

CITY ROAD MASTER PLAN

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES REPORT



JUNE 2014

PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH
melbourne.vic.gov.au/cityroad



CITY OF MELBOURNE

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Issue 2 - Final Report

June 2014

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Testing Grounds and Arts Centre,
City Road East

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for a City Road Master Plan

The City of Melbourne is leading the development of a draft City Road Master Plan that aims to better balance the road's two key roles as both an important transport link and a people friendly place. This project is a key action from the Southbank Structure Plan, 2010 and responds to the changing role of the road as Southbank grows.

Delivering public realm improvements is the focus of the City Road Master Plan. It will explore options to change the layout and design of the road to address issues such as pedestrian safety, cycling access, transport movement and access, street character and quality, tree planting, water management and public transport provision.

A Changing Place

City Road's function is vital to the success of Southbank, which is now the fastest growing residential suburb in the City of Melbourne. An estimated 3500 dwellings are forecast to be built within Southbank by 2021.

Southbank is also a significant employment centre with over 42,000 workers, particularly in the Arts and Recreation sector. This is projected to grow significantly.

These changes amplify the need for improvements to the public realm of City Road. To date, the quality of the public realm has not kept up with the rate of development as Southbank completes its transformation from an industrial area to a mixed-use, capital city suburb.

What have we learnt so far?

The current design and layout of City Road present many issues for its users, as summarised below:

- City Road is an undesirable place to be with 90 per cent of experiences shared by residents being negative and 89 per cent of experiences shared by pedestrians being negative
- City Road is a difficult place to get around for all users (pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and drivers)
- City Road performs poorly on environmental measures

What are the opportunities?

There are many opportunities for positive change in City Road. With the length of the study area spanning close to two kilometres, some segments of the road will allow for greater change than others.

This report identifies a suite of opportunities which fall under three categories:

1. Four key moves that will significantly change the identity and performance of City Road. They are:
 - Enhance Boyd into a local hub
 - Re-establish a city connection
 - Enhance pedestrian comfort and access
 - Create a cycle street
2. General opportunities that can be considered along the full study area to improve the comfort, accessibility and performance of the street.
3. Specific site improvements that have been identified from a detailed site inspection and the traffic and analysis report.

Next steps

Opportunities identified in this report will be further explored and tested through the development of the draft Master Plan which will go out to the public for community comment before finalisation.

PART 1: A CHANGING PLACE

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The City Road Master Plan is identified in Council's Annual Plan 2013/14 as Priority Action 3.7 - "Develop a City Road Master Plan in line with Southbank Structure Plan objectives".

More specifically, the master plan will guide public realm improvements towards the creation of a civic spine in line with the Mobility and Access, Open Space Network and Sustainable Infrastructure strategies of the Southbank Structure Plan, 2010.

Southbank is our fastest growing suburb, with a significant amount of large-scale residential and mixed use developments recently completed, under construction or scheduled. This amplifies the need to improve the quality of the public realm in City Road. The master plan will have to address issues relating to both transport and urban design and balance the needs of various users and stakeholders.

This Issues and Opportunities Report provides an analysis of these issues and identifies opportunities to improve the road as a place for all people to get around and a desirable place to be.



Figure 1.1: City Road Master Plan Study Area

Study Area

City Road is under the shared management of the City of Melbourne and VicRoads. It is a declared arterial route and provides an important connection between Port Phillip Bay and the City.

The study area includes the length of City Road within the City of Melbourne, from the Westgate Freeway in the west to St Kilda Road in the east. It also includes Alexandra Avenue to the intersection with Linlithgow Avenue. In total, the length of the road is approximately two kilometres.

The road has been divided into three precincts due to the varying transport role and local characteristics along its length (see figure 1.1). Each precinct offers different issues and opportunities.

City Road West

City Road West runs from the Westgate Freeway in the west to Power Street in the east. This precinct has the greatest potential to fulfil a local neighbourhood function due to the local nature of traffic, the presence of the Boyd Community Hub and reasonable public transport links. It has an important role connecting Fishermans Bend to the City.

City Road East

City Road East runs from Power Street in the west to the St Kilda Road underpass in the east. This section of City Road is located between two key city destinations - the Arts Precinct and Yarra River Precinct. It has an important traffic link role as an alternative route to the CityLink Burnley Tunnel for placarded and over-dimensional vehicles and as the alternative route for all vehicles in times of tunnel closure.

