

8.3. BAKERY HILL URBAN RENEWAL PLAN - DESIGN UPDATE

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PURPOSE

1. To provide information on two Precinct Plans that have been prepared by design consultant - Hassell Ltd for the Bridge Mall Rejuvenation Project in response to a Council Briefing on 27 August 2020. The Precinct Plans note options for a one-way east bound or a one-way west bound traffic flow for Bridge Mall.

BACKGROUND

2. Background
At the 15 May 2019 Council meeting \$15 million was allocated for the rejuvenation of the Bridge Mall and at the October 30, 2019 meeting the *Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan* was formally adopted.
3. The *Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan 2019* outlined the vision and interventions in order to ensure that the precinct of Bakery Hill, including the Bridge Mall continues to play an important commercial and community role in the CBD. The Plan adopted three key themes:
 - A thriving economy, supporting and engaged and resilient community
 - A community connected to people, place and local destinations
 - A place with a distinctive identity and story to tell.
4. The genesis of the *Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan* was that Bakery Hill has been – and is - experiencing a steady decline in retail and commercial activity, measured through a significant increase in vacant shops. There is poor connection east to west and north to south and physical challenges in accessing the Mall. There is an observed underutilisation of the Bridge Street Mall (the commercial core of Bakery Hill) by community and visitors. Poor natural surveillance allows for antisocial behaviour which is increasingly evident, spreading across the precinct to include Curtis St and Little Bridge St.
5. The project aims to derive the following benefits:
 - Increased business confidence and activity as catalysts for accelerated economic, social and cultural growth;
 - Government investments facilitate private sector growth and remove investment barriers; and
 - Creating a point of difference to ensure regional competitiveness.
6. Hassell were selected as the preferred consultant through a competitive process in early 2020 to prepare plans for the renewal of the Bridge Mall Rejuvenation Project
7. Presentations to Council
The project team and Hassell briefed Council on two occasion in 2020 and 2021. The aim of the briefings was to update Councillors on the project progress and design thinking. At the 14 July 2020 briefing Hassell presented their analysis, design thinking and key findings. The key findings were:

- The introduction of traffic into the Mall should be one-way flow (not two-way) in order to provide adequate space for pedestrians, cyclist, play-space, activation and event spaces and to minimise the impact of vehicle movement through the space on the amenity and function of the precinct;
 - Hassell recommended that the direction of traffic flow should be east bound (towards Melbourne) on the basis that for every \$4 spent in the precinct \$3 is spent by locals and only \$1 is spent by visitors. This gave rise to the notion “that if Locals Love it, Visitors will Love it Too”.
8. At a briefing in August 2020, an overview was provided of the most recent community feedback undertaken on the Bridge Mall renewal project. That consultation was open to everyone in the community – and sought to test community views on the structure of the precinct, including specifically testing views on two-way traffic, one way (east bound or west bound options). Submissions were wide ranging but strongly reinforced the extensive feedback received during the almost 2 year period of preparation of the *Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Urban Renewal Plan* – that the space needs to be designed to be a pedestrian focused, inviting, safe and activated space.

Specifically, the feedback regarding the various street options put forward was:

- a. Two way traffic – very little support, largely because it would require the removal of the trees, outdoor dining spaces and the playground – which are three of the most valued aspects of the current area, and considered major drawcards for existing users of the area. The overwhelming support was for a more pedestrian focused space rather than re-introduction of another vehicle dominated space. General sentiment was this would be a step back than a step forward.
- b. One way – had overwhelming support from those who participated, but there were a range of perspectives on direction. A range of questions were posed by submitters regarding how the different directions would actually function and operate and differing perspectives provided on how each direction supported different outcomes.

Given the professional recommendation from Hassell on a single lane of movement aligning with the overwhelming community feedback received (including from the Bridge Mall Business Association and other key stakeholders), but noting the desire from community and Council for greater clarity on the function, operations and cost implications of the two variants (eastbound or westbound), two precinct plans has been prepared. These plans have taken the general concept of a single lane for vehicles in either direction, involved detailed engineering, planning, design and other technical analysis, to identify preferred layouts that best achieve the overall objectives of the project.

A detailed precinct plan for a two-way option has not been prepared as its form and layout are sufficiently understood to provide guidance needed in the next more detailed stage of design, if required. A two-way option would be a road design project without the wider design opportunities and implications of designing new areas for pedestrians, playgrounds, trees and green spaces.

9. A presentation to a Council Briefing on 3 March 2021 included the design team and Council officers and indicated that Officers preferred option was the one way, east bound traffic flow.
10. The Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan Design Statement
The Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan provides the following Design Statement to guide the development of the Bridge Mall Rejuvenation and preparation of the Precinct Plans.

“Create a distinctive identity that responds to the opportunities and constraints of the Precinct and reinforces the personality of Bakery Hill by reflecting a thriving, connected and distinctive community.”

