

MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL

15 NOVEMBER 2023



12.3

PICKLES STREET SAFETY IMPROVEMENT - EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: **BRIAN TEE, GENERAL MANAGER, CITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the results of the evaluation of the Pickles Street Safety Improvement Trial and recommend the permanent closure of the median at the intersection of Pickles Street and Bridge/Glover Street Port Melbourne.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Intersection of Pickles Street at Bridge Street and Glover Street in Port Melbourne is classified as a Road Safety Blackspot with multiple crashes occurring at this location between 2016 and 2020. A petition received by Council in 2020 expressed community concern for safety at the intersection and requested action to prevent further crashes.
- 2.2 During community consultation in 2021 on a proposed trial closure Council received three petitions, one for, one against and one suggesting an alternative closure approach and 51 individual responses, 24% for, 69% against and 7% with feedback.
- 2.3 Most feedback related to a concern that traffic would be redistributed to side roads and restrict access to resident properties.
- 2.4 This feedback was considered at the Ordinary Council Meeting held 4 August 2021, when Council endorsed a 12-month trial of a median closure along Pickles Street at Bridge Street and Glover which commenced in June 2022 (following delays due to COVID).
- 2.5 The primary objective of the trial was to address the safety risks at the intersection and reduce the crashes at this location. During the trial no crashes have been recorded at the intersection, or in the adjacent local road network.
- 2.6 To support the evaluation of the trial, traffic and crash data were collected before and during the trial to understand impacts and outcomes:
 - 2.6.1 Traffic volumes in surrounding streets showed minimal fluctuations, with many streets experiencing relatively stable or slightly reduced traffic volumes.
 - 2.6.2 Where streets had observed increased traffic volumes. The resulting daily traffic volume remained within the acceptable limits in Council's Road Management Plan.
 - 2.6.3 Vehicle speeds recorded post-implementation were generally consistent with pre-implementation data.
- 2.7 Based on the assessment of the impact and effectiveness of the trial Council officers recommend a permanent median closure.

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3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes that the intersection of Pickles Street at Bridge Street and Glover Street, is identified as a Road Safety Black Spot. Council as the responsible road authority for this intersection is obligated to act to reduce the safety risk to the community.
- 3.2 Notes that the trial has proven to be successful. The safety improvements have addressed the main cause of the recorded crashes, without transferring them to the adjacent area, or significantly changing traffic volumes in the adjacent local road network.
- 3.3 Endorses making the trial median closure at the intersection of Pickles Street at Bridge Street and Glover Street permanent to improve safety for all road users.
- 3.4 Advises the community of the outcome of the trial, next steps, and thanks them for their contribution.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 A petition, containing 77 signatures was received in March 2020, raising safety concerns about the intersection of Pickles Street, Bridge Street and Glover Street.
- 4.2 Six (6) crashes were recorded on the Victorian Road Crash Statistics at the intersection between July 2015 – June 2020.
- 4.3 On 4 August 2021, following consultation with affected residents and businesses, Council endorsed a 12-month trial closure of the median.
- 4.4 The trial included the following restrictions:
 - a) No right turns into Pickles Street from Bridge or Glover Streets
 - b) No through movements from Bridge Street into Glover Street
 - c) No through movement from Glover Street into Bridge Street
- 4.5 The median closure was installed on 28 June 2022. Aerial images of the site before and during the trial are below.



Image 1. Pickles/Bridge/Glover before and during the trial intersection closure

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Assessment of the trial

- 4.6 An assessment of the trial's effectiveness included a collection of transport data to quantify traffic movements at intersections and vehicle volume and speed counts throughout the trial, collation of crashes at the intersection and nearby streets and community feedback.

Traffic Data

- 4.7 As with any changes to traffic conditions, on-site observations during the first days of the trial showed that, as drivers adjusted to the change, they made some unusual traffic movements including indicating and slowing down at the previous opening. However, within a month traffic adjusted to the change.
- 4.8 Traffic data was collected before the trial (December 2021) and at two points during the trial (February and August 2023) to capture impacts of the closure, see Attachment 1 for survey locations.
- 4.9 A summary of the traffic data can be found below.

