



10.1 **COBDEN STREET POCKET PARK**

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Councillors on the Cobden Street and Kings Plaza, South Melbourne project to convert a roadway to a recreation space for the local community.
- 1.2 To provide the concept design for Cobden Street for endorsement (Attachment 1).
- 1.3 To outline the timelines for the project, the funding arrangements and the proposed community engagement process and seek Council endorsement to proceed.
- 1.4 To formally seek Council endorsement to commence a process to convert designated roadways to a road reserve.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cobden Street Pocket Park, South Melbourne, is part of the Kings Place Plaza project which was included as a project within the Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan that was endorsed on 18 September 2019.
- 2.2 In March 2020 the project received \$1.3M in funding through Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP). The grant is conditional on the project being completed by 30 October 2022 (revised from 30 June 2022). Council has committed a further \$500k towards the project across the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years in the ten-year financial plan. The total project budget is \$1.8M.
- 2.3 The project will provide a new park, improved greening and enhance connections to public transport, including the new ANZAC station.
- 2.4 The concept design will be released to the community for feedback in August and September.
- 2.5 The creation of the pocket park will require a change of road function for a section of Cobden Street and Kings Place, from a roadway to a road reserve and Council has commissioned a traffic study that supports this change. Formalising the change will require community engagement and application to Department of Transport (DoT).
- 2.6 Due to the tight project timelines, this road closure process will-be run concurrently with the project community engagement and design process.



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes Cobden Street pocket park received \$1.3M in funding from the Victorian Government and is required to be completed by 30 October 2022.
- 3.2 Endorses the concept design for Cobden Street pocket park (Attachment 1).
- 3.3 Notes the reduction of eight parking spaces is proposed in the concept design.
- 3.4 Resolves to inform the local community of the concept design and project timelines.
- 3.5 Resolves to specifically engage the community of the intent to change the function of the following roadways to a road reserve;

Cobden Street

- From the intersection of Kings Way Chainage 000-023 Cobden Street will remain a two-way roadway with no change in width; and
- Chainage 023 of 049 being the intersection of Kings Place will become road reserve.

Kings Place

- From the intersection of Kings Way to the intersection of Palmerston Cres Chainage 000-084 Kings Place will become a one-way roadway with the nominal width of 3.6m; and
 - From the intersection of Kings Way to the intersection of Palmerston Cres Chainage 084-124 Kings Place will become a one-way roadway, with no change in width.
- 3.6 Notes after community engagement, a future report will be presented to Council formally amending the designated area of the proposed pocket park to a road reserve.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Background

- 4.1 The Domain Precinct is rapidly becoming one of the City's fastest growing neighbourhoods. City-shaping projects like the Victorian Government's Metro Tunnel are transforming the way people move and live in the precinct. Domain is also becoming more densely populated, with several large developments expected to become home to thousands of new residents over the coming decade.
- 4.2 In consultation with the community, Council has developed the Domain Precinct Realm Masterplan (Attachment 1). Which was adopted in September 2019. The masterplan provides a vision for the precinct, historical context, a summary of the community engagement to date, plans for the proposed improvements and implementation steps.
- 4.3 Kings Place Plaza was identified as one of the key projects in this masterplan. This area is currently of poor design, consisting of a narrow laneway, on-street parking, wide road and inconsistent and sparse tree planting. The masterplan proposes to revitalise this space and provide a new public plaza.

