

### 6.3 MID City North planning reset

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#### Executive Summary

1. The Melbourne Innovation District (MID) Opportunities Plan (Plan) outlines guiding principles and opportunities for connecting, enhancing and activating priority streets and spaces. The Plan encourages the use of City North as a precinct for trialling interventions and activations that contribute to strategic long-term aims and guides urban design and public realm improvements within the precinct.
2. Since Council's adoption of the Plan in 2020, Council and partners have made substantial investment in public realm upgrades within the precinct including streets, spaces, public art, test beds for data collection, events and programs. Over 40 projects have been identified as either completed or in development.
3. At its meeting on 10 September 2024, the Council's Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) resolved that work on the Innovation Opportunities Amendment (C431) be discontinued, to convene a MID Partnership meeting, and request management report back with recommendations on:
  - 3.1. The extent to which the 'Urban Realm Objectives' and 'Next Steps' in the Plan have been implemented.
  - 3.2. A recommendation on whether the Plan should be renewed or replaced, and if so when.
  - 3.3. Recommendations for any new short term strategic planning and public realm projects for the City North MID.
4. Management recommends there is value in renewing the Plan, as it remains a useful guide to influence urban design and public realm improvements within City North, acknowledging some public realm improvements are still to be delivered.
5. Management will continue to deliver concurrent short-term strategic planning projects as part of Council's work program for 2024/25 under Major Initiative 17 and 20 of the Council Plan 2021-25.

#### Recommendation from management

6. That the Future Melbourne Committee resolves to:
7. Note management and partners have delivered over 40 projects that align with the 'Urban Realm Objectives' and 'Next Steps' of the Melbourne Innovation District (MID) City North Opportunities Plan 2020.
8. Renew the MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020 as a guide to inform future urban design and public realm improvements within the MID City North precinct.
9. Note management will deliver concurrent short-term strategic planning projects as part of Council's work program for 2024/25 under Major Initiative 17 and 20 of the Council Plan 2021-25.

#### Purpose

10. To report back to this Committee on the 'MID City North planning reset' in line with the resolution of Council's Future Melbourne Committee on 10 September 2024.

## Background

11. The MID Partnership was established in 2017 between Council, University of Melbourne (UoM) and RMIT University (RMIT) to contribute to shaping Melbourne's future through open collaboration that deepen the city's capacity for applied technology.
12. The initial area of focus for the MID Partnership was City North given it has a successful history of innovation underpinned by the co-location of the UoM and RMIT, and other research and education institutions enabling the synergy effects from many professionals, researchers and students working and studying in close proximity.
13. Council endorsed the Plan in 2020 with collaborative input from the MID Partners. The Plan outlines guiding principles and opportunities for connecting, enhancing and activating priority streets and spaces, and encourages the use of City North as a living lab for trialling interventions and activations that contribute to strategic long-term aims.
14. City North is undergoing transformation through coordinated efforts across public and private sectors. The Victorian Government's Metro Tunnel project, RMIT and UoM masterplans, Council-led Queen Victoria Market renewal, and significant private investments such as CSL Headquarters are collectively enhancing the precinct. These initiatives are positioning City North as a premier hub for innovation, education, and urban development.
15. At its meeting on 10 September 2024, the Council's FMC resolved that work on the Innovation Opportunities Amendment (C431) be discontinued, to convene a MID Partnership meeting, and request management report back with recommendations on:
  - 15.1. The extent to which the 'Urban Realm Objectives' and 'Next Steps' in the Plan have been implemented.
  - 15.2. A recommendation on whether the Plan should be renewed or replaced, and if so when.
  - 15.3. Recommendations for any new short term strategic planning and public realm projects for the City North MID.

