

Brunswick Street Trial



Image credit: TO Transportation on Twitter



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra

www.streets-alive-yarra.org

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Foreword

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a [vision](#) for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving [neighbourhoods](#). We see our streets being used by people from [8 to 80 years old](#), irrespective of whether they choose to walk, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers are able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and can easily find a park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,200 likes on Facebook, increasing by 10-20 per week. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at www.streets-alive-yarra.org.

Overview

Streets Alive Yarra applauds the Council Resolution from 3rd December 2019 to authorise Council Officers to:

Initiate further discussion with the DoT on future improvements on the allocation of road space on Brunswick Street, including clarification on the timelines for accessible tram stops in Brunswick Street, noting the representations for these in 2006, 2012 and 2016, the potential to install temporary trial treatments in Brunswick Street and DoT's potential support for these.

This document suggests how a trial could be designed and conducted.

Context

The City of Yarra has developed a Streetscape Masterplan for Brunswick Street, examining how best to use the available footpath space. The next step is to consider how best to use the available street space.

In parallel, VicRoads has led a multi-year project examining how best to use the footpath and street space on Sydney Road in Brunswick, including the completion of a Safe System analysis of various possible street layouts, and surveying the community to obtain feedback on the possible layouts. The process led to the City of Moreland approving a trial of a new street design that included level access tram stops and separated bicycle lanes. The trial was delayed by the State Government, stating that it would not proceed until at least after the Level Crossing Removal Authority had completed their work on the Upfield line.

This presents an opportunity for the City of Yarra to propose a trial of level access tram stops and separated bicycle lanes on Brunswick Street, and to seek funding for the trial from the State Government.

The case for a trial

Taxpayers have already invested significant time and money (via the VicRoads Sydney Road Improvement Project) to examine how a tram-based shopping street can:

- Support level access tram stops
- Support separated bicycle lanes
- Better align with Safe System
- Improve the 'Place' rating
- Improve the 'Movement' rating
- Improve the 'Environmental' rating

Work to date has included the development of multiple possible street layouts, detailed discussions with local residents and traders, a Safe System analysis, a Movement & Place analysis, and a public survey. This investment should not be wasted - the knowledge gained should be used to support a trial somewhere in Melbourne.

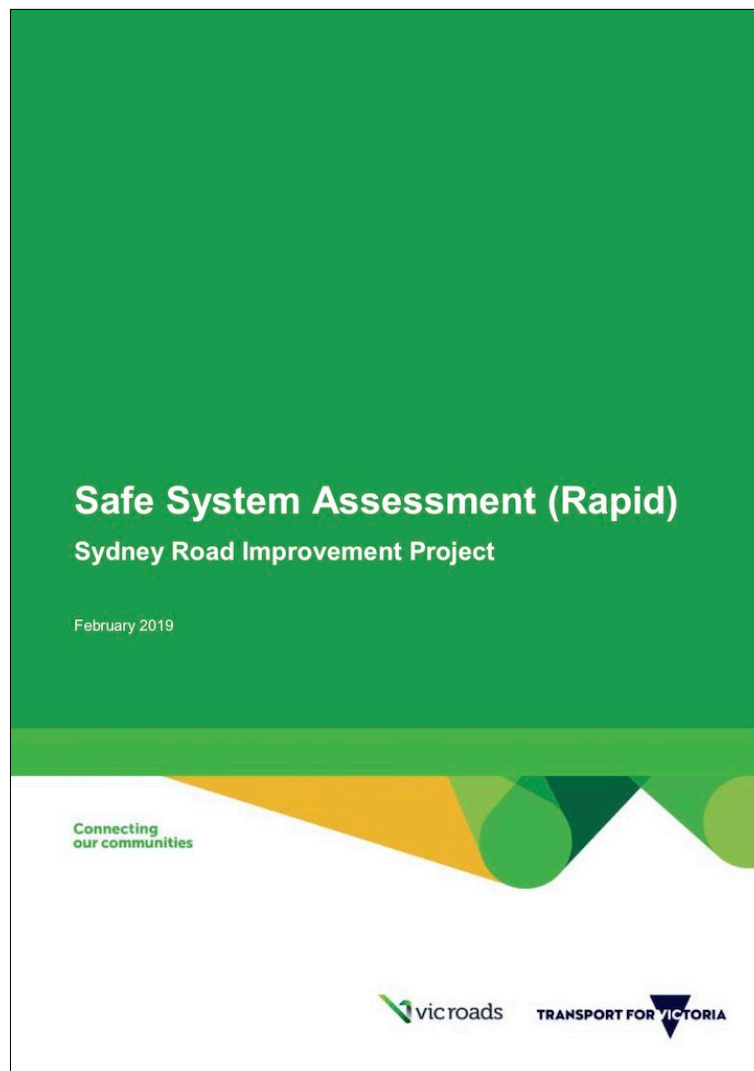


Image credit: VicRoads

In addition, ratepayers have invested significant time and money (via Council processes to develop the Council Plan and multiple Council strategies) to examine how best to use public land:

