

Draft Budget 2018-2019



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra

www.streets-alive-yarra.org

facebook.com/streetsaliveyarra/

Foreward

Streets Alive Yarra is a community group who advocate for:

- shopping streets that build wealth for traders by attracting regular business from local residents;
- a network of safe streets that enable those who wish to use active transport to do so, thus freeing up space on the streets for those who prefer to drive;
- economically rational and evidence-based re-allocation of street space toward transport modes that can carry more people per unit area of street space; and
- evidence-based re-allocation of street space toward safe travel infrastructure that provides equity of access for people who are young, old or with disabilities.

Our vision is for **vibrant and profitable local businesses**, owing to increased patronage, and **traffic that still flows freely**. Residents and shoppers are able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra. We see our streets being used by people from **8 to 80** years old, irrespective if they choose to walk, cycle, use public transport or drive.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 750 likes on Facebook, increasing by 20-30 per week. A network of local champions develop concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Streets Alive Yarra has made multiple submissions to the City of Yarra:

- www.streets-alive-yarra.org/submissions

Further information is available at:

- www.streets-alive-yarra.org
- facebook.com/streetsaliveyarra/

The problem

The draft budget has a total revenue of \$181 million but only allocates \$1 million for footpath and bike path improvements:

- \$1m for footpath and bike path improvements
 - Including \$200,000 on stage 2 of the Wellington Street separated bike lane

Source: screenshot from www.yoursayyarra.com.au/budget1819

Primary purpose

The primary purpose of government is to protect the public. This point is neatly made by the Government of New York City:

- <http://nyc.gov/visionzero>

Quote “The primary mission of government is to protect the public. New York's families deserve and expect safe streets.”

Wilful blindness

The City of Yarra is one of three levels of Government in Australia and operates under an Act of the Victorian State Government. Federal and State Governments are signatories to the National Road Safety Strategy, which is firmly based upon Safe Systems principles:

- <http://roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/>

There are several guiding principles to this approach:

1. People make mistakes. Humans will continue to make mistakes, and the transport system must accommodate these. The transport system should not result in death or serious injury as a consequence of errors on the roads.
2. Human physical frailty. There are known physical limits to the amount of force our bodies can take before we are injured.
3. A ‘forgiving’ road transport system. A Safe System ensures that the forces in collisions do not exceed the limits of human tolerance. Speeds must be managed so that humans are not exposed to impact forces beyond their physical tolerance. System designers and operators need to take into account the limits of the human body in designing and maintaining roads, vehicles and speeds.

Source: screenshot from <http://roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/safe-system.aspx>

As such, The City of Yarra is obligated to align and comply with Safe Systems principles. Unfortunately, Yarra fails to do so. A core tenet of Safe System principles is a pro-active (instead of reactive) assessment of safety.

- <https://visionzeronetwork.org/developing-a-proactive-approach-to-safety/>

Vision Zero's *Safe Systems* approach means moving beyond a rearward review of crash maps to a forward-facing focus on trends and patterns to help identify future problem areas and work to prevent severe crashes before they happen. This means determining, analyzing, and addressing the underlying risk factors that influence dangerous actions: the where, how, and why serious crashes happen.

Source: screenshot from visionzeronetwork.org/developing-a-proactive-approach-to-safety/

To date, the City of Yarra has failed to fund a Safe Systems analysis of the hazards and associated risks that exist in our transport networks. Without this data it is difficult to follow an evidence based approach to budget prioritisation. Also it is difficult to provide clear and transparent justification to ratepayers for why investment in safe travel infrastructure is necessary.

A Safe Systems analysis of hazards and their associate risks does not need to be unnecessarily complex or expensive. A “first cut” analysis conducted by any Officer in the Traffic Department would suffice as justification for a more extensive phase of analysis. Alternatively, traffic engineering students at a local University could be approached to analyse selected streets in Yarra for their final-year or Masters projects.

