



**STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**4 MAY 2009**

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report provides further information on two specific issues associated with the Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project, namely:
- 1.1.1. Tree selection policy and process for the Cleve Plaza space
  - 1.1.2. The potential under grounding or relocation of the Citipower powerbox located on the public footpath adjacent 7 Fitzroy Street
- 1.2 A detailed project history and community engagement / communication process is also outlined, as is an assessment of the benefits of the project.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1. That the Strategy and Policy Review Committee recommend that Council resolve to:
- 2.1.1. Receive and note this report
  - 2.1.2 Explore options to improve the streetscape contribution and minimise the impact of the Citipower power box located on the footpath adjacent 7 Fitzroy Street

**3. DISCUSSION**

**3.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 3.1.1 The Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project is a product of the 2002 Council adopted St.Kilda Urban Design Framework and was conceived in 2005.
- 3.1.2 Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project is also strongly congruent with the City of Port Phillip's sustainable transport and climate change policy.
- 3.1.3 The project consists of five elements:-
- 1. Cleve Plaza space (Fitzroy Street – Acland Street to Jacka Boulevard)
  - 2. Fitzroy Street greenway (bikeway)(Jacka Boulevard to Albert Park, northern side of Fitzroy Street
  - 3. Jacka Boulevard pedestrian crossings
  - 4. Jacka Boulevard bicycle lanes
  - 5. Fitzroy Street tram stop (@ Park Street) – completed 2008
- 3.1.4 The remaining four elements of the Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project will provide a \$4.7 million upgrade, creating enhanced public spaces and footpaths, integrated improvements to

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transport infrastructure, in addition to delivering a high quality landscape and streetscape setting

- 3.1.5 This project has been developed over the past four years in concert with project partners, Yarra Trams, VicRoads, Department of Transport, and Melbourne Water
- 3.1.6 In excess of \$1.6m of the project budget has been provided through Government grants associated with the cycling (Fitzroy Street bikeway – VicRoads), walking (Jacka Boulevard pedestrian crossings – DoT), public transport (DDA compliant tram stop – Yarra Trams) and water sensitive urban design (water harvesting – Melbourne Water). Council has provided the remaining funds through its annual capital works program
- 3.1.7 The project has obtained substantial community input and response through the project's development resulting in substantial support from the resident community, traders, key stakeholders and the wider community
- 3.1.8 In summation, the following milestones mark the project's development:
- 2007 (April) SKE Committee Briefing Update#1
  - 2007 (June) External project manager appointed Coffey Projects
  - 2007 (July) SKE Committee Briefing Update#2
  - 2007 (Sept) Principal Urban Design consultant appointed (Tract) & Quantity Surveyor (Slattery Australia)
  - **2007 (Jul - Sep) Major Community Consultation sessions**
  - 2007 (Sept) SKE Committee Briefing Update#3
  - 2007 (Sept) Councillor Briefing
  - 2007 (Sept) First Project Control Meeting (PCG) held
  - 2007 (Sept) SKE Committee Briefing Update#4
  - 2007 (Jan) SKE Committee Briefing Update#5
  - 2008 (Feb) Councillor Briefing
  - **2008 (Feb) Planning permit application lodged**
  - 2007 (Mar) SKE Committee Briefing Update#6
  - 2008 (Apr) Ads placed in EHW & PPL
  - 2008 (May) SKE Committee Briefing Update#7
  - 2008 (May) Planning Application: Objector Meeting (only 1 objection received & 42 letters of support)
  - **2008 (May) Planning Permit issued** (Note single objection received was withdrawn)
  - 2008 (July) Initial Stakeholder (Trader) Construction Meeting on the Pending Works Program
  - 2008 (July) **Discussions with individual traders** adjoining the works on the design and works program