- Objective 6 of the Council Plan commits Council to creating a city to support a fulfilling life without the need for a car, and encouraging the use of public transport, walking or cycling as the first choice of transport,
- Council Safe Travel Strategy and Bicycle Strategy commits Council to supporting infrastructure for safer walking and cycling,
- Council has declared a climate emergency, and the draft Climate Emergency Plan clearly supports investments in infrastructure to support sustainable transport.

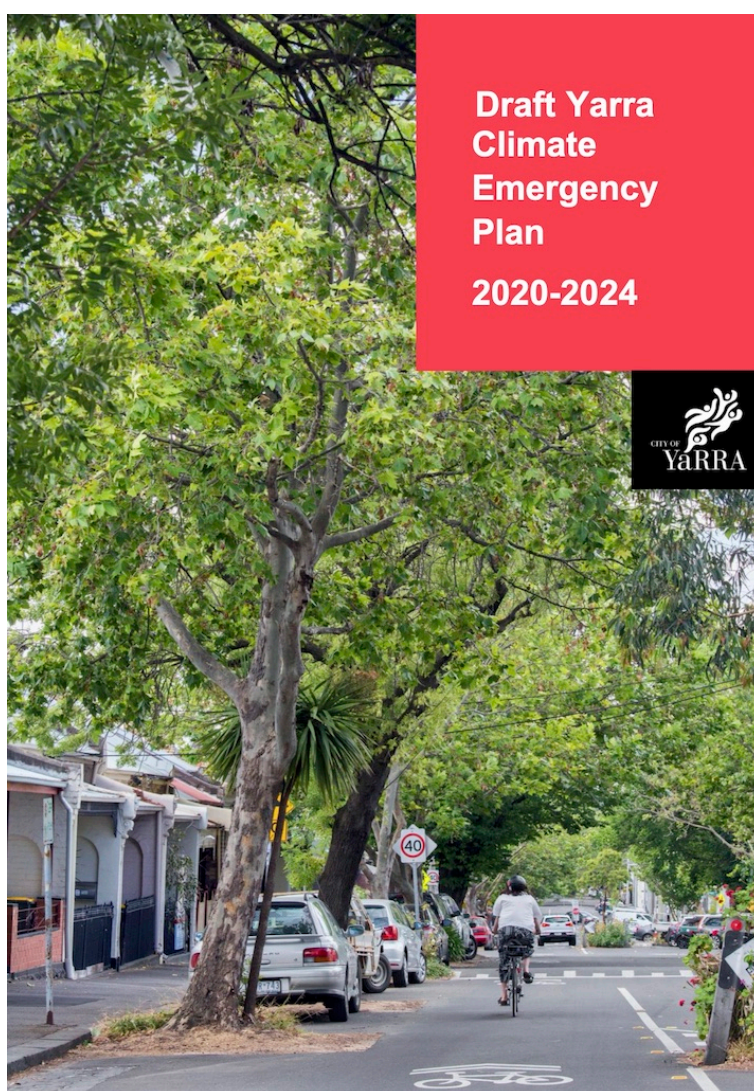


Image credit: City of Yarra

The case for Brunswick Street

Brunswick Street is the ideal location for a trial of a new street layout for a tram-based shopping street, because:

- It's not a 'Preferred Traffic Route' in the VicRoads/DoT hierarchy of roads, so there is significantly lower risk of any detrimental impact upon the broader road network, compared with Sydney Road.
- It's not a VicRoads declared arterial, so it is possible for the trial to be conducted by a Local Government Council (instead of the State Government) which means the administrative overhead would be lower.
- It has a similar overall width to other tram-based shopping streets in Melbourne and therefore can act as a representative location for a trial design that can be later rolled out across greater Melbourne.
- It has a significant length, so the impact on overall traffic flows can be quantified.
- It is designated by VicRoads as forming part of the 'Principal Bicycle Network', so deserves protected bicycle lanes.
- It is designated by the Inner Melbourne Action Plan (IMAP) as a 'high priority bicycle route', so deserves protected bicycle lanes.
- It is designated by the Yarra Bike Strategy as 'Priority A' and 'Priority B', so deserves protected bicycle lanes.
- It is a thriving commercial precinct, so there is little risk that traders will be negatively impacted, and indeed will most likely be positively impacted.
- The City of Yarra community engagement process for the Streetscape Masterplan showed that there was broad community support for the relocation of shopper parking and the use of the space for wider footpaths, protected bicycle lanes, level access tram stops and trees.
- The City of Yarra has adopted an 'iterative approach' for trialling new street designs, which will be demonstrated on Elizabeth Street - so is an ideal Council to host a trial for a tram based shopping street.

