



# **Punt Road Concept Options Overview**

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## 1 OVERVIEW

VicRoads provides this overview to the attached ARUP Punt Road Concept Options Report to assist the community, stakeholders and the appointed Independent Advisory Committee in its review of the future need for the Punt Road Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO). A further public submission will be made by VicRoads to the Advisory Committee in November 2015. This overview and ARUP’s accompany report is to be read in conjunction with the VicRoads Background Report on Punt Road (August 2015).

## 2 HODDLE-PUNT CORRIDOR

The Hoddle Street-Punt Road corridor is the only major north-south arterial that can provide a strategically important bypass of Central Melbourne and encourage through traffic away from local roads and key activity centres such as Victoria Street - Richmond and Chapel Street - South Yarra.

With a high proportion of road users undertaking business, delivering freight and connecting with jobs and opportunities across Melbourne, it is economically important to optimise this vital city asset to support economic growth and jobs for our state.

Currently users can experience significant delays throughout the day both along and across the corridor, not just at peak times. These delays also affect pedestrians and cyclists increasing their wait times. The result is a considerable impact to the economy through lower productivity and reduced amenity for the local community. The risk of casualty crashes along the corridor is about 50% higher than for comparable arterial roads.

Figure 1 below illustrates the [SmartRoads](#) Preferred Traffic Routes designated for Melbourne and the substantial distances between them. The rest of the transport network provides for other key priorities & activities such as: public transport priority, local access and Strip Shopping Centres.

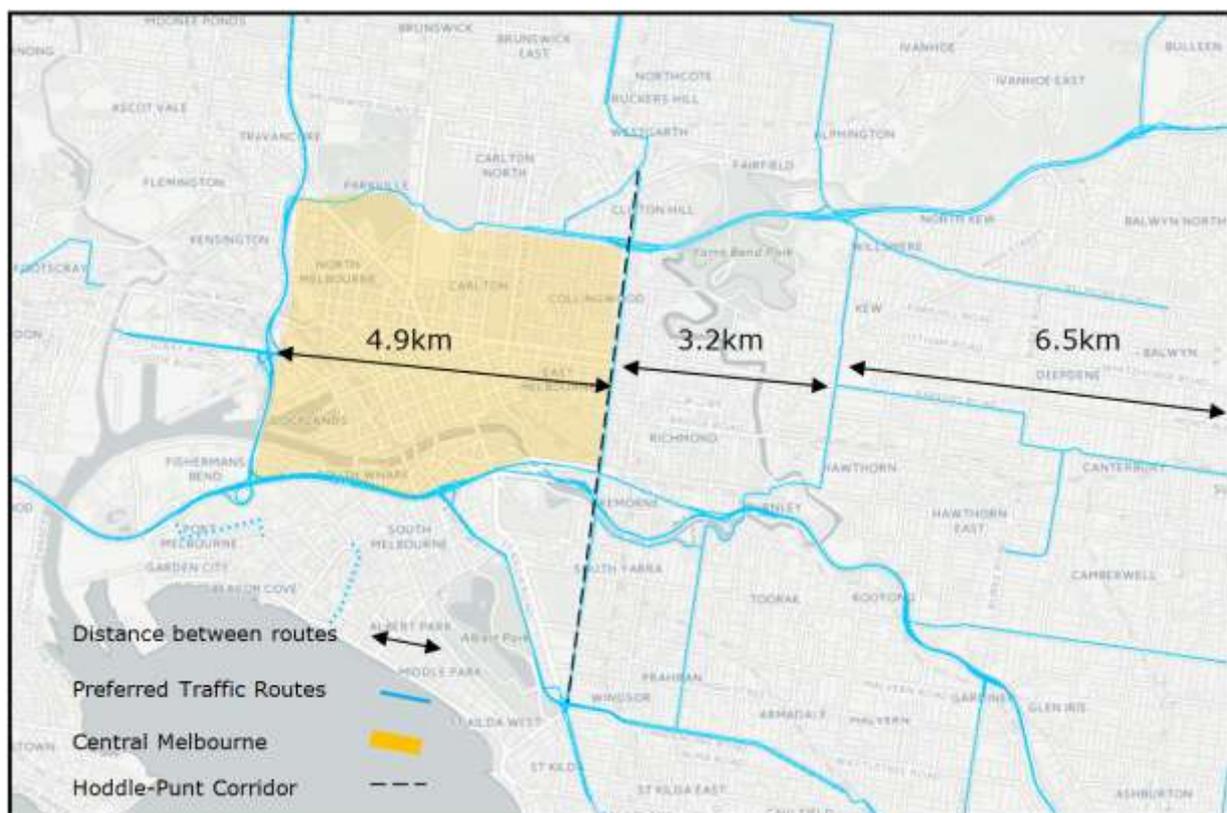


Figure 1 – SmartRoads Preferred Traffic Routes

Figure 2 is a select link analysis generated by the Victorian Integrated Transport Model. It basically illustrates, from a high level view where the model calculates people who cross the red line have come from and where they are going to. It clearly shows the strategic importance of the Hoddle-Punt corridor for connecting people with jobs and opportunities across the city and therefore the need to operate this link efficiently and safely for all road users.

