



Merri-bek
City Council

Hope Street

Existing Conditions Report

February 2025



Contents

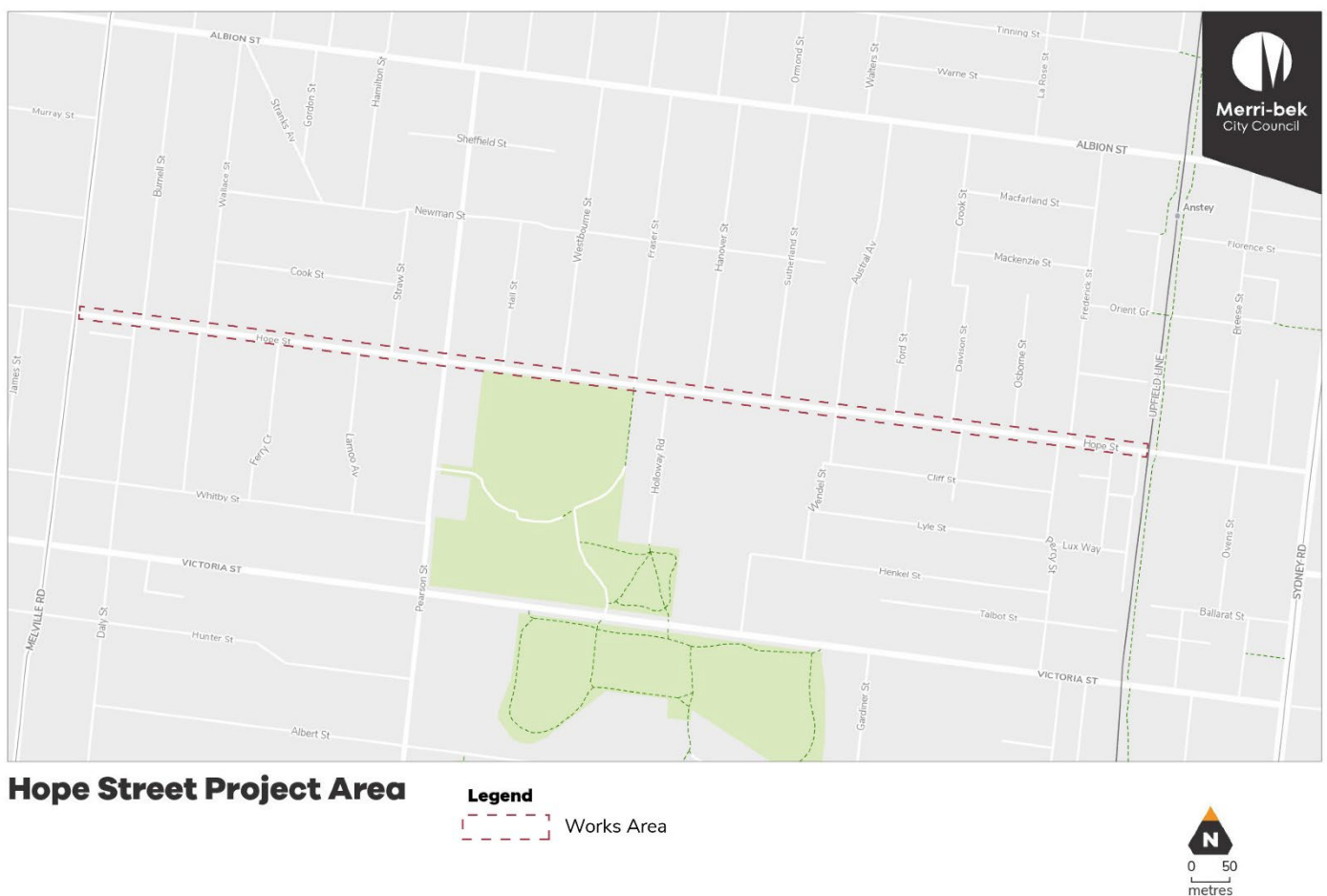
Executive Summary	3
Background	4
Project area and Scope.....	4
Project objectives.....	4
Methodology	5
Existing Conditions	6
Precinct environment.....	6
Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project.....	6
Site Images	7
Site Images 1-4	8
Site Images 5-8	9
Site Images 9-12.....	10
Transport networks	11
Walking and Cycling	11
Street segments	11
Hope Street.....	11
Cross Streets	11
Intersections.....	11
Public Transport.....	12
Current opportunities and constraints.....	13
Opportunities	13