For example, even lay persons can identify that the primary hazard is being struck by a motor vehicle while walking, cycling or taking public transport. Hazards can be further delineated, e.g. struck while crossing at an intersection, or doored while cycling. These hazards carry the risk of serious injury or death.

Congestion in Yarra

Hazards and risks are linked to traffic volumes and congestion. Infrastructure Victoria has modelled traffic and congestion patterns and trends in Melbourne, with results published in their report: *FIVE-YEAR FOCUS Immediate actions to tackle congestion April 2018*.

- <http://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/node/111>

Relevant excerpts are reproduced here:

Yarra's streets are already at capacity



Congestion will get worse

Melbourne's roads increasingly struggle to cope with growing demand. Road congestion is forecast to get worse over the next 15 years and on some parts of the network, increases in travel times and declines in reliability will be significant.

Congestion costs us money

According to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, road congestion in 2015 across all roads in Melbourne cost \$4.6 billion.⁸ This means that if the public transport network did not exist, these congestion costs could be far worse.⁹

Active transport reduces congestion

International evidence shows that measures to support active transport can reduce demand for car use and public transport in key corridors at peak times.³⁰ Active transport is also efficient – high-quality cycling infrastructure can accommodate 4,600 cyclists per hour compared to 1,900 cars.³¹

Active transport has strong potential to assist with managing transport demand as Melbourne grows, diverting people off roads and public transport and providing active transport users important benefits, including improved health.

Active transport needs to be made more attractive

We know that for many people, driving is the only option. But our recommendations aim to make other transport modes more attractive to those who can travel in other ways.

Street space needs to be better allocated

Better allocation of road space to prioritise efficient movement is essential to manage competing interests for limited road space.

Active transport requires investment

Targeted active transport investments could also help ease pressure on roads and public transport for short trips into inner Melbourne and key employment areas in peak periods.

Transport demand can be managed via parking costs

BOX 6: THE ROLE OF PARKING IN THE DECISION TO DRIVE

The availability of time unlimited, free parking provides a strong incentive for people to drive.

Our community research found that 55% of people who regularly drive during the weekday peak have access to free, time unlimited parking, while another 27% have free, time limited parking. Only 17% of those who regularly drive during the weekday peak pay for parking.

Of respondents who indicated they sometimes used another mode to travel during the weekday peak, the reason most commonly cited was that parking was a problem.

These findings suggest that, where there is good public transport in place, making parking less freely and readily available could be an effective lever in helping to manage road demand.

Source: Quantum Market Research (2017), Community research – Part 2.

Summary

If Yarra does not act to invest in safe travel infrastructure and to reform both the pricing and regulation of parking, then ratepayers will continue to suffer sub-optimal outcomes for mobility, access to mobility, safety and overall levels of taxation.

Impact upon young people

If it's unsafe for young people and students to use active transport to get to school, then each student will most likely suffer a loss of independence. They are dependent upon their parents to get them to and from school and to after-school activities. This impacts upon their learning and development opportunities, as well as their mental health.

In what ways can children's independent mobility promote their mental health and wellbeing?

"Children's lack of independent mobility is a concern for their levels of physical activity, but also for the broader personal, spatial and social skills that moving freely about neighbourhoods and cities can help foster in children. The benefits of children's everyday mobility range from learning to navigate local streets, to interacting with people in public, to gaining a sense of citizenship. There are a number of studies showing that the freedom of children to travel around their neighbourhood without adult supervision has dramatically declined over the last 30 years. This is associated with changes to the physical environment (such as urbanisation and increased car dependence) as well as the social environment (including changes to family working patterns and parental concerns about traffic or strangers)."

Source: <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/health-and-community/enewsletter/freedom-benefits-children%E2%80%99s-wellbeing>

"A Good City

is one in which children can grow and develop to the extent of their powers; where they can build their confidence and become actively engaged in the world; yet be autonomous and capable of managing their own affairs."