Daily Vehicle Volumes

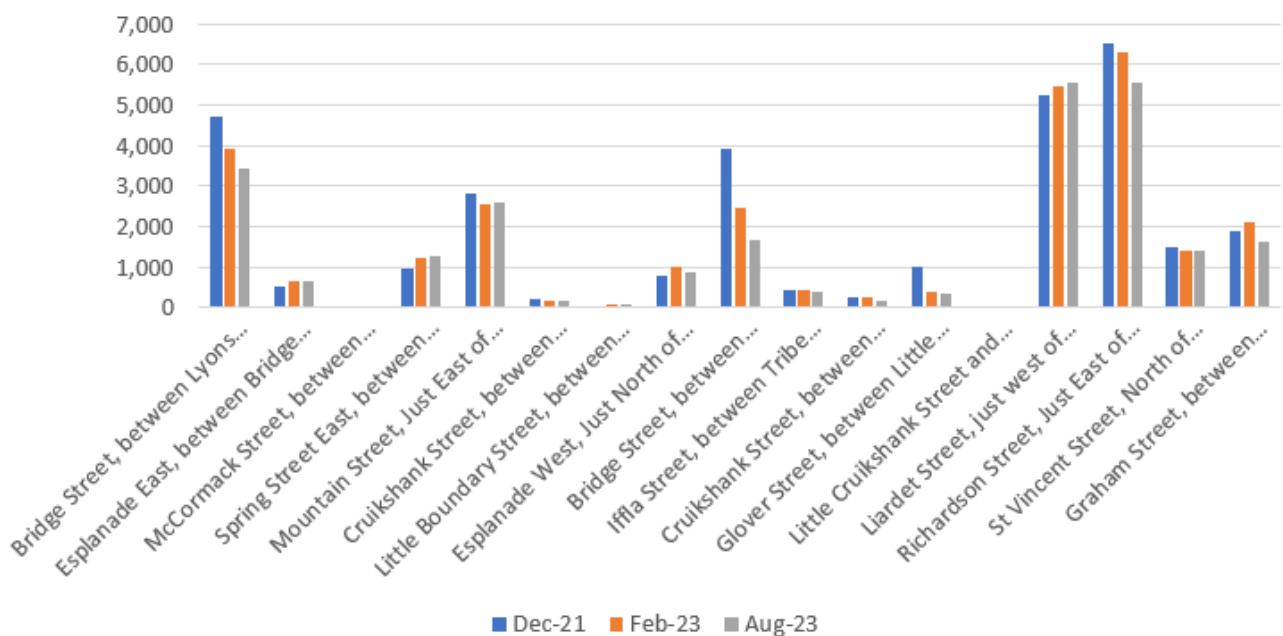


Figure 1. Daily Vehicle Volumes (excluding Pickles Street) Before and During Trial

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Daily Vehicle Volumes - Pickles Street