Executive Summary

Merri-bek City Council is developing a Streets for People Streetscape Project for Hope Street Brunswick, between Melville Road and the Upfield Rail Corridor. The section of Hope Street between the Upfield Rail Corridor and Sydney Road is being investigated as part of the Breese Street Precinct streetscape improvement project.

This report outlines the existing conditions of Hope Street to provide direction for the design stage of this project.

This project was identified for development in the 2024/25 budget process.



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Figure 1 – Works area

Background

Project area and Scope

Hope Street is a residential street in Brunswick that connects the Moonee Ponds Creek to Sydney Road, intersecting Melville Road, Pearson Street and Sydney Road. East of the Upfield Rail Corridor, the residential density of Hope Street increases substantially.

This project aims to improve the streetscape on Hope Street to improve road safety and amenity and improve access for people walking and riding. It also aims to ensure that Council is well placed for advocacy in advance of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project

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

- Changes to Hope Street between the Upfield Rail Corridor and Sydney Road (this is being done as part of the Breese Street Precinct works)
- Changes to Hope Street west of Melville Road
- Changes to the Upfield Shared User Path
- Infrastructure changes to Melville Road
- Changes to Sydney Road

Project objectives

We are working to produce a suitable design for streetscape improvements to Hope Street. The suitability of our design will be measured against the following objectives.

Quantitative Objectives

- Reduce heat vulnerability
- Increase number of trees and vegetation
- Safer vehicle speeds
- Create a relaxed environment for all transport users
- Achieve higher numbers of people walking and riding

Qualitative Objectives

- People feel safe and relaxed when walking and riding on Hope Street
- People enjoy spending time on Hope Street
- People choose to walk or ride on Hope Street
- Residents enjoy living on or near Hope Street

The primary deliverable for this project is a Council endorsed design for streetscape improvements for this section of Hope Street.

Breese Street Precinct.