Alexandra Avenue

Alexandra Avenue (between St Kilda Road and Linlithgow Avenue) has a similar traffic link role to City Road East, but runs through Alexandra Gardens and Queen Victoria Gardens which are major pedestrian destinations due to general recreational use and as host to many significant Central City events throughout the year.

Project stages

The project is being undertaken in four stages. This Issues and Opportunities Report is the culmination of the key findings in Stage 1 – Audit and Analysis. Stage 2 will involve the development of a draft Master Plan which, subject to approval by the Future Melbourne Committee will be available for public comment in Stage 3. The feedback from the broader community will be considered and inform a final Master Plan in Stage 4 (see figure 1.2).

Key Background Documents

This project has been informed by the work of various organisations over the past 10 years, including:

- Southbank Plan, 2006 (DTPLI)
- SmartRoads Network Operating Plan, 2012 (VicRoads)
- Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area Draft Vision, 2013 (Places Victoria)
- Montague Structure Plan, 2012 (City of Port Phillip)
- Yarra River Corridor Pedestrian and Cycling Safety Plan, 2013 (City of Melbourne)
- Plan Melbourne, 2014 (DTPLI)
- Melbourne Arts Precinct Blueprint, 2014 (Arts Precinct Working Group, State Government of Victoria)
- Southbank Developer Contribution Plan - Public Realm Design Intent for Streets and Local Centres, 2014 (City of Melbourne)

In addition to the existing background documents, the City of Melbourne has commissioned a new study to further understand the current traffic and transport issues and opportunities. This report is included at Appendix A.

- City Road Master Plan Issues and Opportunities Report, 2014 (GHD)

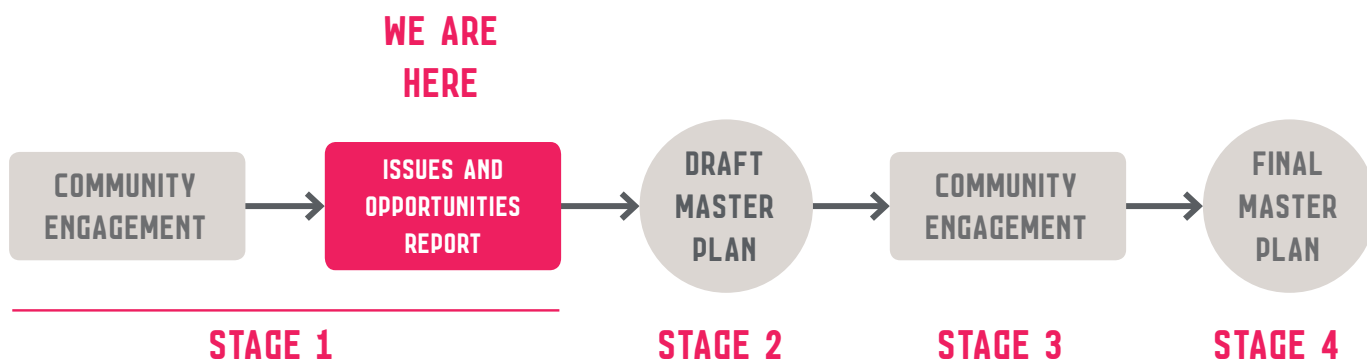


Figure 1.2: City Road Master Plan Project Staging



Sharing an experience on the online map, BOYD

The Community Experience

The views and experiences of the local community are essential in understanding City Road's function. During February and March the City of Melbourne asked the people who use City Road to share their experiences to help inform the draft master plan.

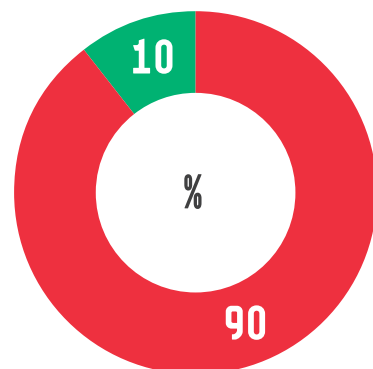
Participants could pinpoint their specific experiences on an interactive online map. They also had an opportunity to look at other people's experiences and comment on, or support them.

As well as describing their experience participants were asked a few questions such as; why they were on City Road, by what mode they were travelling and how their experience made them feel.

