

Rail Futures Institute Inc

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**Rail Futures Institute Inc
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1. Transport Infrastructure and Capital Works Projects (Hon Jacinta Allan – Minister for Transport Infrastructure)

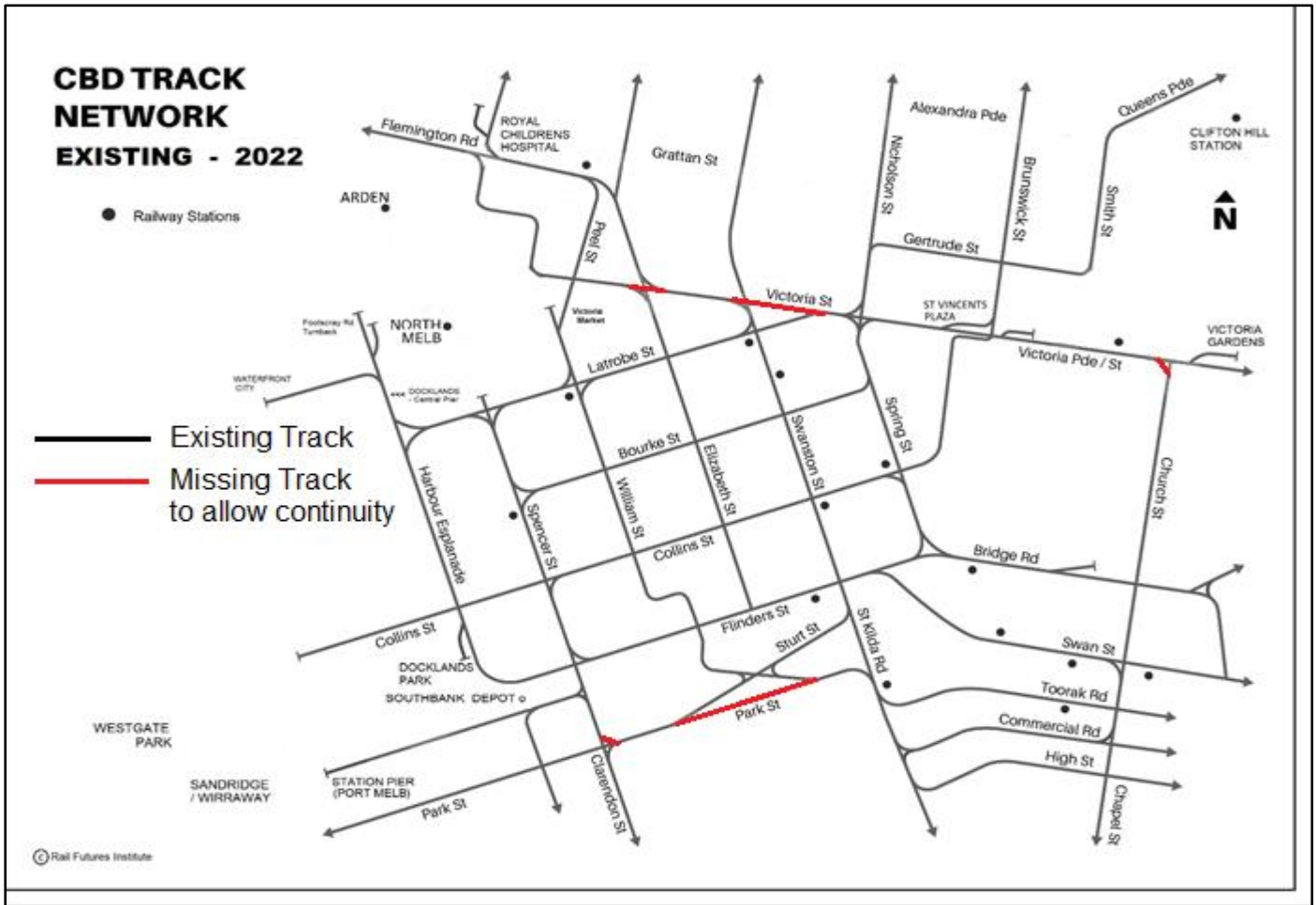
Project Description	Project Rationale	Other Comments
Metro Area Rail Projects		
<p>Caulfield Station Upgrade –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprising a new DDA compliant upper concourse leading to the existing present heritage listed station buildings and linked to street access on both the Northern and Southern sides. New station ticket offices, toilets, escalators, ramps and stairs, plus options for direct access to Caulfield Racecourse and the Caulfield campus of Monash University, PLUS Enhanced tram interchanges on both Northern and Southern sides of the station. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caulfield will be an even more important interchange between the Dandenong and Frankston corridors when MM1 opens. It is already a significant origin and destination location handling around 5 million boardings per annum. The present station subway, ramps and entrances are unattractive, narrow and non-DDA compliant. Further, the structural integrity of the existing passenger subway imposes a severe long standing speed restriction on all trains passing over it which needs to be addressed and removed as part of the station upgrade works. <u>(This speed restriction has existed for over 10 years without the underlying structural fault being rectified and removed.)</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project was expected to be an integral part of the overall scope of MM1 but has NOT been so. Post-MM1, Caulfield will be of equal importance to stations at Footscray and Sunshine, both of which have recently undergone major upgrades. Interchange with trams at this station also needs significant improvement. Proposed timing of works : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by early 2023 completion of design/approvals by early 2024 – procurement by mid-2025 - completion of station and interchange upgrading to be concurrent with Metro 1 tunnel opening.
<p>Cranbourne – Clyde Extension</p> <p>Extension of Electrified Metro Services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> track infrastructure re-build duplication and electrification new stations at Cranbourne East and Clyde level crossing removals including South Gippsland Highway at Cranbourne Cranbourne station re-build Train stabling at Clyde. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2026, the projected population between Cranbourne and Clyde will be 141,000 in a rapidly growing area poorly served by public transport. This compares to currently 98,000 in the recently electrified extension catchment between South Morang and Mernda. As such, extension of electrification from Cranbourne to Clyde following completion of Cranbourne line duplication should now be a priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected growth in the Cranbourne – Clyde corridor will require extension of MTM train services to Clyde by 2026 to handle the expected patronage task. Provide funding in 2022/23 budget for implementation of this extension with construction to commence 2024 for completion mid-2026.
<p>Accessibility Upgrades - Metro stations program</p> <p>Initiate ongoing program for progressively achieving DDA compliance at all Metro stations</p>	<p>Many major junction and interchange stations still do NOT meet the most basic standards of accessibility as required by Federal DDA legislation.</p>	<p>Priority to be given to junction stations and major interchange stations including Newport, Clifton Hill, Richmond, Burnley, Camberwell and South Yarra</p>

