

Ms Melissa Alessandrini
Director – Program Delivery
Public Transport Victoria

Metropolitan North West Region
12 Clarke Street
Sunshine Victoria 3020
Telephone (03) 9313 1333

Send Correspondence to:
mnw.mail@roads.vic.gov.au
or Fax (03) 9313 1175

Parcels and Drawings to:
Private Bag 4000
Sunshine Victoria 3020

vicroads.vic.gov.au

Contact: David Niemiecki
Telephone: 9313 1154
Our Ref: 15640165

Dear Ms Alessandrini

NICHOLSON STREET ROUTE 96 - TRAM STOP UPGRADE PROPOSALS

As our teams have discussed, following on from the traders meeting on 18 March 2019, VicRoads has reviewed the current options being considered for the Nicholson Street Route 96 tram stop upgrade. This includes a traffic lane reduction in both the northbound and southbound directions from two traffic lanes down to one (between Alexandra Parade and Brunswick St) and a speed limit reduction to 40km/h.

VicRoads has worked closely with PTV/Yarra Trams in the design process to ensure that all tram stop locations provide the best serviceability for patrons. VicRoads has no objection to the current PTV detailed designs including the trams stop upgrade locations and stop types.

Observations of the southbound traffic along Nicholson Street (Alexandra Parade to Brunswick St), revealed that the existing queue lengths could extend to approximately 370m north of Alexandra Parade and subsequent traffic queuing at other intersections, including Reid Street, with queue lengths of approximately 150m.

The VicRoads traffic modelling for a one lane option at the intersection of Nicholson Street and Reid Street revealed significant queuing in the order of 800m in both the northbound and southbound directions. This was largely due to right and left turning vehicles frequently blocking the through traffic lanes to wait for gaps between trams, oncoming vehicles and pedestrians.

Further to the above, the Movement and Place objective for this section of Nicholson Street sets a certain level of service for all modes to balance priority for all road users. The above one lane reduction all the way along Nicholson Street will likely lead to a reduction in the level of service for trams which is the highest priority mode and will result in significant queuing along Nicholson Street. To mitigate this level of services further changes would then be required like banning the right turn movements. This is not considered appropriate as the change would adversely impact local community access and shift this problem to another intersection, potentially leading to rat running through local streets to get around the turn bans.

Based on the above, VicRoads reconfirms its support for a mid-block single traffic lane in the northbound direction only, retaining the number of traffic lanes at the signalised intersections. VicRoads does not support a traffic lane reduction at intersections for tram stop 20, 21 and 22. This outcome is consistent with the VicRoads approval of the southern tram stop upgrades on Nicholson Street, between Victoria Parade and Johnston Street. One of the key issues raised during Traders meeting was feedback that people feel unsafe parking in a 60km/h speed environment and exiting their vehicle. With one lane of traffic, it is considered to be simpler to park and will lead to opportunities for a buffer zone to be provided between parked vehicles and the through traffic lane.

In relation to the southbound direction, it was noted that even outside of the typical peak hours, traffic flow was much higher than in the northbound direction. Therefore, two full lanes are required in the southbound direction at all times.

In terms of the speed limit, it is important to note that speed limit changes are assessed using the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines. The guidelines ensure appropriate, credible and consistent speeds are applied across the state, with consideration given to factors such as the number of access points along the route, the nature of the road environment, neighbouring development, nearby intersections and the safety history of the road. The road environment should be such that motorists can comfortably travel at the desired speed limit without the need to physically put up a speed sign.

Nicholson Street is designated as an 'arterial road' and its purpose is to carry higher traffic volumes than local roads. Arterial roads in built-up areas are generally signposted at higher speed limits than local roads, in accordance with the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines. This encourages motorists to use these roads over alternative local roads.

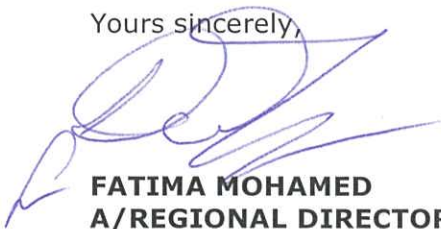
Currently, tram stops 16 through to 22 have traffic lane widths which vary significantly with the narrowest lane being 2.52m. In the proposed tram stop upgrade designs, the narrowest traffic lane width will increase to minimum 2.72m. With the minimum traffic lane width along Nicholson Street increasing the road environment will further support the current speed limit of 60Km/h.

Based on the road environment post this project, VicRoads does not support a full-time 40km/h speed limit at this time. VicRoads is willing to discuss a holistic network view of the Nicholson Street corridor with Yarra City Council.

VicRoads is reviewing road clearance dispensations with an aim of retaining street trees and to minimise the relocation of shop awnings adjacent to the tram stop upgrade locations on Nicholson Street. VicRoads will continue to work with PTV with an aim to further enhance the tram stop designs and minimise impacts to street amenities.

If you have any queries regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Hazel Lirios, Team Leader – Movement and Safety Central on 9313 1169

Yours sincerely,



FATIMA MOHAMED
A/REGIONAL DIRECTOR – METRO NORTH WEST
02/04/2019