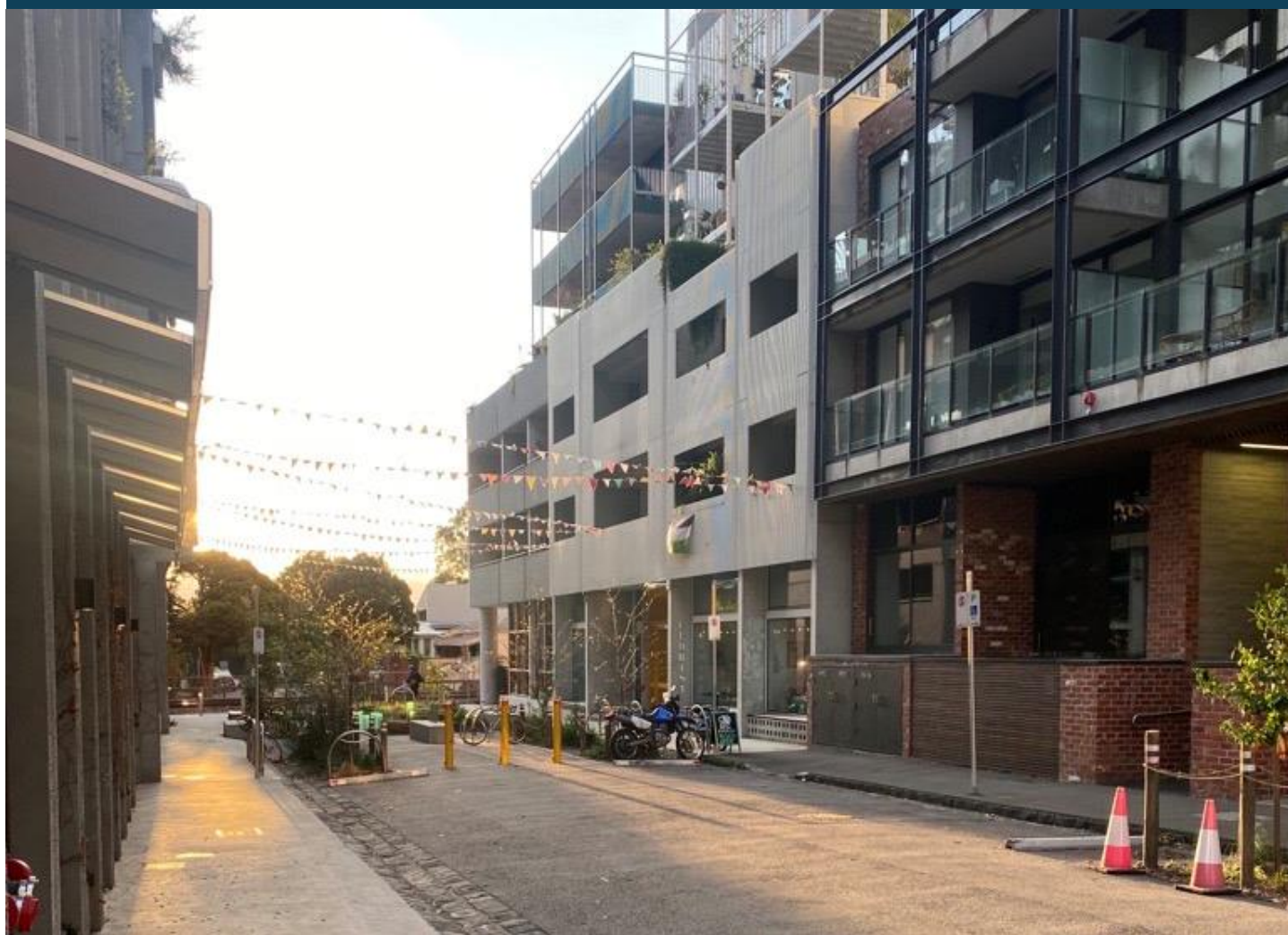




Merri-bek
City Council

Breese Street Precinct

Existing Conditions Report



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Background

Project area and Scope

Breese Street is a high-density residential area in Brunswick between the Upfield Rail Corridor and Sydney Road. Over the last ten years there has been significant residential development and investment in the area. While there is mixed land use, many of the existing commercial blocks have planning permits to develop them into multi-story apartment buildings. The project area for this project includes all of Breese Street between Albion Street and Hope Street, as well as Hope Street between Sydney Road and the Upfield Trail. While the majority of the works will be focused on Breese and Hope Street, the side streets including, West Street, Florence Street, Duckett Street and William Street are also in scope for streetscape upgrades.