Planning for Major High Priority Capital Projects–City Loop Re-configuration and Metro 2.

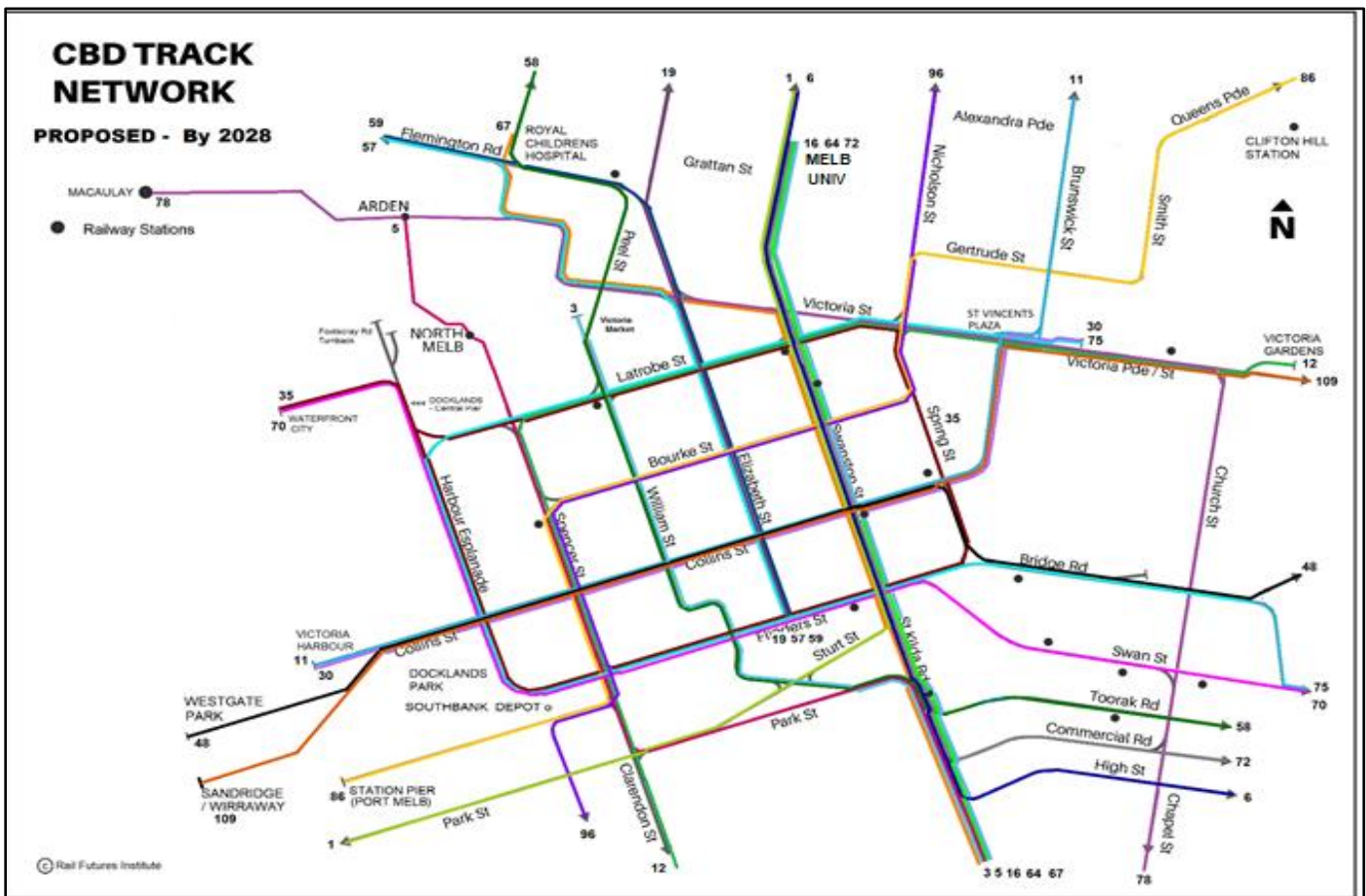
We propose that funding be provided in 2022/23 to progress planning, scoping, concept design and Business Case preparation for City Loop Re-configuration and Metro 2 to provide an ongoing pipeline of essential major projects to follow the approaching completion of Metro 1.

