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Bentleigh

Bentleigh

Bentleigh urban design context

The Bentleigh activity centre is a busy strip shopping centre that runs along Centre Road and is dissected by the railway line, which has recently undergone a level crossing removal. There is no distinct difference between the east and west area of the activity centre, although the bulk of the car parking is located on the eastern side.

Buildings are generally up to two storeys in height, with newer development up to four storeys. There are isolated older buildings dispersed throughout.

Centre Road has an intimate pedestrian streetscape environment, and break out areas along the street provide landscaping, seating and shade trees.

Large expanses of car parking are located behind the shop frontages to Centre Road. While these car parks are well-used, they also create a barrier to pedestrian access to the shopping strip.

Recent public realm upgrades along side streets including Godfrey and Vickery Streets provide attractive spaces for people to stop and enjoy the streetlife, and suggest that additional small-scale urban open space will be well used.

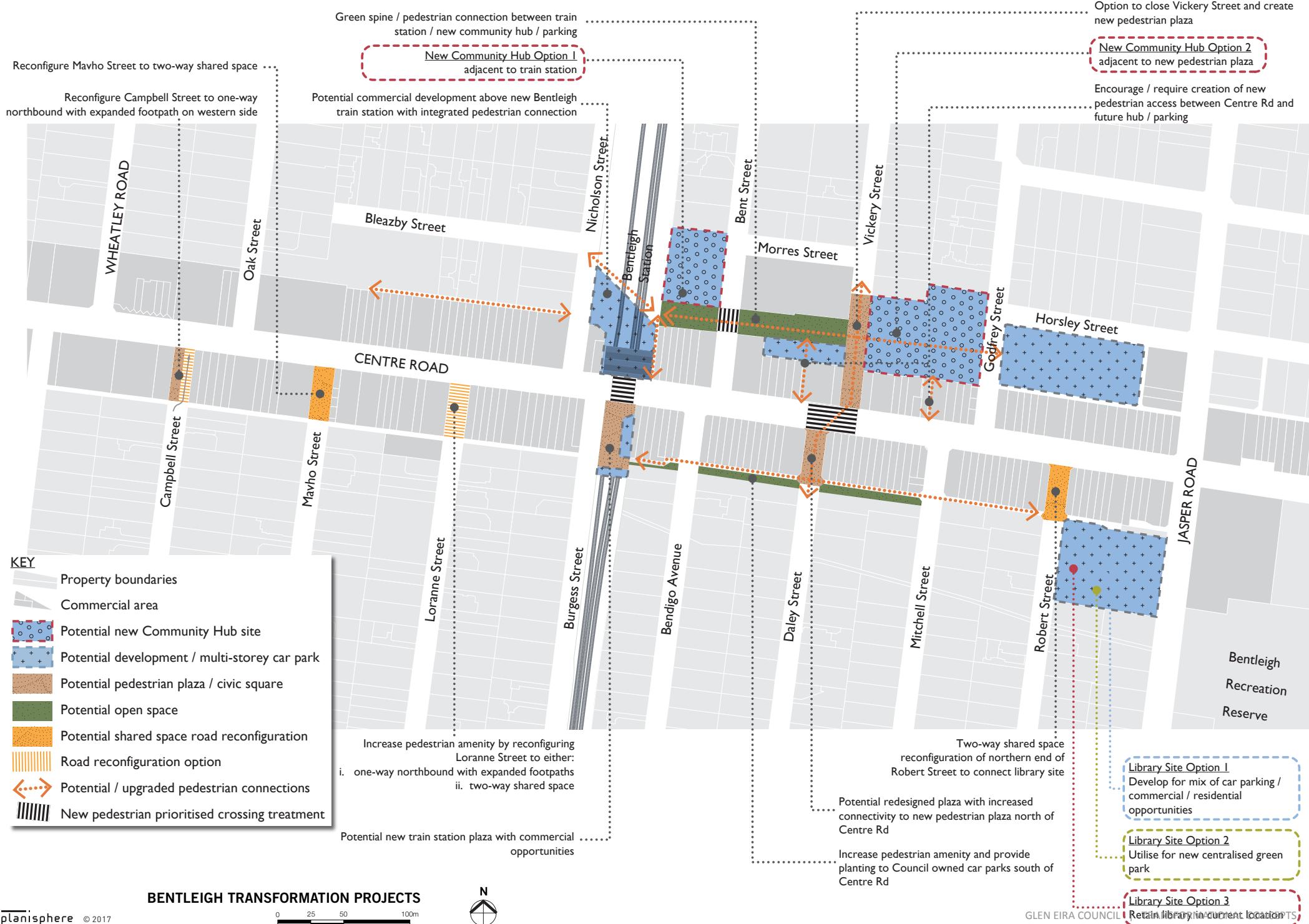
Objectives

The key proposal ideas from the initial consultation for Bentleigh are:

- Create a new green space in the heart of Bentleigh
- Create new community hub and additional car parking
- Transition Bentleigh to a pedestrian friendly centre
- Create a vibrant and safe train station precinct

Ideas & options

Ideas and options of how these objectives could be achieved in Bentleigh are illustrated on the map on the following page and detailed in this section of the report.