This data has allowed for a more qualitative analysis of the issues faced by different people and modes of travel, to be discussed in Part 2 of this report.

All quotes from the community used in this report are taken from this community engagement exercise.

**POSITIVE
EXPERIENCES**



**NEGATIVE
EXPERIENCES**

Figure 1.3: Experiences shared on online map

1372

ONLINE VISITS
TO PARTICIPATE
MELBOURNE

103

PEOPLE SHARED
THEIR EXPERIENCE
OF CITY ROAD

182

SPOTS DROPPED
ON INTERACTIVE
MAP

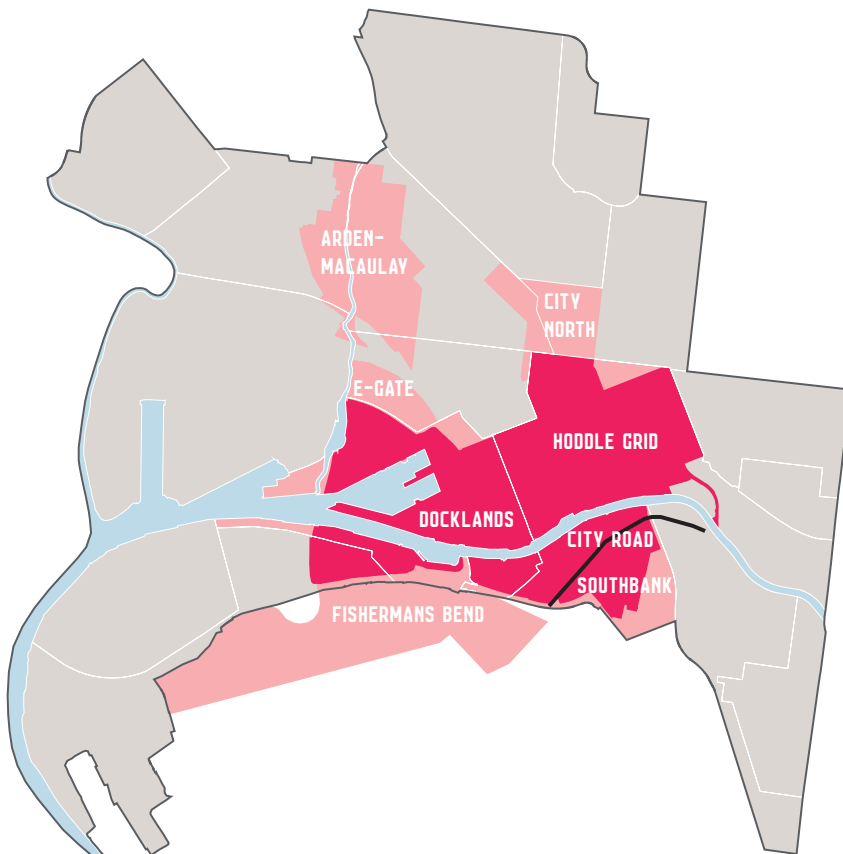
2. ONGOING TRANSFORMATION

Southbank: a snapshot

The future of City Road must be considered in the context of the Southbank neighbourhood and the needs of the residents, workers and visitors for whom City Road is a front door, a means of getting around and a lingering impression of our city.

Formerly an industrial area, Southbank was renewed in the 1990s into a mixed-use suburb of high rise buildings. The Southbank Structure Plan documented this transformation and confirmed Southbank's position as an integral part of Melbourne's expanded central city. This was cemented with the rezoning of much of the suburb into the Capital City Zone in 2013 (see figure 2.1).

Southbank is known as the home to many of Victoria's celebrated arts institutions, including the Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall, the Recital Centre and the Victorian College of Arts. It is the location of other key regional destinations such as the Crown Casino and the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre. There are 42,768 people employed in Southbank. The Arts and Recreation sector is the biggest employer, employing 8461 people or 19.8 per cent of the total employment (CLUE 2012 Small Area Report: Southbank, City of Melbourne).



**Figure 2.1: The Expanded Central City
(Urban Renewal Areas and Capital City Zone)**

Southbank is now the City of Melbourne's fastest growing residential suburb. Ninety-eight per cent of the 12,236 residents live in apartment buildings. Southbank is still, however, marked by a lack of essential neighbourhood services such as a full-line supermarket, a primary school, post office and open space and playgrounds (see figure 2.3). This is a significant issue with most residents having to leave their suburb to fulfil their everyday living needs, predominantly in the Hoddle grid or South Melbourne (Clarendon Street).