## Key considerations

16. As the Plan is primarily an advocacy and visioning document, it does not include an implementation plan, specific targets or measurables to assess its completion. However, a review has identified over 40 projects, either completed or in development, that align with the 'Urban Realm Objectives' and 'Next Steps'. A summary is provided below, and a full review is included in Attachment 1.
  - 16.1. *Urban Realm Objective 1 – 'enhance amenity and function of built environment, streetscapes, open spaces'*. Council has led the delivery of numerous capital works projects that include streetscape upgrades, civic space upgrades, new open spaces, improved irrigation, tree replacement, as well as public art. Example projects include Lincoln Square Play Space and Street Upgrade (2021), Therry Street upgrade as part of the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal (2023) and University Square Master Plan Stage 1 & 2 (anticipated completion in 2025).
  - 16.2. *Urban Realm Objective 2 – 'use urban realm as a testbed for innovation in infrastructure and environmental management'*. Council has led two data collection projects focusing on environmental management, climate impacts, and public space usage. Examples include the Cooling the City Carlton Sensor Pilot and Drummond Street Social Spaces Pilot.
  - 16.3. *Urban Realm Objective 3 – 'facilitate use of urban realm by businesses and researchers for testing, demonstrating, and engaging new ideas'*. Council initiated the Melbourne Knowledge Week program from 2017 to 2021. This objective is now supported by UoM and RMIT's innovation spaces (Melbourne Connect and RMIT Social Innovation Hub). These facilities host programs that enable businesses and researchers to test, demonstrate and engage with new ideas within the district.

- 16.4. Urban Realm Objective 4 – alignment and integration between MID vision and major infrastructure/urban realm projects delivered by RMIT, UoM, State Gov, private developers. The range of projects identified across all objectives have been assessed to align with the MID vision.
- 16.5. *Urban Realm Objective 5 – ‘improve transport, mobility, and connectivity’*. Two new metro train stations are being delivered in this area as part of the Victoria’s Big Build, Victoria Street and Swanston Street tram renewal works, Parkville Station bus route reconfiguration and separated bicycle lane roll-out.
17. While the above is not an exhaustive list of projects, it demonstrates the Plan has facilitated significant investment in City North urban realm across capital work upgrades, public art, test beds for data collection, events and programs, and transport.
18. Since 2020, the economic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly hindered the MID Partnership’s ability to deliver and co-funded projects aligned with the Plan.
19. Following a MID Partnership meeting on 25 October 2024, partners expressed interest in collaboratively refreshing the partnership’s focus. This includes exploring State and Federal grant funding opportunities to improve governance, explore membership expansion, and reinvigorate a joint work program.
20. In addition to renewing with the Plan, the following concurrent short-term strategic projects have been identified in Council’s 2024/25 work program:
  - 20.1. Encouraging innovation uses through the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) including strengthened provisions for City North and Parkville. The MPS incorporates the vision and objectives for managing land use and development across the municipality for the next 10 to 20 years. The MPS was exhibited for community consultation from 8 August to 16 September 2024, and will be presented back to Council in early 2025.
  - 20.2. Undertake a review of strategic sites across MID City North and Parkville NEIC as part of Major Initiative 17 of the Council Plan 2021-25 to ‘partner with the Victorian Government to deliver high quality, sustainable urban renewal and innovation districts’.
  - 20.3. Investigate recommendations to update urban design policies and provisions for municipal areas outside of Design and Development Overlay 1 (Central Melbourne), while also advancing municipal-wide infrastructure and contributions planning.
  - 20.4. Investigate the impacts of rezoning land between La Trobe Street and Victoria Street, to reflect its role within the capital city Hoddle Grid area. The land is currently zoned Mixed Use in contrast to the rest of Hoddle Grid, sitting within the Capital City Zone.

## Legal

21. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation from management.

## Finance

22. New projects, outside of Council’s existing capital works program, will require additional Council budget or external partnership funding or opportunities.
23. The preparation of grant applications for State or Federal funding bids, and delivery of any subsequent successful projects, will require resourcing, funding and technical support.

## Conflict of interest

24. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

**Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities**

25. The recommendation contained in this report is compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006* as it does not raise any human rights issues.

**Health and Safety**

26. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

**Consultation**

27. The MID Partnership provided input into this report as part of a meeting held on 25 October 2024.

**Relevance to Council Plan and Council Policies**

28. Supporting the development of globally competitive innovation districts, is identified as a Council priority in Major Initiative 17 of the Council Plan 2021-25 and Action 24 of the Economic Development Strategy 2031.

**Social and environmental impacts**

29. **Social impacts**

The recommendations in this report are projected to have positive social impacts on students, workers and visitors to the MID City North district.