Guidance from other organisations

A multitude of [design guides](#) recommend improving shopping streets by prioritising wider footpaths, trees and bicycle lanes.



Benefits for the State Government

Conducting a trial on Brunswick Street instead on on Sydney Road offers the State Government several benefits, including:

- Enabling the State Government to demonstrate their support for:
 - Pilots and trials
 - 20-minute neighbourhoods
 - DDA compliant level access tram stops
 - People who prefer to cycle or use trams
 - Traders, via an associated promotional campaign to 'Visit Brunswick Street'
- Avoiding competition for the 'political win' between the one political party (the State Government) and a different political party (the local member of the Legislative Assembly district that includes Sydney Road)

Suggested methodology

The trial should be designed to address the concerns of traders, including:

Concern	Response
The trial isn't genuine, they will just make it permanent at the end of the trial.	Commit to a fixed duration (e.g. 6 or 12 months) followed by returning the street to its original condition for an equal duration. In addition, construct the trial using low cost and temporary materials.
The trial will cost me customers and revenue.	Commit to include extensive promotion of the street for the duration of the trial, attracting customers. Engage an expert financial consultant to measure revenue & profit for traders before, during and after the trial. Include platforms to widen footpaths, enabling more footpath dining that attracts customers. Include greenery (in planter boxes on wider footpaths) that attracts customers.
Customers (or traders) will have nowhere to park.	The first 5-10 bays on each side street will be reallocated to parking for shoppers, using the same time restrictions as existed for the previous on-street parking bays.
Delivery trucks will have nowhere to park.	The first bay on each side street will be designated as a 15 minute loading zone.
It's too difficult to transport deliveries around the corner.	Deliveries are typically loaded onto a trolley, it's not that much extra time or effort to wheel a trolley around the corner. This process already occurs for any shop in an indoor shopping centre, so can also occur on a shopping street.

Suggested design elements

The trial should leverage learnings from other cities, such as Toronto.

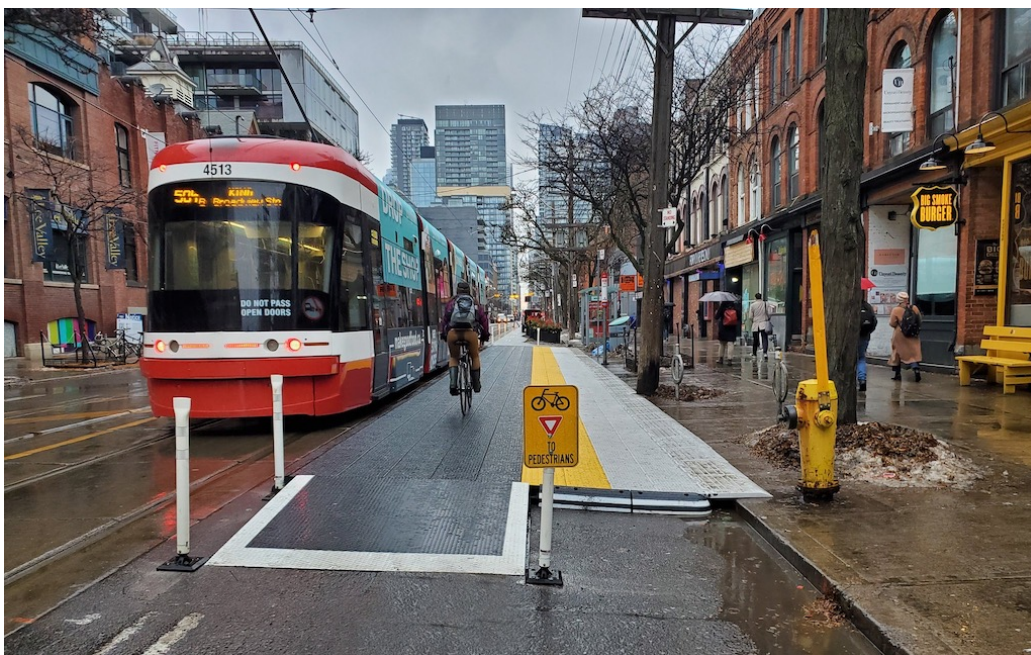
Issue	Response
No impact on trams.	No change to tram stop locations. No change to tram timetables.
Re-locatable, re-usable level access tram stops.	The cost for materials is not wasted, the level access tram stops can be moved to other streets for other trials.
Low cost, high impact, reversible.	No permanent infrastructure (concrete, asphalt). Use materials and techniques of tactical urbanism, such as paint and planter boxes.
Retain parking for shoppers.	Designate the first 5-10 bays on each side street for shoppers.

