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**To: Mayor and Councillors**

Councillor Gabrielle de Vietri  
Councillor Anab Mohamud  
Councillor Stephen Jolly  
Councillor Amanda Stone  
Councillor Bridgid O'Brien  
Councillor Sophie Wade  
Councillor Claudia Nguyen  
Councillor Edward Crossland  
Councillor Herschel Landes

**CEO Executive**

Chief Executive Officer  
Director Corporate, Business and Finance  
Director Planning and Place Making  
Assistant Director Planning and Place Making  
Director Community Wellbeing  
Director City Works and Assets  
Group Manager Chief Executive's Office  
Group Manager People, Culture and Community  
Acting Group Manager, Advocacy and Engagement

**From: Bruce Phillips**

**Date:** 28<sup>nd</sup> January, 2021

**Subject: Elizabeth Street Bike Lane Project – Quarter 1 Survey Results**

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1. This memo updates Councilors on the pilot trial of protected bike lanes in Elizabeth Street following the completion of a comprehensive data collection exercise and on-street intercept surveys conducted in November 2020.
2. On 15 September 2020, Council resolved that:

*... a formal trial update report is scheduled which details data collected 3 months after the trial has been in operation;*

*... further parking occupancy surveys are commissioned and being undertaken in preparation for a first formal evaluation period report to Council; and*

*... as part of the evaluations during this 12-month period, there would be intercept surveys with persons using Elizabeth Street including residents, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to further inform the evaluation of the trial for Council consideration.*

## Background

3. Elizabeth Street is designated as a strategic cycling corridor by the Department of Transport and connects the central city via Albert Street in East Melbourne to Richmond and the inner east suburbs.
4. There is a Council commitment to delivering protected bike lanes on Elizabeth Street in the Bike Strategy Refresh 2016 and as a pilot trial in the Climate Emergency Plan 2020. This project was originally scheduled for delivery by 2015 in the 2010-2015 Bike Strategy. Both these documents acknowledged that delivering protected bike lanes would require the removal of car parking on one side of the street.
5. The pilot trial was installed in July 2020 following a Council resolution in December 2019 to deliver the protected bike lanes in a timely manner as part of a regional cycling route. This trial consists of changes to linemarking and use of bollards to delineate the bike lanes. Previous Council reports provide the basis of the design including its widths and landscaping potential.
6. Upon installation some concerns were raised by some local residents regarding the design, and the trial delivery process using the iterative (pop-up) method. These concerns are detailed at length in the September 2020 council report are summarised as follows:
  - General objections to the removal of car parking from the northern side of Elizabeth Street
  - Access and convenience for loading, deliveries and pick up/drop offs
  - Public safety and perceived safety due to stated need to often park further away from their homes and the concerns stated regarding anti-social behaviour issues on or near Elizabeth Street
  - The width of the traffic lanes and space for emergency vehicles
  - The width of the parking bays and space for people getting in and out of cars
  - New parking restrictions and impacts on visitor parking in the evening
  - New parking restrictions and impacts on businesses generally during the day including medical practices and places of worship
  - Unsightly bollards and visual clutter
  - Sightlines for vehicles turning from some side streets
  - Difficulties for pedestrians crossing Elizabeth Street
7. These concerns were noted, considered and responded to in detail by officers via conversations with residents, the September 2020 council report and then via questions in the council chamber.
8. The project has also received a significant amount of praise by other community members. It has been seen as progressive and in line with what Council should be doing given its cycling policy objectives. Other feedback received supporting the trial is summarised as follows:
  - The protected bike lanes are a major upgrade
  - People feel far safer as they are away from car doors and passing traffic
  - The bike lanes are wide enough for a comfortable journey and allow overtaking and parents to ride side-by-side with children
  - Narrower traffic lanes encourage people to drive more slowly

## General Observations about COVID-19 Impact on Travel

9. As with other parts of the economy, the global pandemic has led to rapid changes in transport trends in all Australian cities. During the Stage 2 lockdown, there was a sharp decline in movement across metropolitan Melbourne of all transport modes, particularly public transport. Since lockdown ended in November, there has been a steady increase in car use because it is perceived to be the safest way to travel around the city and maintain social distancing. This usage is expected to exceed pre-pandemic levels by at least 20 per cent until a vaccine is widely distributed to the general population.
10. Demand for active transport modes is also rising as people avoid public transport. There has already been a significant uptake in recreational cycling during the pandemic to add to the doubling of commuters cycling along some bike corridors in Yarra over the last 10 years. These trends represent a major challenge as these transport modes are competing for access to the same limited street space in Yarra.
11. It is still too early to predict the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on transport in Melbourne, however it is widely predicted that demand for walking and cycling will continue to rise. Some studies suggest that one third of people will not return to work in offices full time and will opt to continue to work from home more regularly.