- 4.4 With a view to working towards establishing a pocket park in this area, the project was awarded \$1.3M in grant funding from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) through the Pocket Parks Program. Council has resolved to provide \$500k of additional Council funds to the project bringing the total budget to approximately \$1.8M.
- 4.5 For a variety of reasons, the grant and Council funding will enable the delivery of part of the Kings Place Plaza vision, with future stages needed to achieve the whole outcomes espoused in the masterplan.
- 4.6 The DELWP funding grant initially required the project to be complete by 30 June 2022. It is not possible to undertake the significant design, consultation, road closure processes, service authority changes and construction for the entire Kings Place Plaza area within this timeframe.
- 4.7 Additionally, site constraints make the delivery of the entire Kings Place Plaza works, at this time, impractical. The site is surrounded by new high-rise developments. Some developments are underway, with others to following in the next few years. Completing the full build at this point would mean that some of the new park would be removed as developers require access to their builds. Council is currently exploring opportunities with the surrounding high-rise developers to potentially fund (fully or partially) the remainder of the Kings Place Plaza project when it is ready to be delivered.
- 4.8 For the aforementioned reasons, it is instead proposed to deliver a smaller section of the Kings Place Plaza vision.

Cobden Street Pocket Park

- 4.9 The current funding is proposed to be used to deliver the Cobden Street Pocket Park, which is a section of the envisaged Kings Place Plaza project. A concept design for the project has been developed based upon the high-level objectives and approaches articulated in the masterplan. The concept design is available as Attachment 2.



Image 1: Cobden Street Pocket Park design



4.10 The concept design includes the following:

- Changing a section of Cobden Street to a road reserve to create a pocket park;
- Changing Kings Place into a one-way street with traffic running in the direction from Kings Way to Palmerston Crescent;
- Removal of existing on-street parking to construct kerb extensions and garden beds;
- The creation of a central plaza and meeting place;
- Informal planting;
- The establishment of a central lawn area and seat walls;
- Significant upgrades to the public lighting; and
- Additional tree planting.

4.11 The delivery of the Cobden Street Pocket Park will enable future states of the Kings Place Plaza vision to be delivered at a point in the future.

4.12 Council has worked closely with DELWP on the development of the Cobden Street Pocket Park proposal. DELWP have confirmed that the development of the sub-project will provide positive outcomes for the local community and meets the objectives of the grant. In recognition of the changes in scope, DELWP have agreed to extend the completion milestone from end-June 2022 to 30 October 2022. It is highly unlikely that additional extensions will be granted.

Road Change of Function

4.13 To create the pocket park, part of Cobden Street will require a change of function from a roadway to a road reserve.

4.14 The changes will be as follows:

Cobden Street

- From the intersection of Kings Way Chainage 000-023 Cobden Street will remain a two-way roadway with no change in width; and
- Chainage 023 of 049 being the intersection of Kings Place will become road reserve.

Kings Place

- From the intersection of Kings Way to the intersection of Palmerston Cres Chainage 000-084 Kings Place will become a one-way roadway with the nominal width of 3.6m; and
- From the intersection of Kings Way to the intersection of Palmerston Cres Chainage 084-124 Kings Place will become a one-way roadway, with no change in width.



- Community feedback on the design response influenced the designs proposed in a draft masterplan.

Draft Masterplan

- The draft masterplan was exhibited online for public comment from in July and August 2019.
- A direct mail out to all households in the precinct (4767 letters) were sent to residents advising them the draft masterplan was on exhibition.
- A pop-up information session was held on. Council officers had over 30 conversations about the project with interested community members.
- Information boards relating to each of the proposed projects were erected around the precinct to communicate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft masterplan
- Fifty-seven submissions to the draft masterplan were received during the exhibition period, with one received outside of the period.

5.2 Feedback on Kings Place Plaza

- Support for more pedestrian areas and activation.
- Questions about access to properties and future developments with the proposed one-way arrangement.
- Concerns about safety and how the shared space / zone will function.

5.3 This feedback was considered when finalising the masterplan for adoption by Council on Wednesday 18 September 2019.

5.4 Full information on the community consultation is in the Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan on pages 22-23.

5.5 Further consultation was also identified in the St Kilda Road North Precinct Plan, which was a four-year process and adopted in 2015.

5.6 As outlined, the local community has been heavily involved in the development of the masterplan for the area, including the development of the scope for the King Place Plaza project and the Cobden Street Pocket Park sub-project. The community's input has helped to shape the current concept designs for the pocket park.