Suggested materials

The trial should use relocatable level access tram stops, with the bicycle lane in between stops being protected by poles, as demonstrated in Toronto. The same technology can be used to widen footpaths in between stops, e.g. by a width of 1 m:



Relocatable level access tram stop being used by tram passengers. Image credit: TO Transportation on Twitter



Relocatable level access tram stop being used by a person cycling. Image credit: TO Transportation on Twitter

Suggested promotional campaign

The trial should include a 'Visit Brunswick Street' promotional campaign, funded by the State Government (e.g. DoT, TAC, Dept. of Economic Development) to:

- Draw attention to the new wider footpaths, greenery and outdoor dining areas.
- Inform shoppers of available parking on the first 5-10 bays on each side street.
- Inform delivery drivers of the loading zones on the first bay on each side street.
- Inform taxpayers that this is a fixed duration trial of DDA compliant tram stops.

Suggested final street design

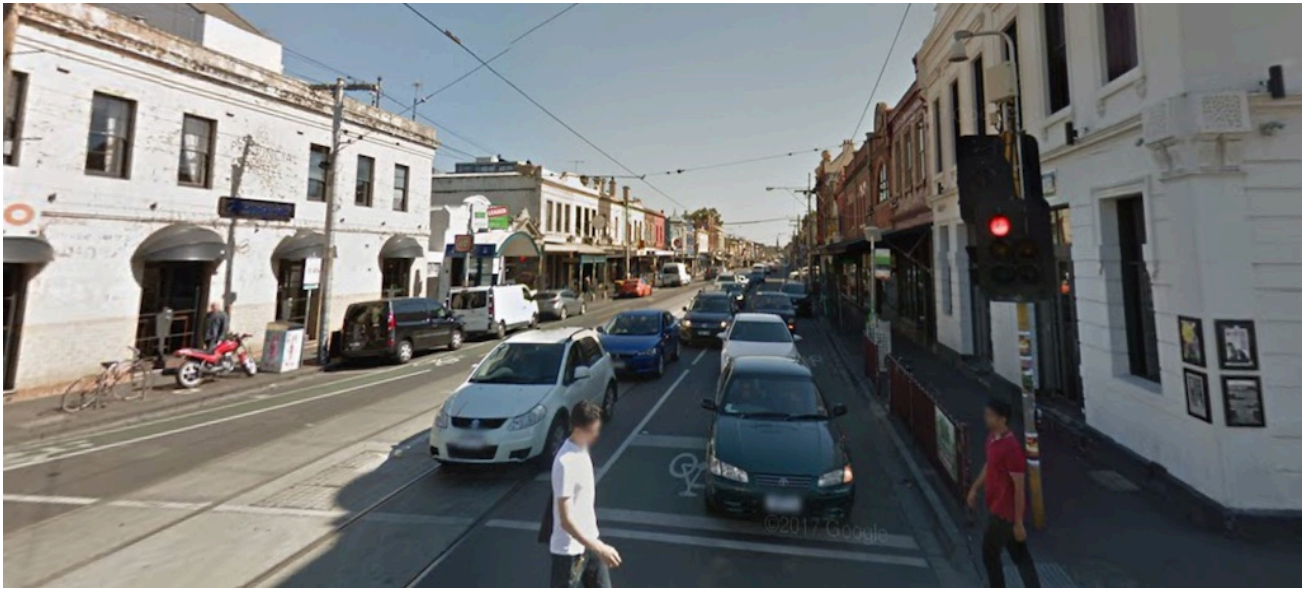
If successful, the trial would provide the evidence for a high quality street design including:

- **Wider footpaths** (including continuous footpaths and fewer footpath obstructions (including undergrounding of power lines),
- **More street trees**,
- **Protected bicycle lanes**,
- **Level access tram stops**,
- **Shopper parking** relocated to the first 5-10 bays on side streets and using meters with demand responsive pricing.



Proposed final layout for Brunswick Street. Trees are used to provide beauty and shade, and to separate people walking from people cycling, A kerb is used to separate people cycling from people driving. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra and StreetMix.

Clearly, this would offer a huge improvement in amenity for shoppers, compared with existing conditions:



Existing conditions deliver poor amenity for shoppers. Image credit: Google Street View.

Concluding remarks

Streets Alive Yarra applauds the City of Yarra's focus on improving our shopping streets. Brunswick Street is a great shopping street and can be even better. We ask Council to conduct a trial of level access tram stops and separated bicycle lanes on Brunswick Street, with funding sourced from the State Government.

We would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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