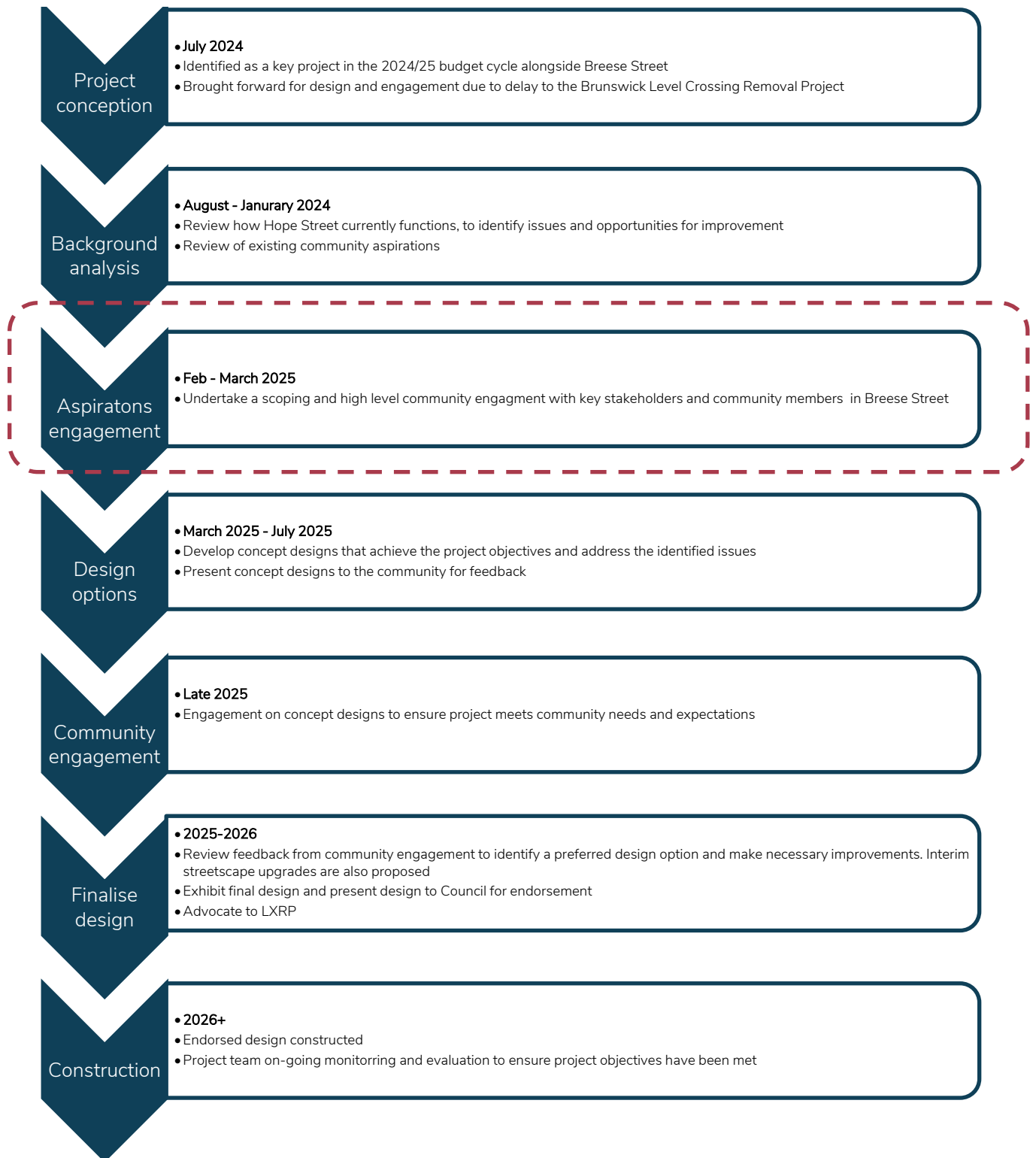
In November 2024 Council engaged with community regarding the Breese Street Precinct, which includes Hope Street east of the Upfield Rail Corridor.

Hope Street east was included in the Breese Street Precinct works due to the difference in population density, and the inherent difference of the streetscape east of the Rail Corridor.

As these projects are so geographically aligned, design options are being considered together.

You can see more at [Breese Street streetscape improvements | Conversations Merri-bek](#)

Methodology



Existing Conditions

Precinct environment

Hope Street is a narrow residential street in Brunswick that connects West Brunswick with Sydney Road. As with many streets in Brunswick, the areas of Hope Street closer to the activity centre have undergone significant change over the years, with increased residential density mixed in with the existing low-density residential areas. There are also sections of the street closer to Sydney Road which feature commercial properties.

This project area is approx. 1.4 km long, bordered by the Upfield Rail Corridor and Melville Road, with Hope Street to the East of the Upfield being considered as part of the Breese Street Precinct streetscape improvement works, and Hope Street west of the Melville Road being out of Scope.

The street itself features on-street parking on both sides of the street. It also features several kerb outstands which slow traffic and have provided additional planting opportunities. Services poles and bus stop infrastructure makes up the remainder of the street furniture.

A.G Gillion Oval is an important and popular open space in this area, and forms part of the Brunswick Central Parklands. The park is frequently accessed for dog walkers and organised sporting activities throughout the week. Outside of residential tenancies, the primary trip generators on this section of Hope Street are the business on the Upfield Corridor End, and on the opposite end at Melville Road.

Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project

The State Government announced in September of 2024 that they will be removing all 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).