Kevin Lynch, Growing Up in Cities, 1977

Source: https://bernardvanleer.org/app/uploads/2017/10/Compendium_of_Best_Practices_of_Child_Friendly_Cities_2017.pdf

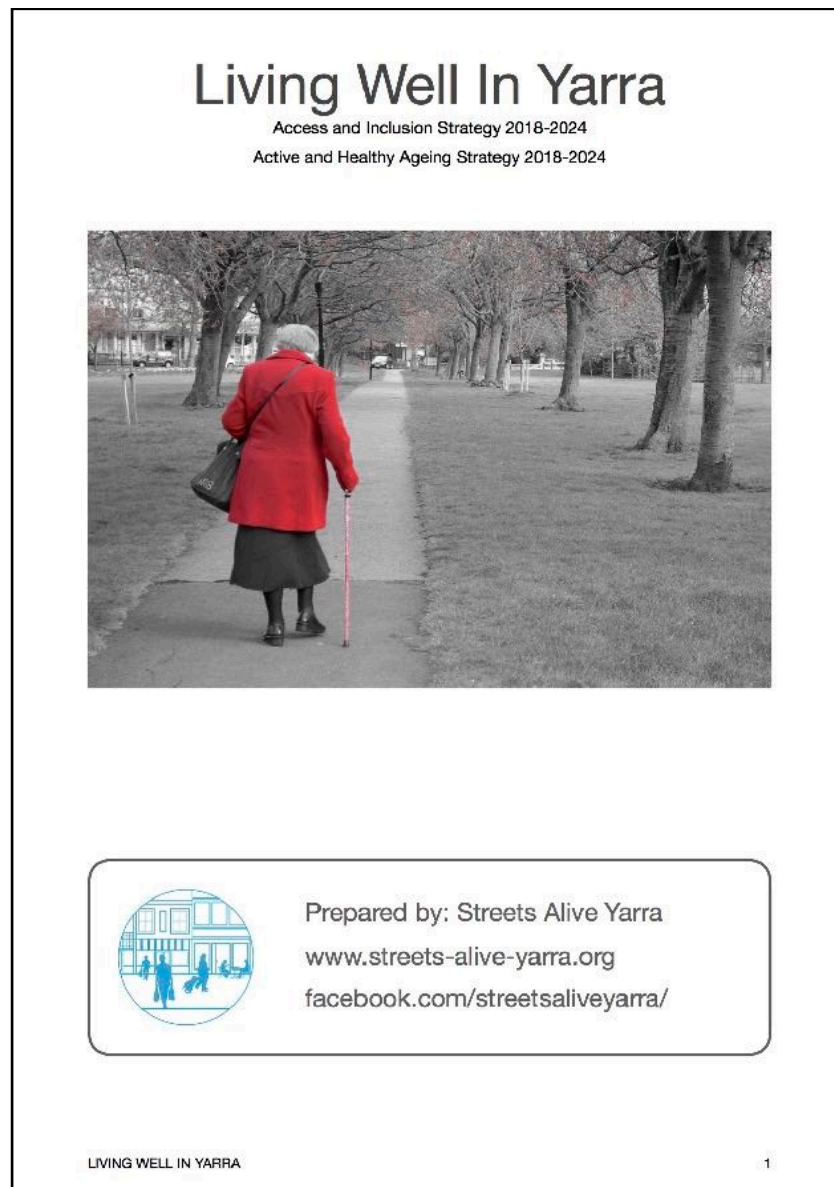
For a more extensive description of these issues please refer to Streets Alive Yarra's submission on Safe Routes to School, available for download at:

- www.streets-alive-yarra.org/submissions

Impact upon older people and people with disabilities

If it's unsafe for older people or people with disabilities to get around without a car, then they will suffer isolation and be less able to age in their own home. Being forced into high-care environments also imposes extra economic burdens upon ratepayers and taxpayers, which is a sub-optimal outcome.