This growth of Southbank is expected to continue, particularly through greater residential development with an estimated 3,500 dwellings forecast to be built within Southbank by 2021.

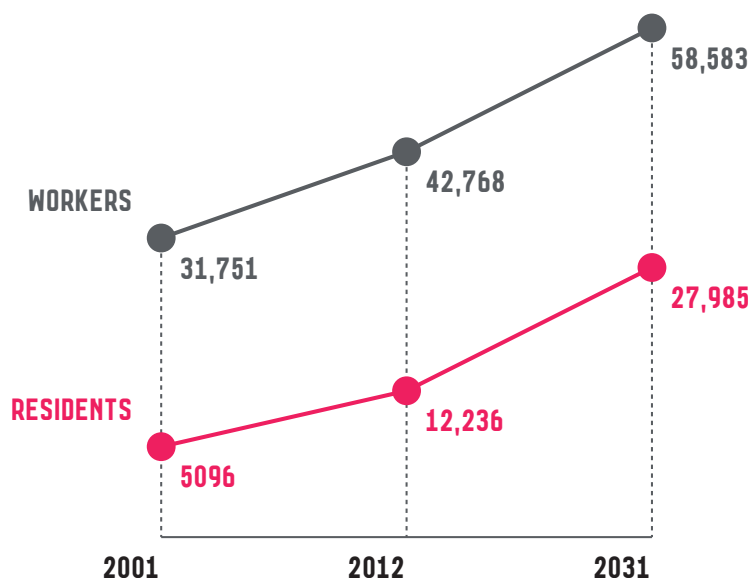


Figure 2.2: Southbank population growth: recent and projected

42,768

WORKERS IN
SOUTHBANK - 2012

12,236

RESIDENTS IN
SOUTHBANK - 2012

9058

DWELLINGS IN
SOUTHBANK - 2012

20

ARTS RELATED
ORGANISATIONS

8461

WORKERS IN THE ARTS
AND RECREATION
SECTOR

98%

OF RESIDENTS
LIVE IN AN
APARTMENT

7000

PEOPLE VISIT BOYD
LIBRARY EVERY
MONTH

34%

OF RESIDENTS
WALK TO WORK

1 IN 4

RESIDENTS DO
NOT OWN A CAR

1/2

HOUSEHOLDS ARE
FAMILIES

50

CHILDCARE
PLACES ARE
ESTABLISHED

24%

OF RESIDENTS TAKE
PUBLIC TRANSPORT
TO WORK

Broad Bean Organic Grocer,
Fanning Street, Southbank



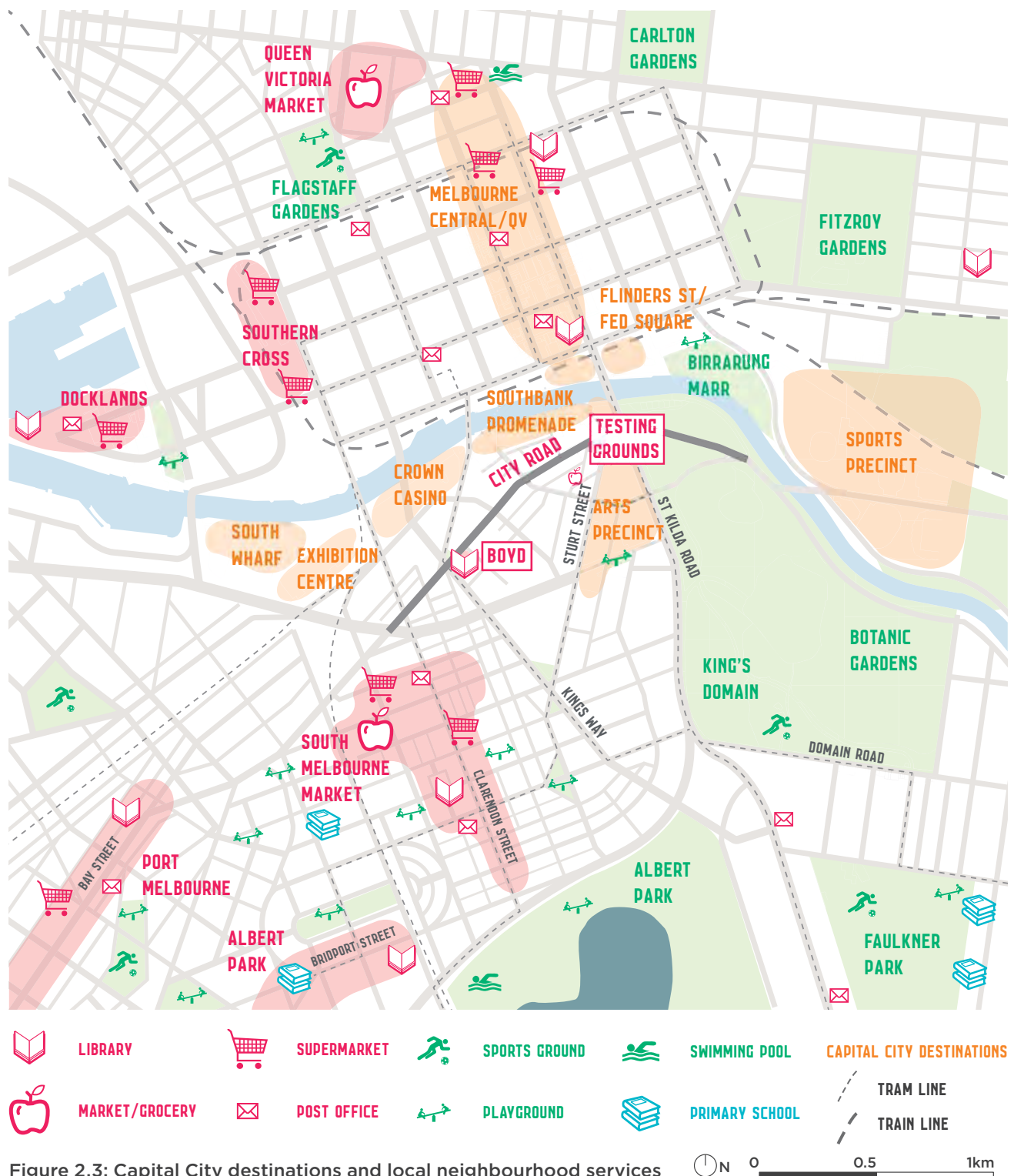


