

5. Trams on Fitzroy and Acland Streets

Yarra Trams and Public Transport Victoria have plans for the 96 and 16 tram route that will have significant impacts on Fitzroy St and Acland St. (All new tram stops have to have disability and disabled access and every tram stop in Melbourne must eventually be upgraded to a standard that meets the Disability Discrimination Act.)

Public Transport Victoria and Yarra Trams TV's propose to remove the existing stop on Fitzroy St on the beach side of Grey St. This will speed up the 96 tram which will then stop only at the St Kilda station. The remaining issue is what to do about the Route 16 stop? Where should any new stop be built between the Park St stop and the Junction to replace the existing one at Princes St?

The current PTV proposal has a new Route 16 stop between Grey St and Princes St. This allows access to school and Albert Park but it is not a significant improvement on the original PTV proposal. There is still concern about safety and the impact on traffic with the platforms narrowing Fitzroy St in this section. This proposal requires a Planning permit and unChain will be opposing this.

It is possible to 'do nothing' at Fitzroy St at this stage and use the existing stop at Princes St. This allows us to explore better alternatives. There is an alternative design proposed by traders and some residents, and supported by unChain. This is to put the new stop between Princes St and the Junction. This will have significantly less impact on traffic, on the primary school and on traders.

One thing that is noticeably lacking is an overall plan for the 16 route.

- We need a long term plan about the whole of the route – especially with the re-development of the Junction stop in the future.
- Other cities like Berlin have much longer distances between stops than the 400 m that PTV wants.
- We need to acknowledge that work three years ago in Fitzroy Street has caused massive problems for residents and traders and was done with inadequate consultation.
- We need to acknowledge that some of the other stops on the 16/96 Route between Barkly St and the Junction have been inappropriately located or not well designed
- We need to acknowledge that the re-development of the Junction Oval may mean that it is more appropriate to locate any new Route 16 tram stop opposite it.
- We also need to note that there are different types of DDA compliant stops. A pair of experimental tram stops on Bridge Road in Richmond have been given an emphatic thumbs up in a VicRoads-commissioned

study, paving the way for hundreds more to eventually be built throughout Melbourne. The stops are designed to provide easy access for the elderly, people with disabilities and parents with prams without building platforms that cut off traffic lanes. This may be the way forward for the 16 stop on Fitzroy St.

For Acland St it is proposed to have a new terminus located near Acland Court. Acland Street would be closed to motor traffic between Belford St and Barkly Street with a pedestrian Plaza between the terminus and the intersection with Barkly Street. There would also be a significant expansion of footpath trading and plantings. Trams and traffic would share the tram tracks between Shakespeare Grove and Belford streets. This is a significant improvement on the original proposals. The question is whether there will now be genuine consultation with the Council, traders and residents on exploring different combinations of this general concept to get a win-win-win result. For example should Shakespeare St remain two-way? Should the plaza be bigger? Should the terminus and the plaza be constructed so as to allow one-way traffic all the way along Acland St to Barkly Street?

unChain believes that the candidates and their parties should commit to exploring alternative options for the 16 Route on Fitzroy St and on consulting on the details of the Acland St terminus. The next state government should insist that PTV and Yarra Trams plan properly for the 96 and the 16 tram routes. This should take account of traffic management, impacts on local traders and residential amenity.