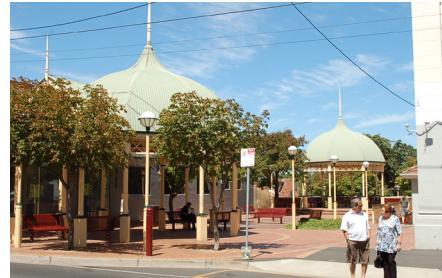


New green space

The option to close Vickery Street creates the opportunity for a new pedestrian plaza north from Centre Road that could be connected via a relocated pedestrian crossing to the existing Bentleigh Plaza. This could define the centre-point of the Bentleigh retail strip and provide an area for civic activity such as street parties and markets.

A green-spine connecting this space to the train station / new Community Hub would provide additional space for these activities.

Another urban open space opportunity is located across from the train station with a new plaza located on top of the sunken rail line south of Centre Road.



Bentleigh Plaza, Centre Road



Vickery Street



Example of shared space that could be created in Vickery Street to connect to Bentleigh Plaza

New community hub & additional car parking

The large expanses of surface car parking in Bentleigh represent a valuable opportunity to consolidate areas of parking into a centralised, multi-storey car park and free up areas for better use.

While it is recommended that this involve consideration of opportunities for commercial and residential development with a public focus, the primary benefits of freeing up these spaces north of Centre Road are in the opportunity to provide a new Community Hub with an option to relocate the library with this hub.

The option to potentially develop these carpark sites would address considerations of:

- Ensuring that replacement carparking is provided elsewhere
- Providing net community benefit - either through new community spaces on the carpark site, or through contribution of funds for community spaces elsewhere in the centre

- Building scale that is consistent with the character of the centre and adjoining residential interfaces
- Opportunities for new pedestrian links through development sites.

Community hub

The existing library (which includes other community facilities) is located at the edge of the centre, and is not well connected to the retail strip in terms of visual connection or pedestrian links. It is proposed that the library is relocated and integrated with a new Community Hub. A number of options for the location of this new Community Hub have been proposed.

Carparks reimagined as a community hub or market



Considerations for existing carparks



Car park in between rail line and Bent St



Connection to train station

Carparks today....



Vickery Street looking west toward the rail line



Vickery Street looking north

Option B: Vickery Street

On the Vickery Street frontage of the site of the car park between Vickery Street and Godfrey Street. Together with the proposed pedestrian plaza along Vickery Street option would create a community and cultural node at Vickery Street and could be connected to the train station via a green-spine running behind the Centre Road shops.

Pedestrian friendly centre

Other ideas are focussed upon making the existing centre more conducive to pedestrian activity.

This can be achieved through a series of more general actions within the streetscapes of the centre.

Options include extending footpath materials across the road to create pedestrian prioritised crossing locations with raised thresholds, 'narrowing' the road visually by providing more street trees and kerb pop-outs, and providing more pedestrian furniture at key locations.

Specific initiatives identified include the reconfiguration of the following side-streets to reduce vehicular traffic on residential streets and increase pedestrian safety, and also create new spill-out spaces.

Mavho and Robert Streets

Mavho and Robert Streets provide a good opportunity to slow and reduce traffic into these side-streets through implementation of a two-way shared space at the Centre Road end of these streets. This would allow the existing levels of activation (in particular along Mavho Street to extend into a plaza type space. Robert Street shared space could connect to a new opportunity provide at the existing library site.



Mavho Street looking south



Robert Street looking north

Campbell Street

Campbell Street could be modified to one-way northbound at Centre Road which allows for an extended footpath on one side with encouraged activation of the corner frontages.



Campbell Street looking south (source: Google)

Loranne Street

Loranne Street could also be reconfigured with a similar treatment to that recommended for either Mavho and Robert Streets, or the one-way option proposed for Campbell Street.



Loranne Street looking south



Indicative one-way street to the centre with extended kerb space for pedestrians, planting and seats

Other Opportunities & Ideas

The new Community Hub, car parking and open spaces north of Centre Road could be better connected to Centre Road via new development providing pedestrian access.

The laneways south of Centre Road and their interface with the small car parks could be improved with planting, street furniture, and enhanced pavement materials to increase activity and pedestrian amenity along these existing frontages and connections.



Centre Road 'back-end' frontages to rear laneway

Vibrant and safe train station precinct

The rail line south of Centre Road could be decked over east of Burgess Street to create a new train station plaza. This space would allow for larger organised events such as outdoor concerts or a public big-screen, with the opportunity to expand into Burgess Street on occasions. This plaza could also provide an opportunity for commercial tenancies similar to those located adjacent the Elsternwick Plaza open space.

A pedestrian prioritised crossing would provide connection across Centre Road.



Plaza opportunity from the train station

The decked space over the railway line could be reimagined as a pedestrian plaza, with active retail and mixed use buildings around its edge