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- 2008 (July) SKE Committee Briefing Update#8
- 2008 (Sept) SKE Committee Briefing Update#9
- **2008 (Sept) Council awards construction contract 1144 to 2Construct**
- 2008 (Oct) Commence fortnightly Stakeholder (Trader) Construction Meetings on Works
- 2008 (Nov) SKE Committee Briefing Update#10
- **2008 (Nov) Construction commences**
- 2009 (Jan) SKE Committee Briefing Update#11
- 2009 (Apr) 18th PCG meeting conducted – 4 more anticipated
- **2009 (Apr 27) Fitzroy Street Business Association provides written advice confirming its support for the urban design response**
- 2009 (4 May) Construction week 29 of 41 (breaks for Christmas / NY, St.Kilda Festival, Grand Prix and Easter)

### **3.2 TREE SELECTION**

- 3.2.1 As part of the Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project, a streetscape plan was prepared. In the Cleve Gardens plaza space, five existing elms are proposed to be removed (**ATTACHMENT 1**)
- 3.2.2 **ATTACHMENT 2** documents a memo from the projects external principal urban design consultant – Mark Reilly, Tract Consultants - commenting on tree selection in the context of:-
  - Achieving urban design objectives for the area;
  - Condition of existing trees, and
  - Managing technical constraints associated with the proposal build.

- 3.2.3 A summary of Attachment 2 is reproduced in full below, as any attempt to summarise would simplify the complexity in which the thinking / decision-making process for the tree policy was considered

*“The following text provides some background to the issue of existing tree removal and selection of new tree species. This is an overview only and it should be understood that there are a range of detailed design and technical requirements that go into a project of this kind but are not discussed here.*

#### **1. Existing Trees**

*We view the design as an integrated package of works. While we respect the value of existing trees, they are still a functional part of the street and must contribute over the long term, to the function and appearance of the Cleve Plaza. We spent time looking at all existing trees within the Cleve Plaza site and made the decision to propose removal of all five trees for the following reasons:*

##### **North side Elms**

- *Two elms on the northern side of the street are poorly formed, immature specimens that show evidence of long term (salt laden) wind pruning and water stress*
- *The trees do not contribute to the appearance of the Plaza and would not improve in future.*
- *The trees cannot be connected to the WSUD system being developed for the site. Tree pits will be a different appearance from WSUD pits (no grates).*
- *The surrounding footpath pavements will be reconstructed to slightly different levels than existing and with a reinforced concrete base and underground services will be changes in this location. This will require additional excavation that will affect existing tree roots and may result in the death or decline of the trees, or long term physical instability because of the restricted root system. The level of the footpath may be different (higher) from the surface surrounding the tree.*
- *Kerb lines are moving out at this point and trees will no longer be positioned behind the back of kerb.*

### **South side Chinese Elms**

- *The two eastern trees have grown in locations that are restricted by verandas. As a result of location and pruning, they have poor canopy form and provide little shade or amenity.*
- *The trees cannot be connected to the WSUD system being developed for the site. Tree pits will be a different appearance from WSUD pits (no grates).*
- *Footpath spaces and proposed tree layouts are designed to maximize café table layouts. Retaining the Chinese Elms reduces table layout capacity as the trees are not positioned within the 'grid' and have tree pits that are not compatible with walking / seating.*
- *The surrounding footpath pavements will be reconstructed to slightly different levels than existing and with a reinforced concrete base and underground services will be changes in this location. This will require additional excavation that will affect existing tree roots and may result in the death or decline of the trees, or long term physical instability because of the restricted root system. The level of the footpath may be different (higher) from the surface surrounding the tree.*
- *Kerb lines are moving out at this point and trees will no longer be positioned behind the back of kerb.*
- *The Chinese Elm (No 1 Fitzroy St area) is a reasonably attractive tree and in the current setting provides shade and visual impact within that location, however we came to the view that the tree had similar construction risks and ground level functional problems to the other Chinese Elms, and in isolation, was not likely to contribute to the overall, long term visual character of the Plaza*

## **2. New Planting (ATTACHMENT 3)**

*Planting is intended to contribute to Cleve Plaza and Fitzroy Street in a range of ways:*