1. Pedestrians: The final design outcome must prioritise the pedestrian experience. People should be able to move through the space feeling safe, confident and comfortable at any time of day. Vehicles may be present, but their influence should be limited.
2. Activation and Play: Spaces must be flexible, adaptable, equitable and maximise opportunities for activation through play, outdoor dining, events and festivals.
3. Resilience: Materials should be of high quality and finish selected to be adaptable, robust, sustainable in origin and resilient in a changing climate. This will include maximising green space and reclaiming some asphalted surfaces as green space.
4. Vibrant: The spaces should be attractive, magnetic, stimulating and well connected to other destinations in Ballarat's tourist network.
5. Urban Forest: The design outcome will maximise tree planting for shade, habitat and amenity within the space and within adjacent streets for a net gain within the precinct.
6. Local Heritage: The design outcomes should reflect the heritage architecture and Aboriginal cultural heritage by utilising the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach for site analysis, synthesis and design development.

KEY MATTERS

11. Precinct Plans - Key Design Principles
Hassell have been engaged to prepare two precinct plans for the Bridge Mall Rejuvenation Project showing options for east bound one-way traffic and west bound one-way traffic. The Precinct, for the purpose of this project, includes the area bounded by Lt Bridge Street to Curtis Street and Grenville Street to Humffray Street.
12. The Precinct Plans focus on the function of this precinct, movement of vehicles, pedestrian linkages, green space accrual, precinct amenity and treed boulevards. The main differences between the two Precinct Plans are the treatment of the two key entry points at Humffray Street and Grenville Street.
13. The recommendations for Lt Bridge Street and Curtis Street are identical for both of the Precinct options.
14. The Precinct Plans reflect an overall design intent and do not provide specific details on streetscape treatments. The preferred Precinct Plan (direction) will be developed into greater detail as part of the Design Development phase.
15. Why one-way?
Both two way and one way options were provided to Council via Briefings to which both Hassell and the project team presented. Whilst two-way did have some merit, the spatial benefits of one-way (either east or west) was preferred. In short, the one-way option provided the greater amount of flexible space - spaces where people could meet, play-space, outdoor dining, events, etc. The raw percentages of two-way noted 65% of the total space for roadway and parking compared with 32% for one-way. In order to achieve a pedestrian first outcome, one-way traffic provided the more optimal amount of flexible space for all.

16. Traffic Movement

Much has changed since the Bridge Mall was created in 1981. As part of the original Mall Project significant roadworks were put in place to accommodate for traffic movement. These works included land acquisition, building demolition and construction of Little Bridge Street and Curtis Streets between Humffray Street and Peel Street. These roads did not previously exist and were created as part of a huge and costly undertaking taking several years. Subsequently the Western Freeway had removed significant through traffic from this precinct and Mair Street continues to be developed as a precinct by-pass. Simply putting traffic back into the Mall creates another level of complexity in the movement of traffic in and around this precinct.

17. Consideration of traffic movement throughout the precinct indicates the following patterns of movement noting that the numbers are general and provide an understanding of the relationship between volume and movement in the precinct.

Summary of findings:

- Sturt Street carries the most movement at approximately 12,000 vehicles per day (51.40% east + 48.60% west).
- Victoria Street carries less traffic at 8,000 vehicles per day (assumed to be equally split between east and west flows).
- East-west movement through the Bridge Mall precinct via Curtis Street and Lt Bridge Street is approximately 10,800 vehicles per day combined (east bound Curtis 48% + westbound Lt Bridge St 52%).
- Some of this east-west flow through the precinct is charged by traffic from Humffray Street and Peel Street and Grenville Street to cover the shortfall from Victoria Street.
- It is worth also noting the influence of outflow of traffic along Mair Street (13,000 vehicles per day) and Dana Street (12,000 vehicles per day) suggesting significant bypass of this precinct.

*Source: Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Masterplan Preliminary Transport Design Commentary. ESR Transport Planning 18 July 2019
Traffic Flow Data July 2019*