Figure 2.3: Capital City destinations and local neighbourhood services



City Road, corner of Clarke Street, 1930s
Source: State Library of Victoria

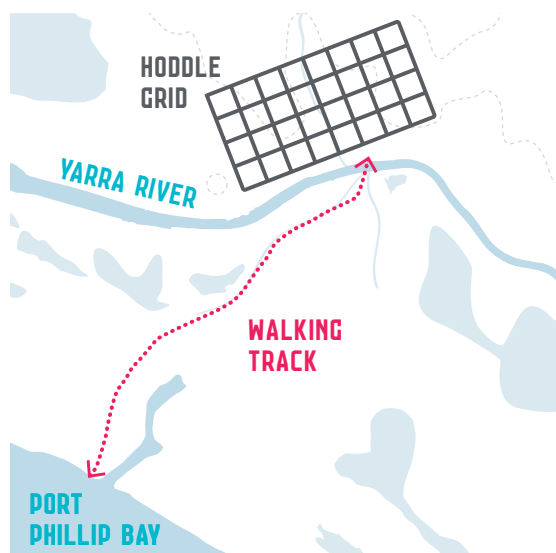
City Road: a short history

Pre-European Settlement

It is estimated that the area south of Birrarung (Yarra River) was occupied by indigenous people for tens of thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans in 1835. The earliest inhabitants of these low-lying wetlands were the Ngaruk-Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung (coastal tribe) and other clans of the Kulin Nation.

1830s

City Road has claims to being the first 'street' in Melbourne, when soon after European settlement a walking track was established between Port Phillip Bay and the newly laid Hoddle Grid along a dry creek bed.