Project Description	Project Rationale	Other comments
<p>City Loop Re-configuration</p> <p>Scope comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of new underground ramp connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At Jolimont from the existing Northern Loop to Richmond station. ○ At North Melbourne station connection from existing Caulfield Loop. • Construction of a new rail over rail flyover near Cremorne • Construction of a new platform 7 face at North Melbourne station. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a new twin track rail route from Craigieburn to Frankston via Flagstaff, Melbourne Central and Parliament, Richmond and South Yarra and releases two existing tracks between North Melbourne and Richmond via Southern Cross and Flinders Street. • Allows the potential operation of 20 additional trains per hour in each direction through the inner CBD core of the metropolitan rail network by creating additional rail capacity equivalent to at least 20 lanes of road freeway through the CBD. • Simplifies cross city line groups resulting in less train conflicts and improved network reliability. • Also allows for the creation of a NEW cross City Line Group from (Wallan) – Craigieburn - Upfield - Southern Cross - Flinders Street – Burnley – Glen Waverley • Cost / Benefit analysis will realize an above average return for this proposed investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FULLY endorsed for early implementation by Infrastructure Victoria (at August, 2021). • Practical timing of this project is ideally for it to be implemented following the opening of MM1 in 2025. This will allow the work of re-configuring the Caulfield and Northern Loop tunnels to be undertaken with minimal disruption to existing services on both the Frankston and Craigieburn lines. • Lead times would require early works to commence in mid-2023. With careful scheduling the larger part of the new connections to both existing tunnels can be constructed in advance of Metro 1 opening, so that the actual period of disruption to the Northern & Caulfield loops in making the new connections at Richmond and North Melbourne can potentially be limited to around 6 months. • Outstanding fire and safety upgrade works in the City Loop can also be undertaken at the same time.
<p>Metro 2 Tunnel</p> <p>Stage – 1 Southern Cross to Newport . Planning and design</p> <p>Stage – 2 Southern Cross – Flagstaff – Parkville – Fitzroy - Croxton</p>	<p>Critical to increase Metro capacity to the Western and Northern suburbs medium term and to activate Fishermans Bend development precinct.</p> <p>Stage 1: to allow Metro services to operate from Southern Cross via Fishermans Bend and Newport then splitting to run to Black Forest Road via Werribee, and via Brooklyn and Sunshine to Mt Atkinson (longer term Melton)</p> <p>Stage 2: from Southern Cross via Flagstaff and Parkville to Croxton.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with Geelong FAST Train via Spotswood and Werribee. • Williamstown & Laverton via Footscray through routed to Sandringham. • Complementary with Southern Cross - Black Forest Road Metro trains via RRL and Tarneit. <p>Stage 2 allows for Mernda trains to be through routed via Metro 2 to Black Forest Road and for WOLLERT trains to be through routed via Metro 2 to Mt Atkinson (and Melton.)</p>