- *The design is intended to identify this location as a key pedestrian and tourist setting. The use of palms, various paving treatments, feature lighting etc are designed to emphasize the special role of the place. Palms in selected settings, in combination with avenue plantings, are intended to become the visual symbol of Fitzroy Street.*
- *Cleve Plaza is designed to be a space which visually and functionally 'joins' Cleve Gardens, Catani Gardens, Fitzroy Street, Jacka Boulevard and Esplanade landscapes and becomes a part of each of those spaces.*

*The 'free form' arrangement of trees is intended to allow the space to blend with its surroundings and not be allied to a single area such as Fitzroy Street.*

- *The arrangement of trees visually reinforces the role of the Plaza as a Shared Use Space with an unusual geometry, where pedestrians, cyclists and cars have equal status and where irregular pedestrian movement is expected. Trees are an important, large scale visual cue within a busy commercial setting.*
- *Palms are a direct reference to the design themes established by Carlo Catani in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and by later projects that developed the foreshore and Esplanade areas as visual icons and as a representation of St Kilda as an 'exotic place' and community. Palms, for many people, symbolise the idea of an exotic beachside setting and leisure.*
- *Palms – Phoenix canariensis and Washingtonia robusta (majority) – are very hardy trees that are suited to the climate and beachside setting. They are already extensively planted in Catani Gardens and the Esplanade, can be purchased at mature heights and have relatively small, fibrous root systems that can be planted close to underground services. Tree canopies are relatively small and maintain a stable size. Washingtonia can be planted within the road space and still maintain clearances to tram wires and other infrastructure.*
- *Palms are proposed to be planted at varying heights to achieve a 'layered' canopy effect. This will create a textured and interesting appearance, patterns of shade and a visual scale that relates to pedestrians as well as motorists and long distance viewers. Additional shade, if required, will be provided by umbrellas and other architectural features that are expected to be a part of the Fitzroy Street commercial environment.*
- *Palms can be located in and around café seating areas to provide amenity and richness to the pedestrian environment. Groundcover planting within the Cleve Plaza site (southern edge) is proposed to be drought tolerant plants with dynamic forms that match the qualities of the palms.*

**3. The effect of adopting an alternative planting strategy**

- *Overhead and underground services and building verandas would be likely to severely restrict the location of broad canopy trees (as per existing conditions).*
- *Trees could not be planted within the road space and the form of the planting would be likely to return to a kerb edge situation which would appear similar to Fitzroy*

*Street. As a result, the Plaza would be likely to lose visual definition as a special place.*

- *The current services design (currently being implemented) is based on the current landscape design. Changes to the landscape design approach would require re-documentation of much of the project, including WSUD components funded by Melbourne Water.*

3.2.5 The total cost of the 42 palms for the Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections Project is \$150,000

### 3.3 CITIPOWER POWERBOX

3.3.1 A Citipower power box is located in the public footpath area fronting No. 7 Fitzroy Street (**ATTACHMENT 4**). The dimensions of the steel green coloured cabinet are approximately 1500mmx500mmx1000mm

3.3.2 A decision was made during the design and documentation stage not to relocate the power box due to the estimated poor value return (i.e. consideration of benefit vs cost), as well as the funds not being readily available within the projects construction budget

3.3.3 The proprietor of 7 Fitzroy Street (Bar Santo) sought the relocation or under grounding of the power box for aesthetic reasons, raising the issue at the first of the fortnightly Stakeholder Construction Forums on the 28 October 2008 (**ATTACHMENT 6**).