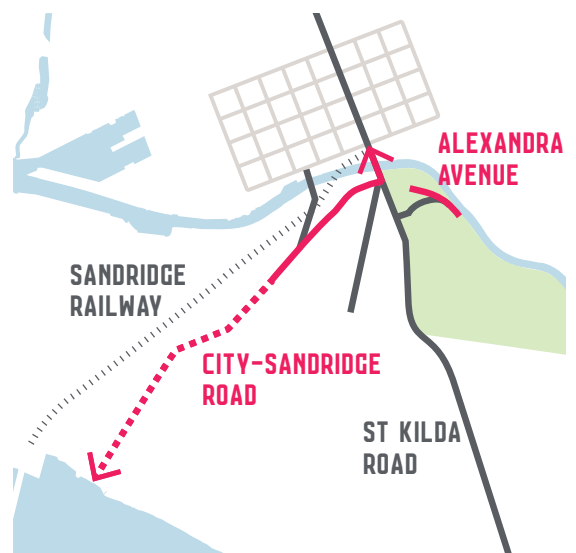


1850 - 1950

By the 1840s the track was formalised as City - Sandridge Road, connecting the fledgling city to the bay. In 1854, the Sandridge Railway was opened, becoming the primary means of moving goods to and from the port.

Over the next century, land use along City Road was predominantly industrial with warehouses, manufacturing and mechanics' workshops setting up along the road's length.

At its eastern end Alexandra Avenue was established and the Royal Botanic Gardens and parks along the south bank of the Yarra River were gradually expanded.

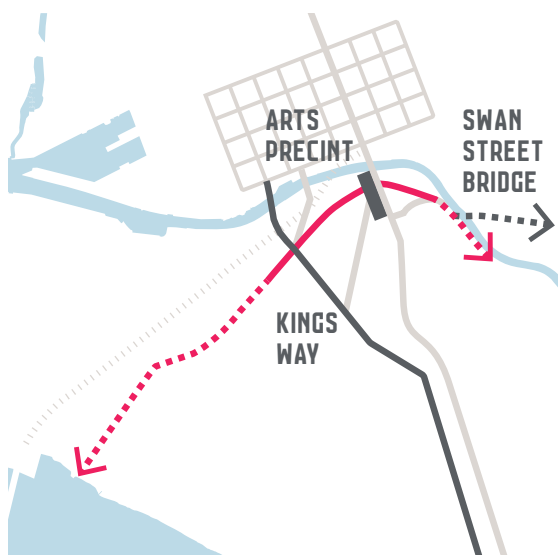


1960s

In the early 1950s the Swan Street Bridge was opened, connecting Alexandra Avenue to the sports precinct for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

In 1960, the Roy Grounds' Master Plan for the Arts Precinct along St Kilda Road was completed. City Road was sunken below St Kilda Road, severing its connection with Princes Bridge and Swanston Street.

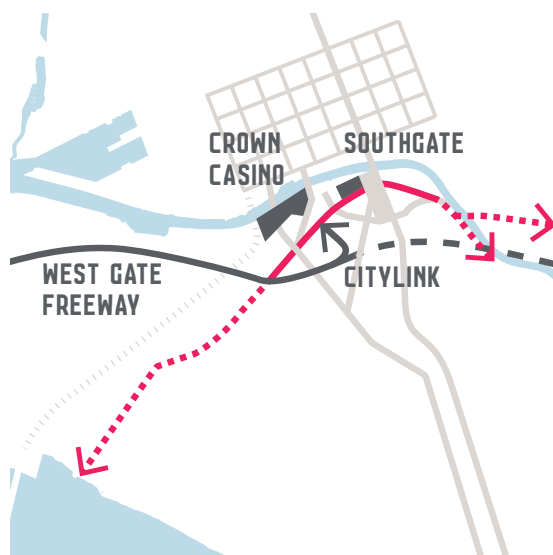
In 1961 the Kings Way overpass was opened, creating a new southern entrance to the city and forming a perceived barrier between Southbank and South Melbourne.



Late 20th century

In the 1980s urban renewal of Southbank commenced with the opening of the Southgate Complex and high rise office towers along the Yarra River. Crown Casino opened in 1997, continuing the trend of development fronting onto the Yarra River and turning its back to City Road.

In the 2000s, CityLink and the Burnley tunnel were opened. This vehicle traffic link reinforced City Road's role as the alternate route for placarded trucks crossing the city.



21st century

In the past decade the number of residents and workers in Southbank has drastically increased, particularly on the blocks fronting City Road. There are now over 5000 dwellings and over 20,000 jobs.