This project is primarily about improving the streetscape around Breese and Hope Street to support active transport improvements and improve road safety. The project aims also include sustainability and liveability improvements including increased tree canopy, improved connectivity and enhanced amenity. Only works in the road reserves are being considered as part of this project.

Items that are currently outside of scope for this portion of the works include

- Changes to the Upfield Shared User Path
- Changes to Hope Street west of the Upfield Rail Corridor (a future project targeting this section of Hope Street will occur in 2025)
- Changes to Sydney Road
- Changes to Little Breese Street

Project objectives

The primary objective for the design section of this project is to produce a suitable design for the Breese Street Precinct.

The outcomes from this design stage are

- A Streetscape Masterplan for the Breese Street Precinct.
- A preferred concept layout for both Breese and Hope Street
 - This concept layout is likely to feature a staged approach potentially including trial treatments such as the existing Breese Street Midblock crossing.
- A budget bid and cost estimates for delivery of capital works improvements in future budget years.

Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project

The State Government announced in September of 2024 that they will be removing all the level crossings in Brunswick from Park Street to Albion Street, including those at Hope Street and Albion Street, as part of the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP).

The State Government further indicated that the project will include construction of two new railway stations, including one north of Hope Street, and the closure of Anstey Railway Station.

No further details on the LXRP plans for this area are currently available.

These decisions will be taken into consideration when developing our plans for the Breese Street improvements and future improvements to Hope Street. A Council endorsed masterplan for this area will assist in our negotiations with the State Government during this construction of the Level Crossing Removal Project.

Works Area and Site Images

Outlined below in Figure 1 is the project area. Albion Street and Sydney Road are not in project scope. The images are located on pages 6-10 and are site images which display the streetscape character of the Breese Street Precinct.



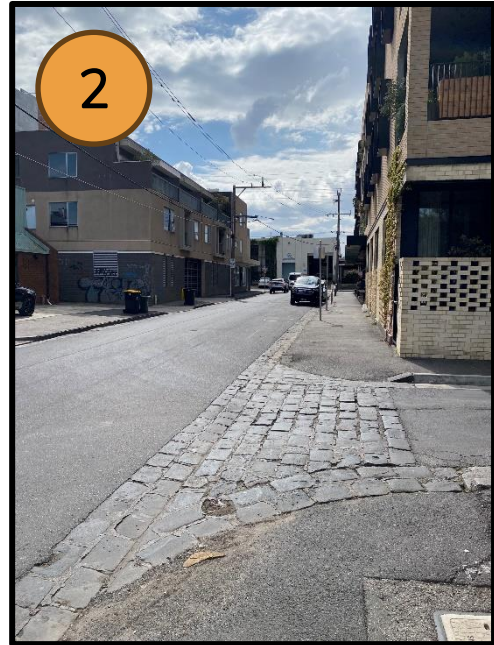
Figure 1 - Breese Street Image Locations

Site Images 1-4



Breese Street at Albion Street looking south.

Typical streetscape with parked cars, bluestone kerbs and overhang from the building line. This building has ground floor commercial activation.



William Street and Breese Street Intersection

This bluestone exit of William Street provides a poor pedestrian crossing environment. Looking north towards the Albion Street intersection and new developments.



Breese Street south of Florence Street

This photo of the footpath demonstrates the hazard the services pole is for pedestrians by narrowing the path



Breese Street midblock.

An example of the mixed used businesses of Breese Street. This also serves as the exit to the carpark behind 36 Breese Street. Note the rows of bicycle parking in the car parking spaces

Site Images 5-8



Breese Street midblock looking north

A street sign displays typical parking controls to assist with vehicle movements. Footpaths are wide however there are several obstructions.



Breese Street and West Street Intersection

Another example of bluestone crossings and kerbs. Looking towards Bulleke-bek park and Hope Street. Midblock pedestrian crossing is also visible.



Bulleke-bek community garden and seating

The community garden and park. This park provides a central community point for residents of the Breese Street Precinct as is frequently used.