18. Key Components of the Precinct Plans

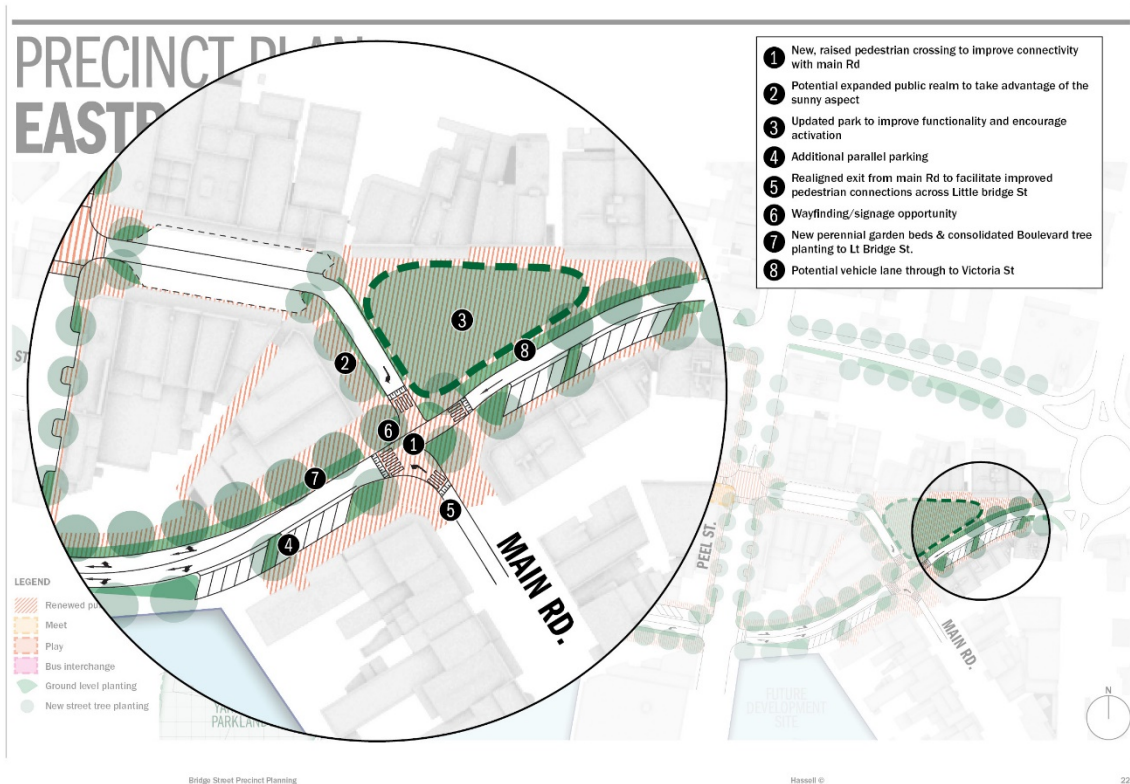
Arrival Experience

The boulevards of Sturt Street and Victoria Streets are – in their own right – gardens and provide a beautiful entrance into Ballarat from the east and the west. Grenville Street and Lt Bridge Street have been identified as key areas for improvement to enhance this experience and provide “green linkage” between the two boulevards. The Precinct Plans show significant upgrades to Grenville Street and Lt Bridge Street aimed at creating an appealing sense of entrance/departure that is commensurate with the qualities of Victoria Street and Sturt Street.

19. Views

The key views are from the top of Lt Bridge Street at Humffray Street looking west toward the CBD skyline and the view from Grenville Street looking west along Sturt St. Additionally there are important views into Bridge Mall from the west (Sturt St) which will be enhanced by the new intersection treatment at Grenville Street and the proposed parkland spaces. Views within Bridge Mall are localised by virtue of the buildings and existing tree canopy. The precinct plan seeks to identify the key existing views, upgrade views into Bridge Mall from the east and the west and improve localised views along Lt Bridge Street and Curtis Street.

East Bound Drawing below of Little Bridge, Bridge Street and Main Road derived from the Precinct Plan



20. Green Space

The Precinct plans show a 200% increase of greenspace throughout the precinct. This valuable new greenspace will allow the garden experience of both Sturt and Victoria Streets to be brought into the precinct.

21. Trees – A 300% increase in the number of trees is proposed in the precinct plan compared to existing (77 existing, 240 additional). With regard to Bridge Mall, the vast majority of trees will remain in both the east and west bound options noting some targeted removal may be required. to accommodate various aspects of the design and it is expected that there will be much understory planting to continue the gardens of Sturt and Victoria Streets into the new Bridge Street.

Trees are - and will continue to be an important asset for the precinct – Drawing derived from the Precinct Plan

DEVELOP PRECINCT PLANTING CHARACTER

KEY MOVES

-  Create a precinct that prioritises pedestrians
-  Stitch Bridge Street back into Ballarat
-  Ensure the precinct is easy to navigate
-  Provide a series of gateway experiences
-  Tell the many important stories of the precinct
-  Define Bridge Street as the spine of the precinct
-  Strengthen the green character of the precinct



