

**Submission
To The City of Melbourne**

Swanston Street Redevelopment

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Contacts

Geoff Oulton

Executive Director

Community Development & Planning

City of Port Phillip

goulton@portphillip.vic.gov.au

Raoul Wainwright

Sustainable Transport Planner

City of Port Phillip

rwainwri@portphillip.vic.gov.au

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Swanston St Redevelopment offers us a unique and highly strategic opportunity to reshape the way Melbournians think about transport. We advocate taking this opportunity in such a high profile site to promote a more sustainable transport future by encouraging more walking, cycling, public transport use and efficient freight management.

In our view, Option 6 delivers the best outcomes for bike users, pedestrians and public transport commuters and we support its implementation.

INTRODUCTION

A municipality spanning part of Port Phillip Bay, the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) takes in a variety of urban villages close to some of Melbourne's most popular beaches. Its urban character is marked by a richness of diversity, and features some of Victoria's most celebrated and innovative cultural events, recreational facilities, restaurants and entertainment venues.

With a wide network of public transport services operating throughout Port Phillip, it's easy to get to and around our city. The council endorses improvements to these services to reduce the demand for motor travel.

In terms of cycling, our geographic location combined with better than average bicycle facilities and low journey-to-work travel distances has resulted in high numbers of cyclists.

CYCLE ACCESS

Swanston St is a key component in a vital south-north cycle route. Research shows a significant and growing level of ridership along St Kilda Road and on to Swanston St.

CoPP has identified 3 key cycle routes in our municipality:

- The Beach Route along the Bay and along the Port Melbourne Shared Path,

- The Lake Route, along Fitzroy St, through Albert Park Reserve, and along Cecil St, and

- The St Kilda Road Route.

CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

**AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER
RIDING DESTINATION**



St Kilda Rd-Swanston St is recognised by VicRoads as part of the Principle Bike Network (PBN) (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1 – Extract from Principle Bike Network



In the Victorian Government’s recently released ‘Victorian Cycling Strategy’ the route is again recognised as part of a vision for a redefined PBN for inner Melbourne (see Figure 11 page 27 ‘Victorian Cycling Strategy’).

However, bike routes not just about more than a line on a map. More importantly, they are a reflection of rider behaviour. During the Bicycle Victoria ‘Super Tuesday’ count in 2007, 576 riders were recorded travelling north on St Kilda Rd at Park St. Beyond Flinders St, the number of riders travelling along Swanston St was 715.

In 2008 the corresponding numbers were 616 and 845, reflecting strong growth. Some of the St Kilda Rd riders do turn off on Southbank Bvd or Flinders St, but it is clear that a majority continue on and use Swanston St.

The same circumstances are repeated in the north.

For this reason we feel that is vital that the Swanston Street Redevelopment zone be considered in the context of the overall cycle route. The redevelopment should be cognisant of the way cyclists



enter the zone and it should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the cycle route connecting St Kilda Rd with the University/Hospital precinct.

Our consideration of the 7 Options identified for the Swanston St Redevelopment will reflect our desire to increase the proportion of CoPP residents who ride to the city.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Swanston St is a critical part of Melbourne's public transport network. It links Melbourne Central Station and Flinders St Station to St Kilda Road for the employees of hundreds of CoPP businesses. And it is the CBD destination for 8 tram lines serving CoPP residents.

In fact the Swanston St precinct is the busiest tram thoroughfare in the world.

Recent research has demonstrated the critical importance of trams in meeting the public transport needs of our residents. When asked what the main form of transport was in a recent CoPP phone survey, 46% cited trams, ahead of cars on 36% and trains on 7%.

Looking at residents in St Kilda or St Kilda Road, the percentage citing trams as the main method of transport used rises to 56% and 58% respectively. In fact the recent Census showed that 8,320 CoPP residents used trams to get to work on Census day. The vast majority of these commuters would have relied on trams travelling along Swanston St.

Swanston St Trams – Some Fast Facts

- There are 9 tram routes operating along Swanston Street
- these 9 routes account for a total 56 million passenger trips per year
- It is the spine of Melbourne's tram network with a third of all tram passengers using the routes travelling along Swanston St.
- During the peak times Swanston St has a tram service scheduled every minute in each direction.
- Approx 1600 trips per day
- In 2008 tram patronage grew by an estimated 8%
- During the AM peak, lunch time and PM peaks there are about 10,000 people coming and going from the Swanston St tram stops
- The busiest hour is between 5pm-6pm with stop usage of over 11,000 people.
- On a Typical weekday Swanston St Stops have over 123,000 people moving to and from the stop.
- There are 1770 stops on the tram network.
- All the Swanston Stops are ranked in the top 20 busiest tram stops.