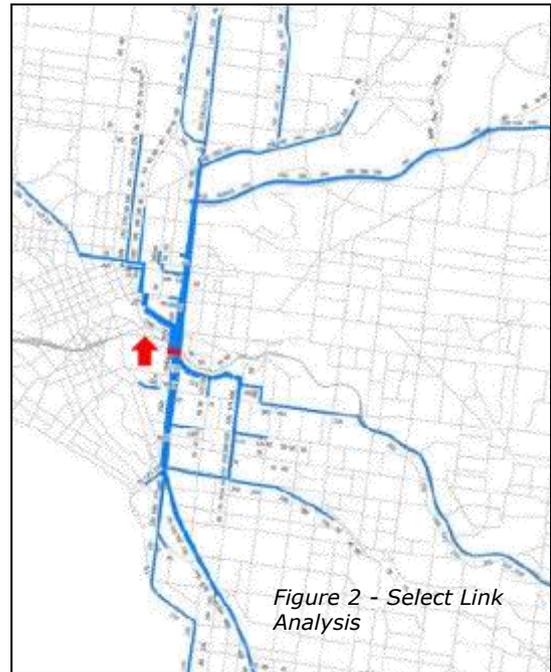


Figure 2 - Select Link Analysis

### 3 PLANNING CONTEXT

#### 3.1 Application of Transport Integration Act 2010

Any changes to the Hoddle-Punt Corridor need to be planned and undertaken with regard to the *Transport Integration Act 2010*.

The Act sets out a vision for Victoria's transport system that supports a city that is inclusive, prosperous, safe and green, maximise opportunities and reduce risks. All Victorian transport planning and management needs to have regard to the six key objectives of the Act: environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, safety, integration of land use and transport planning; and efficiency, coordination and reliability.

#### 3.2 Applying a Network Strategy

While private vehicles remain the most popular way to travel, this behaviour is changing as factors such as congestion, fuel costs and health encourage people towards more active, efficient and/or affordable transport modes. To accommodate the growing number of residents and jobs across Melbourne, the Hoddle-Punt Corridor needs to cater better for public transport, walking and cycling, without losing sight of the economic importance of private and commercial vehicles for certain trips.

Successful cities strike the right balance between hosting an array of activities on the one hand and providing a transport system that works well enough to connect people with jobs and opportunities

A Network Strategy has been developed with this view in mind (Page 15 – Concept Options Report). The strategy illustrates that different streets and intersections need to be operated differently depending on the priority mode and adjacent activity. This sets the parameters for developing and implementing solutions.

Figure 3 below is an extract from the network strategy showing just the Preferred Traffic Routes. It illustrates there are significant opportunities to improve amenity for activity centres and levels of service for priority modes within the orange areas by operating Punt Road and Williams Road more efficiently. Refer to page 15 of the Concept Options Report for the whole network strategy, including public transport priority routes.