For a more extensive description of these issues please refer to Streets Alive Yarra's submission on Living Well in Yarra:



The submission is available for download at:

- www.streets-alive-yarra.org/submissions

Solution - invest in safe travel infrastructure

The solution is to invest to deliver safe travel infrastructure consisting of integrated, cohesive networks with a minimum of a 3-star road safety rating from iRAP, the International Road Assessment Programme.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/safety>

The term “networks” refers to both footpath and bicycle path networks:

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/footpath-network>
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/bicycle-network>

Government policies

Plan Melbourne

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 principle #5 is “20-minute neighbourhoods”, stating:

In a 20-minute neighbourhood people have the choice to live locally, with the ability to meet most of their everyday needs including access to shops, childcare and schools, parks, doctors and public transport, within a 20-minute walk, or alternatively cycle or local public transport trip from their homes.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is all about creating walkable, healthy, cohesive, sustainable communities with strong local economies, while reducing the need to travel and cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Investing in safe travel infrastructure is clearly aligned with this policy.

Victorian Cycling Strategy

The Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-2018 states:

2.3 Support cycling to school

If more students cycle to school, there will be less traffic congestion near schools and on nearby roads. The percentage of students walking or cycling to school is significantly less than in the past. In 1970, only 16 per cent of students (primary and secondary) were driven to school, but by 2016 this had increased to 65 per cent.

The percentages are even higher for primary school, with almost 74 per cent of children being driven. Inner Melbourne primary schools fared slightly better, with 7 per cent of trips by bicycle and 36 per cent on foot. As students transition to secondary school, there is a notable shift to using public transport. Almost no secondary students cycle to school in the outer suburbs.

Encouraging children to cycle to school is an important way to increase the uptake of cycling by adults. If primary school students see cycling as a normal, practical and fun way of travelling, they are more likely to cycle as secondary students and on into adulthood.

It's also healthy to cycle to school. Studies show the single most effective way to improve the rate of physical activity and reduce the rate of childhood obesity is to get children out of cars and into active transport. Increasing the number of students riding to school creates a safer road environment, as drivers have more experience sharing roads with children.

Strategic approaches

The Victorian Government will work with local councils to improve cycling routes and facilities at schools, which will help increase the number of children cycling to school.

Investing in safe travel infrastructure is clearly aligned with this policy.

Community expectations

Feedback from residents and ratepayers consistently indicates support for sustainable transport.

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/community-support>

For example, here is a screenshot from the Draft Council Plan 2017-21:

Council Plan community consultation

The top issues identified by the community in the Council Plan community engagement process are:

1. Sustainable transport

Community expectations are also reflected in existing adopted Council policies, including:

- Safe Travel Strategy
- Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Encouraging and Increasing Walking Strategy
- Local Area Place Making Policy
- Structure and local area plans
- Urban design frameworks and streetscape masterplans
- Local area plan making

Community expectations are also reflected in State Government acts, policies and strategies:

- Towards Zero road safety strategy
- Sustainability strategy
- Transport Integration Act 2010, supporting an integrated and sustainable transport system

Student expectations

Students (and their parents) prefer to travel independently to school, using walking, cycling or public transport, as shown by a recent petition.