Transport Infrastructure and Capital Works Projects (Continued)		
Project Description	Project Rationale	Other Comments
Yarra Trams Capital Works Projects		
Park St South Melbourne – Track Continuity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide 300 m of double track infill in Park Street, South Melbourne and an additional curve pair at Clarendon and Park Streets, South Melbourne. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows trams from Anzac to ALSO enter the CBD via Spencer Street, plus existing access via Swanston and William Streets. Allows Route 5 from Malvern to run from Anzac via Park, Clarendon and Spencer Streets (Southern Cross) to the Remand Centre, North Melbourne and Arden stations. 	Construct by 2024/25 to be available at Metro 1 opening. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See concept diagrams page 6
Victoria St, CBD - Track Continuity Provide 750m of double track infill in Victoria Street between Latrobe and Swanston Streets, plus cross connections at Swanston and Elizabeth Streets, and an additional curve pair at Victoria and Church Streets , North Richmond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for existing Route 78 to be extended via North Richmond Station, St Vincents Plaza, RMIT, and Victoria Market to Arden Station and into the Arden Development precinct. Links the job rich South Yarra and Cremorne precincts across the north of the CBD to the Arden Precinct. <u>Connects with 15 other tram routes offering hundreds of new public transport travel options.</u> 	Complete late 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See concept diagrams page 6
CBD WEST - Tram extensions Stage 1: from the existing Remand Centre Turnback in Spencer Street to NORTH MELBOURNE and ARDEN stations. Stage 2: From existing trackage at Abbotsford / Arden Streets to ARDEN and MACAULAY stations. (Above as per Arden Precinct Plan submission).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: Extends CBD tram service along Spencer Street to both North Melbourne and Arden stations by Metro 1 opening in 2025. Stage -2 connects existing tram trackage at Abbotsford St to link via Arden St to ARDEN station, the Arden Precinct and MACAULAY station. See concept diagrams page 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: Via Spencer, Abbotsford and Adderley Streets to NORTH MELBOURNE station, then continuing via Railway Place and Laurens Street to ARDEN station. Stage-2: From existing trackage at Abbotsford Street via Arden Street to ARDEN station, continuing via Arden, Fogarty and Henderson Streets, Boundary Road and Macaulay Road to MACAULAY station. (See also Victoria Street track infill above).
CBD – Fishermans Bend Growth Precinct Extensions Stage 1: Collins Street to Westgate Park Route Stage 2: Collins Street to Sandridge Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extends the CBD Tram network into the Fishermans Bend Development Precinct Allows Route 48 to be extended from Victoria Harbour to Westgate Park (Industrial Precinct) Allows Route 109 to be re-directed to Sandridge (Residential precinct) Allows Route 86 to operate direct to Port Melbourne (In lieu of Route 109) 	
CBD Tram Track – Road Traffic Separation Project Install solid barrier delineation between tram clearways and road traffic lanes in the CBD as proposed by Yarra Trams and endorsed by both the City of Melbourne and RACV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases the average speed of trams Stops illegal road user U turns and blocking of CBD tram clearways Enhances tram fleet utilization. <p>Will result in less falls by tram passengers resulting from the current levels of sudden braking incurred owing to motor vehicle intrusion onto tram tracks.</p>	<p>A low cost initiative delivering multiple immediate benefits, enhanced safety and expediting free flow of both trams and road traffic in Central Melbourne.</p>



SHOWING PROPOSED EXTENDED & ENHANCED CBD TRAM NETWORK AT 2028



Route #	From / To	Via CBD Streets
1	East Coburg–South Melbourne Beach	Swanston Street
3	Haymarket (Bedford St) – East Malvern	Peel & William Streets
5	Arden R.S. – Malvern (Wattletree Road)	Spencer & Clarendon Streets
6	Moreland – Glen Iris	Swanston Street & St Kilda Road
11	Victoria Harbour–West Preston	Collins Street
12	Victoria Gardens – St Kilda (Fitzroy St)	Victoria, Latrobe, & Spencer Streets
16	Melbourne University – Caulfield RS	Swanston Street & St Kilda Road
19	Flinders St RS – North Coburg	Elizabeth Street
30	Victoria Harbour – St. Vincent’s Plaza	Collins Street
35	City Circle – Tourist Route	Latrobe, Spring, Flinders Streets, & Harbour Esplanade
48	Westgate Park – North Balwyn	Collins & Spring Streets
57	Flinders St RS – West Maribyrnong	Elizabeth & Victoria Streets
58	West Coburg - Toorak	William & Peel Streets
59	Flinders St RS – Airport West	Elizabeth Street
64	Melbourne University – Malvern RS	Swanston Street & St Kilda Road
67	Parkville (RCH) - Carnegie	Victoria & Swanston Streets
70	Waterfront City – Wattle Park	Harbour Esplanade & Flinders Street
72	Melbourne University – Camberwell	Swanston Street & St Kilda Road
75	St. Vincent’s Plaza – Vermont South	Latrobe Street, Harbour Esplanade, & Flinders Street
79	Arden Precinct - Balaclava	Victoria Street, Victoria Parade, Church & Chapel Streets
86	Port Melbourne – Bundoora RMIT	Spencer & Bourke Streets
96	East Brunswick – St Kilda (Barkly St)	Spencer & Bourke Streets
109	Sandridge – Box Hill	Collins Street & Victoria Parade