30. **Gender Impact Assessment**

If the recommendations in this report regarding future short-term strategic projects are endorsed by Council, a Gender Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each project in accordance with the statutory requirements.

31. **Environmental impacts**

The recommendations in this report are aligned with the positive environmental aspirations of City of Melbourne. Projects delivered include additional landscaping and street greening, improving infrastructure of sustainable transport modes such as upgraded and expanding footpaths, and dedicated cycle lanes.

**Attachment List**

1. MID City North Opportunities Plan implementation review [6.3.1 - 13 pages]





# ATTACHMENT 1 – MID City North Opportunities Plan review

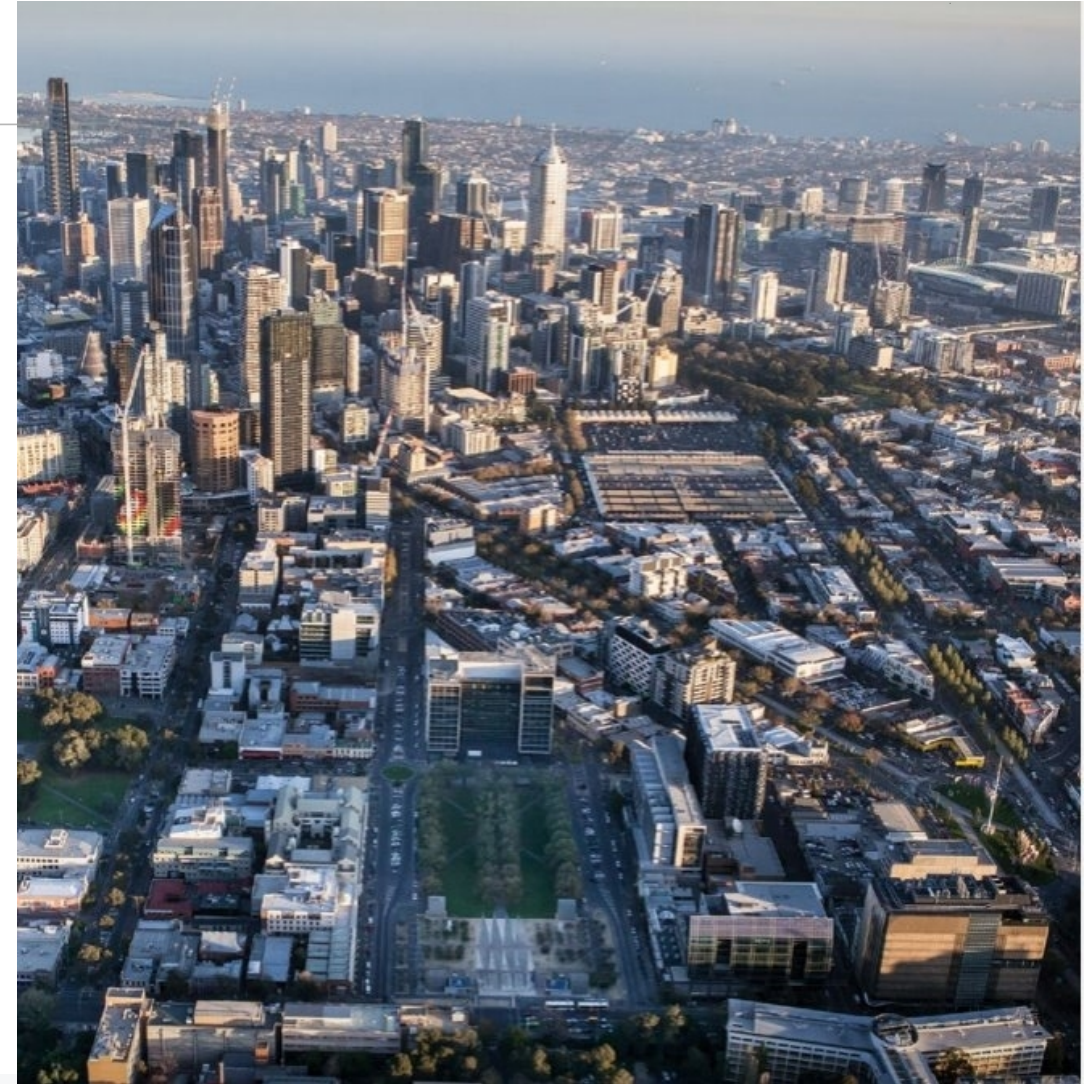
FMC 3 December 2024



## CoM Council Resolution

10 September 2024, FMC resolved:

- **Discontinue** planning scheme amendment **C431 (Innovation Opportunities)**
- Convene a **MID Partnership meeting**
- **Implementation** update of the MID City North **Opportunities Plan 2020**
- Future **status of the Opportunities Plan**
- New short-term **strategic planning & public realm projects**
- Report back to FMC by **3 Dec 2024**

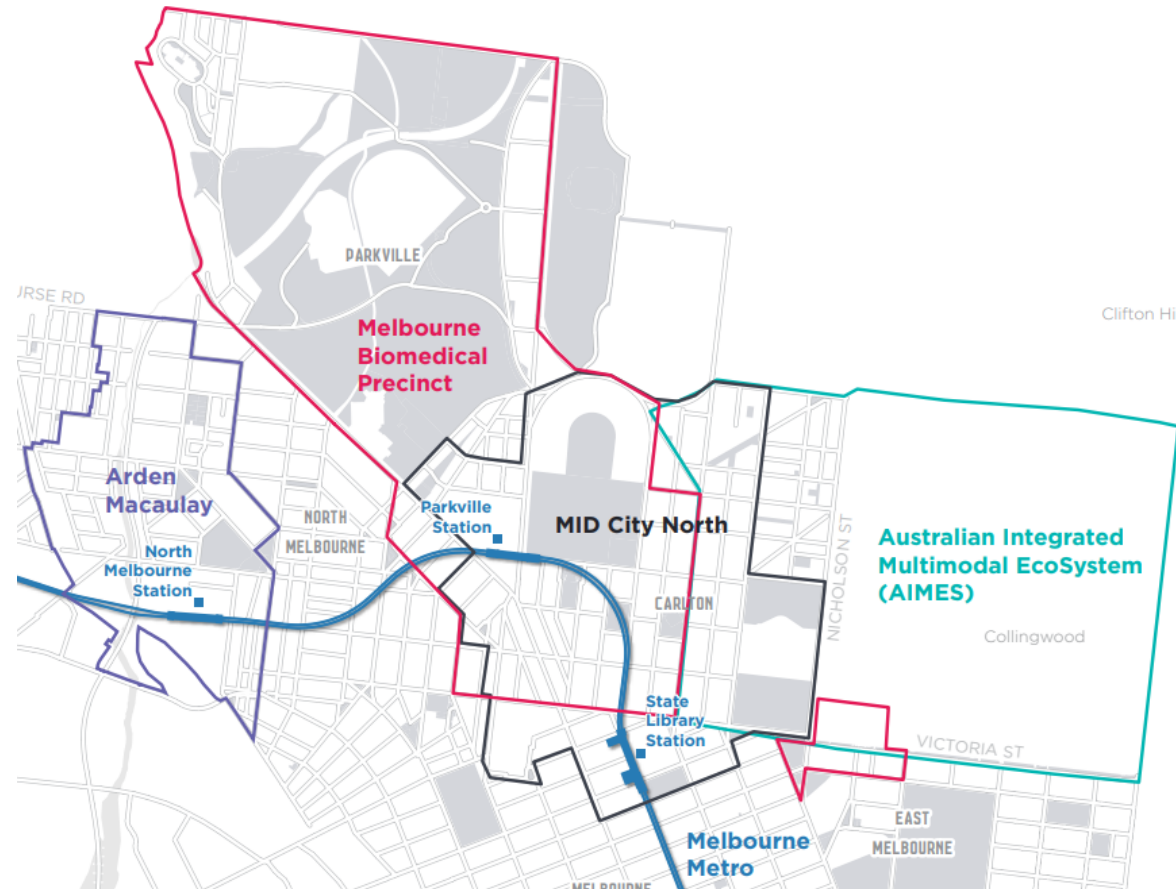


2 —City North planning reset



## Melbourne Innovation District (MID) City North

- The **MID Partnership** was established in 2017 between RMIT, UoM and CoM.
- **City North** is the initial focus of the MID Partnership.
- **City North** is Melbourne's most mature innovation district, recognised as a global biomedical and research powerhouse and an international education gateway
- City North overlaps with the **Parkville NEIC** and the **MID**, located with connection to **Arden**