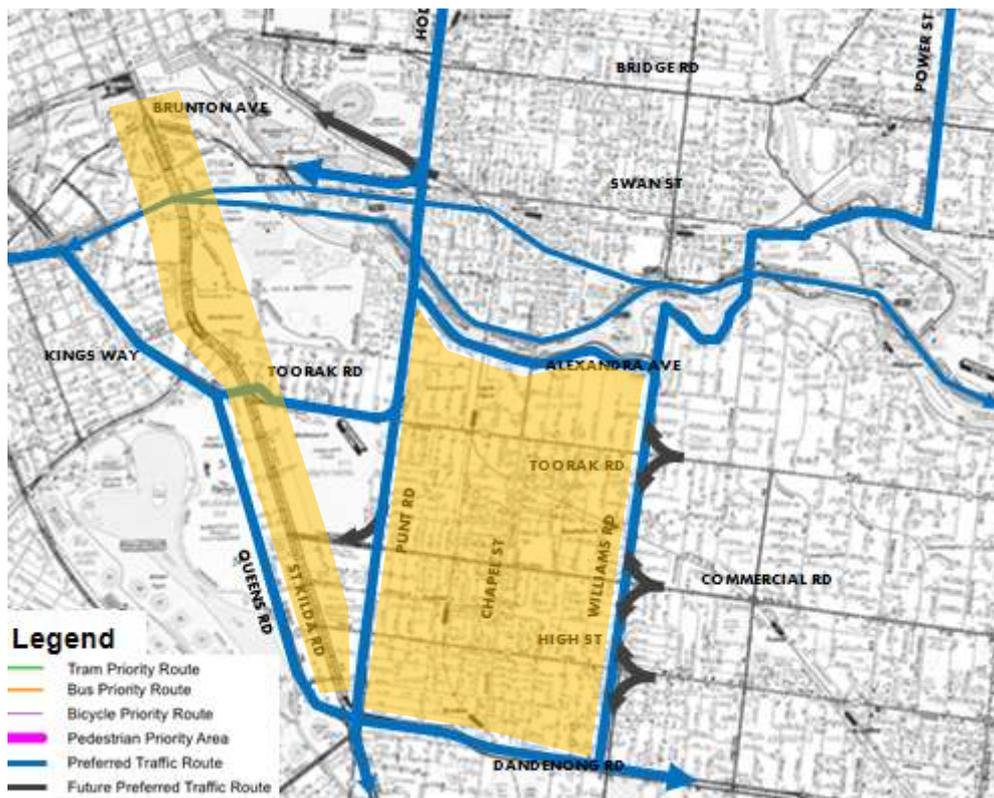


Figure 3 - Network Strategy Preferred Traffic Routes

## 4 OVERVIEW OF CONCEPT OPTIONS

This section provides a brief description of the concept options outlined in ARUP's report.

It is noted VicRoads will make a formal response regarding the options and PAO review to the Independent Advisory Committee as part of its calls for submissions. This response will be made public and is expected to be submitted late-2015.

VicRoads may also provide a further submission to the Committee in response to the submissions received to provide further context and/or answers to queries.

### 4.1 Overview – Concept Options

It is important to recognise that the concept options developed and assessed by ARUP are not final solutions. They are rather themes and concepts that could be considered for implementation in the short to long-term. Any proposals will need to go through further community consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, prior to implementation.

There are a number of elements that are common to each of the concepts, as well as assumptions for improvements to the network, these are outlined on Page 18 of the Concept Options Report.

### 4.2 Description – Concept Options within the Existing Road Reserve

**Concept 1 – 24/7 Clearways:** Extends clearways to 24hrs 7 days a week from the current arrangement of both directions morning (6:30am to 9:30am) and evening (3:30pm to 6:30pm). This would also include restrictions of parking on east-west arterial

roads for approximately 100m either side of the intersection to maximise intersection efficiency and public transport priority.

VicRoads would consider converting suitable properties it owns, into additional parking along Punt Road, this assumes these properties will remain within the PAO.

**Concept 2 - Four Lanes with central right turn:** provides for four through lanes and a central right turning lane along the length of the corridor where feasible; improved tram priority lanes and upgraded stops; and simplified traffic signal operations (reduced delays for priority movements) with changes to right turns - consistent with the network strategy. A displaced right turn intersection at Alexandra Avenue and Punt Road has been considered.

**Concept 3 - Four Lanes with median:** Similar to Concept 2 however a solid median is provided midblock instead of a right turning lane (right turn lanes still at signalised intersections). Minor side roads would then be converted to left in, left out access only. This option considers a connection between Punt Road and Batman Ave.

**Batman Avenue Connection:** The proposed Punt Road / Batman Avenue connection would allow the network to be operated differently to support broader objectives, such as reducing traffic volumes through the Melbourne Sports Precinct during events or providing alternatives when major events are taking place at Federation Square / Flinders Street Station. It is also likely to provide some relief for the road network at Swan Street / Brunton Avenue / Punt Road.

The roads highlighted in red (right) are those where potential opportunities might be presented to do something differently or provide increased priority in line with the network strategy.



Figure 4 - Batman Ave / Punt Rd Connection

**Concept 4 - Reversible Lanes:** Similar to Queens Road (to the west of Punt Road) overhead gantries would be installed to allow for a switchable lane (contra flow). This would provide for three lanes northbound during the am peak period and southbound during the pm peak period.

#### 4.3 Description - Options Utilising the Existing PAO

**Concept 5 – Concept 2 plus Widened Intersections:** The basis of this option is to build on the improvements that could be delivered in Concept 2, by providing additional capacity at major signalised intersections. This supports the bypass function of Central

Melbourne, improves bus reliability and allows more signal priority to be given to trams east-west (as the north-south direction is more efficient). This option also includes widening of the Punt Road Bridge across the Yarra River. This option would impact on approximately 65 properties (currently there are 140 properties within the PAO). Though 65 properties would be affected the number of actual buildings impacted could be less than a third.