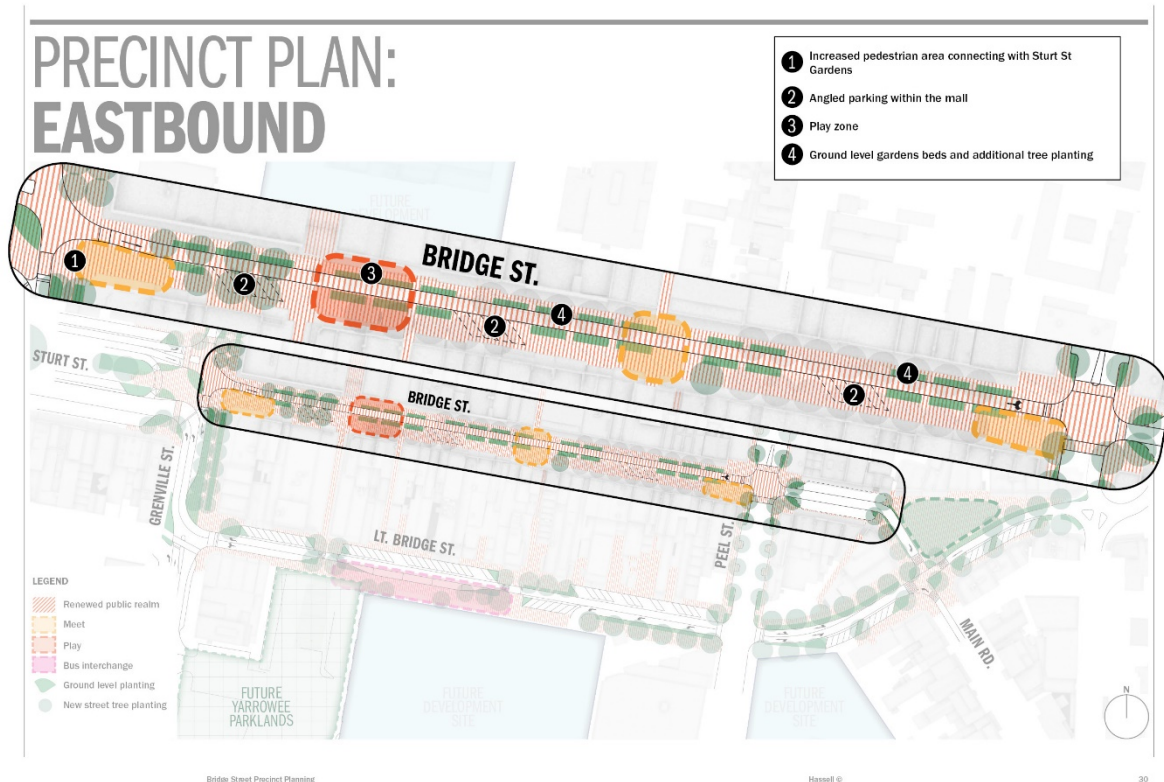
22. Bridge Mall

The current Sturt / Grenville Street intersection will be reconfigured to provide a welcoming connection to the Bridge Mall Precinct. This will be realised through the prioritisation of pedestrian and cycle connections into the Bridge Mall precinct, including the direct connection of the Sturt Street Shared User Path (SUP) into the new Bridge Street. The public realm will also be expanded to provide a new meeting place at the western end of Bridge St and opportunities for new garden beds and tree planting.

23. While the detailed design of the precinct is yet to be undertaken, the intention is to create spaces for people to meet, eat, gather, perform and play. The existing playspace is much loved, and it is anticipated that the new one is a key component of the streetscape. The flexible street arrangement will include:

- Greenspace
- A playspace
- Dedicated on-street dining
- Carparking
- Spaces for people to sit and gather
- Canopy cover
- Flexible event and activity spaces
- The ability to close the street to traffic for events, markets etc.

Bridge Street East Bound and West Bound are similar in layout aside from traffic direction and car parking (note that angular parking is shown for illustrative purposes only and the car parking arrangements have yet to be fully determined). Drawing derived from the Precinct plan



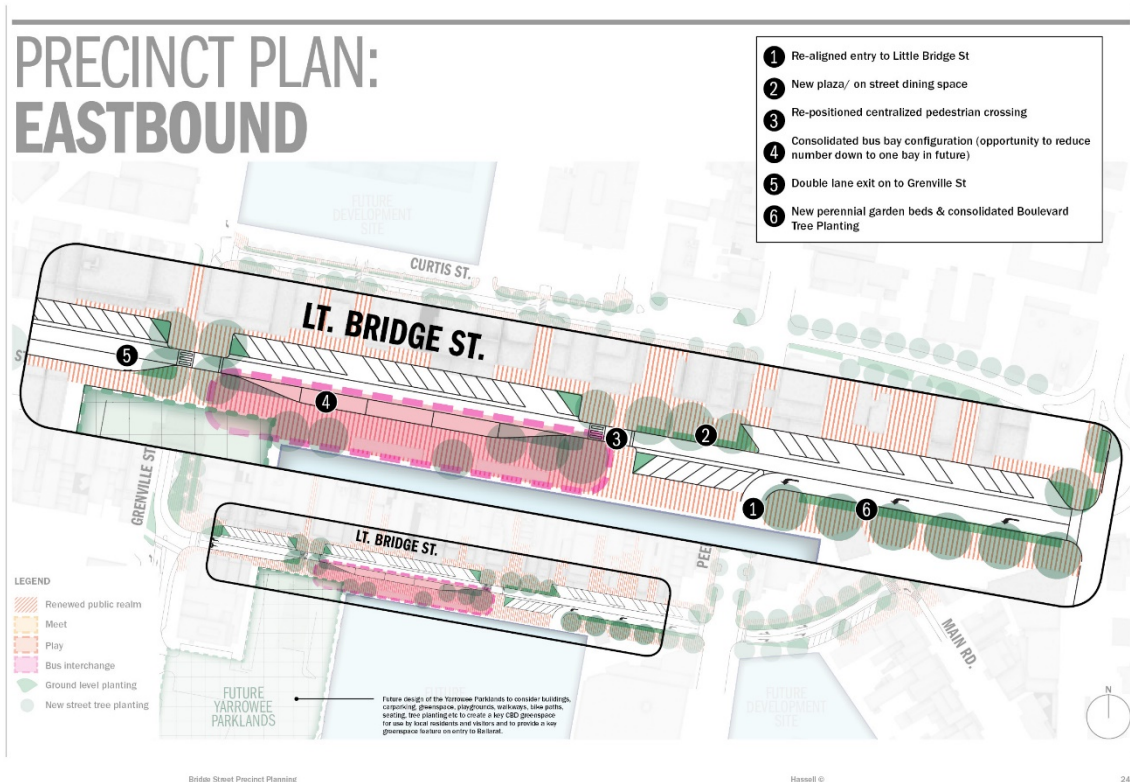
24. Little Bridge Street

An important element of both options is Little Bridge Street. As noted in the discussion on the entry experience, strengthened tree and understory planting is a key feature for Little Bridge Street. The precinct plans show a reduction of the road width to a nominal 3.5m, addition of angle parking on the north side east of Peel Street and tree planting for a boulevard effect on the south side, towards Main Road.