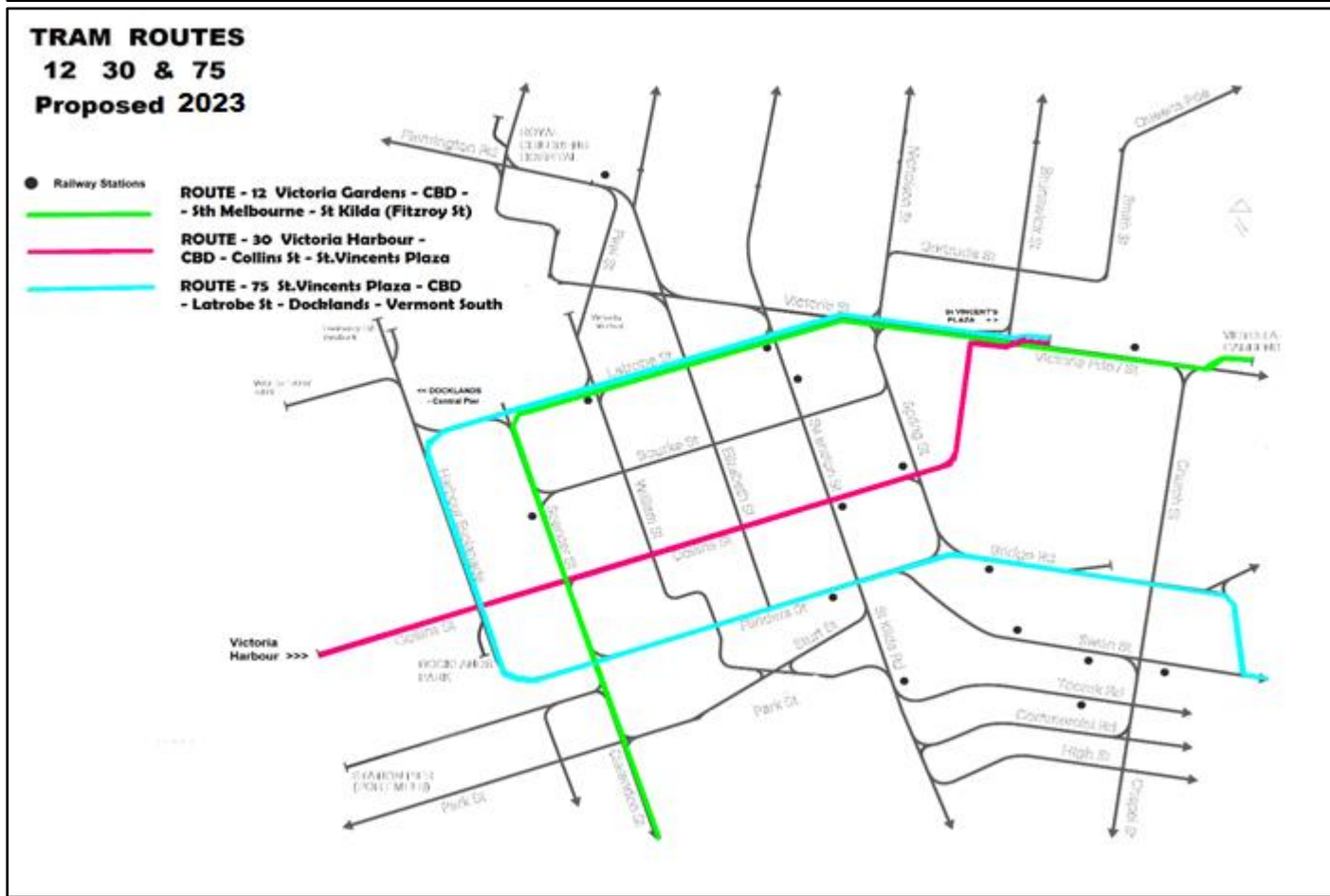
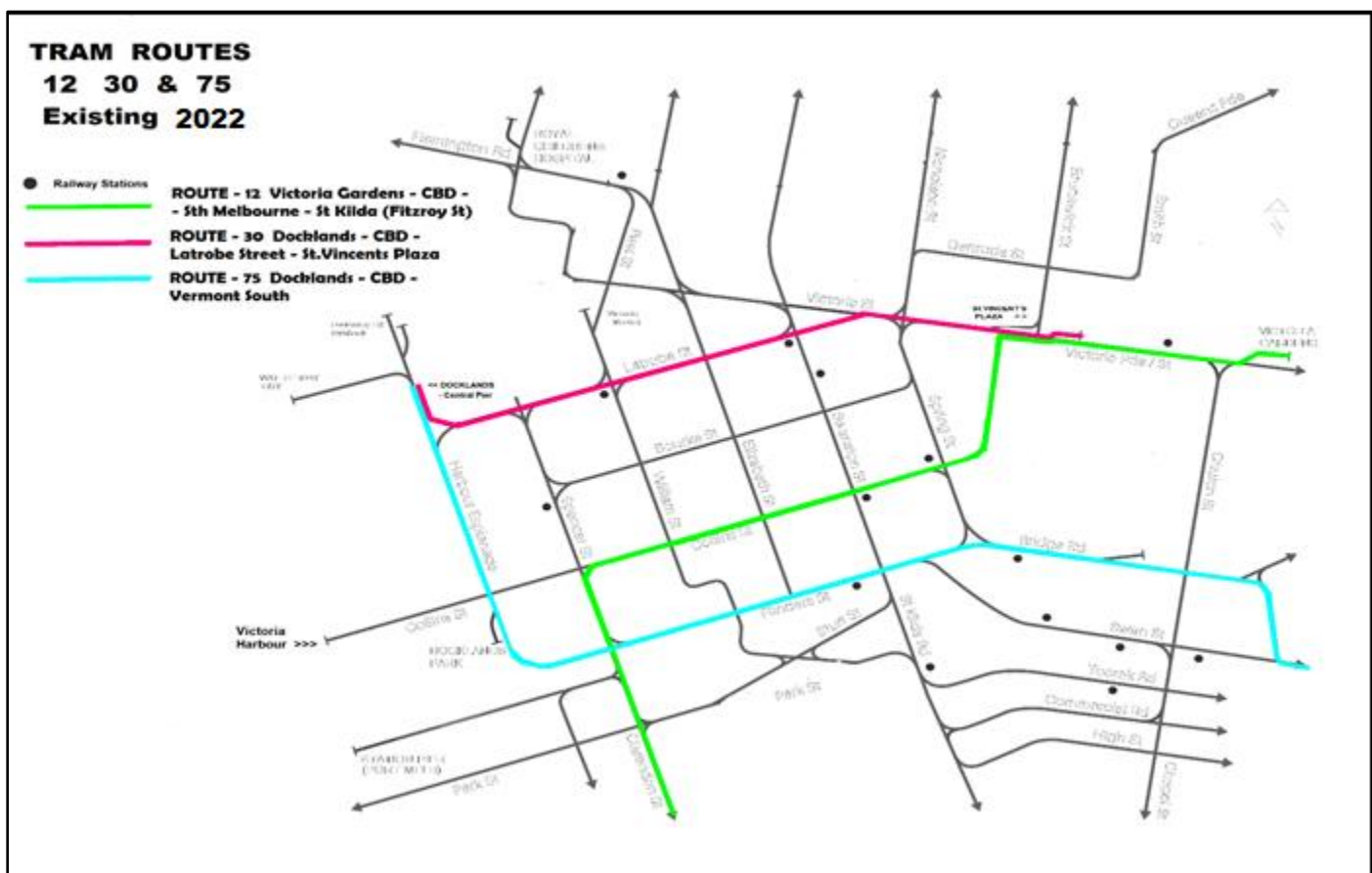
PROPOSED TRAM ROUTES PER KEY CBD STREET - 2028