# Current and Future City North projects

## City of Melbourne Projects

- 1

Lincoln Square - Playspace, Park Expansion and Water Harvesting  
Completed 2021
- 2

Lygon Street median tree replacement  
Completed 2022
- 3

QVM Munro  
Completed 2024
- 4

QVM Renewal
  - Shed restoration  
Completed 2023
  - Food Hall  
Completed 2023
  - Therry Street  
Completed 2023
  - Munro Library and Community Hub  
Completed 2023
  - Trader Shed  
In construction
  - Market Cross and Market Infrastructure  
In design
  - Market Square  
Construction commencement 2028
  - Southern Development Site  
Construction commencement 2028
  - Queens Corner Building  
Construction commencement 2028
- 5

Grattan Street Upgrade (Stage 1) - "Metro Tie-in works"  
In design
- 6

Grattan Street Upgrade (Stage 2)  
Between Swanston and Rathdowne Street  
In design
- 7

Franklin Street Streetscape Upgrade (Stage 2)  
Concept design approved 2024
- 8

Pelham Street Green Spine  
Identified in City North Structure Plan, Urban Forest

## State Government Projects

- 9

Royal Parade Tram Stop Upgrades  
Cross Yarra Partnership (CYP) / Rail Projects Victoria (RPV)  
(Metro Tunnel scope)  
Completed 2024
- 10

Swanston Street and Victoria Street tram track renewal  
Completed 2024
- 11

La Trobe Street Accessible Tram Stop Upgrades  
Completed 2024
- 12

Metro Tunnel Project - Parkville Station  
Cross Yarra Partnership (CYP) / Rail Projects Victoria (RPV)  
Staged completion: late 2023 - 2025
- 13

Metro Tunnel Project - State Library Station  
CYP / RPV  
Expected completion 2025
- 14

Royal Melbourne Hospital Redevelopment  
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- 15

Australian Institute of Infectious Diseases  
University of Melbourne, Doherty Institute, Burnet Institute and State Government  
Expected construction commencement 2025
- 16