Figure 2. Daily Vehicle Volumes (Pickles Street) Before and During Trial

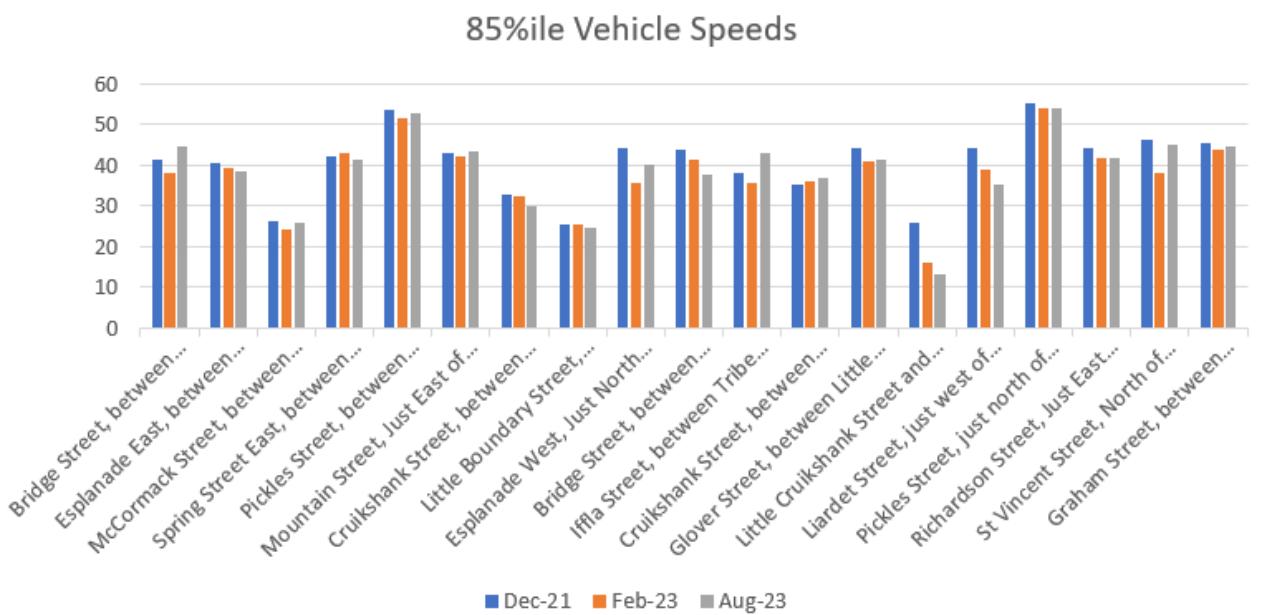


Figure 3. 85%ile Vehicle Speeds Before and During Trial

4.10 Observations in traffic conditions between December 2021 and August 2023 are summarised below.

1. The 85th percentile vehicle speeds post implementation were generally consistent with pre-implementation data showing little to no impact on the average speeds of vehicles.

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2. Overall, traffic volume changes across the surrounding streets surveyed showed minimal fluctuations, with many streets experiencing relatively stable or slightly reduced traffic volumes with the following exceptions:
 - i. Bridge Street, between Lyons Street and Esplanade Place – traffic volume decreased by approximately 27.1% to 3,427 vehicles/day.
 - ii. Spring Street East, between McCormack Street and Cruikshank Street – traffic volume increased by approximately 31.59% to 1,271 vehicles/day.
- 4.11 All traffic volumes recorded post implementation are within the expected and accepted limits for the respective road functions in line with the Road Management Plan.

Crash Data

- 4.12 A review of the crash statistics at the Pickles Street/Bridge Street/Glover Street intersection and in nearby local streets has confirmed no recorded accidents following the trial closure.
- 4.13 The Police have confirmed that no crashes were recorded or observed at the intersection, or in the adjacent local road network, since the installation of the trial.
- 4.14 It appears that the median closure has treated and not transferred safety issues from the intersection of Pickles Street, Glover Street and Bridge Street to another site and has achieved its aim of reducing crashes at this intersection.

Options Assessment

- 4.15 Following feedback from community members regarding impact to access, officers investigated the reinstatement of the right turn only from Pickles Street to Bridge Street. It was concluded that the current full median closure is required due to the following:
 - The median width does not allow for the minimum dimensions for a turning lane.
 - Four out of the six recorded crashes involved a right turn movement from Pickles into Bridge.
 - Leaving an at grade opening in the median will likely lead to noncompliance.
- 4.16 Pickles Street is part of Victoria's Over Dimensional (OD) network, making it the designated route for OD vehicles. The proposed changes are expected to retain the existing capability of this route. Any permanent changes proposed will need to be approved by DTP.
- 4.17 To improve safety at this location, officers assessed the option of a further reduction in the speed limit on Pickles Street from 50kph to 40kph. However, the existing road environment and infrastructure does not support a 40kph speed limit, primarily because Pickles Street has two lanes of traffic and is part of the ODI Road network.
- 4.18 During the trial there have been reports of vehicles mounting the temporary kerbing and proceeded through the median. As part of the conversion to permanent infrastructure signage will be installed to physically deter this behaviour.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

Prior to the trial

- 5.1 A petition, containing 77 signatures was received in March 2020, raising safety concerns about the intersection of Pickles Street, Bridge Street and Glover Street.

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Council is the road authority for this intersection and has responsibility for reducing crashes at the site.