25. Moreover, the intersection of Main Road and Little Bridge Street is improved for all with a safer pedestrian crossing and an improved exit from Main Road onto Little Bridge Street. Key themes for the remainder of Little Bridge Street include:

- Dedicated turning lane from west of Peel Street into the car park.
- Angle parking on the north side.
- New angle parking on the south side (achieved through the reduction of the bus bay by 18m).
- Bus bay reduction to allow three buses to be stacked and not the six as currently exists (noting that the only place to alight to and from the bus is the most western end. The other five places are there for bus parking/stacking).
- One lane of traffic to through traffic from Peel Street to the crossing of the Yarrowee (Senior Citizens site). Thereafter it reverts to two lanes – allowing for the continued flow of traffic from Little Bridge, into Grenville and into Sturt Street.
- New pedestrian crossing from the east end of the bus interchange directly into Time Lane (and into the Bridge Street) – as summarised above.

Little Bridge Street Drawing derived from the Precinct Plan noting that Curtis Street is the same configuration for both East and West bound options

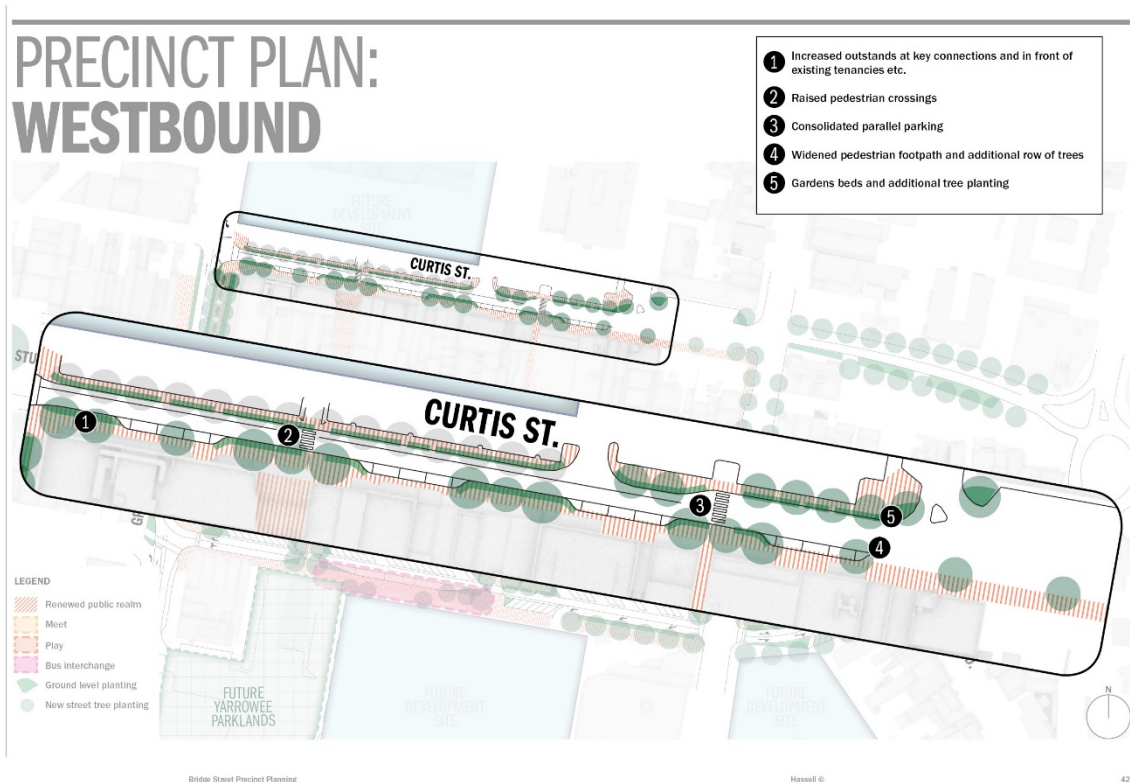


26. Curtis Street

Curtis Street will remain an important component of the precinct and will continue to be an exit point from the CBD to Victoria Street. It is expected, however that over time traffic exiting the city to Victoria Street and beyond may choose Mair Street after its recent improvements.

Curtis Street will be enhanced by increased planting and outstands at key crossing points, strengthening the link from the Big W car park into Bridge Mall.

Curtis Street Drawing derived from the Precinct Plan noting that Curtis Street is the same configuration for both East and West bound options



27. Grenville Street/Sturt Street intersection – benefits of both East and West bound options

For both options, this is the intersection of greatest importance and most significant change. Importantly, it provides a key linkage from the CBD into the new Bridge Mall– for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

28. Key Elements:

- Increased green space - with Grenville Street closed to some movements south of Curtis Street, existing roadway and pavement will make way for increased greenspace. This green space will allow for a shared user path and gardens.
- This public realm/greenspace increases from 2,277m² to 3,486m² of potential public realm (a 50% increase).
- Sturt Street turnaround – the existing U-turn through the centre median strip will be maintained with a raised platform for the Sturt St shared user path and narrowing to slow traffic.
- Shared user path on Grenville Street - a shared user path is depicted in the new green space on the eastern side. This path will link directly into the new shared user path network.
- Nicholson Light – increased greenspace around the light will ensure its location remains prominent (subject to final design).