CYCLE FRIENDLY



- They account for the top four stops and seven out of the top ten.
- Of the 123,000 people moving to and from the Swanston Street Stops 42% of them walk to and from their destination
- While 55% transfer to another form of public transport i.e. tram, train or bus.

Our consideration of the 7 Options identified for the Swanston St Redevelopment will reflect our desire to preserve and, where possible, improve the level for CoPP tram commuters.

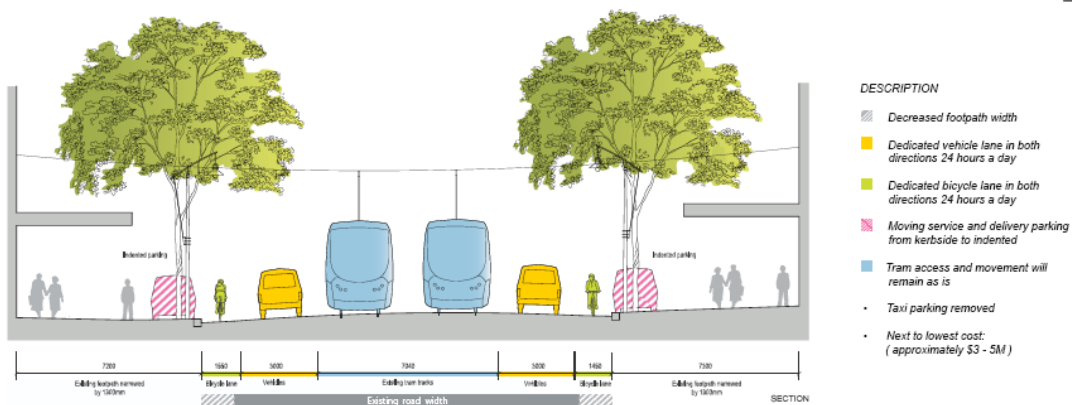
Late at night on the weekends, Swanston St also serves as the starting point for NightRider bus services travelling through CoPP.

Consideration of the Seven Options

Option 1

FOCUS: Increased motor vehicle and bicycle access

Design Option **1**



This option reduces space available to pedestrians and opens Swanston St to vehicular traffic 24 hours a day. **In our view this option is detrimental to public transport and is not supported.**

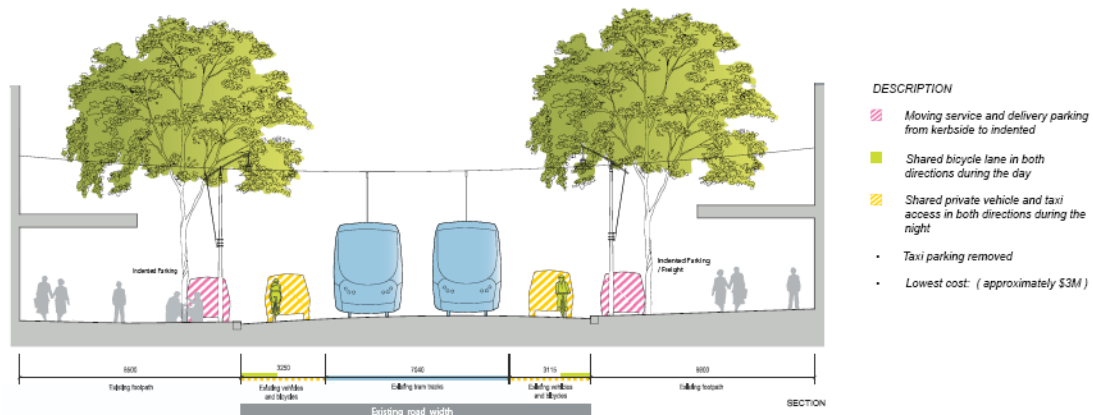
As can be seen above, approximately 50,000 commuters walk to or from the tram each day. Any reduction in footpath width will make public transport a less attractive option for them.