### **Intercept Survey**

12. An intercept survey was conducted of 180 individuals at random on Elizabeth Street by an independent consultant to understand how the community feel about the pilot trial of protected bike lanes. A broad cross-section of the community was surveyed including both younger and older persons, males, females, local residents, people passing through, pedestrians, cyclists, and car drivers.
13. The intercept surveys were undertaken in English. Every person who was approached at random spoke and understood English at an appropriate level, be it as a first or second language. 180 people of those approached then agreed to stop and participate in the survey. The experienced survey consultant did not believe that language and communication was a significant issue when undertaking the surveys.
14. The following paragraph and graph summarise the survey results.

**Satisfaction with the Elizabeth Street Protected Bike Lane by method of travel**  
**Yarra City Council - 2020 Elizabeth Street Intercept Survey**  
*scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)*

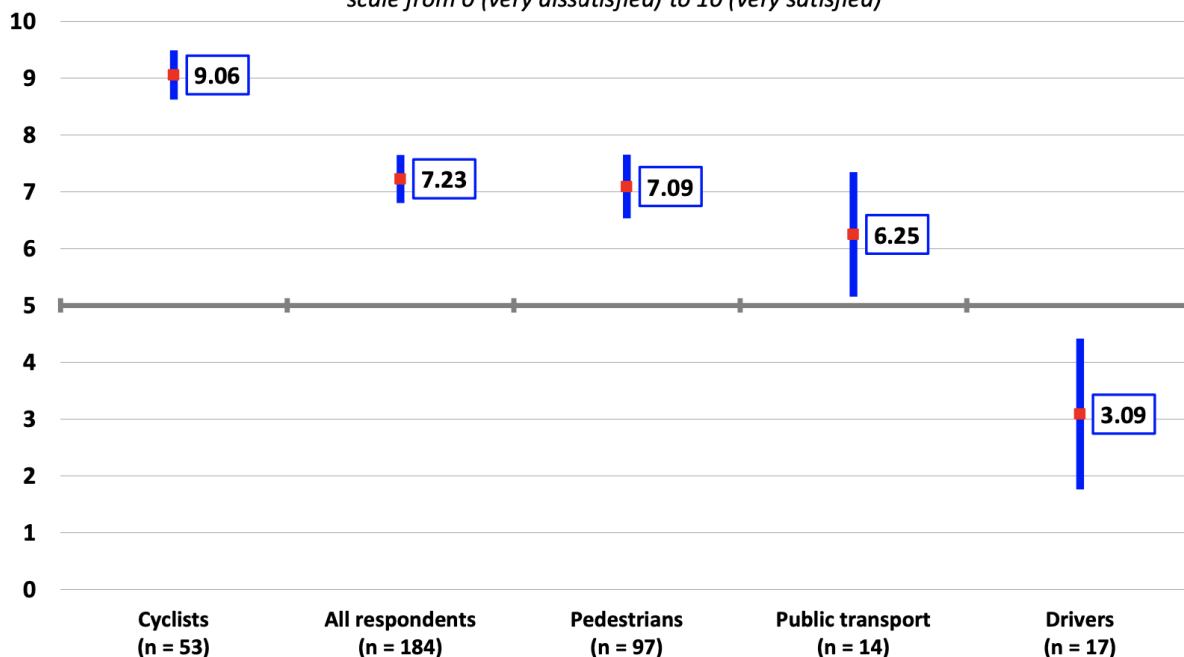


Diagram 1: Metropolis Research, November 2020

15. Most respondents were relatively local with 60% already being aware of the trial. Cyclists made up 28% of all the respondents and were extremely satisfied with the project scoring it 9.06 out of 10. The biggest reason for supporting the project was that people felt safer.
16. Overall 72% of all 180 respondents stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the project. Only 15% stated they were dissatisfied or very satisfied which is considered by officers to be a small relative number all things considered. Many of the dissatisfied respondents are people looking to park cars on Elizabeth Street. Parking supply has been reduced to make space for this project thereby making it more difficult to park, hence it was always highly unlikely that this particular segment would be supportive of the project.
17. The full consultant report with more detailed information and other key findings is provided at Attachment 1.

### Cycling Volumes

18. Comprehensive cycling count data was collected by an independent consultant.
19. Key findings and comparisons are provided below. The data has been divided between the sections west and east of Lennox Street which is a key north-south feeder route to Elizabeth Street.