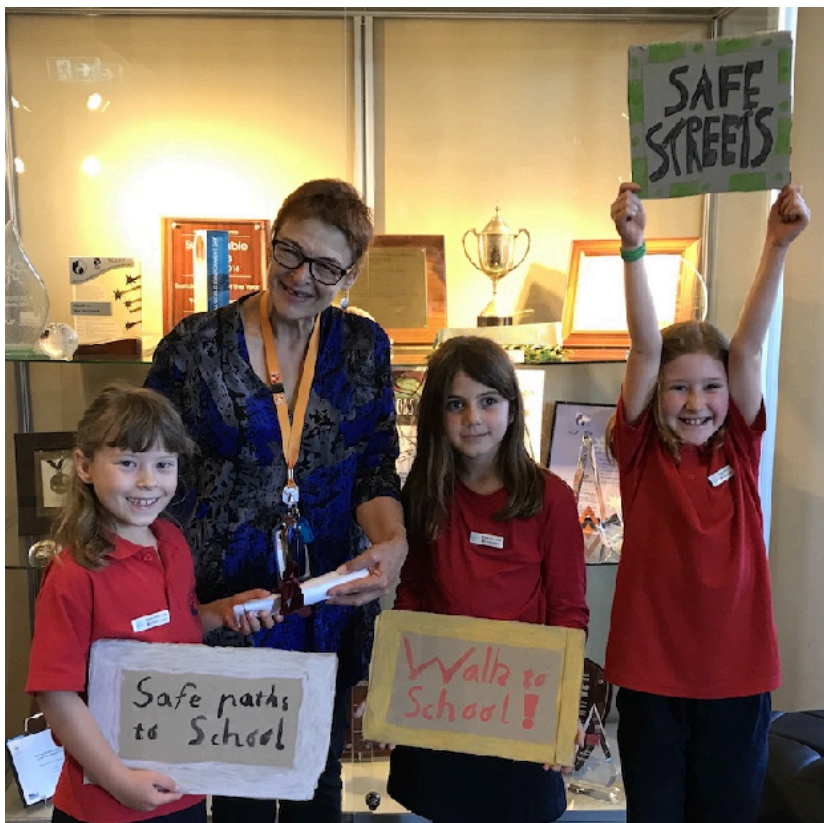
- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/student-support>

At the meeting on 5 December 2017 Council received a petition with approximately 51 signatures of Richmond Primary School grade 3 students. The petition stated:

"We are primary school kids that are probably going to Richmond High School when we are older. But we don't want to get run over by some fast cars and you probably don't want that either. You can stop this from happening by making the cars go slower and make a safer bike path too."

Council resolved:

"That the petition be received and referred to the appropriate officer for consideration."



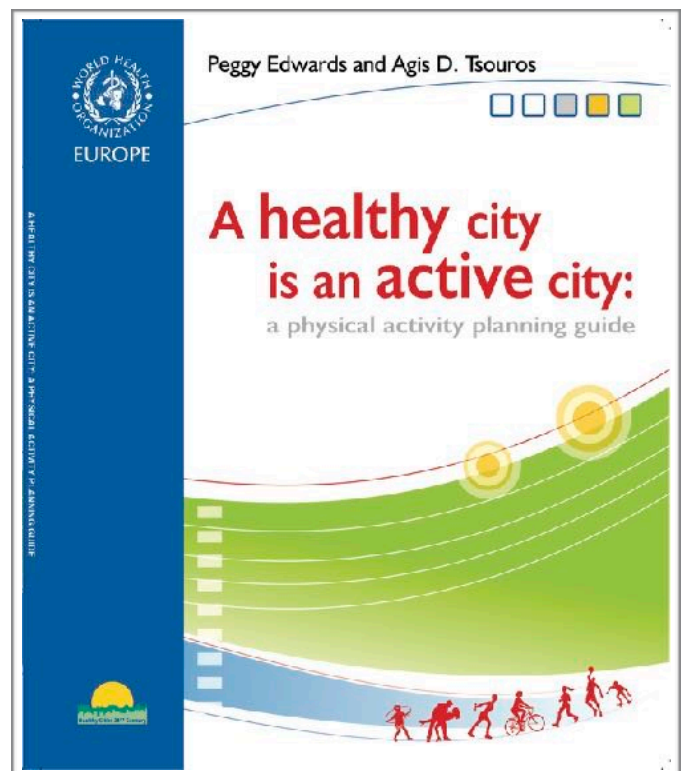
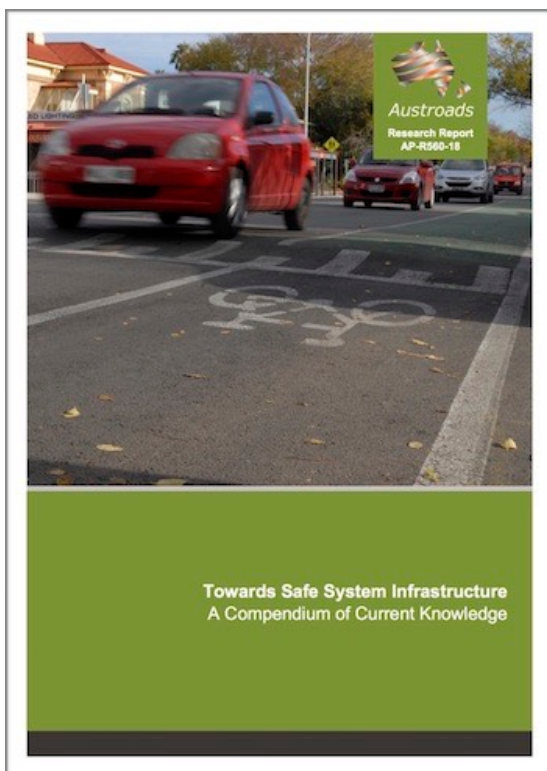
Design requirements