Option 2

FOCUS: *Managed service delivery*

Design Option **2**



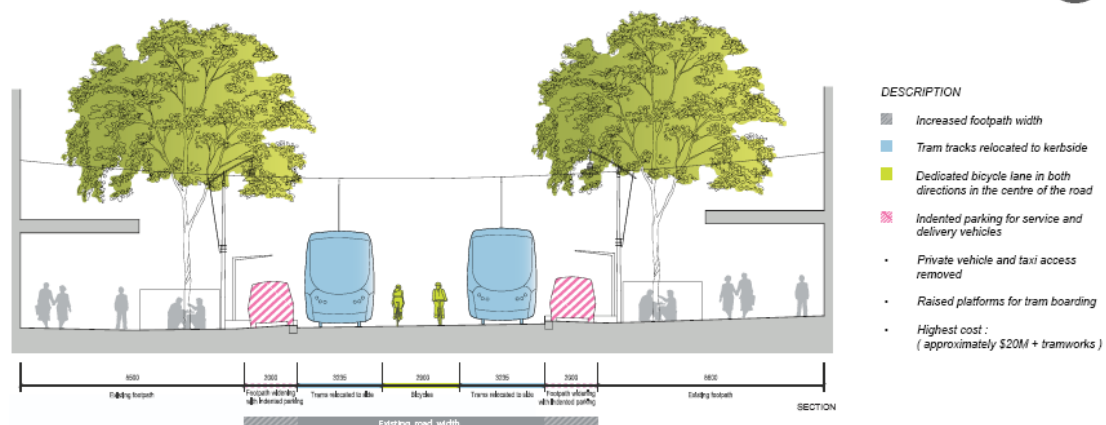
This Option does represent an improvement on current conditions. Our concern over this option is how it would work in an operational sense. With limited indented parking for service and emergency vehicles it is inevitable that there would be conflict between those vehicles and bike users.

Vehicles entering and exiting the indented bays would cut across cyclists and queuing of vehicles wishing to enter the indented spaces is foreseeable. **In our view this option is detrimental to bike users and is not supported.**

Option 3

FOCUS: *Increased pedestrian movement*

Design Option **3**



This option has many positives for pedestrians, with raised platforms along the length of Swanston St and broader footpaths. **However, in our view the option is unworkable and is not supported.**



Three main factors detract from the attractiveness of this option. The first is cost, in relation to benefits derived.

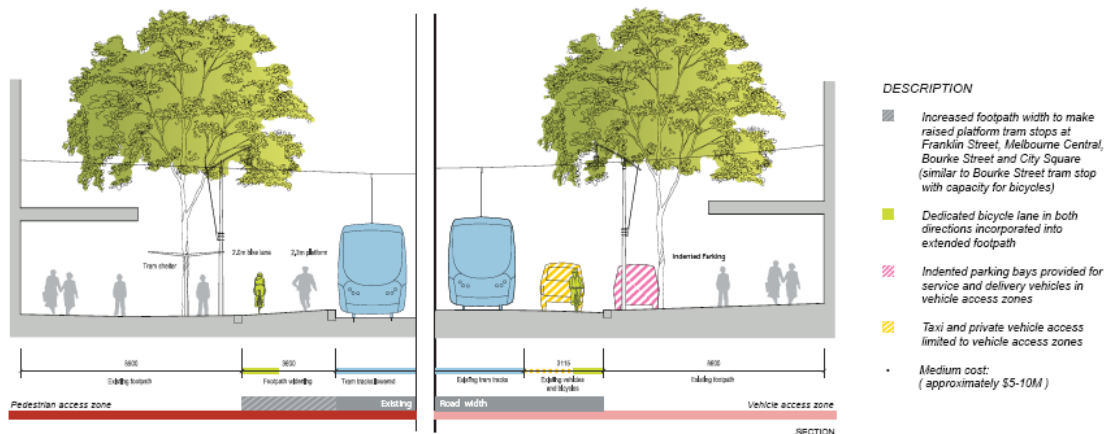
Secondly, the bike lane in the middle of the trams would need to start and end at some point. Without clearly outlining how riders access the lane at the periphery of the Redevelopment Zone this model can not be said to be workable.

Thirdly, vehicles entering and exiting the indented bays (or those queuing to enter the indented spaces) would cut across trams and slow down public transport.

