

6.2 CHESTER STREET, OAKLEIGH TWO-WAY TRAFFIC TRIAL

Submitting Councillor: Stuart James

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes that following the previous Council resolution at its meeting of September 2021, officers have provided advice that the Department of Transport would not support a shared zone at the intersection of Chester Street and Eaton Mall.*
- 2. Notes that traffic counts indicate that the weekday volume of traffic in Chester Street is 3,498 vehicles.*
- 3. Directs officers to commence a feasibility study for a trial of two-way traffic in Chester Street, Oakleigh between Chester Street Carpark and Hanover Street and that Council allocates \$10k for this work.*

INTRODUCTION

Chester Street is a one-way (westbound) busy road, which runs between Jones Street to the west and Hanover Street to the east. It has a carriageway width of 10.3m, including parallel parking on both sides of the road and a single traffic lane. At Eaton Mall, the carriageway narrows to approximately 3.5m wide through the provision of kerb extensions (no parallel parking). The entry to Chester Street at Hanover Street has also been narrowed to 3.5m.

The weekday traffic volume is 3,498 vehicles with an 85th percentile speed of 30km/h, when last surveyed in February 2020. The Chester Street off-street car park is a main traffic attracter to the street and to the inner section of the activity centre. All vehicles must travel west when leaving the car park – across Eaton Mall and exit via Portman Street, Burlington Street, Jones Street or Warrigal Road.

This motion asks officers to investigate the feasibility of two-way vehicle movements at the eastern end of Chester Street between the carpark entry/exit point and requiring vehicles leaving the car park to turn left only towards Hanover Street. This change will reduce the need for vehicles to travel the length of Chester Street and exit through either Portman Street or underneath Vicinity, thereby reducing the volume of traffic in the street and the number of vehicles crossing Eaton Mall and in the activity centre more generally.

DISCUSSION

Vehicles parking in the Chester Street at-grade carpark, and those unsuccessful in finding a vacant spot, are forced to continue west along Chester Street. From observations, the overwhelming majority of these vehicles then travel either along Portman Street or under Vicinity Centre in order to exit the activity centre. This adds to the overall traffic volume on Chester Street but also adds considerable amounts of traffic to the whole of the activity centre. If the conditions were changed so that vehicles leave via a two-way section of Chester Street from the eastern end of the car park to Hanover Street, traffic volumes on Chester Street and across the activity centre would likely reduce, resulting in a much safer

environment for both pedestrians and motorists alike. Should these benefits be realised, future options such as a shared zone in Chester Street could be revisited.

It is anticipated that introducing a section of two-way traffic would be a significant project requiring civil works and the removal of some on-street parking and street trading. Engagement with the community on such a project would be essential.

FINANCIAL

Given the potential scale of the project, a thorough assessment and feasibility of the proposed solution would be sought from officers. Officers have advised that a budget of \$10,000 for this work would be adequate.

CONCLUSION

Given the current issues in Chester Street relating to pedestrian safety, this proposal could offer a solution to reduce through-traffic which would contribute to a calmer and safer street environment. It is recommended that Council directs officers to investigate the possibility of a two-way traffic trial in Chester Street, Oakleigh between the eastern end of the Chester Street carpark and Hanover Street.



OFFICERS REPORT**6.2 CHESTER STREET, OAKLEIGH TWO-WAY TRAFFIC TRIAL**

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BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

To understand the feasibility of converting the eastern section of Chester Street to two-way traffic as proposed, officers would commission an assessment by a consultant. This would involve collection of data, traffic analysis, and high-level community engagement with outcomes and recommendations provided in a report. The cost of the feasibility would be in the order of \$10,000. A new allocation of funding is required in Council's operational budget in 2022/23 to fund this work. The feasibility study will also provide Council with an indicative cost to undertake the works to inform future budget considerations.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

The Engineering team can draw from existing resources to coordinate the feasibility study.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

This feasibility study is in line with Council's Road Management Plan 2021 to ensure that a safe and efficient integrated transport network is provided for the movement of persons and goods.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

An investigation to convert Chester Street at Eaton Mall into a shared zone was recently undertaken. The advice from the consultant was that the volume of vehicles on Chester Street is currently too high to warrant a shared zone at this time.

The installation of road humps along Chester Street is being delivered as planned.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A feasibility study is an appropriate first step to confirm the potential for the solution to lower traffic volumes, improve safety and meet the needs of the community. It could also indicate whether traffic volumes would be reduced enough to allow Council to revisit the shared zone option in future.

Officers can advise that to accommodate two-way traffic, civil works will be required to widen the carriageway. This would likely involve kerb and channel re-alignment and road hump area extension as well as removal of some on-street parking and footpath trading. The resulting impacts of the traffic movement change from vehicles exiting Chester Street to Hanover also needs to be thoroughly analysed and understood. A feasibility study would consider all of the potential impacts and costs associated with the proposed change.