Flemington Road Tram Track Renewal  
DTP

## Major Private Development

- 17

Melbourne Connect (University of Melbourne)  
Completed 2022
- 18

University of Melbourne Student Precinct  
Completed 2023
- 19

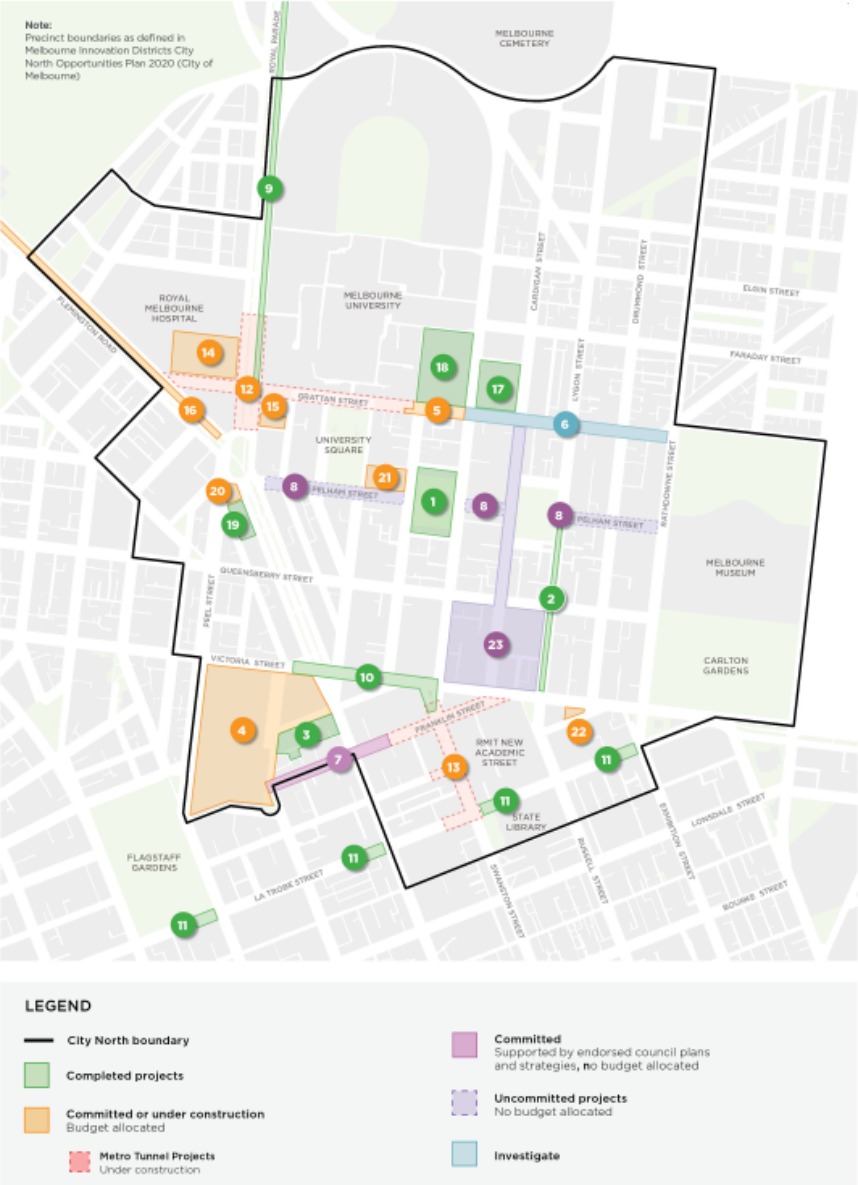
CSL Global Headquarters  
Completed 2022
- 20

Existing Bob Jane T-Mart Site (699 Elizabeth Street)  
Expected completion: Unknown
- 21

Melbourne Business School  
Expected completion: Unknown
- 22

Scape Victoria Street  
Completed 2024
- 23

RMIT Social Innovation Precinct  
Jointly funded by RMIT University and State Government



### 4 — MID Partnership – City North planning reset



## MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020

### Background & context

- Aspirational document that **aligns interests of MID partners**
- Describes **guiding principles** and opportunities for connecting, enhancing, and activating **public spaces for innovation**
- Informed Council's **capital works programming**
- Does not include an **implementation plan**



## MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020

### What's been delivered

#### Urban Realm Objective #1 - Enhance amenity and function of built environment, streetscapes, open spaces.

- **19 projects** were identified including Capital Works (e.g. streetscape & civic space upgrades, new green play spaces, improved irrigation, tree replacement) and public art or memorials
- **Example projects** include:
  - Lincoln Square Play Space and Street Upgrade (2021),
  - Therry Street upgrade as part of the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal (2023)
  - University Square Master Plan Stage 1 & 2 (anticipated completion 2025)
  - Swanston Street Triangle Greening (anticipated completion 2025)
- **COM is the main lead partner**, with some projects involving partnership with Cross Yarra Partnership and Yarra Trams
- **7 projects have been completed** since the MID City North Opportunities Plan was endorsed, and the **remainder are being progressed** through their planning, design, or construction phases



Lincoln Square  
Play Space



Therry Street  
Upgrade



# MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020

## What's been delivered

### Urban Realm Objective #2 - Use urban realm as a testbed for CoM innovation in infrastructure and environmental management

- **5 projects were identified** (4 completed between 2020 and 2023, and 1 in progress)
- Projects enabled the **collection of data** relating to **environmental management & climate impacts** (e.g. Cooling the City Carlton Sensor Pilot) as well as **how people use public spaces** (e.g. Drummond Street Social Spaces Pilot).
- **All projects were led by City of Melbourne.**



Drummond Street  
Social Spaces Pilot

## MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020

### What's been delivered

#### Urban Realm Objective #3 - Facilitate use of urban realm by businesses and researchers for testing, demonstrating, and engaging new ideas

- Both **UoM** and **RMIT** have **delivered innovation spaces** that enable the testing, demonstrating, and engaging of new ideas (e.g. University of Melbourne Student Precinct Project, RMIT Social Innovation Hub)
- CoM-led **Melbourne Knowledge Week** (held in City North several times)
- **CoM partnered in key events** featuring City North, such as the Resilient Cities event in ASEAN week 2024.