Option 4

FOCUS: *Increased tram passenger and motor vehicle access*

Design Option 4

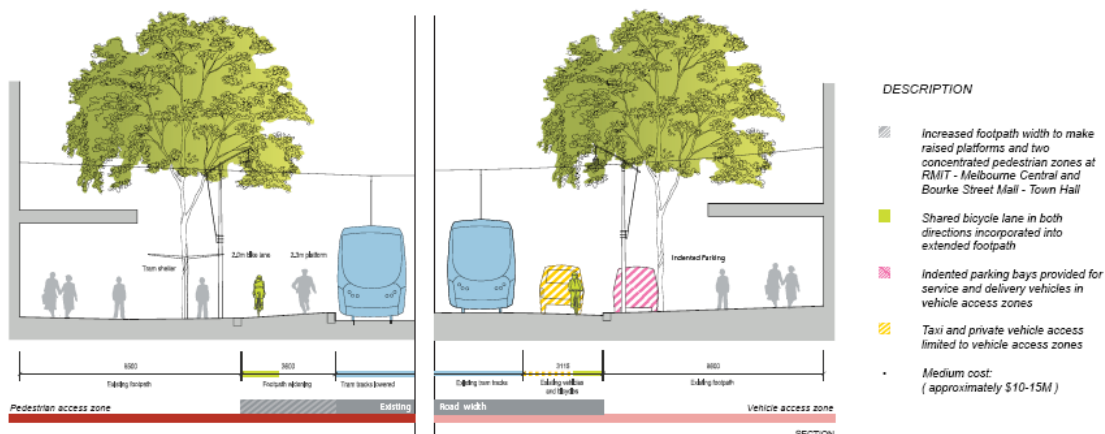


This option is a confusing mix of treatments and in our view would be unworkable in an operational sense.

Option 5

FOCUS: *Alternative option for increased tram passenger and motor vehicle access*

Design Option 5



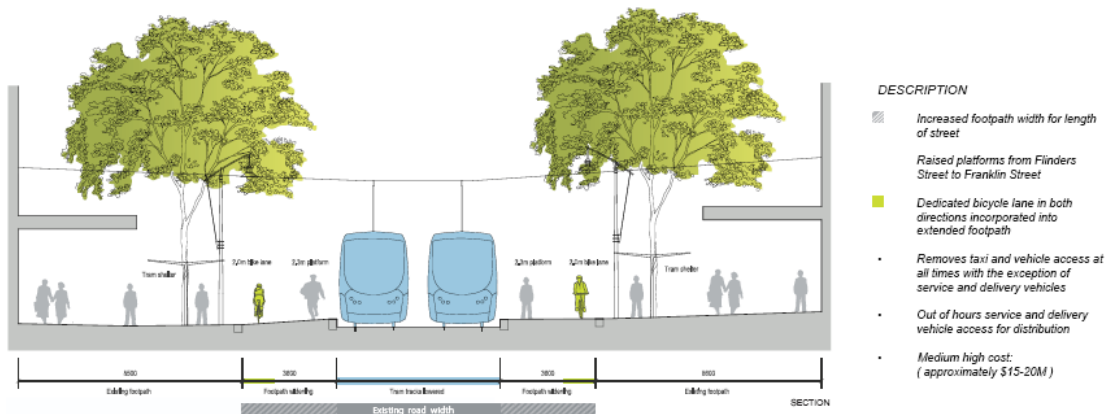


This option, whilst marginally better than Option 4, is a confusing mix of treatments and in our view would be unworkable in an operational sense.

Option 6

FOCUS: *Decreased motor vehicle access*

Design Option **6**



In our view, this option delivers the best outcomes for bike users, pedestrians and public transport commuters and we support its implementation.

In terms of the detail, we support placing the cycle lanes between the tram shelters and the tram lines. Tram users will then cross the cycle lane in a more predictable and orderly fashion, minimising conflicts between users. Melbourne cyclists are used to stopping for trams users when tram doors open and we feel this is the best way for pedestrians to cross the cycle lane.

Closing Swanston St to vehicles is a positive step that will encourage greater use of sustainable transport options. Clearly, the delivery of freight is a challenge and we feel that the Swanston St Redevelopment offers a prime opportunity to implement a state of the art 'last mile delivery' model.

Option 7

FOCUS: *Remove bicycle access*

Design Option **7**



It is unlikely that this option will be capable of being implemented as cyclists who wish to travel from St Kilda Road to the University/Hospital precinct to the north on Swanston St will simply ride along the



Redevelopment Zone. Policing the removal of bikes from this zone would in all likelihood prove impossible.

For those riders who did use the alternative south-north bikeway, their trip would be extended and they would have to deal with the increased grades along Exhibition St and a difficult right turn from Exhibition St on to Flinders St on the return journey. All of these factors would discourage regular bike commuting. **This option is detrimental to bike users and is not supported.**

Conclusion

The Swanston St Redevelopment offers us a unique and highly strategic opportunity to reshape the way Melbournians think about transport. We advocate taking this opportunity in such a high profile site to promote a more sustainable transport future by encouraging more walking, cycling, public transport use and efficient freight management.