Design for safe travel infrastructure should comply with best practice guidelines:

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/design-guides>

While international design guides are of a higher standard, and are preferred, the minimum requirement is for our streets to be designed to comply with:

- Austroads AP-R560-18, Towards Safe System Infrastructure – A Compendium of Current Knowledge
- VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual Part 10, Pedestrian protection
- VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual Part 10, Guidance on treating bicycle car dooring collisions

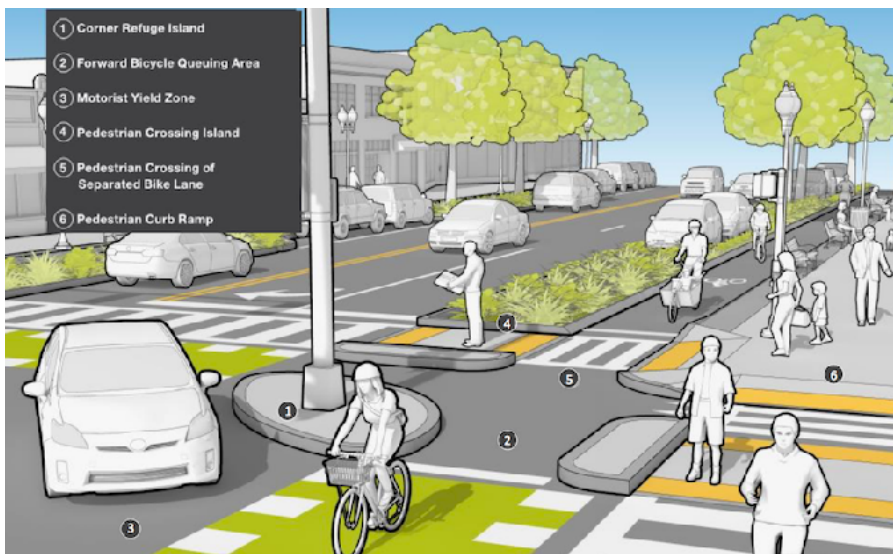


Footpath network

Infrastructure for walking in Yarra is generally of a good standard. However, hazards do exist that impose unacceptably high risks. The primary hazards on our streets are high speed motor vehicles, where minor errors by drivers can result in collisions that cause death or serious injury.