Breese Street midblock crossing

This recently installed crossing connects Bulleke-bek park and the pedestrian access towards Sydney Road. It also provides a pinch point for vehicles where they must yield to oncoming traffic.

Site images 9-12



Breese Street midblock

Parking bays on the eastern side of Breese Street included a share car bay.



Breese Street and Hope Street Intersection

This is a congested intersection and can regularly be blocked due to stationary vehicles. The white truck is unloading in a loading zone which obstructs vehicles



Parking lot at 1-9 Breese Street

This is the Council owned carpark.



Hope Street and Sydney Road Intersection

Hope Street looking west, across the raised threshold crossing over hope street. Vehicles are banned from making right hand turns into Sydney Road from Hope Street.

Site Images 13-16



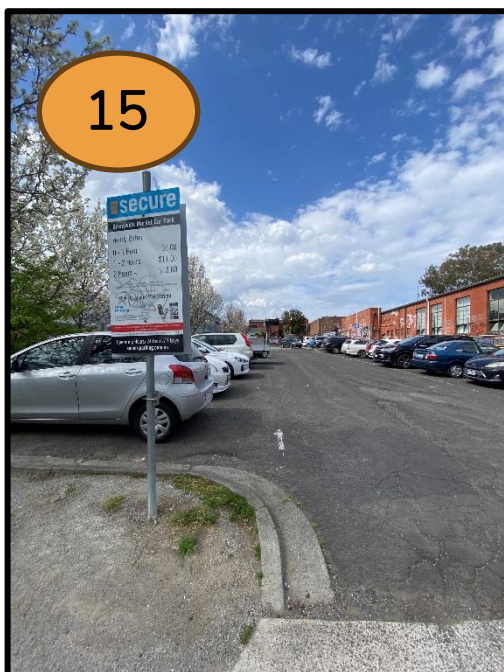
Little Breese Street

This parallel laneway to Breese Street features parking for businesses on Sydney Road as well as car park access to developments on Breese Street.



Hope Street Railway Crossing

The railway crossing on Hope Street also features the Upfield Shared User Path. This path carries 2000+ bicycle riders daily.



Florence Street Private Car Park

This car park is privately owned and accessed by both Breese Street and Florence Street.



William Street Private Car Park

This car park is an elevated private car park, which is accessed by William Street. The carpark resides on the roof of the Brunswick Market building

Site Images 17-20



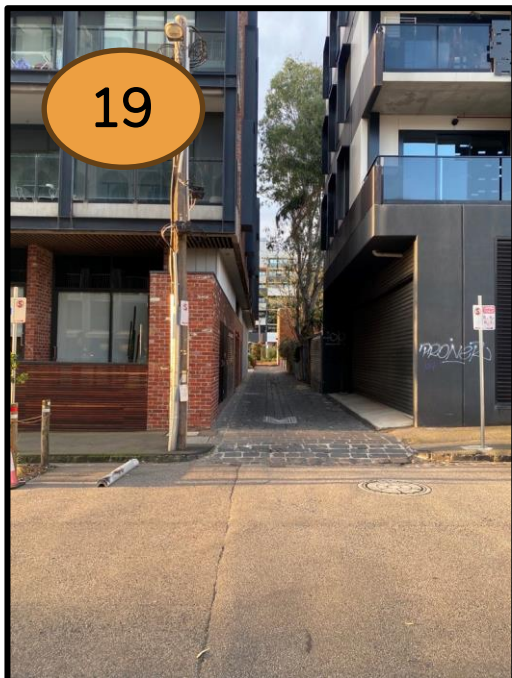
Car Park behind 36 Breese Street

This car park provides public car parking and is accessible by a one way loop from Breese Street. It is also used as a pedestrian access to Sydney Road



Bulleke-bek Park

The western entrance to Bulleke-bek park. Also visible is a public drinking fountain. This park interfaces with the Upfield Shared User Path at this location.



Bluestone Laneway off Duckett Street

This bluestone laneway connects Duckett Street with Bulleke-bek Park. While the entire laneway is bluestone, across the pedestrian desire line the bluestone pavers have been saw cut and smoothed.



Duckett Street looking West

The western end of Duckett Street has been blocked for vehicles which has greatly improved the pedestrian interface with the Upfield Shared User Path.