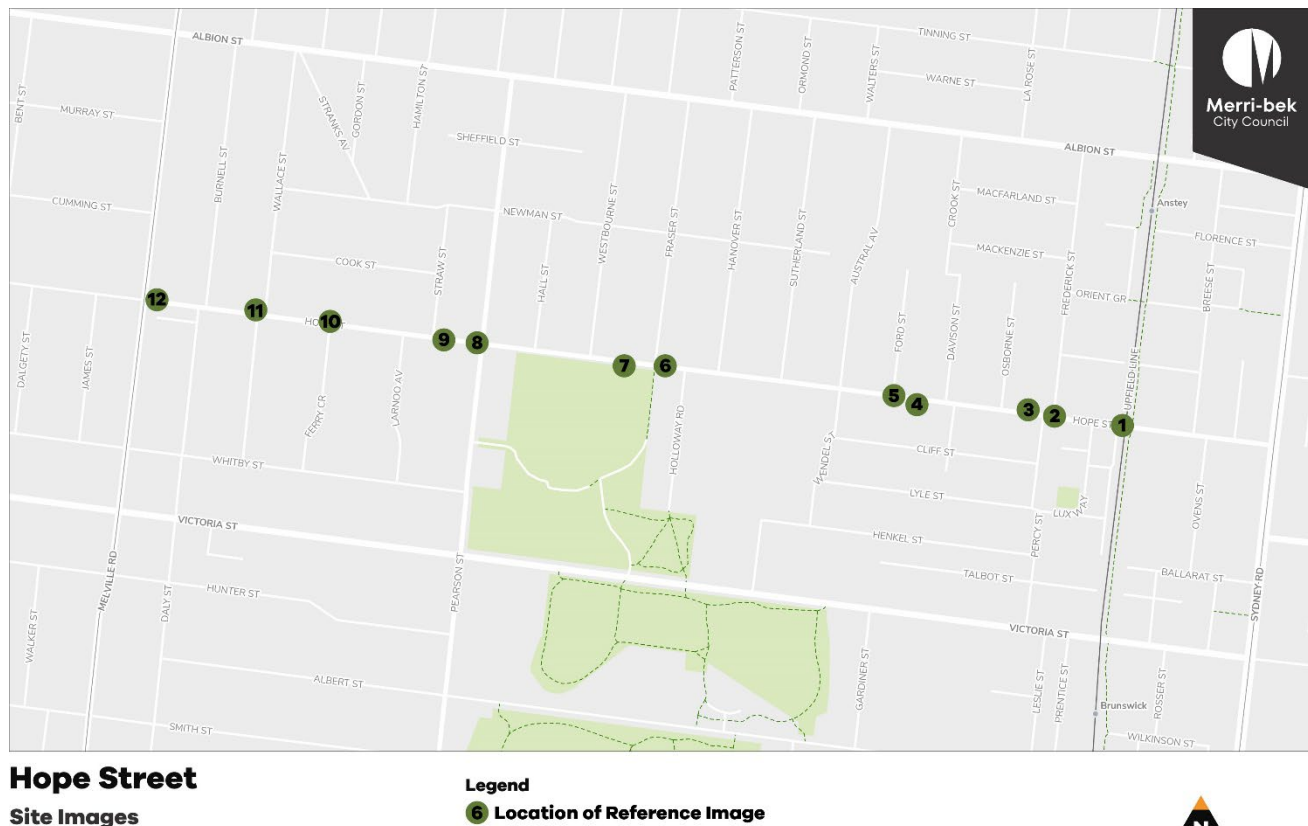
At this time, the State Government further indicated that the project will include construction of 2 new railway stations, including 1 north of Hope Street, and the closure of Anstey Railway Station.

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 Hope Street. A Council endorsed plan for this area will assist in our negotiations with the State Government during this construction of the Level Crossing Removal Project.

Site Images

Outlined below and on the following 3 pages are site images which display the streetscape character of Hope Street



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Figure 2 – Hope Street Image Locations

Site Images 1-4



Hope Street at the Upfield Rail Corridor looking west

Typical streetscape with parked cars, 2-way traffic, powerlines on southern side. Note the extended vehicle crossing on the northern side.



Hope Street and Frederick Street intersection

This dog leg intersection (including Percy Street to the south) is one of the busiest movements on Hope Street.