Harbour Esplanade	2	Latrobe Street	2
Spencer Street	4	Bourke Street	2
William / Peel Streets	2	Collins Street	4
Elizabeth Street	3	Flinders Street	2
Swanston Street	6	Victoria Parade / Street - East	3
Exhibition St Extension	1	Victoria Parade / Street - West	3
Spring Street	2	Flemington Road	2
St Kilda Rd – Nth & Sth	5	Royal Parade	1

Infrastructure and Capital Works Projects (Continued)		
Project Description	Project Rationale	Other Comments
Regional Rail Network Projects – V/LINE Passenger		
<p>Bendigo Line Capacity Enhancement Project</p> <p>Involves the restoration of double track at three locations north of Kyneton.</p> <p>Also, selective installation of additional crossovers on existing bi-directionally signalled track sections between Clarkefield and Ravenswood to maximize train paths for both passenger and freight services during off-peak, evenings and weekends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for reliable operation of Peak 20-minute services and 40-minute Off Peak passenger frequencies in the Melbourne – Bendigo corridor. To restore adequate capacity to handle other broad gauge train movements including freight trains from the Swan Hill, Inglewood and Echuca lines, and placement trips to/from the Bendigo Workshops. Provide resilience to ensure reliable operation of passenger services running at higher Peak and Off- Peak frequencies Allow for extra freight paths evenings, weekends and overnight. 	<p>Facilitates early expansion of the Bendigo Metro network to include MARONG (projected population of 8,000 by 2028).</p>
<p>Seymour Line Modern Automatic Block Signalling Project</p> <p>Installation of a modern Automatic Block Signalling system on the existing double track broad gauge track pair between Craigieburn - Wallan – Kilmore East – Broadford and Seymour to provide maximum 5-minute headways for passenger trains at permitted line speed.</p> <p>(Note: Re-signalling Craigieburn to Wallan assumed to be designed for future electrification for Metro services over this section but also to accommodate short term higher frequency diesel services to Wallan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for higher service frequency Seymour and Shepparton passenger services, including 9 return trips daily to Shepparton from 2024/25. Also allow for increased service frequencies required short term to service both Outer Metro travellers beyond Craigieburn to Wallan and to anticipate subsequent electrification of this line section. Provide resilience for more reliable operation of broad-gauge passenger services to Wallan, Seymour and Shepparton. Allow for increased paths for broad gauge Seymour and Goulburn Valley / Echuca / Deniliquin freight services. 	<p>The existing signalling system on the Craigieburn – Seymour broad gauge lines is a remnant of a labour-intensive system dating from the 1800s.</p> <p>Proposed implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: 2022/23 scoping and design Stage 2: 2023/24 procurement Stage 3: 2024/25 construction and commissioning.
<p>Regional Level Crossings Upgrade Program - Swan Hill and Bairnsdale Lines</p> <p>Provide enhanced level crossing protection at 22 level crossings between Eaglehawk and Swan Hill including elimination of associated rail speed restrictions.</p> <p>Provide enhanced level crossing protection at 11 level crossings between Traralgon and Bairnsdale including elimination of associated rail speed restrictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complements existing approved and funded level crossing protection works in hand on the Warrnambool, Shepparton and Albury lines. Provides enhanced safety for both rail passengers and road users. Removes 33 current severe rail speed restrictions impacting passenger services, resulting in unnecessarily extended rail travel times to Kerang, Swan Hill, Sale and Bairnsdale. 	<p>Can be sold as a REGIONAL equivalent to the Metropolitan level crossing program in enhancing safety for both regional rail passengers and regional road users.</p> <p>Proposed implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022/23: external design and tender 2023/24: contract, construct and commission.

