



**10.2 ALMA ROAD / ALEXANDRA STREET, ST KILDA EAST - TRIAL OF SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS EVALUATION**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LILI ROSIC, GENERAL MANAGER, CITY STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**PREPARED BY: MINH VO, TRANSPORT ENGINEER**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To update Council on the findings of a 12-month trial of a partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street, St Kilda East to improve safety for all road users.
- 1.2 To seek Council's endorsement, subject to a successful Blackspot funding submission, to construct a permanent partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street, St Kilda East to improve safety for all road users.

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 On 5 September 2018, Council endorsed a 12-month trial of a partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street, St Kilda East to improve safety for all road users.
- 2.2 An evaluation of the 12-month trial of the partial closure identified no crashes at this site or within the adjacent street network. Traffic redistribution was also considered acceptable.
- 2.3 Given the positive safety outcome of the trial it is proposed to make the partial median closure permanent. If this is supported, officers will seek funding for these works through a Black spot funding application.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes that the trial has been successful in improving safety outcomes in this location.
- 3.2 Endorses the partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street as a permanent treatment to improve safety for all road users.
- 3.3 Seeks funding for the permanent partial closure through a Black spot funding application process.
- 3.4 Advises the community of the outcome of the trial and thanks them for their contribution.

**4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES**

- 4.1 On 5 September 2018, Council endorsed a 12-month trial of a partial closure of the median along Alma Road at the Alexandra Street intersection, St Kilda East to improve safety for all road users.
- 4.2 The trial involved blocking 'through' and 'right turn' movements along Alexandra Street at Alma Road.



- 4.3 The partial median closure was installed on 16 October 2018. Aerial images of the site before and during the trial are included in **Attachment 1**.
- 4.4 An evaluation of the 12-month trial included:
- Frequent site inspections and observations of traffic behaviour.
  - A typical weekday comparison of traffic volumes and speeds undertaken before and during the trial, to identify where traffic was redistributed in the local road network and its impact.
  - Liaising with Victoria Police for any recorded/reported crashes at the Alma Road/Alexandra Street intersection and in nearby local streets.
  - Reviewing community feedback received during the trial.

#### **Traffic and Speed impact assessment**

- 4.5 At the commencement of the trial, Council's website was updated to provide details of the trial and to seek feedback. A week before the commencement of the trial, Variable Message Signs were placed in key locations to advise drivers of the up-coming changed traffic conditions.
- 4.6 On site observations during the first days of trial showed that traffic was responding to the changed conditions.
- 4.7 **Attachment 2** shows traffic volumes and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds in streets that were expected to be most impacted by the trial. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles travel. It is used to assess compliance with the set speed limit. The data shows traffic volumes before the installation of the trial, and during the trial in May 2019 (6 months) and October 2019 (12 months).
- 4.8 Attachment 2 shows that traffic in May 2019 was still redistributing with drivers adjusting to the changed conditions. Volumes in local streets were higher in May than in October 2019. This can be an indication that drivers have adjusted to the changed traffic conditions and redistributed within the network.
- 4.9 The traffic volume changes in the assessed streets were considered acceptable.
- 4.10 A summary of the stabilised traffic volume after 12-months into the trial identified that traffic in Lansdowne Road and Wilgah Street increased marginally (less than 10% in average); Murchison Street and Alexandra Street decreased.
- 4.11 The identified traffic volume along Lansdowne Road and Wilgah Street were expected, given the banned traffic movements at the intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street.
- 4.12 Traffic on Alma Road may have increased because the removal of the No Through and Right Turn movements from Alexandra Street which forced drivers to turn left out of the street and onto Alma Road. Prior the trial period these vehicles would have driven through or turned right at the intersection. It is noted that Alma Road functions as a main (secondary arterial) road, which is where commuter traffic is meant to be directed.
- 4.13 With the removal of commuter traffic from local streets, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds have either not changed or reduced. Lansdowne Road, Murchison Street and Wilgah Street are now either below or close to the 40 km/h speed limit.



- 4.14 The 85th percentile speed has not changed significantly for Alexandra Street, with speeds remaining close to or above 50km/h. With a posted speed limit of 40 km/h, this is of a concern. The Transport Safety Engineering team will conduct investigations to improve compliance.