Typical examples of Street planting

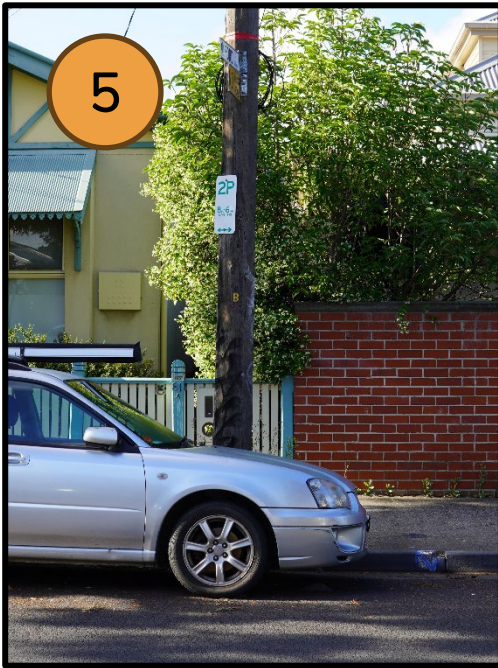
There are several build outs on Hope Street which have been planted out. There are also examples of nature strips maintained by the community with a variety of plantings



Bus stop with tactiles

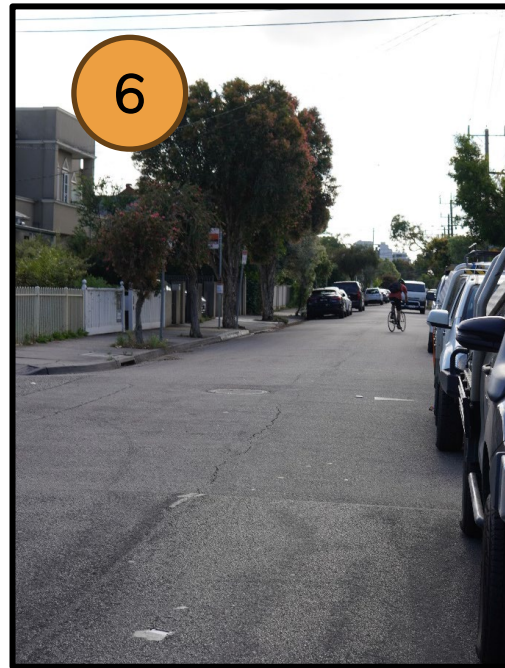
An example of the 509 bus stop with tactiles, but no other supportive pedestrian infrastructure. This photo also shows an example of the typical footpath arrangement which is wide, with cutouts for infrastructure or planting

Site Images 5-8



Typical parking environment

Typical parking environment with typical 2P 8am-6pm parking controls.



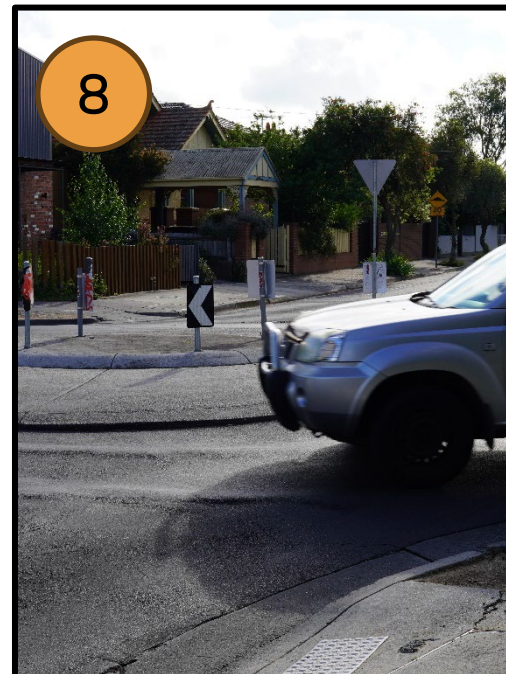
Bicycle Shimmy movement

Hope Street intersects with the Brunswick West shimmy route, with bicycle riders traveling north south along Fraser and Hollaway Streets. This photo shows the negotiation the riders must do on Hope Street to travel north-south



Parking Adjacent to A Gillion Oval

Parking adjacent to A. Gillion Oval, which has low occupancy during the day but high occupancy during sporting events. The south side of Hope Street generally has a nature strip with planting which is visible here



Roundabout at Hope and Pearson Street

This is the busiest intersection (other than Melville Road) in the project area. The roundabout does have medians for assisting in crossing the legs, but they are not very wide.

