



ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 5 SEPTEMBER 2018

10.1 ALMA ROAD / ALEXANDRA STREET, ST KILDA EAST - TRIAL OF SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LILI ROSIC, GENERAL MANAGER, PLACE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Council's endorsement of a 12-month trial of road user safety improvements at the intersections of Alma Road / Alexandra Street in St Kilda East.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Officers have identified the intersection of Alma Road / Alexandra Street in St Kilda East as a blackspot. Six (6) crashes have been recorded between 1/01/2012 to 31/12/2016.
- 2.2 Four (4) more crashes have been observed/reported since April 2017 to June 2018, when the original proposal to fully close the median was reconsidered in response to community feedback.
- 2.3 Reducing the speed limit from 60km/h to 50km/h on Alma Road between Hotham Street and Orrong Road in October 2017 has not eliminated the risk of collision, with two (2) of the four (4) occurring after the speed limit reduction.
- 2.4 Several attempts to implement a low-cost trial of road user safety improvements have been met with negative reactions from a small number of residents.
- 2.5 Officers are seeking Council's endorsement to implement a 12-month trial of a partial closure of the median, blocking 'through' and right turn movements along Alexandra Street at the Alma Road intersection.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes that the intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street has been identified as a road accident black spot with six (6) crashes recorded at the site between 1/01/2012 and 31/12/2016. A further four (4) crashes have been recorded/reported up to 30/06/2018.
- 3.2 Endorses a 12-month trial of a partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street to improve safety for all road users.
- 3.3 Continues to pursue a partnership with VicRoads to develop and deliver road safety improvements through the identification of road accident black spots throughout the municipality.
- 3.4 Advises all residents that made submissions regarding the proposed trial of Council's resolution and thanks them for their contribution.
- 3.5 Officers will evaluate the 12-month trial and provide a report to Council on traffic measures required to improve safety at the intersection of Alexandra Street and Alma Road.



4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The intersection of Alma Road and Alexandra Street has been identified as a road crash black spot. Six (6) crashes were recorded at the site between 1/01/2012 and 31/12/2016. Council, as the responsible road authority for this intersection is compelled to act to reduce crashes at the site.
- 4.2 A trial of a full median closure at the intersection of Alma Road/Alexandra Street (attachment 1) to prevent the main cause of crashes - through and right turn movements from Alexandra Street - was proposed in April 2017. In response to community feedback, it was decided not to proceed with the full closure trial.
- 4.3 As severity of crashes is reduced in a lower speed environment, the speed limit was reduced from 60kmh to 50kmh along Alma Road, between Hotham Street and Orrong Road. Officers agreed to continue to monitor the intersection and if crashes continued, alternative treatments would be explored.
- 4.4 Crashes have continued to occur at the intersection even after the reduction of the speed limit to 50kmh in October 2017. From October 2017 to 30 June 2018, two (2) additional crashes have been recorded by officers at this intersection.
- 4.5 In response to the continued safety concerns, Officers propose to trial a partial closure of the median on Alma Road, at Alexandra Street (attachment 2). The partial closure will prevent through and right turn movements from Alexandra Street into Alma Road, but allow turn movements from Alma Road into Alexandra Street. The construction technique will be relatively low cost and allow for removal at the end of the trial if required.
- 4.6 This modified proposal considers the initial community feedback and targets the main cause of crashes. Residents were notified by letter on 16 April 2018.
- 4.7 A number of community members living in close proximity to the Alma Alexandra Road intersection wrote to Council expressing their concerns about the trial and wanted alternative traffic treatment implemented to reduce car accidents. Officers have considered all of the concerns and proposed alternatives put forward by the residents.
- 4.8 The original proposal to trial a partial closure of the median on Alma Road at Alexandra Road was determined by traffic engineers to be the most effective option to address safety concerns. The proposal was modified slightly to include additional kerb outstands at the Lansdowne Road/Alma Road intersection to improve sightlines for vehicles seeking to exit Lansdowne Road.
- 4.9 The implementation of the trial is expected to cost \$36,000. Alternatively, Council may decide to fund traffic signals at an estimated cost of \$600,000 - \$700,000, with additional annual maintenance costs. Signals would provide the best technical result and support continued movements along Alexandra Street, however it will not attract co-funding from other government agencies, as the Benefit-Cost Ratio does not meet VicRoads and TAC submission guidelines.
- 4.10 Officers are seeking Council's endorsement to proceed with the 12-month trial of a partial median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street.