5.7 Given the previous consultation, it is proposed a limited period of consultation, taking the inform approach, be undertaken on the refinement of the Cobden Street Pocket Park project. This approach not only reflects the community's involvement to date, but also helps achieve the funding grant conditions of having the project completed by end-October 2022.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A key risk to the successful delivery of this project is the tight timeline that is a condition of the DELWP grant funding. The project must have construction completed by end-October 2022. If this timeline is not achieved, Council runs the risk of having the grant withdrawn.



- 6.2 To mitigate this risk, and in recognition that the local community has been heavily involved in the development of the masterplan, including the vision for the Kings Place Plaza, it is proposed that community consultation on the concept design take the inform approach.
- 6.3 Additionally, it is proposed to run the statutory process for changes to the road function, concurrently with the consultation and design development of the project.
- 6.4 As side from the timeline risks, there are unknowns at the site around soil contamination. To date, there has been no soil testing done at the site. Based on soil testing undertaken at nearby sites and the prevalence of soil contamination across the City, there is likely to be contamination at the site. The next phase of the project will include soil testing to quantify the risk at the site and budget impacts.
- 6.5 By complying with legislation, policy and creating reasonable provision for service authorities, there is no legal risk associated with changing the function of these roads.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The full project cost, including contingency is \$1.8m and is made up of Council funding and \$1.3M in funding from the DELWP Pocket Parks Program. The grant funding is to be fully expended by 30 October 2022.
- 7.2 An independent cost plan prepared by a qualified quantity surveyor was undertaken in June 2021. The cost plan, based on the concept designs, indicates that the project can be delivered within the existing project budget.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The new park will provide increased canopy cover and decrease the urban heat island effect through new garden beds and canopy tree planting.
- 8.2 WUSD features have not been included in this project due to potential for them to be damaged through the future development. They will be considered in the design for the future Kings Place Plaza project.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The project had community support through the 2019 Domain Precinct Public Realm Masterplan.
- 9.2 The area is not currently a park and once complete will increase the provision of public space in the Domain Precinct, which has been identified as a gap in our Draft Public Space Strategy.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 Council Plan – Liveable Port Phillip

- Strategic Objective - Port Phillip is a great place to live, where our community has access to high quality public spaces, development and growth are well managed, and it is safer and easy to connect and travel within
- What we will work towards (our four-year strategies) - Port Phillip is safer with liveable streets and public spaces for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.
- We will provide - Access to upgraded, expanded and well-maintained public and outdoor spaces for people of all ages and abilities to visit, in line with our 10-year



Public Space Strategy (once adopted by Council), prioritised within available budgets each year

- We will facilitate and advocate for - The best possible public space outcomes that support community health and wellbeing, through infrastructure projects undertaken in our City by other levels of government and stakeholders.

10.2 Council Plan – Sustainable Port Phillip

- Strategic Objective - Port Phillip has a sustainable future, where our environmentally aware and active community benefits from living in a bayside city that is greener, cooler, cleaner and climate resilient. The importance of action in this area is emphasised by Council declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019.
- What we will work towards (our four-year strategies) - Port Phillip has cleaner streets, parks, foreshore areas and waterways where biodiversity flourishes.
- We will provide - Urban forests to increase tree canopy, vegetation, greening and biodiversity and reduce urban heat, in line with Council's Greening Port Phillip and Act and Adapt Strategies prioritised within available budgets each year.
- We will provide - Increased permeability of ground surfaces across public streets and in our public spaces as well as examining ways to support greater permeability on private property.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- Community consultation – August 2021
- Council report for road closure approval – September / October 2021
- Final designs – December 2021
- Commence Construction – May 2022
- Construction is required to be completed by October 2022.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- The road closure process and engagement will happen concurrently with informing the community on the design.
- A project webpage will be created to keep our community updated on project progress from commencement of road closure and inform engagement through until construction is completed.

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. Cobden Street Plaza Concept Design Report