This influx of residents to the area reinforces the importance of City road as a street that must serve the broad needs of its local population.

2002

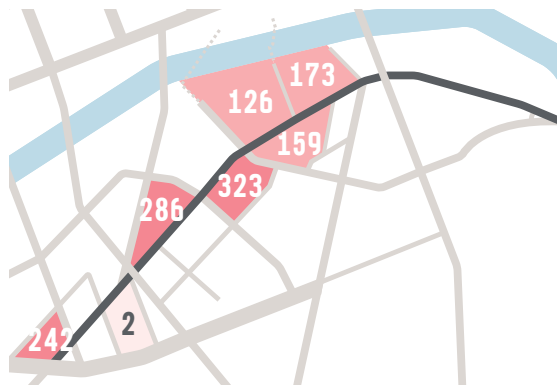


Figure 2.4: Number of dwellings within the blocks fronting City Road (2002)

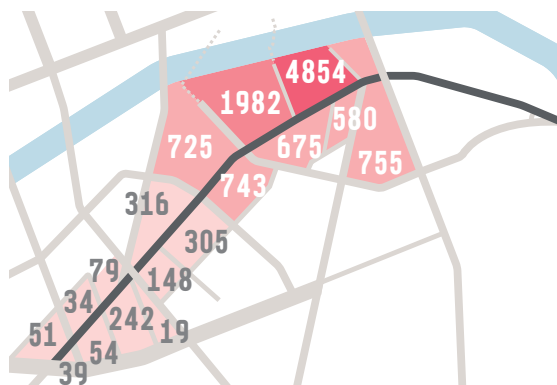


Figure 2.5: Number of jobs within the blocks fronting City Road (2002)

2012

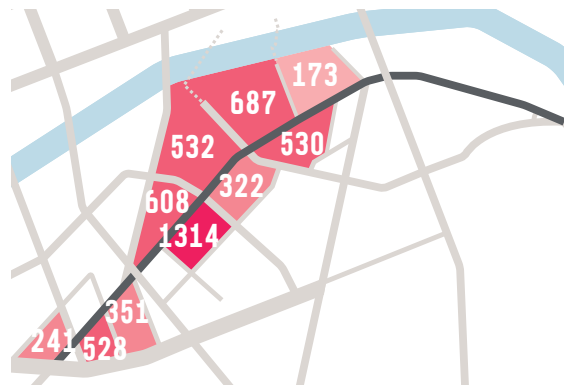


Figure 2.6: Number of dwellings within the blocks fronting City Road (2012)

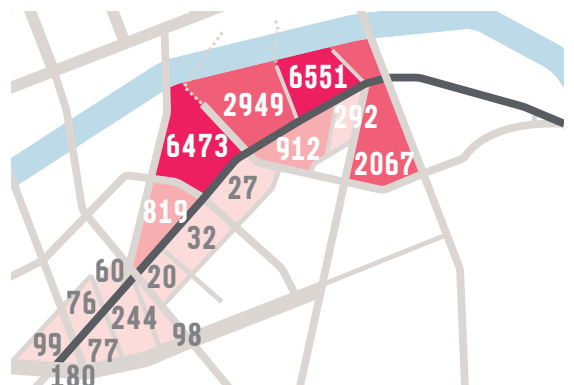


Figure 2.7: Number of jobs within the blocks fronting City Road (2012)

Seeds of Change

Although City Road has a long way to go to reach the 30 year vision set out in the Structure Plan, small seeds of change are emerging and gradually changing the look and feel of the road. This includes interventions such as Testing Grounds, and the development of the Boyd Community Hub.

Testing Grounds

At the eastern end of City Road is a recent project on the State-Government owned 'Y-Site' known as 'Testing Grounds'. It is a free, open-air art space used for a variety of purposes by locals and visitors alike, including recreation space, workshops, art installations, music performances, a bar and food venue (with temporary food trucks). This concept has quickly gained popularity and created a community-focused facility in City Road East.

“ Love Testing Grounds. A great use of the site, and brings some life back to the area.

Jane, resident

”

“ Using vacant land to create temporary public space like Testing Grounds is a fantastic idea. Initiatives like this is why I love Melbourne.