**Concept 6 - 6 Lane Dual Carriageway:** The creation of a grand boulevard similar to Royal Parade or Victoria Parade. This would have three continuous through traffic lanes in both directions. Similar to previous concepts, the operation of right turn movements are modified in order to simplify traffic signal operations and better align with the network strategy. Existing footpaths would be widened on both sides of the road with extensive tree planting along the median and footpaths. A new dedicated cycleway could also be provided.

**Concept 7 – Dedicated Bus Lanes:** This option is a combination of Concepts 5 and 6. Instead of providing three continuous traffic lanes midblock (Concept 6) one lane would be allocated to buses and two for traffic, in both directions. At intersections three through lanes for general traffic would be provided for (Concept 5), instead of a dedicated off-road cycleway continuous bus lanes through intersections would be implemented. Similar to previous concepts, the operation of right turn movements are modified in order to simplify traffic signal operations and better align with the network strategy.

## 5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 5.1 Engagement Process

The Hoddle Street-Punt Road community consultation period was open from Monday 24 August to Monday 21 September 2015. There were 668 contributions to the online consultation and 2920 individual interactions with user contributions (2279 likes and 641 dislikes). In addition to the online consultation, community drop-in sessions were held, with more than 100 people attending across the four sessions. Approximately 60% of attendees were interested in understanding more about the implications of the Punt Road Public Acquisition Overlay.

It is highlighted further opportunities will be afforded to the public to contribute their views on Punt Road either through the independent PAO review process or the '*Punt Road Transport Investigation*' being undertaken by VicRoads.

The consultation process will continue to be critical in VicRoads decision making. A number of great ideas were received and these will be feed into the refinement of recommended options in the future.

### 5.2 Who we heard from

In total, 280 participants commented on the section of Punt Road, south of the Yarra River. Of these participants, most were concerned with issues relating to Traffic and Freight (54 per cent), as shown in Figure 6.

Private Car Users made up the largest proportion of participants (30 per cent), followed by Residents (21 per cent), as shown in Figure 5.

Noting 20% of participants choose to not answer.

Figure 6 Overall feedback categories

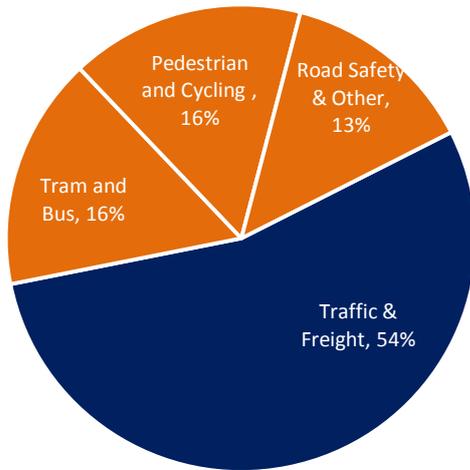
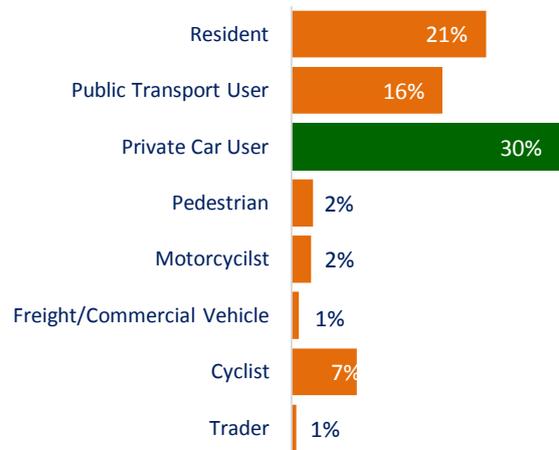


Figure 5 Overall user types



### 5.3 What we heard

#### Congestion is a major issue

All groups were consistently concerned and frustrated by traffic congestion. Participants said that this congestion increases travel times and reduces public transport reliability.

#### Extended clearways are generally supported to improve safety & congestion

Participants generally supported extended or permanent clearways. Parked cars were often also identified as a danger for cyclists and a hindrance to buses.

#### PAO is a contentious issue

Many participants supported the overlay and subsequent widening of Punt Road to ease congestion. However, many participants were equally supportive of removing the overlay, suggesting it would make congestion worse (due to increase in traffic).

#### Prioritising public transport widely supported to encourage alternatives to the car.

There was broad support to prioritise public transport to ease congestion and encourage alternatives to car travel.

#### Cyclists and pedestrian amenity is perceived as poor

Participants reported that bicycle infrastructure on Punt Road is insufficient. Cyclists often didn't feel there were better alternative. Participants also raised concerns about the narrowness of the footpaths which was of particular concern as there are a number of schools in hospitals in the area.