3.3.4 Council's project team subsequently investigated the relocation or under grounding of the power box again. Response provided by the Council's consultant, Webb Australia Engineering (**ATTACHMENT 5**) was communicated to the stakeholder construction forum at Meeting 2 on the 20 November 2008. It was noted:

*"The cost of relocating the cubicle to the opposite side of the road will be in excess of \$70K.*

*The option of replacing the existing cubicle with a smaller/more visually appealing cubicle is unlikely to be accepted by Citipower.*

*They use 'standard' cabinets which comply with safety regulations, are suitable for maintenance, can easily be replaced in case of damage etc. The proposal to use of a non-standard cabinet would require submissions for approval by Citipower. This would be a complex and time consuming process and extremely unlikely to be accepted. The cost is also likely to be in excess of \$50K."*

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3.3.5 Building on these earlier comments, Council's consultant project managers, Coffey Projects on the 29 April 2009 have provided comments following further discussions with Citipower, in seeking options in relation to the powerbox:

*"Wayne Davies from Citipower ... [has] advised undergrounding is not an option as the power box in question is a switching pillar which enables circuits to be connected/disconnected. Sounds like it needs to be above ground for access reasons.*

*In relation to moving the power box to the north side of the street, it is possible, it is a matter of dollars and achieving consent. Scope of works needs to be established, reconfigure cables, etc and needs to be relocated to a spot agreeable by all parties (residents included).*

*In relation to making the cabinet more visually appealing, Citipower uses one standard switching cabinet (green cabinet).*

*In relation to costs, Wayne advised approx cost to relocate power box is \$50,000 excluding associated paving removal / reinstatement works.*

*In relation to timelines for relocating power box, they are as follows:*

- *On receiving requested information from customer, Citipower takes 4 weeks to prepare scope and quotation*
- *On acceptance of quote, design takes 4 weeks*
- *Allowance of 2 weeks to receive consent from all parties (this is the big variable and could blow out if resident oppose box at the front of their property)*
- *Financial approval – 2 weeks*
- *Construction works – 8 weeks (works would probably take 1 week however Citipower says it could be done in the 1<sup>st</sup> week if you are very lucky and the stars are all aligned, or most likely in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> week).*
- *Therefore I believe overall you are looking at likely timeframe of 18-20 weeks (4-5 months) from when Citipower receives all information to commence scoping works.*

3.3.6 In summary, advice is:-

- The power box can be relocated
- The power box must be retained above ground
- Citipower costs alone are in the order of \$50,000 for relocation on the same side of the road, and \$70,000 on the opposite side of the road (adjacent to Cleve Gardens).
- Citipower advises it needs 12 weeks from order before construction could begin. It could then be another 8 weeks before works are completed
- Additional costs for paving removal / reinstatement would also be borne (based on current construction works being completed). These could be estimated in the order of \$5,000 - \$10,000 depending on distance between existing and any new power box location
- Total costs for relocation options would be in the range of \$55,000 - \$80,000. However, a more accurate cost estimate can not be provided until a design and scope of works is defined by Citipower. Costs may exceed \$80,000 suggested.
- The cheaper option would still need to be located outside another commercial property

3.3.7 Based on the above it is recommended that, should Council wish to minimise the impact of the power box, further exploration of options that improve its visual impact in its current location and configuration be undertaken.

### **3.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS**

3.4.1 A copy of the project's Stakeholder / Community Engagement Strategy is shown in **ATTACHMENT 7**

3.4.2 In summation, key consultation period were conducted in Phase 2 (August – October 2007 prior to the appointment of the urban design consultant to inform project design), and during Phase 4 (April 2008, leading into planning approval seeking response on the concept design).

3.4.3 Consultations (including local residents, public transport users & traders) has encompassed:

- 4 community meetings held at the St Kilda Town Hall (August 2007 & April 2008) at which the design and process for delivery was discussed and debated
- 2 on site displays (August 2007) held on a weekday mornings (peak) and Saturday morning (approximately 120 points of contact were made at these sessions). These included encouraging residents to mark up copies of schematic sketches