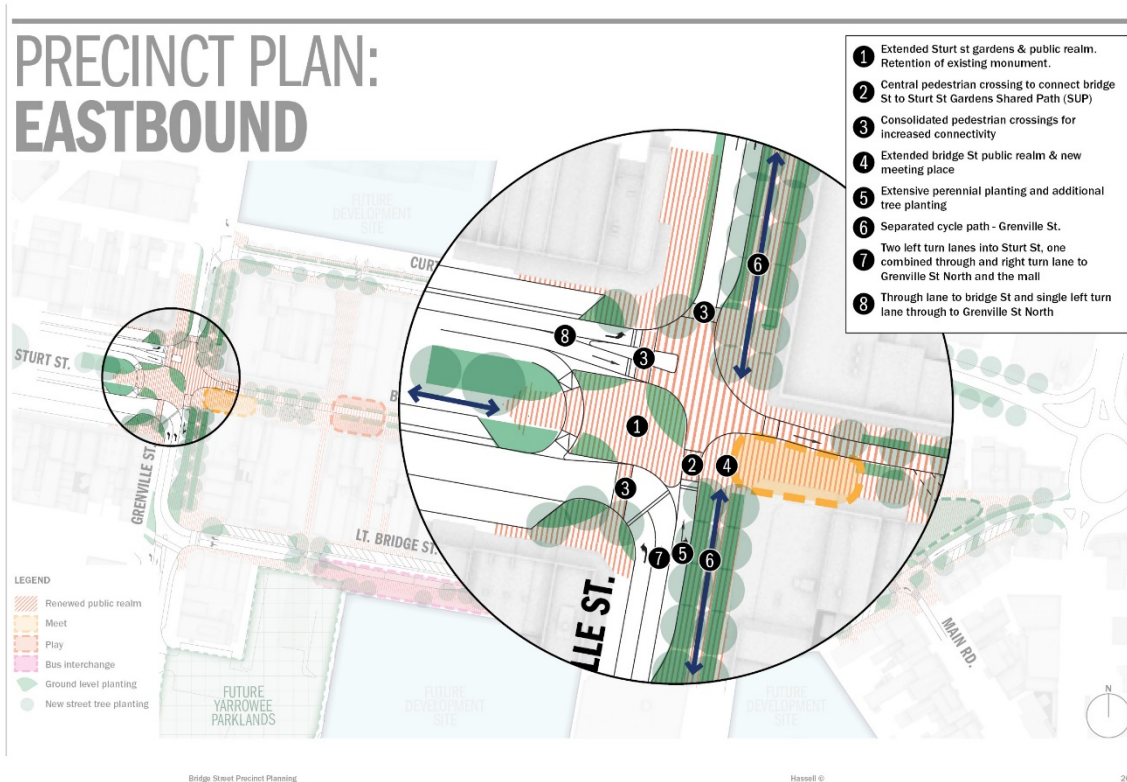
29. Grenville Street / Sturt Street Intersection – East Bound Option

The East Bound intersection provides for:

- A dedicated lane from Sturt Street into the new Bridge Mall
- One turning lane from Sturt Street into Grenville Street north bound
- Retention of two turning lanes from Grenville Street turning west into Sturt Street
- A new dedicated turning lane from Grenville Street turning east into Bridge Mall
- South bound traffic along Grenville Street directed along Curtis Street

- No southbound traffic along Grenville Street between Curtis St and Lt Bridge Street