Garrath, resident

”





Kere Kere Cafe at BOYD, City Road West

Boyd Community Hub

The Boyd Community Hub opened its doors to the Southbank community in July 2012. Since then, they have received on average over 7000 visitors per month (approximately 230 per day) from Southbank and surrounding suburbs including South Yarra and South Melbourne.

Boyd has been described by many as the new 'heart' of Southbank, bringing the community together under one roof with a diverse range of community services including a library, cafe, maternal and child health services, meeting rooms, studios and various classes.

Boyd and Testing Grounds are unique cases that demonstrate the contribution greater civic activity can have in activating the local area and fostering street life. More creative land uses will undoubtedly continue over time.

The City Road Master Plan will be developed with the involvement of local businesses and service providers and will strive to incubate further local community and business activity.

“ The Boyd Library complex is a great resource for all community members, whether it is to borrow some books, have a coffee, access family support groups/resources, or participate in an art project.

Madeleine, student

“ Useful community services along the street front such as a post office, chemist, supermarket, doctor/dentist, hardware shop and restaurants which are easily accessible to the local residents would enhance the area.

Mark, resident

Priorities and desired outcomes

The Southbank Structure Plan, 2010 established a clear vision for City Road as the central civic spine for the Southbank neighbourhood. This means transforming the current road into a high quality, lively, safe and welcoming walking and cycling street. It is also acknowledged that City Road will have to retain access for vehicles and its function as an alternative route to the Burnley Tunnel for placarded and over-dimensional vehicles.

This was supported by a number of recommendations listed under the mobility, open space and sustainable infrastructure strategies contained in the plan. The strategies and associated recommendations can be summarised by the following overarching three key principles which will guide the development of the draft City Road Master Plan.

Define City Road as the spine of a local and capital city precinct

Make City Road a comfortable and inviting place to be

Improve access and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists

Achieving these three principles will be challenging within the established road width, where the amount of space to accommodate the varying needs of users is fixed. The future design of the road must consider and assess the priorities between different and sometimes competing outcomes, including transport access (all modes), the social life of the street (eg. footpath widths, outdoor dining, street furniture), an expansion of the urban forest (tree planting and sustainable water management) and civil infrastructure (above and below ground).

The following is a list of project outcomes sought by key stakeholders who were present at a workshop in December 2013 on existing conditions, issues and outcomes.

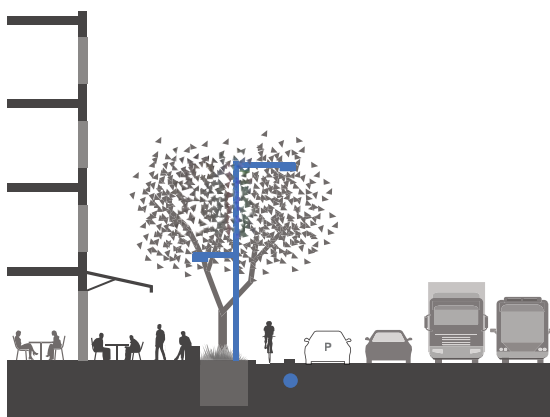
Urban forest

- Increase canopy cover.
- Increase diversity of tree species.
- Improve vegetation health and biodiversity.



Civil infrastructure

- Address flooding and capture storm water.
- Increase permeable surfaces.
- Explore opportunities for Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).



Transport Outcomes

- Maintain placarded vehicle function east of Power Street.
- Align with Network Operating Plan.
- Incorporate boulevards work that is underway as part of Plan Melbourne.
- Maintain public transport priority and increase provision as required to accommodate population density increase.
- Consider opportunities to simplify transport network.
- Prioritise north-south tram movement at key intersections (Kings Way and Clarendon Street).
- Ensure safety of cyclists on City Road.
- Align with land use change.
- Improve connectivity between City of Melbourne and City of Port Phillip.
- Allow for future Fishermans Bend connections.
- Improve and plan for east-west bus link from the bay, through Fishermans Bend to City Road.
- Put City Road back on the agenda for a bike route.



Public Realm Outcomes

- Continue Capital City street scape treatments and emphasise gateways and activity hubs.
- Enhance walkability through a more human scale and texture. Promote local character and provide places to gather, meet and connect.
- Improve freeway under crofts and the pedestrian underpass at St Kilda Road.
- Investigate lower vehicle speeds, new pedestrian crossings and signal times.
- Enhance way finding, particularly around transport interchanges.