#### **Crash data assessment**

- 4.15 In total, 10 crashes were recorded at this intersection between January 2012 and September 2018, an average of 1.4 crashes per year.
- 4.16 The Victoria Police has confirmed that no crashes were recorded or observed at the intersection, or in the adjacent local road network, since the installation of the trial.
- 4.17 This indicates the partial median closure has not transferred identified and treated safety issues from the intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street to other streets.

### **5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS**

- 5.1 Shortly after the September 2018 Council resolution to proceed with the trial, Council's website was updated to advise of the trial and invite feedback.
- 5.2 25 responses in total were received. Of these responses, four indicated support for the partial median closure and 21 indicated no support. Key issues raised in the responses are addressed as follow:
- **Inconvenience:** The trial has caused inconvenience because of the turn bans at the intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street do not allow direct traffic movement across Alma Road.  
**Officers' response:** The intent of the partial median closure was to prevent the main cause of the recorded and observed crashes – that being the through and right turn movements from Alexandra Street to Alma Rd. The trial has proven to be successful in reducing crashes by preventing these movements. Whilst a lack of direct convenience to make these movements is noted, depending on location, access to properties or desired destination can still be achieved via different routes.
  - **The width of the gap to allow traffic on Alma Road to turn right is not wide enough for two opposing vehicles to be stored at the same time before turning right into Alexandra Street.**  
**Officers' response:** The gap within the median was intentionally designed to ensure a vehicle cannot drive through or turn right from Alexandra Street. It requires that all vehicles reduce speed when turning to ensure greater safety.
  - **Safety concerns with limited sightlines at the Lansdowne Road and Alma Road intersection.**
  - **Officers' response:** Temporary kerb extensions were installed on Alma Road at Lansdowne Road as part of the trial to improve sightlines for vehicles exiting Lansdowne Road (**Attachment 1**).

### **6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Council as the responsible road authority for this intersection is compelled to act to reduce the safety risk to the community.



- 6.2 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)
- 6.3 A small group of residents that initially opposed the trial may continue to oppose it, should Council resolve to proceed with the permanent implementation of the trialled treatment.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- 7.1 The permanent partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street and kerb extensions at the intersection of Alma Road and Lansdowne Road are estimated to cost approximately \$160,000. If Council supports the permanent treatment a funding submission could be sought through the Federal Blackspot Program 2021/22 to fund the permanent treatments.
- 7.2 Council may consider to signalise the intersection however this would be at an estimated cost of \$600,000 - \$700,000, with additional annual maintenance costs. Signals may provide a result which provides for continued movements along Alexandra Street, however it would not attract co-funding from other government agencies, as the Benefit-Cost-Ratio would not meet VicRoads and TAC submissions guidelines. For these reasons this option has not been pursued further.
- 7.3 If the external Federal Blackspot Funding application was unsuccessful, Council would need to either fund the permanent treatment through the Council's Local Area Traffic Management Program or continue with the temporary treatment until funding become available.
- 7.4 Cost for ongoing maintenance of the temporary treatment of around \$5,000 per year (depending on damage to temporary kerbing and signs) is currently sourced through the Council's Local Area Traffic Management Program.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

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

## **9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 9.1 Prior the trial, the intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street had a high number of crashes when 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 12-month trial of the safety improvements addressed the safety risks identified at this site. No recorded or observed crashes were identified during the trial period.
- 9.3 The result of the trial will be used to inform a detailed design for a more permanent safety improvement.

## **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

### 11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 **December 2019:** Notify the community of the outcome of the Council meeting and the next steps.
- 11.1.2 **2020:** Prepare detail design of a permanent treatment.
- 11.1.3 **August 2020:** Apply for funding through Federal Blackspot Programme 2021/22.
- 11.1.4 **Financial Year 2021/2022:** If the Federal Blackspot Programme 2021/22 submission is successful, design and construction for the permanent partial median closure on Alma Road at Alexandra Street will be scheduled.

### 11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 The outcome of the trial and Council resolution will be communicated to all stakeholders via a direct mail out and update to Council's web-page.
- 11.2.2 Key messages will include:
- The trial of safety improvements at the intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street has addressed the main cause of the recorded crashes, without transferring safety issues to the adjacent streets, or significantly changing traffic volumes on the adjacent local road network.
  - The temporary treatment will remain in place.
  - Council will seek external funding to construct a permanent treatment.
  - 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 direct or indirect interest in the matter.

**TRIM FILE NO:** 30/21/22

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Attachment 1 - Aerial images of the sites' safety improvements
2. Attachment 2 - Traffic Impact Assessment Summary (Volume and Speed)