material outcome like that in Eaton Mall and Atherton Rd and is consistent with what is envisaged for the Oakleigh Activity Centre as a whole.*
 - c. *Means that the outcome is of the highest modern standard and consideration of further improvements (and cost) in years to come to make it consistent with Eaton Mall would not have to be considered by Council.*
4. *Notes that the schematic design proposes a flush pavement outcome featuring spoon drains rather than raised kerbs and channel for enhanced pedestrian accessibility, subject to the final recommendations of the flood modelling study currently underway.*
5. *Directs officers to proceed with community consultation on Option 2 with the granite pavement material, with the outcome of the consultation to be reported to Council along with the proposed way forward on the proposal.*

INTRODUCTION

This report discusses the outcome of the further planning and design work recently completed for the two design options for footpath widening in Portman Street between Eaton Mall and Station Street, Oakleigh to improve outdoor dining (**Project**).

This further work was completed to better inform Council's decision making on the preferred option for the Project and to commence community consultation.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 26 October 2021, Council considered two concept design options for footpath widening in selected areas of the Oakleigh Activity Centre being:

- Option 1 – Low cost – The minimum works required to deliver increased footpath width for outdoor dining in brick or asphalt infill material; and
- Option 2 – High cost – The ultimate design for footpath widening in granite material.

Council resolved as follows:

“That Council:

- 1. Notes the report and its findings regarding options to maximise the width of footpaths to facilitate permanent outdoor dining in the areas identified in the attached plan (Attachment 1, Appendix A).*
- 2. Notes and agrees that Option 1 with brick infill kerb outstands offers a mid-range cost outcome that fits with the existing character of Chester and Portman Streets and is the most suitable option in the current circumstances.*
- 3. Notes that implementing wider footpaths to facilitate permanent outdoor dining areas results in the permanent loss of approximately 55 kerbside car parking spaces.*
- 4. Notes that officers recommend that if Council were to proceed with these works that it is preferable to commence with one location in the first instance where the outcomes can be fully realised before considering other locations. That the most opportune location to undertake these works initially are at Portman street west between Eaton Mall and Station Street. Other locations can be considered in future years as part of Council's annual budget process.*
- 5. Refers consideration of option 1 with brick infill kerb outstands focussed on the west section of Portman Street to the 22/23 budget process, inclusive of the need to undertake detailed design work and consultation which will explore the opportunity to maintain some loading bay presence in this location or propose alternative locations should they be necessary understanding that there may be a loss of additional car spaces to accommodate this.*
- 6. Notes that the recommended option if implemented in the western section of Portman Street would remove 14 car spaces and 4 loading zones (where an additional 6 vehicles can park when the loading zones are not in operation).*

7. *Notes that whilst it may be appropriate to implement option 1 in certain locations across the Activity Centre, it does rely on other locations remaining unchanged so as to provide for parking and loading and unloading. Further notes that should Council wish to increase these types of enhancements across the Activity Centre that detailed design plans for entire streets and the Activity Centre would need to be prepared.*
8. *Directs officers to utilise the remaining funds of \$55,000 from the 2021/22 budget and allocate a further \$20,000 (total \$75,000) from the 2021/22 budget to commence and proceed with further planning and detailed design work focussed on the west section of Portman Street so that full costs of the works can be considered in the 22/23 budget process. "*

In responding to point 8 of the above Council resolution, officers have completed the further planning and design work (focusing on the west section of Portman Street between Eaton Mall and Station Street). Both design options have now progressed to preliminary schematic design.

Site investigations were also completed as part of this further work to better understand the cost differences between the two options.

DISCUSSION

The Further Design Work

As per the concept plans originally prepared and presented to Council at the October 2021 meeting, the two options that were further considered for the Project were:

- Option 1 – Brick infill
- Option 2 – Granite pavement

The concept plans that were presented to Council at the October 2021 Council meeting have now progressed into the two schematic design options included in Attachment 1 of this report.

Both options achieve the same outcome in terms of:

- Narrowed road width
- Widened footpath and outdoor dining areas
- New street trees with water sensitive design infrastructure
- New street furniture; and
- Permanent loss of 14 kerbside car parking spaces and 4 loading zones (where an additional 6 vehicles can park when the loading zones are not in operation).

The further work considered two scenarios for each option:

1. Raised kerb and channel; and
2. Flush pavement with spoon drain.

Flush pavements are desirable for ease of pedestrian access if overland stormwater flows can be effectively managed with spoon drains.

Site investigations were also completed as part of the further work and included:

- Feature and level survey (completed)
- Drainage investigation (completed)
- Flood modelling (in progress)

The Schematic Design Options

Option 1 - Brick Infill

This option retains the existing brick footpath and extends the footpath from both sides to leave a 3-metre road width. The new materials are placed into the additional areas and kerbs are reconstructed.

The brick infill material matches the existing brick paving in Chester and Portman Streets. As the design proposals do not deliver the long-term vision for the public realm there may be aborted works in the future to achieve the ultimate streetscape design.

Option 2 – Granite Pavement

The footpath in the granite pavement design is fully reconstructed from the building line to the proposed new kerb alignment, leaving the same 3-metre road width as per Option 1.

The granite option will deliver a high-quality material outcome like that in Eaton Mall and Atherton Rd, consistent with what is envisaged for the Oakleigh Activity Centre as a whole.