2. Proposed Services Improvement Package – (Hon Ben Carroll – Minister for Public Transport)

Project Description	Project Rationale	Other Comments
Proposed Service Improvement Package - Metro Trains		
<p>Progressively move to standardize on a common Weekend train timetable on the MTM Network for Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement in 2023 calendar year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardize to a core timetable for Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays to turn up and go frequencies between 0700 and 2200; with services starting earlier on Saturday mornings and finishing earlier on Sunday evenings Facilitate co-ordination at key interchange railway stations especially with trams also operating to a common timetable on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays (See below). 	<p>(Note: V/LINE has already FULLY implemented a common Weekend timetable for Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays).</p>
Proposed Service Improvement Package - Yarra Trams		
<p>Move to standardize to a common Weekend timetable on the Yarra Trams network for Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays</p> <p>Implement – in 2023 calendar year.</p>	<p>Standardize to a core timetable for Saturdays and Sundays to turn up and go frequencies between 0700 and 2200; with services starting earlier on Saturday mornings and finishing earlier on Sunday evenings</p>	<p>Co-ordinate at key interchange points especially where trams meet trains at key railway stations in adopting similar uniform train timetables for Saturdays, Sundays & Public Holidays. (See above)</p> <p>(NB: V/LINE have already FULLY implemented a common Weekend timetable for Saturdays , Sundays & Public Holidays).</p>
<p>Latrobe and Collins Street Tram Services Package.</p> <p>Transfer Route 30 to Collins Street as a Victoria Harbour – St Vincents Plaza shuttle Weekdays Off Peak day service.</p> <p>Transfer Route 12 to operate at all times via Victoria Parade, Latrobe and Spencer Streets.</p> <p>Maintain all other Collins Street tram routes as now (Routes 11, 48, 109 and Peak route 11a)</p> <p>Extend Route 75 from Harbour Esplanade along Latrobe Street to terminate at St Vincents Plaza.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a much better choice of travel options to/from Latrobe Street /RMIT and the Western end of the CBD. Restores a much-needed continuous tram service along the full length of Spencer Street from Latrobe Street to the Exhibition Centre, Casino and South Melbourne Maintains existing capacity in Collins Street Doubles capacity and frequency in Latrobe Street (A major CBD street which is very poorly serviced) Provides a direct tram route from Richmond via St Vincents Plaza to the Western end of the CBD and RMIT Campus Provides a direct tram route from the RMIT Campus and Western end of the CBD to Southern Cross station, South Melbourne and St Kilda Offers new direct CBD tram travel options. 	<p>This project is a classical “low hanging fruit” opportunity, providing many benefits.</p> <p>Requires no capital expenditure on additional track connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a small number of additional trams sourced from the available existing fleet to operate the altered Route 12 (as it did via Latrobe Street between July and October 2020) and the extended Route 75. Existing E class in Latrobe St move to Route 58 releasing B2 class trams to go onto the extended Route 75 in Latrobe Street. Potential implementation as one package over 2022/2023. Fully supported by PTUA, VTAG and Transport for Melbourne. <p><i>See concept diagrams page – 10.</i></p>



Proposed Services Improvement Package (Continued)

Project Description	Project Rationale	Other Comments
Proposed Service Improvement Package – V/LINE Trains		
<p>Melbourne to Maryborough day return service on Saturdays and Sundays – by extending existing Ballarat services to and from Maryborough, as under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the 0914 Southern Cross – Ballarat service from Ballarat to Maryborough, arriving at 1145. • Originating the existing 1720 Ballarat – Southern Cross service from Maryborough at 1610. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryborough has good tourist potential. At present, a suitable service is provided on Weekdays but not on Weekends when it is impossible to make day or weekend return trips to Maryborough from either Melbourne or Ballarat. • Maryborough service frequency is seriously deficient compared to other regional centres at similar distances from Melbourne. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional rolling stock is required to operate these services. • Increased service frequency will generate additional farebox revenue at marginal extra cost.
<p>Seymour Line - additional weekday evening and weekend service frequency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a better service to Donnybrook and Wallan as outer Metro growth areas, and to the peri-urban growth towns of Kilmore, Broadford and Seymour, as under: • <u>Weekday</u> – Evenings provide an additional Down service between the existing 2005 and 2143 trains and an additional Up service between the existing 1953 and 2156 Up trains. • <u>Weekends</u> – round out to minimum 90 minutes frequency, daytime/evenings. 	<p>No additional fleet is required.</p>
<p>Traralgon Line - improved Sunday evening service</p>	<p>Add a later Up service around 2020 on Sundays . Currently the last Up train from Traralgon on Sundays is far too early at 1825. (Compared to the last Sunday trains from Geelong at 2252, Ballarat at 2128, Bendigo 2100 and from Seymour at 2027.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves the Weekend service offering overall in providing a later last Up train from Traralgon on Sundays and Public Holidays at around 2020 in line with all other Commuter corridors. 	<p>No additional fleet is required.</p>

