

1.3 CHESTER STREET, OAKLEIGH – PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes the findings regarding options to enhance the amenity and safety of pedestrians on Chester Street at Eaton Mall, as detailed in this report.*
2. *Notes that the proposal for a shared zone in Chester Street does not satisfy Department of Transport (DoT) guidelines for traffic volume assessment.*
3. *Notes that the installation of road humps on Chester Street between Hanover Street and Station Street this quarter will contribute to enhanced safety and amenity, which will be monitored post installation.*
4. *Directs officers to make a grant application to the DoT for a 30km/h area trial study on Chester Street and the surrounding streets.*

INTRODUCTION

This report provides Council with the findings of an assessment of traffic options to enhance amenity and safety of pedestrians on Chester Street, Oakleigh in response to the Council resolution on this matter on 28 September 2021. Amongst other things the resolution:

- 1) Noted that the planned installation of road humps on Chester Street between Hanover Street and Station Street in 2021/22 utilising external grant funding will contribute to enhanced safety and amenity.
- 2) Directed officers to commence preliminary planning and community consultation for a 20km/h Shared Zone trial on Chester Street at Eaton Mall and an area-wide 30kph speed limit in the area bounded by Warrigal Road, Atherton Road, Hanover Street and Portman Street

BACKGROUND

A traffic engineering feasibility report was prepared by road safety consultant, Quantum Traffic, summarising findings of a Chester Street safety improvement desktop study and feasibility of a shared zone trial on Chester. The report also sets out alternative measures that address 'hoon' behaviour and improve pedestrian conditions in Chester Street.

The Department of Transport (DoT) Safer Road program fully funded the installation of asphalt road humps along Chester Street between Station Street and Hanover Street to address speeding and enhance safety for pedestrians. The construction works are anticipated to start in October 2022.

DISCUSSION

In Chester Street at Eaton Mall, aggressive driver behaviour is the predominant problem. It is important to develop options that address this key issue while maintaining a balance between pedestrian safety and convenience.

In the previous Council report, four options were presented – (1) Pedestrian-only area, (2) Shared Zone trial, (3) 30km/hr speed limit trial across Oakleigh Activity Centre and (4) Installation of road humps along Chester Street. Council directed officers to proceed with investigation of Options 2 and 3. Option 4 is being delivered as planned.

Options

Option 2: Shared Zone trial.

This option involves the conversion of the street to a 20km/hr shared zone - 25 metres east and 33 metres west of Eaton Mall - which legally gives pedestrians the right to share the road space with vehicles. It would require new signage, the installation of traffic calming measures such as road cushions and linemarking and other interventions to signal a slow-speed pedestrian environment (e.g. planters, graphics on street, bollards, existing pedestrian signalised crossing being deactivated/covered). This option could be delivered as a lower-cost trial with a view to making more extensive pedestrian improvements in the future (e.g. raised pedestrian threshold treatments). Implementation of a shared zone would require DoT approval.



Area of Shared Zone Trial Proposal

Option 3: 30km/hr speed limit trial across Oakleigh Activity Centre.

This option was identified as an opportunity to improve safety more broadly across the precinct in the area bound by Warrigal Road, Atherton Road, Atkinson Street and Portman Street. It would involve the installation of new signage and possible linemarking and a communications program to support a trial. A speed limit change would require DoT approval.

Analysis of options

Option 2: Shared Zone trial

Council held a preliminary meeting with the Department of Transport to discuss the potential shared zone trial for Chester Street at Eaton Mall.

The DoT raised initial concerns with implementing a shared zone as a measure to stop hoon behaviour and their advice was to implement other measures first to reduce hoon behaviour prior to formalising a shared zone.

Officers sought independent assessment on the matter from Quantum Traffic. The assessment included surveys, looking at existing shared zone examples and assessing against the DoT criteria. The advice from the consultant was that the volume of vehicles on Chester Street is currently too high to warrant a shared zone.

This is consistent with the initial advice provided by DoT, where they indicated that the volume would need to be reduced and hoon behaviour would need to be addressed prior to consideration of a shared zone.

Whilst Chester Street is a local road under the management of Council, the installation of a trial shared zone will require DoT approval, as the following items are 'Major Traffic Control Devices':

- 'Shared Zone' and 'End Shared Zone' signage.
- Traffic signals (alternation by temporary deactivation).

On this basis, it is not feasible to progress the option of a shared zone at this time.