Site Images 9-12



Bluestone vehicle crossings

A typical Brunswick legacy bluestone vehicle crossing, this example is from the laneway, and has 1m of asphalt across it to provide an improved pedestrian environment



Concrete Road intersection at Ferry Street

The Ferry Street redevelopment is unusual in that the roadway is concrete as opposed to asphalt.



Buildout example

Another example of a buildout. This example does not have the greening of some other examples but performs the same traffic calming impact.



Melville Road and Hope Street intersection looking west

An example of the various transport users who use Hope Street.

Transport networks

Walking and Cycling

Hope Street is used as an important active transport connection. For pedestrians, the footpaths on the northern side of Hope Street are wide and generally concrete, with cutouts for trees. While some trees have a low canopy, there is generally a high level of canopy cover along the extent of the street. On the southern side of Hope Street, there is a standard concrete footpath with a nature strip featuring planting along the extent of the street.

Between Pearson Street and Melville Road, the footpath environment changes. Both sides of the street are asphalt footpaths, with a lack of street trees to provide shade. The footpath is also narrower on the northern side. On this section, there are several vehicle crossings, resulting in a steeper crossfall and a reduced level of service for pedestrians.

Notably, along the extent of Hope Street there are 17 intersections of which none have raised thresholds.

Hope Street is often used for bicycle user to travel east-west through Brunswick. It functions in a similar manner to many of the narrow east-west routes for people riding bicycles, who like vehicles must negotiate when passing oncoming vehicles. Bicycle riders use the section of Hope Street between Fraser Street and Holloway Road as part of the West Brunswick Shimmy.

The West Brunswick Shimmy is an identified north south low stress cycling route which is used by bike riders of all ability levels.

Alongside the West Brunswick Shimmy, the project area intersects with the Upfield Shared User Path which is the key north-south cycling route in Merri-bek.

Street segments

Hope Street

While the project area is primarily low-density residential across the extent of the street, with most properties being single-story dwellings, the feel of the street subtly changes at Pearson Street. The tree canopy cover is less mature, and there is an increase of bluestone kerbing (up to 5 pitches) across both sides of the road.

Cross Streets

Pearson Street is currently overperforming as a north-south corridor for vehicles seeking to avoid Melville Road. The same can be said for Percy and Fredrick Streets, which function similarly for vehicles seeking to bypass Sydney Road. These are the busiest cross streets in the corridor and carry the most vehicles over Hope Street.

Intersections

There are 17 cross street intersections in the project area. While most of these intersections connect local streets that carry small numbers of vehicle volumes, they still increase the potential for conflicts between different road users.