Comparison of Cost

The cost estimates for the latest two schematic design options has resulted in a much smaller cost gap (approximately \$500k) when compared to the two options presented to Council in October 2021 where the cost difference was approximately \$900k. This cost difference can largely be attributed to an increase in the scope of works for the brick infill option arising from the drainage investigation.

The brick infill design option originally took a minimalist approach (short-medium term) and did not include drainage works. However, a subsequent drainage audit conducted as part of the further work, identified the poor condition of the existing drainage pipes and the requirement for an upgrade.

The original granite option presented in 2021 had already included drainage replacement works as it was scoped as the ultimate long-term design for footpath widening.

Related Oakleigh Activity Centre Projects

Council is currently undertaking the Portman Station Streets and Haughton Road Public Realm Feasibility Studies which are focused on public realm improvements to the Oakleigh Station transport interchange precinct (Station Precinct Projects).

The study areas for the Station Precinct Projects are located immediately west of the study area for this outdoor dining Project.

Key outcomes of the Station Precinct Projects are:

- the delivery of new granite paved forecourts north and south of Oakleigh Station;
- widened pavements; and
- enhanced greening and amenity including new tree plantings, street furniture and lighting.

The Station Precinct Projects together with other streetscape upgrades completed over the last 10 years, including at Eaton Mall and Atherton Road, aim to alleviate traffic congestion and transform Oakleigh Village into a thriving pedestrian focused destination with a high-quality public realm.

This Project to improve outdoor dining in Portman Street is a key link between the proposed station forecourt upgrade to be delivered in granite and Eaton Mall which also features a granite pavement.

It is important to deliver an integrated outcome and consistent look and feel for the two adjacent Station Precinct Projects, particularly given their significance to the pedestrian arrival experience at Oakleigh Station and link to the popular dining destination of Eaton Mall.

Flood Modelling Investigation

A flood modelling study is currently in progress to inform the schematic design for the Project. This analysis will also be used to inform the design work underway for the Station Precinct Projects.

The schematic design for the Project proposes removal of the kerb and channel along Portman Street between Eaton Mall and Station Street and reinstatement with spoon drains to deliver fully flush pavements. Flush pavements are preferred in pedestrian focused environments as they support walkability and encourage outdoor dining activation.

The preliminary flood impact assessment indicates that a spoon drain treatment is viable for the Project if sufficient underground drainage is provided. As such, it is recommended to proceed with the flush pavement design, subject to the findings of the final flood modelling report.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy issues arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no social implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no apparent human rights implications under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

As this Project is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community, a gender impact assessment will be undertaken.

CONSULTATION

Council officers conducted an initial consultation with local traders in April 2022 via distribution of a flyer and one on one conversations to inform traders that Council was preparing a preliminary schematic design for the Project and undertaking a feature and level survey to support its development.

If this report is endorsed, work will get underway on direct consultation and conversations with traders within the design footprint of the project. This will use the 'Inform' methodology outlined in Council's Community Engagement Framework, and also offer traders the opportunity to directly discuss concerns about the design and matters like street furniture and tree placement with officers.

Traders will have the opportunity to provide feedback about the project. However, importantly, this consultation will focus on how the project would be delivered if this report is endorsed and budget allocated in the 2023/24 Council budget cycle.

A summary of this will be delivered is outlined below.

Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder	Expected Level of Interest	Method of consultation
Local traders	Oakleigh Traders Association Oakleigh Market Vicinity – Oakleigh Central	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to traders 1:1 consultation with individual traders within the design footprint Trader consultation session at Oakleigh Chambers Social media Shape Monash page
External organisations	Taxi companies PTV (buses) Victoria Police	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter
Local MP	Steve Dimopoulos	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter
Federal MP	Clare O'Neil	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter
Council advisory committees	Various	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update by Council officers at advisory

			committee meetings
General public	Oakleigh Leadership Community Group	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape Monash page •

Traders will be invited to discuss their specific concerns regarding how the design proposals affect their business at a trader consultation session in the Oakleigh Council chambers in early May 2023. Council will also directly contact traders via letter and a visit to premises before this session in April 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Construction costs to be considered as part of the 23/24 budget process.

A balance of \$35,000 remains from the \$75,000 budget allocation to progress the detailed design work.

CONCLUSION

This report discusses the revised costing information obtained during the further planning and design work for the Project that has led to a review of Council's previous resolution that recommended Option 1 (brick infill material).

In October 2021 Option 1 was noted as offering a mid-range cost option that matches the existing character of Portman and Chester Streets. This was acknowledged as a short to mid-term solution that may need to be replaced in the future. Option 2 (granite) was noted as representing the best design to deliver the long-term vision but was the highest cost option.

Following the outcome of the further planning and design work (including site investigations), the revised cost estimates have identified that a much narrower gap now exists between the two cost options.

It is also noted that this Project is a key link between the proposed station forecourt upgrade to be delivered in granite and the vibrant dining destination of Eaton Mall which again, features a granite pavement. Given this, delivering a consistent material treatment throughout the public realm is desirable.

In light of the revised cost comparison, it recommended to proceed to community consultation with the granite option. This will deliver a superior, integrated and high-quality material treatment between Oakleigh Station and Eaton Mall.