Option 3: 30km/h speed limit across Oakleigh Activity Centre

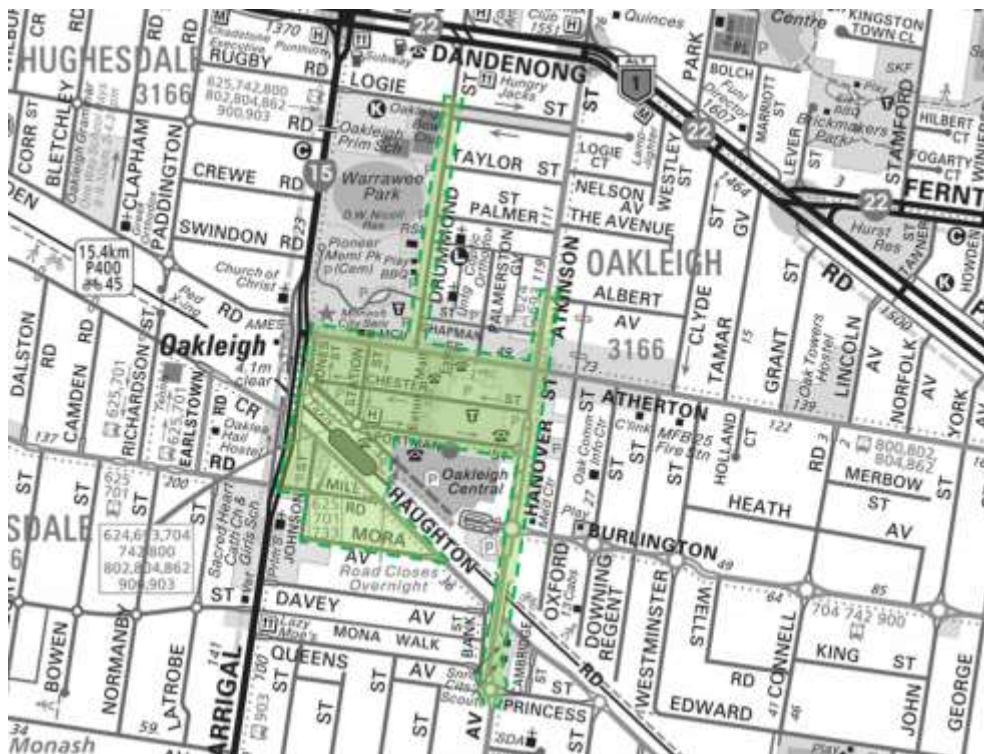
Officers have identified a lower speed zoning throughout the Oakleigh Activity Centre as an option for improved road safety. Under the existing conditions a 40km/h zoning applies across the Activity Centre, which represents the 'standard' speed zoning for high pedestrian activity locations.

DoT has recently permitted the implementation of 30km/h speed zonings in general road environments through the approval of several trials. The DoT

speed zoning guidelines provide the following commentary in relation to the use of 30km/h speed zones:

“30 km/h speed limits are not commonly used on Victorian roads. DoT may permit 30 km/h speed limit trials on local streets on a case-by-case basis and will consider evidence from the evaluation of these trials, community sentiment and other factors to inform future guidance on appropriate usage.”

The current 40km/hr zone is illustrated below. Officers need to carefully select the 30km/hr zone speed limit trial zone to avoid frequent speed limit changes from 50km/hr to 40km/hr and 30km/hr in short distances.



Oakleigh Activity Centre – Area currently 40km/h Speed Zoning

The DoT guidelines consider 30km/h speed zone trials based on Community support and attitudes, data collection and evidence of effectiveness. Officers will commence consultation with DoT to confirm the suitability of the Oakleigh Activity Centre and seek funding to support the trial. Quantum Consultants advice is that the area is appropriate for a 30km/h trial and should be investigated.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy issues arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no social issues arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no apparent human rights implications under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

The grants and approval process with the DoT required applicants to address issues of gender inequity in their proposed initiative, ensuring that planning on this issue is addressed from the commencement of the project.

CONSULTATION

No external consultation has been undertaken in preparing this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***Option 3***

Delivery of a 30km/h trial study would cost in the order of \$30,000. Included in this cost is additional survey, data analysis, preliminary design, DoT application process and some traffic calming measures as well as a communications program. Potential external funding sources include Transport Accident Commission safety grants. Any required officer time will be within existing operational budgets. Should Council be unsuccessful in receiving a grant through the Transport Accident Commission, funds could be sought through Council's 2023/24 budget process.

CONCLUSION

Officers have undertaken an assessment of the feasibility of different options to enhance the amenity and safety of pedestrians on Chester Street.

The shared zone proposal cannot be progressed at this time on the basis of high traffic volumes.

Officers will investigate the planning and community consultation for a 30 km/hr speed zone trial and alternative safety measures in Chester Street, Oakleigh.