Existing Conditions

Precinct environment

Breese Street Precinct is a densely populated residential area of Brunswick. The area has undergone significant change with many developments being completed in the last 10 years, which has significantly increased the population in the area, with further development still to come.

The project area contains a variety of land uses, including multi-story residential development, single story houses and a mix of retail and commercial businesses. Several of the new multi-story developments contain ground floor activated businesses which contribute to the street level activation.

In 2013, The Commons residential apartment building was delivered on West Street. This building was one of the first which had no car-parking provided as part of the development. Since this development there have been multiple developments delivered in the project area that have no car parking as part of the build.

In 2021 Bulleke-bek Park was delivered by Merri-bek Council, as part of the A Park Close to Home program, a program where Council purchases land to deliver new open space for communities where there are gaps. This park functions as the community centre for the Breese Street Precinct.

This project area is bordered by the Upfield Rail Corridor and Sydney Road which makes the precinct feel contained and gives it a local feel, despite the level of development.

Street segments

Breese Street

The central corridor of the precinct, Breese Street functions as the connection for residents in the precinct, however it is also used as a vehicle rat run by drivers seeking to bypass the Sydney Road/Albion intersection. Breese Street features bluestone kerb and channel and several bluestone crossovers along its extent.

Hope Street

Hope Street connects Sydney Road and Melville Road in West Brunswick, it is a designated Collector Road, however it performs similar functions to the Major Roads of Albion Street and Victoria Street (North and South respectively). Like Breese Street it is typical of a Brunswick Streetscape with legacy commercial buildings interlaced with recent development and high footpath traffic. Vehicles cannot turn right onto Sydney Road from Hope Street.

Side Streets (William, Florence, West, Duckett)

The side streets of William and Florence are one-way from Sydney Road to Breese Street and carry very minimal traffic. All the street segments between Breese Street and the rail corridor function only as building access as they are all dead ends. However, these streets all function as important pedestrian connections to both the Upfield Shared User Path and Anstey Station as well as the pedestrian rail crossing at West Street which links west of the rail corridor,

Recent developments on Duckett Street have produced greening and usable space in a closed section of the street which has greatly improved the streetscape interface.

Current opportunities and constraints

While the Breese Street project area presents challenges there are also several opportunities for positive development. Recent improvements to the area such as the Bulleke-bek park and the midblock pedestrian crossing display the range of improvements that can be installed to improve the precinct.

The below opportunities and constraints offer the high-level items to work through as part of the design process. While the LXP has been marked as a constraint for the design process, it also presents an opportunity via significant investment from the State Government in the precinct area.

Opportunities include

- Precinct is a destination and is situated in an area that doesn't serve as a thru route for vehicles.
- Low speeds through the precinct. (Albion Street and Hope Street averages are consistently within the 40km/h speed limit)
- Low traffic volumes
- High pedestrian activity with active frontages and connections to retail businesses within the precinct and on Sydney Road
- Proximity to high quality public transport
- Several existing pedestrian only connections
- Engaged local community

Constraints and challenges include

- Narrow road widths with limited existing foliage and shade
- Project area is impacted by flooding/overland flow which can be exacerbated by raised levels and thresholds
- Existing underground and above ground services including gas, electricity and water complicate streetscape upgrades and limit potential tree planting opportunities, or require costly relocation
- Bluestone kerb and channel, vehicle crossovers and laneways
- Footpaths with several obstructions
- Challenges with staging and LXP
- Vehicle crossovers are everywhere throughout the precinct complicating footpath improvements (due to steep crossfalls)

University of Melbourne Research Project

The University of Melbourne Centre for Cities is conducting a research project into how to retrofit existing streetscapes with green infrastructure, by use of "co-design" with residents. This project's overall objective is to demonstrate how streets can be adapted to improve resilience to heatwaves, drought and flooding, while improving their safety, liveability and sociability. It will work with local residents and stakeholders to develop and evaluate designs for deep retrofitting of streets as integrated green infrastructure.

This research project will allow Council to access information regarding best practice and new solutions to challenging construction environments.

One of the project locations for this project is the Breese Street Precinct. Council will be assisting in the recruitment of this working group.

This is a project led by the University of Melbourne and a report will be presented to Council as part of the design process. However it is a separate project, and the outcomes of the research project are not necessarily aligned with Councils design process.