Grenville Street/Sturt Street East bound drawing derived from the Precinct Plan

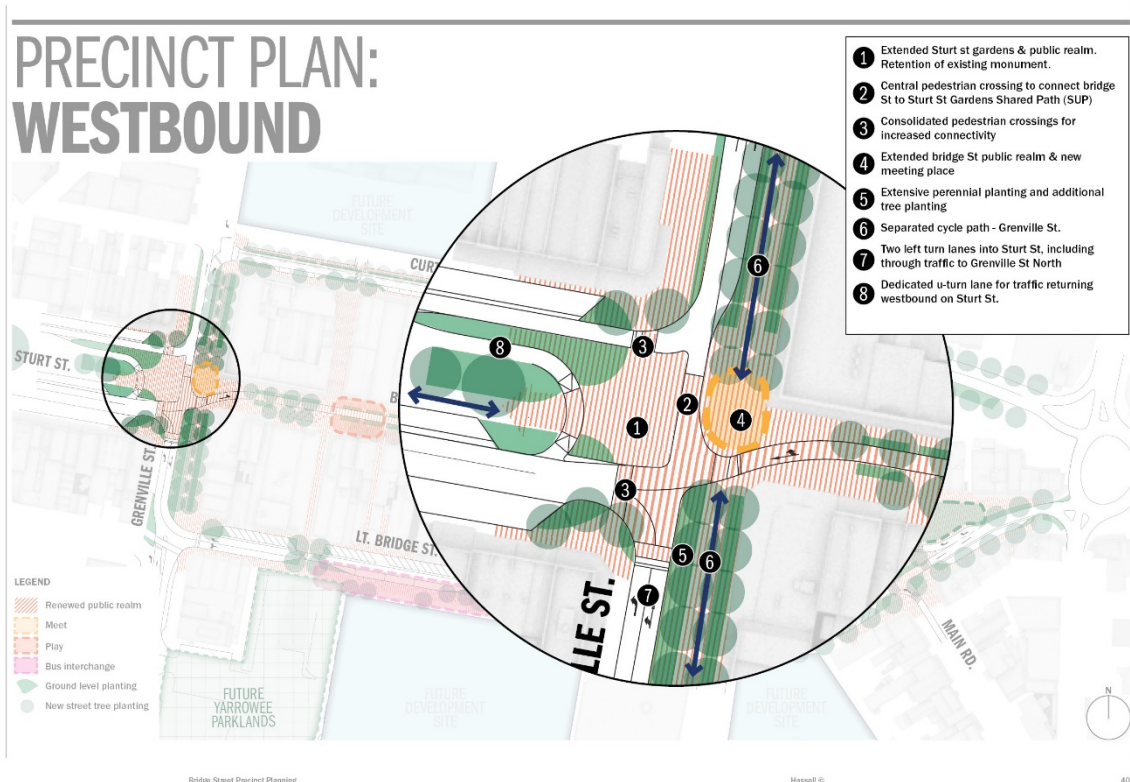


30. Grenville Street / Sturt Street Intersection – West Bound Option

The West Bound Grenville Street intersection option provides for:

- Exit from Bridge Mall into Sturt Street along the southern carriageway
- Exiting vehicles can turn right into Grenville Street to head north
- Exiting vehicles will not be able to head south along Grenville Street
- Retention of two turning lanes from Grenville Street turning west into Sturt Street
- South bound traffic along Grenville Street directed along Curtis Street
- No southbound traffic along Grenville Street between Curtis St and Lt Bridge Street

Grenville Street/Sturt Street West bound drawing derived from the Precinct Plan



31. Precinct East of Peel Street - The shopping strip immediately east of Peel Street has existing one-way east-bound traffic flow and angle parking both sides. Shoppers can enter from Peel Street and exit onto Little Bridge Street.
32. The east bound option is unlikely to impact on the existing configuration of roadway and parking and movement of traffic into and around the precinct. This is significant in that the existing business will retain existing north and south access from Peel Street and the ability to “loop” around via Lt Bridge Street. The precinct plans do not specifically show direct access to the Victoria Street roundabout however, an east bound flow could accommodate such (subject to further design).
33. The west-bound option only provides for vehicles to enter this precinct from Lt Bridge Street via a secondary access to limit through-flow and the potential for a “rat-run” effect. Drivers will make a choice as to whether they deviate through the Mall or continue westwards along Lt Bridge Street. It is expected that most of the traffic flow will continue along Lt Bridge Street as it moves through the precinct to Sturt Street. The west-bound option will severely restrict access to this precinct by excluding vehicle access from Peel Street and disabling the “loop” movement via Lt Bridge Street. Therefore access to businesses in this precinct will be limited to traffic from the east only via the Victoria Street roundabout. There will be no access from Main Road as this would create a cross-road intersection.
34. For those coming from the west along Sturt Street they will have to access this precinct from the Victoria Street roundabout via Little Bridge Street and then into the new Bridge Mall.

35. The west bound option will impact on the arrangement of the roadway and existing car spaces and likely lead to reduction in parking capacity. Final outcome subject to detailed design.
36. A west bound option for this area restricts the entry down to one point – that of the new entry off Little Bridge Street.
37. Restricting vehicle access to an existing shopping precinct with decades of known ease and access is a major impediment to the west bound option. The project team is of the view this will lead to a poor long-term outcome.
38. Peel Street Intersection – For both options Peel Street remains open to North/South traffic with minor changes to the intersection to accommodate traffic access or egress to the new Bridge mall. In order to make the crossing of Peel Street more intuitive, a raised platform and or line marking is recommended (subject to detailed design).
39. Both options allow for traffic to enter Peel Street from Bridge Street with the west bound option allowing an entry point into the new Bridge Street.
40. Summary of Differences Between Precinct Plans
Summary East Bound Option
 - Eastbound traffic flow provides for logical and strong connection with the Sturt Street precinct and a fluent entry for pedestrians and vehicles into the Bridge Mall.
 - The Eastbound option strengthens connections to the majority of the Ballarat community who reside to the west.
 - Eastbound option captures more of the local spend and provides for a rejuvenated Bridge Mall that is designed for “Locals to Love” and bring their, families, friends and visitors.
 - East bound has least impact on businesses as it’s the current flow of traffic.
41. Summary Westbound Option
 - The westbound option provides for vehicle entry into the Bridge Mall from Victoria Street but complicates vehicle movement and current parking in the precinct east of Peel Street.
 - The westbound option still provides a strong connection for pedestrians and cyclists from Sturt Street into the Mall via improvements to the Grenville Street intersection as per the eastbound.
 - The westbound option provides a logical point of exit from the Bridge Mall for vehicles heading west along Sturt Street.
 - The westbound option does not capture locals who reside in the west and is at risk of limiting this important market.
 - The westbound option is focused on the notion that it will provide a better point of entry for visitors from Melbourne noting that the visitor travelling market is small relative to the local spend in this precinct and the Friends and Families and Visitor market which represents approximately 40% of the local tourism.