- 5.2 In May 2021 Council officers advised the community of a proposed trial closure of the median. In response Council received three separate petitions and 51 individual responses. These were considered by Council at its meeting on 4 August 2021.
- 5.3 One of the three petitions with 63 signatures supported the trial. The other two petitions opposed the proposed trial. One petition with 158 signatures requested the median closure be modified to maintain right turns into Bridge Street from Pickles Street. The other petition, with 45 signatures, opposed the trial due to the redistribution of traffic onto other side roads and restricted access to residents when accessing their properties.
- 5.4 Of the 51 individual responses, approximately 69% objected to the trial, 24% supported the proposed trial, and 7% provided feedback without stating whether they supported or opposed the trial.
- 5.5 A review of the open-ended comments found the following key themes for those that did not support the trial
 - 5.5.1 **Community inconvenience** The closure of the median is an inconvenience to local community members and reduces the ease of travel.
 - 5.5.2 **Transfer of Safety Risk** The trial would shift the safety risks to nearby streets and intersections.

Note The crash data shows the changes addressed the main cause of the recorded crashes without transferring them to the adjacent areas.

During the trial

- 5.6 As part of the trial, community members were encouraged to provide feedback on their experiences and perceptions of the changes introduced.
- 5.7 Notification letters were sent to adjacent properties in March 2022 informing them of the trial, no significant feedback was received at this time.
- 5.8 Once the trial median closure was in place the feedback from the community has been mainly favourable, the majority of those against the treatment understood the positive outcomes for road safety despite small impacts to their usual travel patterns.
- 5.9 Some people sought an update on the trial given the initial delay in installing the trial due to COVID.

Stakeholders

- 5.10 Emergency services, such as Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police and the Department of Transport have endorsed the trial and the recommendation to convert the trial to a permanent solution.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Council as the responsible road authority for this intersection is obligated to act to reduce the safety risk to the community based on the crash history.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The implementation of permanent construction is estimated at approximately \$60,000.

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- 7.2 Officers will explore the possibility of securing funding through the Federal Blackspot Program in 2025/26. If unsuccessful, Council will need to allocate funds for the permanent treatment which will be requested through the normal budget process.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The conversion of the temporary treatment to a permanent treatment will provide opportunity to increase green space at the intersection.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Prior to the trial, the intersection of Pickles Street, Glover Street, Bridge Street had a high number of crashes compared to other Council managed roads in Port Phillip.
- 9.2 Council is committed to improving the safety of this intersection for all road users. The trial improvements addressed the safety risks at this site and makes our community safer while also not unduly distributing additional traffic to local streets.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 Reducing crashes on the local road network directly relates to the Council Plan 2017-27 – Direction 2: We are connected and it's easy to move around.
- 10.1.1 2.3 Our streets and places are designed for people'
- 10.2 Outcome 1 of the Integrated Transport Strategy (Move, Connect, Live 2018-2028) – Our cities transport network, streets and places cater for our growing community.
- 10.2.1 Outcome 1 – Action 7: Deliver blackspot safety improvements at high collision locations (subject to external funding).
- 10.2.2 Outcome 1 – Action 9: Ensure our streets and place are safe and inclusive, including accessible parking, pedestrian facilities, lighting and security.
- 10.3 Modifications to the local traffic network can technically be approved under delegation - Local Government Act 1989 – Schedule 11 – Cl.10(1)(a) & Cl.10(1)(b).

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

TIMELINE

- 11.1 Late 2023 - Project portfolio bid for 2024/2025 budget
- 11.2 2024/25 - Detailed design of permanent treatment
- 11.3 2025/26 – Construction of permanent treatment
- 11.4 The trial infrastructure will remain in place until a permanent treatment is installed.

COMMUNICATION

- 11.5 Original Petitioners and survey respondents from 2020 and 2021 will be notified of this report to be tabled at the Council meeting.
- 11.6 The outcome of the council meeting will be communicated to all stakeholders via letters and an update on the webpage.
- 11.7 Key messages will include:
- 11.7.1 The trial of safety improvements at the intersection of Pickles Street, Bridge Street and Glover Street has addressed the main cause of the recorded

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crashes, without transferring them to the adjacent area, or significantly changing traffic volumes in the adjacent local road network.

- 11.7.2 Temporary infrastructure will remain until a permanent treatment is in place.
- 11.7.3 The City of Port Phillip is committed to improving safety and connectivity for all road users.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Map Locations of Traffic Surveys for Pickles Street Safety Improvements** [↓](#)