

Bayswater streetscape - 6 to 4 lanes - from concept to reality

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In 2005, Knox City Council endorsed the Bayswater Activity Centre Structure Plan. The Plan embraced the principles of sustainability and provided the preferred vision for the long term development of Bayswater.

A key proposal was to reduce Mountain Highway from 6 to 4 lanes through the retail precinct. This proposal recognised that traders, residents and visitors had expressed a long-standing view that Mountain Highway presented a hostile, traffic dominated environment through the heart of Bayswater.

Following the 2014 State election, Bayswater was included in the 25 level crossing removal projects to be delivered in the Andrews government's first term.

As a part of the initial project consultation, Council took the opportunity to outline the vision for Bayswater, which included reducing Mountain Highway from 6 to 4 lanes.

Whilst having general project support, this vision was actively opposed – including by the media, the RACV, some residents and local Members of Parliament. Within VicRoads, there were senior engineers who were sceptical about the proposal.

To this end, Council undertook significant modeling and analysis of the traffic conditions. This work demonstrated that the proposal would have a negligible impact on the traffic conditions.

It was also argued that the proposal aligned with the VicRoads Road Use Hierarchy and the LXRA position that crossing removals within activity centres need to consider wider community needs.

The proposal was ultimately supported by the Roads Minister, the LXRA and VicRoads. This did not however stop the ongoing criticism – right up until completion.

Now successfully operating, this project presents an informative case study of how major infrastructure projects can leverage transformational urban design outcomes when evidence based strategic plans are in place.