- 4.11 The trial effectiveness will be assessed by monitoring crashes at Alma Road/Alexandra Street and other nearby local streets (including Alma Road and Lansdowne Street), traffic volume and speed counts in the local road network adjacent to the intersection. An assessment report will be produced after the 12-month period with further recommendations.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 In April 2017, a community consultation was undertaken on a trial of a full median closure along Alma Road at Alexandra Street. A letter explaining the reasons for the trial and inviting feedback was sent to 4,585 properties in the area.
- 5.2 Out of 180 responses received, approximately 90% did not support the proposed trial. Therefore, an alternative treatment of lowering the speed limit from 60kmh to 50kmh along Alma Road, between Hotham Street and Orrong Road was implemented. Officers agreed to continue to monitor the intersection and if crashes continued, alternative treatments would be explored. In May 2017, a letter was sent to residents informing them of this decision.
- 5.3 Since April 2017 officers have observed four (4) additional crashes at the intersection, including two (2) after the speed limit reduction in October 2017. It was evident that crashes involving drivers failing to select suitable gaps in the Alma Road traffic flow will continue unless a suitable intervention was implemented.
- 5.4 In April 2018, a notification letter advising of a 12-month trial for a partial closure of the median on Alma Road at Alexandra Street (attachment 2), instead of the originally proposed full closure, was sent to 473 potentially affected residents/businesses in the area. The letter was also sent to all 180 respondents from the original community consultation. The modified proposal considers the initial community feedback, while still targets the main cause of crashes.
- 5.5 Council officers received 35 responses, of these 20 (59%) not supportive of the trial. On Tuesday, 8 May 2018 a meeting was held with a group of the concerned residents, to discuss their concerns. Officers prepared a detailed response to all the concerns and alternative treatments that were raised in the meeting. A Frequently Asked Questions document was also prepared and added to the Council website.

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 opposed the proposed trial may continue to oppose it should Council resolve to proceed with the trial.



7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 Implementation of the trial is expected to cost \$36,000 and will be funded through Council's safer Streets program 2018/19. Potential external funding sources and Council budget capacity are being investigated.
- 7.2 The cost for the following actions can be sourced from an existing 2018/19 operational budget:
 - 7.2.1 Community notification of the Council resolution regarding the trial.
 - 7.2.2 6-month and 12-month reviews of the trial.
 - 7.2.3 Council report and subsequent community notification.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The proposed trial will not negatively impact upon the environment. Materials employed will be reusable.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The intersection of Alma Road / Alexandra Street has 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 safety improvements will address the significant safety risks at the intersection by reducing the number and severity of injuries.
- 9.3 Council's vision in the Safer Streets Road User Strategy (2013-2020) is to eliminate fatalities and reduce the risk of injury on our roads so that people of all ages and abilities can travel on our road network safely and that vulnerable road users have confidence to travel freely within the municipality.
- 9.4 The results of the trial (if successful) will be used to inform a concept 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, specifically '2.3 Our streets and places are designed for people' – Implement blackspot safety improvements at high collisions (subject to external funding). The proposed works will "Decrease the number and severity of crashes." Outcome 1.1 – A Safe and Active community with strong social connections.
- 10.2 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).

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- 11.1 TIMELINE

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- 11.1.1 **September 2018:** Notify the community of the outcome of the Council Meeting.
- 11.1.2 **October 2018:** Installation of temporary closure of the median on Alma Road at the intersection of Alexandra Street.
- 11.1.3 **November 2018 – October 2019:** Monitoring and assessment of the trial. Further report to Council on the results with recommendations on any traffic measures required to improve safety.
- 11.1.4 **November 2019:** Community engagement on proposed next steps.
- 11.1.5 **December 2019 – February 2020:** Subject to community support and success of the trial, concept design options will be prepared for a more permanent improvement.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 The outcome of the council meeting will be communicated to all stakeholders via e-mails, letters and an update on the web-page.
- 11.2.2 Key messages will include:
 - a) Alexandra Street and Alma Road intersection has a high number of crashes compared to other Council managed roads in Port Phillip.
 - b) The City of Port Phillip is committed to improving safety and connectivity for all road users.
 - c) Council will commence trial safety improvements at the intersection of Alexandra Street with Alma Road and will monitor what other improvements may be required.
 - d) Council is keen to hear from the community regarding their experiences of the intersection in relation to safety and connectivity, and to seek feedback on the trial.

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: 68/13/721

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Alexandra Alma - Full median closure plans
- 2. Alexandra Alma - Partial median closure plans