	KEY DATA & STATISTICS	FEBRUARY 2020 <i>(Pre-Trial)</i>	NOVEMBER 2020
<b>ELIZABETH STREET WEST</b>	Weekday Avg. Total No. Of People Cycling	686	384
	Commuter (Peak) Cycling Weekday Avg. %	61%	49%
	Weekend Bike Volume Total	380	399
	85% Speed Km/h	27.2	26.3
	Avg. Speed Km/h	22.1	21.6
<b>ELIZABETH STREET EAST</b>	Weekday Avg. Total No. Of People Cycling	391	311
	Commuter (Peak) Cycling Weekday Avg. %	58%	48%
	Weekend Bike Volume Total	351	319
	85% Speed Km/h	28	26.4
	Avg. Speed Km/h	23	20.6
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	Weekday Peak Avg. % Of Females Cycling	14%	23%
	Weekday Peak Avg. No. Of Children Cycling	2	13
	Weekday Peak Avg. % of Children Cycling	0.3%	4%

20. From the table the following should be noted:
- The volumes and speeds of cyclists travelling along Elizabeth Street have generally declined, especially for commuter cycling, due to COVID-19 rather than as a result of this project specifically;
  - There is now roughly an equal proportion of commuter and everyday cyclists during the week;
  - There is a greater proportion of people cycling for everyday activities than previously;
  - Weekend volumes have remained the same;
  - Cycling speeds have been reduced which reflects the uptake of everyday cycling and by a broader demographic; and,
  - The average number of woman and children during the weekday peaks has increased.
21. At this stage, it is difficult to quantify what the project has done to cyclist volumes due to COVID-19. However we will have a clearer picture when more surveys and counts are done as life in Melbourne hopefully returns to a post-COVID normal.

### Traffic Volumes and Speeds

22. Daily traffic volumes on Elizabeth Street have decreased by nearly 30% compared to pre-pandemic baseline levels. Peak-hour traffic volumes have also decreased by around 35% while average traffic speeds have reduced by up to 7%. The table below summarises the key traffic data findings.

KEY TRAFFIC DATA	February 2020 (Pre-trial)	November 2020 (Q1)	Pre-Trial vs Q1 (%)
<b>ELIZABETH STREET WEST</b>			
Total Weekday Daily Avg. Traffic Volume	9837	6956	-29%
Total Avg. Daily Traffic Volume	8946	6400	-29%
Weekday Peak-Hour Avg. Traffic Volume	849	543	-36%
Total Average Traffic Speed (km/h)	32.4	32.4	0%
Total Heavy Vehicle % of Traffic	6.2	6.9	+11%
<b>ELIZABETH STREET EAST</b>			
Total Weekday Daily Avg. Traffic Volume	9711	7402	-24%
Total Avg. Daily Traffic Volume	9024	6710	-26%
Weekday Peak-Hour Avg. Traffic Volume	831	572	-31%
Total Average Traffic Speed (km/h)	32.7	30.5	-7%
Total Heavy Vehicle % of Traffic	5.2	2.7	-48%

### Parking Occupancy

23. Extensive parking occupancy surveys were conducted on Elizabeth Street along with nearby on-street and off-street parking facilities by an independent consultant. In total, 1504 parking bays were surveyed. The outcome of the assessment is that parking is generally available albeit the provision is slightly reduced as a result of the need to remove car parking to deliver this project. As with everything else, COVID-19 has impacted demand for car parking.
24. The table below summarises the outputs of the parking surveys.

ELIZABETH STREET PARKING OCCUPANCY SURVEY PRE-TRIAL VS Q1 SUMMARY RESULTS TABLE				
LOCATION	DATA	FEBRUARY	NOVEMBER	CHANGE %
ELIZABETH STREET	TOTAL NO. PARKING BAYS	148	72	-51%
	AVG. OCCUPANCY %	74%	86%	+16%
NEARBY ON-STREET	TOTAL NO. PARKING BAYS	308	308	0%
	AVG. OCCUPANCY %	67%	52%	-21%
OFF-STREET	TOTAL NO. PARKING BAYS	1124	1124	0%
	AVG. OCCUPANCY %	53%	46%	-14%
TOTAL AREA	NO. OF PARKING BAYS	1580	1504	-5%
	AVG. OCCUPANCY %	58%	49%	-16%

25. The following observations are made based on the survey results:
  - a. Average parking occupancy on Elizabeth Street has increased which is as expected given the reduced parking provision on this street;
  - b. Almost 50% of all on-street parking bays within a short walking distance of Elizabeth Street are typically vacant, hence there continues to be parking availability in the area (particularly on Regent and Garfield Street); and,
  - c. Around 54% of all off-street parking bays are unoccupied at any one time. DHHS staff do not believe that this project has had a significant impact on DHHS residents with cars as they have allocated off-street parking.
  
26. Summary tables with more detailed information on the results of the parking occupancy survey are provided at Attachment 2.