Public Transport

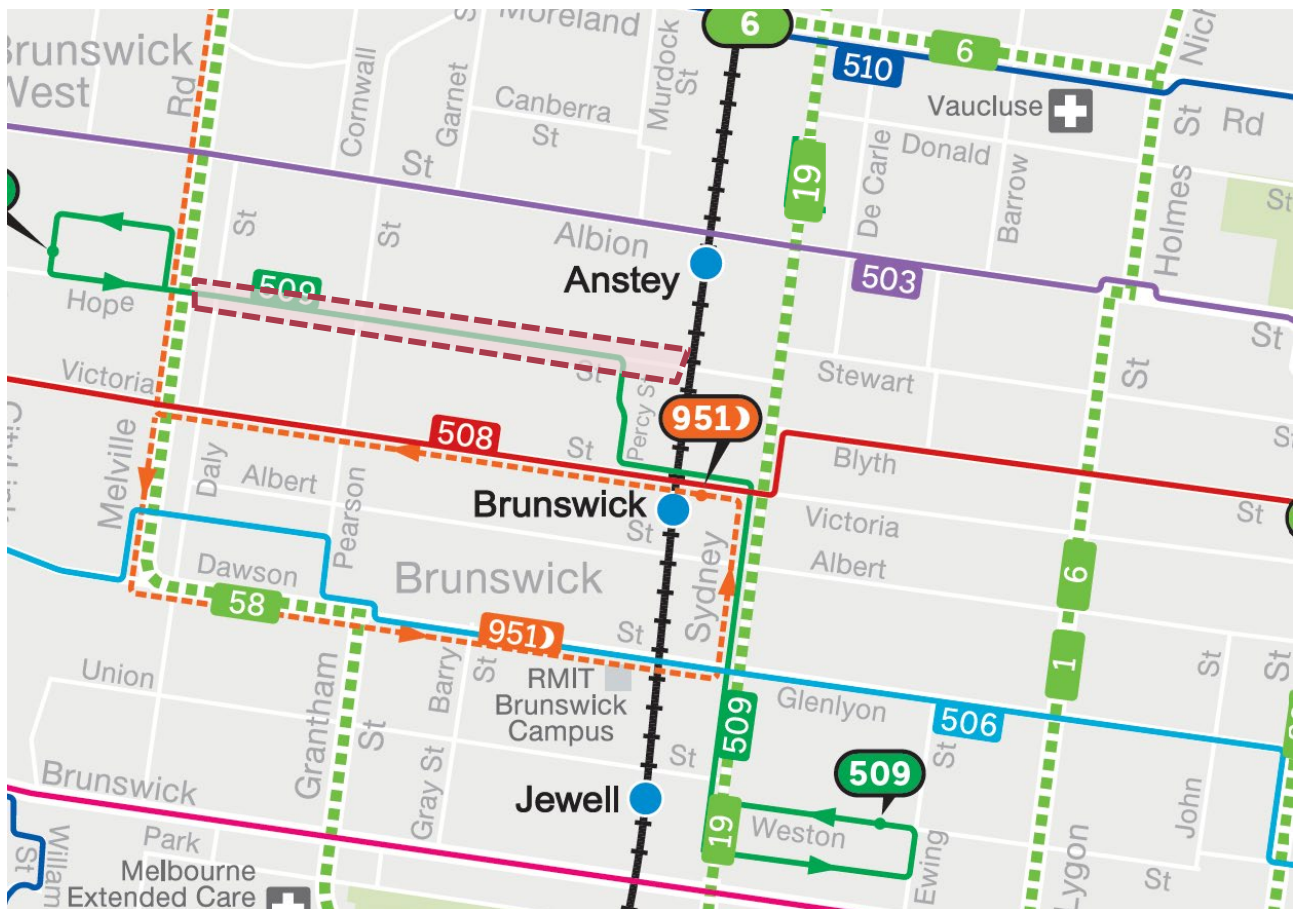


Figure 3 – Hope Street Public Transport Options (Source - Public Transport Victoria)

Hope Street Project Area 

Hope Street is well serviced by public transport. The project area is bordered by high frequency tram services with the 19 tram on Sydney Road and the 58 tram on Melville Road. The project area is easily accessible by train to both Brunswick and Anstey Stations.

The 508 Bus between Barkly Square and Pascoe Vale currently uses Hope Street as part of its route. This is a low-frequency bus that runs every hour between 9am-3pm and not on Sunday. Higher frequency buses on the 508 on Victoria Street and the 503 on Albion Street are close (under 400m) from the project area.

Current opportunities and constraints

The Hope Street corridor is long streetscape that provides several opportunities and constraints for improvement.

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

Opportunities

- Existing low traffic volumes
- Proximity to roads that perform a similar traffic function with higher capacity
- Low-density local street
- Existing pedestrian environment with established tree cover on both sides of the street.
- Adjacent to Brunswick central parklands
- Connectivity to the existing bicycle network, and established cycling connection
- Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRП) provides an opportunity for large changes to the street

Constraints and challenges include

- Narrow road width with typical Brunswick conditions
- Long project corridor
- A Melbourne Water pipe runs under the extent of the street
- Overland flooding issues along the street corridor
- Bluestone kerb and channel, vehicle crossings
- Roundabout at Pearson Street and high traffic volumes
- West of Pearson Street the streetscape environment changes with lack of street trees and increase in bluestone
- High number of cross streets which complicates pedestrian environment