Proposed Services Improvement Package (Continued)		
Project Description	Project Rationale	• Other Comments
Proposed Service Improvement Package – V/LINE Road Coaches		
<p>BALLARAT – HAMILTON additional Weekday Hamilton – Ballarat return coach trip coordinated at Ballarat with existing train services to/from Melbourne</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will offer a much wider choice of travel options to travellers from all locations between Hamilton and Ballarat, in terms of multiple day return trip options to both Ballarat and Melbourne <p>HAMILTON only has two return trips to Ballarat & Melbourne , whereas OTHER regional centres a similar distance from Melbourne enjoy a minimum of FOUR (4) return Weekday trip choices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays Departing Hamilton 0850 arriving Ballarat 1110 (connecting with 1124 train to Southern Cross arriving 1251) Tuesdays, Thursdays, departing Hamilton 1130 (connecting with 1404 train to Melbourne arriving 1531) Saturdays 1145 (connecting with 1420 train to Melbourne arriving 1548) Weekdays and Saturdays Departing Ballarat at 1455, arriving Hamilton at 1715 (Connecting Weekdays with the 1316 train from Southern Cross, arriving Ballarat at 1441 and Saturdays with the 1314 train from Melbourne arriving Ballarat at 1443) There should be available idle coach resources at Hamilton to run these extra return trips. <p>As recommended in the Wimmera Area Transport Study of 2017 but still NOT implemented.</p>
<p>BALLARAT – MARYBOROUGH provision of third Weekday Melbourne – Ballarat – Maryborough return trip</p> <p>Initially as extra return coach connections to/from Maryborough connecting with existing Melbourne / Ballarat trains at Ballarat.</p>	<p>Increases Ballarat – Maryborough Weekday return services to a minimum level of 3 return services already enjoyed by other comparable regional centres a similar distance from Melbourne, as under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEW 1200 Noon Weekdays road coach Maryborough to Ballarat, connecting with the existing 1324 train to Melbourne arriving 1451 NEW 1335 Weekdays road coach from Ballarat to Maryborough (arriving Maryborough at 1435) connecting at Ballarat with the existing 1156 train from Southern Cross. <p>Provides a middle of the day Weekday train/coach trip in both directions between Melbourne – Ballarat and Maryborough offering multiple day return trip opportunities from Maryborough to both Ballarat and Melbourne.</p>	<p>Existing idle coach fleet at Maryborough between school runs can provide this service without requiring acquisition of an additional road coach.</p>

3. Rail Freight Network Issues (Hon Melissa Horne – Minister for Freight and Ports)

Project Description	Project Rationale	Other Comments
<p>Sustainability Program for Victorian Freight – Only Lines</p> <p>(Approximately 1,200 route kilometres of track).</p> <p>Project scope principally involves replacement of some 1.8 million timber sleepers over a 15 year period with either steel or concrete locally manufactured sleepers with a nominal 50-year service life.</p>	<p>The current V/Line practice of continuing to use replacement timber sleepers on most freight-only lines is now unique to Victoria, and whilst it allows for future gauge conversion, their limited life of 15 years or less continues to perpetuate an on-going high cost track maintenance model.</p> <p>A typical outcome is that lines are permitted to deteriorate until the timber sleeper condition is poor resulting in severe speed restrictions and increased risk of train derailment.</p> <p>In common with other Australian rail systems practice (e.g. New South Wales Country Rail Network), with staged replacement of timber sleepers over 15 years with nominal 50-year life steel or concrete sleepers will provide a robust and sustainable track structure of increased operational capability and reliability, and a consistent 21 tonne axle load (on 41 kg/m or heavier rail), but with substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.</p>	<p>A suitably staged program of timber sleeper replacement would typically provide a commitment to a program spread over 15 years at an estimated cost of \$35m (Year 1) and \$24m per annum (Years 2-15), as under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 1-5: Program mobilisation, sleeper supply contracts, ballast and drainage improvement, replacement of 1 in 4 timber sleepers resulting in a 25% consistent pattern of long life sleepers. • Years 6-8: Replacement of a further 1 in 3 of remaining timber sleepers resulting in a 50% consistent pattern of long life sleepers. • Years 9-11: Replacement of a further 1 in 2 of remaining timber sleepers resulting in a 75% consistent pattern of long life sleepers. • Years 12-15: Replacement of all remaining timber sleepers resulting in 100% long life sleepers. <p>• Priority would be given to lines with a history of accelerated timber sleeper degradation, e.g: Due to termite infestation.</p>
<p>Track Standard - Toolamba to Echuca</p> <p>(as part Melbourne – Seymour – Toolamba – Echuca – Deniliquin freight corridor)</p>	<p>This line was re-opened in recent years specifically for container traffic from Deniliquin to access Melbourne Port in higher containers that cannot use the route via Bendigo because of restricted tunnel clearances.</p> <p>The line has not been maintained by V/Line to the specified standard and is currently unavailable for traffic yet again.</p> <p>The current rice harvest which is processed at Deniliquin is at a record high.</p>	<p>The line requires short term catch-up and on-going maintenance to allow a minimum operating speed of 50 km/h.</p> <p>Potential other rail freight business opportunities along this line at Tongala and Tatura cannot be exploited as long as this key cross country freight line remains unfit for use.</p>