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- Articles in the Port Phillip Business Newsletter (September 2007)
  - Advertisement in the Port Phillip Leader (August 2007 & April 2008)
  - Individual meetings with Traders Adjacent to the Works (October 2007)
  - 2 mail-outs (September 2007 & July 2008) to 2,200 local residents, businesses and property owners (**ATTACHMENT 8**)
  - Mail-outs to property managers (October 2007)
  - Direct mail-outs associated with the formal planning approvals process
  - Multiple presentation to West St Kilda Residents Association, Fitzroy Street Traders Association & St Kilda's Edge Interested Parties Forum
  - On site billboard with project information and scope (**ATTACHMENT 9**)
- 3.4.4 Comments received at the above sessions, has been considered and integrated through the design process and response provided. The project's design has been informed through substantial community consultation and input through all phases of the project's development. Furthermore, the project is provided with substantial support from the resident community and traders.
- 3.4.5 This is evident as there were no objections when a planning permit was issued on the works in May 2008, including 42 written acknowledgements of support.
- 3.4.6 Letters of support from both adjacent residents (Summerland Mansions – 19 April 2008) and Fitzroy Street Traders' Association (27 April 2009) shown as (**ATTACHMENT 10**)
- 3.4.7 Leading into the construction period, Council officers have conducted ongoing consultations and provided project inform residents and traders impacted on by the works:
- Individual discussion with traders adjacent to the Cleve Plaza works area (April 2008)
  - Fortnight (currently weekly) Stakeholder Construction Forums have been conducted since 28 October 2009. These sessions seek to minimise the impact of works on traders, and project delays by providing a forum to enable all parties to work together
  - Mail-out (600) to adjoining owners and occupiers informing them of the pending street closure (March 2009)
  - 2 Advertisements in the local newspapers (Local Leader Newspaper) on during April informing of the road detour
  - Website updates including minutes of the construction forums

- Articles in Diversity

3.4.7 Numerous media releases, including a front page article in the Port Phillip Leader (April 2008).**(ATTACHMENT 11)**

### **3.5 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

3.5.1 The Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project will be one of the more sustainable public domain projects ever undertaken in the City of Port Phillip and metropolitan Melbourne

3.5.2 The project will provide the highest quality sustainable transport infrastructure and priority across three modes – walking, cycling and public transport

3.5.3 **Walking** – this project will increase pedestrian level of service and safety through:-

- Provision of two new and very wide (15m) pedestrian crossings across Jacka Boulevard
- Provision of a continuous footpath between The Esplanade and Cleve Gardens
- Provision of a new traffic-calmed space for people to mill, connect to each other and the environment, rest and play
- Provision of a new public space through a 10km/h shared zone within the Cleve Plaza space (Fitzroy Street - Acland Street to Jacka Boulevard)
- Provision of enhanced lit street seating
- Provision of 'Dwell on Red' traffic signalisation at the western (The Esplanade) end of the Cleve Plaza space. Pedestrians crossing over The Esplanade will incur a 'default green' at all times, while vehicles will be required to 'trigger' their green
- Provision of a level surface for over half of the cleve space, free of level differences typical with standard kerb and channel responses
- Reduced traffic volumes through the Cleve Plaza space

3.5.4 **Cycling** – this project will increase cyclist level of service and safety through:-

- Provision of two major sections of cycling infrastructure within two of the Cities three major north-south cycling routes – Jacka Boulevard on 'The Beach Road Route' and Fitzroy Street on 'The Lake Route' – the latter linking the St.Kilda Foreshore via Albert Park, South Melbourne Market to Melbourne's new

Convention Centre and Docklands via the new Yarra pedestrian bridge

- Provision of the highest quality cycling path design, through superior separation of cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles

3.5.5 **Public Transport** – this project will increase tram users level of service and safety through:-

- Provision of a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant tram stop
- Additional seating
- Real-time passenger information

3.5.6 **Water Management** – this project will deliver positive water management responses through:-

- Water harvesting (pavement and awnings)
- Re-use harvested water on all landscaping
- Improve water quality through filtration systems before entering as storm water to the bay

### **3.6 IMPLEMENTATION**

3.6.1 Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections is currently well in construction

3.6.2 On 4 May 2009 the project construction will be in week 29 of 41.

3.6.3 The construction program has allowed significant breaks for Christmas / NY, St.Kilda Festival, Grand Prix and Easter to minimise impacts on adjacent traders