Prototype Street (Blackwood St North Melbourne)  
Melbourne Knowledge Week 2019



## MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020

### What's been delivered

#### Urban Realm Objective #4 – Alignment and integration between MID vision and major infrastructure/urban realm projects delivered by RMIT, UoM, State Gov, private developers

- **RMIT & UoM** have **delivered innovative spaces** that enhance education and economic outcomes, create new knowledge and city experiences, and enrich inclusion and public amenity (e.g. RMIT Social Innovation Hub and UoM's Melbourne Connect)
- **Major State Government projects** that support the MID vision include the **Metro Tunnel Project** (Parkville Station and State Library Station) to support better city experiences, public amenity, inclusion, and accessibility to the precinct, and the **new Australian Institute of Infectious Disease** (AIIM) which will leverage emerging technologies and innovation.
- The relocation of **CSL's Global Headquarters** to Elizabeth Street in the Parkville Biomedical Precinct enables collaboration between the universities leading to *enhanced education and economic outcomes*.



University of Melbourne's, Melbourne Connect

# MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020

## What's been delivered

### Urban Realm Objective #5 – Improve transport, mobility, and connectivity

- **11 projects** have been identified that support the improvement of transport, mobility, and connectivity
- **CoM has delivered several Capital Works projects** that focus on public and active transport (e.g. Grattan Street Separated Bike Lanes)
- **Multiple projects** are in response to the **delivery of Parkville Station**, as it will impact the way people move around the area (e.g. tram stop upgrades, bus route reconfigurations)
- **4 projects identified were completed** between 2020-2024, and the **remainder are currently being progressed**



Grattan Street Separated Bike Lane

# Concurrent Strategic Planning Work

**Strategic Intent of Amendment C431 continues through:**

Objective	City of Melbourne Strategic Planning Pathway
Encouraging Innovation uses	Progress through the Municipal Planning Strategy including strengthened provisions for City North and Parkville
Strategic opportunities for key sites	Identify strategic sites across Parkville NEIC and MID City North that will undergo future change, and review whether existing policy can deliver good outcomes (MI17 Council Plan 2021-25)
Enhance the urban realm to attract and retain talent	Progress investigations and commence implementing recommendations to update urban design policies (and other provisions ) for all areas of the municipality outside DDO1 (Urban Design in Central Melbourne).  Progress municipality-wide infrastructure and development contributions (MI 20 Council Plan 2021-25)
Mixed Use Zone between La Trobe and Victoria streets	Investigate the impacts of rezoning to reflect the role of land as part of the capital city Hoddle Grid capital city area.

# Analysis to inform recommendation

Future Melbourne Committee resolution requested a report back on whether the MID City North Opportunities Plan should be **renewed** or **replaced**, and if so when.

Option	Rational to support this option	Impact of not progressing this option
Renew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrated value to date to provide a framework to deliver for more than 40 projects delivered. A number of public realm improvement opportunities identified in the Plan are still yet to be delivered.</li><li>• The Plan is an aspirational document and therefore remains relevant to guide decision making and discussion with funding and delivery partners.</li><li>• It provides a mechanism to support and collaborate with key stakeholders in the precinct</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removing the Plan would result in a void of strategic planning to guiding decision making for public realm projects.</li><li>• Removes mechanism to engage with the MID Partners on co-funding and delivering projects</li></ul>





## Recommendation

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- Note management and partners have delivered over 40 projects that align with the ‘Urban Realm Objectives’ and ‘Next Steps’ of the Melbourne Innovation District (MID) City North Opportunities Plan 2020.
- Renew the MID City North Opportunities Plan 2020 as a guide to inform future urban design and public realm improvements within the MID City North precinct.
- Note management will deliver complimentary short-term strategic planning projects as part of Council’s work program for 2024/25 under Major Initiative 17 and 20 of the Council Plan 2021-25.