42. Budget

\$15 Million was allocated to the project by Council in May 2019 with \$12.5M of that proposed for on the ground works.

43. An initial Cost Plan notes the following for the precinct plan for both east and west bound options:

East Bound Total End Cost:	\$17,675,000
West Bound Total End Cost:	\$17,653,000

44. Whilst the initial concept for the entire precinct plan is in excess of the current budget, the project team will undertake cost management to ensure the major components – Bridge Mall, Grenville Street/Sturt Street intersection and Little Bridge Street will be able to be achieved and the benefits of the projects realised.

45. Next Phases

Following a decision on the preferred Precinct Plan, Hassell will undertake design development. This involves the coordinated design of the precinct public realm, with input from relevant engineers and design professionals. In this stage, the general arrangement of the streets and public space will be developed in detail, along with the selection of intended surface finishes, furniture and vegetation. It is during this phase that the 'look and feel of the project will be developed and refined'.

46. Detailed Documentation will immediately follow the design development phase where the plans will be detailed so that the works can be both tendered and constructed.

47. Schedule

The table below notes the expected timeframe for the next phases with 2021 as the year for detailed design and tendering works to begin in the first quarter of 2022.

Phase	Date
Council endorsement	March 2021
Design Phase	
Design Development	March – August 2021
Detailed Design	August - December 2021
Procurement	
Expression of interest	September- December 2021
Tendering	December 2021 – February 2022
Tender Award	March 2022
Construction	March/April 2022

48. Existing Elements

There are a number of existing elements within the precinct which hold social, historical or artistic value. Short statements on each are noted below.

49. *Named Pavers*

The named pavers are important link to the social history of the Mall as it currently stands. Whilst the relocation of the pavers has not yet been fully determined (this will occur during design development), the names and pavers will be respected in an appropriate manner.

50. *Nicholson Light*

The Nicholson Light lay at the eastern most point of Sturt Street just prior to Grenville Street. With both east and west bound options the light will remain in its current

location or only be moved slightly to align itself with the new landscape. Again, the realignment - or not – will be determined during the design development phase.

51. *Trees*

With either the east or west bound option the majority of the existing trees within the Mall will be retained. The mature canopy of Chinese Elms provide great shade and wind protection and the one-way options enable their retention.

52. *Public Art*

There are a number of public art installations within the precinct. Any refurbishments or relocations of the art works will be undertaken in cooperation with Council's public art team and the artists themselves.

53. *Business Support Package*

The Business Support Package consists of opportunities for property owners and business owners to access three existing and one site specific grant. All four Grants are to be launched via a Business Support Package booklet in early 2021.

54. The on-the-ground works will transform the site and the support packages listed below are there to encourage property owners and businesses to make their own improvements that complement the revitalisation.

The four streams are:

1. Shopfront and façade restoration grant
2. Heritage conservation advisory service
3. Heritage restoration grant
4. Low interest heritage restoration loans.

55. *Summary*

- The Precinct Plans reflect the intent of the Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan aimed at creating a thriving economy, connected community and a distinctive place.
- The Precinct Plans prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles and "invite" vehicles back into the Mall along a slow moving one-way laneway.
- The Precinct plans provide for flexible and adaptable spaces that can be used for play, activation and events.
- The Precinct Plans maximise opportunities for increased greenspace, tree planting and gardens for improved amenity and appeal and to strengthen connections to the Sturt Street Gardens and Victoria Street Gardens as part of a "green spine" through the CBD.
- The Precinct plans show significant upgrades to Lt Bridge Street, Curtis Street and Grenville Street in support of improved amenity through increased greenspace, shade, walkways and bikeways and spaces for people.
- The Precinct Plans provide for functional management of vehicles through the precinct in both directions and reduced impact of bus infrastructure in Lt Bridge Street.
- The Precinct Plans identified Grenville Street as a "barrier" between the Sturt Street precinct and Bridge Mall. Improvements to the Grenville Street intersection are considered critical to the success of the Mall rejuvenation and to improved connection to Sturt Street for pedestrians and an opportunity to improve the amenity of this area by creating large green spaces as an extension of the Sturt Street Gardens.
- The precinct Plans recommend closure of part of the south bound lane in Grenville St (b/w Curtis St and Lt Bridge St) to enable better access into the new Mall for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and to generate the large areas of greenspace befitting of this precinct.

- The Consultants recommend that the Eastbound Option is preferred on the basis that it provides access for the majority of Ballarat residents who reside to the west of Bridge Mall and the local residents spend \$3 of every \$4 in the Bridge Mall Precinct.
- This is supported by the “Visitor and Friends Market” which accounts for approximately 40% of the local tourist market and gives rise to the notion that *“If Locals Love It Then Visitors will Too”*.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

55. That Council:

55.1 Endorses the Key Components of the Precinct Plans.

55.2 Adopts the preferred Precinct Plan – East bound one-way traffic.

55.3 Endorses the project schedule as covered in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Governance Review [8.3.1 - 3 pages]
2. 210120 PR Bridge Mall Precinct Planning sml [8.3.2 - 48 pages]