Further improvements are possible and desirable:

- On quiet residential streets: traffic speeds should be reduced to 20-30 km/h, by upgrading the streets to shared zones
- On key access streets and nominated arterials: footpaths should continue at grade when crossing quiet residential streets
- On nominated arterials: crossing distances should be reduced by using protected intersections
 - <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-intersections>



Bicycle path network

Infrastructure for cycling in Yarra is generally of a poor standard. Many hazards exist that impose unacceptably high risks. The primary hazards on our streets are:

- high speed motor vehicles, where minor errors by people in cars (such as failing to give way to a person on a bike) can result in collisions that cause death or serious injury.
- cars engaged in the process of parking, including opening doors into the path of cyclists.

The primary barriers and deterrent to cycling are the network of shopping streets, which are also VicRoads nominated arterials.

For example, consider the challenge faced by people living in Cremorne, south of Swan Street, as they attempt to ride north. There is no safe way to reach the north-south bicycle path on Lennox Street. People need to travel east-west on Swan Street to reach Lennox Street. Without a separated bicycle lane, Swan Street is hazardous. A similar problem is faced by people living in East Richmond and Burnley, south of Swan Street, as they attempt to reach the north-south bicycle path on Coppin Street, north of Swan Street.

VicRoads acknowledges the risks and has nominated Swan Street (amongst other shopping streets in Yarra) as the location for a Strategic Cycling Corridor (SSC). Strategic Cycling Corridors typically require the construction of separated or protected bicycle lanes. The City of Yarra should publically support VicRoads and the proposal to construct separated or protected bicycle lanes on all nominated SSCs in Yarra.

Overall, significant investment in safe bicycle travel infrastructure is drastically required:

- On quiet residential streets: traffic speeds should be reduced to 20-30 km/h, by upgrading the streets to shared zones
- On nominated arterials: separated bicycle lanes should be constructed:
- On key access streets: separated bicycle lanes should be constructed that eliminate any overlap with the car dooring zone; or the streets should be converted to bicycle boulevards that have low traffic volumes:
- Where nominated arterials and/or access streets intersect: crossings should be improved by using protected intersections

In summary, safe cycling routes should be delivered by constructing the VicRoads Principle Bicycle Network within Yarra:

- <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/bicycle-network>

Public transport

Tram stops in Yarra are generally of a poor standard. The primary hazard is a high speed motor vehicle hitting a passenger when the passenger attempts to embark or disembark a tram.

The solution is to eliminate this risk, for example to eliminate the opportunity for motor vehicles to drive past a tram when passengers are embarking or disembarking. This can be achieved by either:

- Protected tram stops
 - <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-transit-stops>
- Or requiring vehicles to share the same lane as trams. In this solution, the only hazard imposed upon embarking or disembarking passengers is impact from a bicycle, which presents a much lower risk of serious injury or death, compared with collision with a motor vehicle.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Recommendations

Streets Alive Yarra recommends that the budget be modified to action the following items:

- Increase the budget for safe travel infrastructure to \$10m per year
- Classify streets in Yarra as public open space so that investments in safe travel infrastructure can be funded from the open space levy
- Increase the open space levy to provide more funds for safe travel infrastructure
- Define [20-minute neighbourhoods](#) in Yarra, in accordance with [Plan Melbourne](#), centred around shopping strips
- Develop a [street hierarchy](#) for Yarra, and class each street as one of following types:
 - quiet residential street; for conversion into a 20-30 km/h shared zone that retains on-street parking
 - access street; requiring minimum standard footpaths and protected bicycle lanes
 - shopping street; requiring wider [footpaths](#) and protected [bicycle lanes](#)
 - freeway; enabling people to move between neighbourhoods
- Collaborate with traders to show how safer, more enjoyable streets are [better for business](#); and that patrons who need to drive can still use the first 5-10 spots on each side street
- Conduct a hazard identification and risk assessment review of all Yarra's streets, as part of the [Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy](#)
- Reform the [pricing of parking](#), to bring supply and demand back into balance, and to mitigate claims that parking fees are intended to raise revenue (i.e. change pricing from a revenue target to an occupancy target)
- Update the [Street Tree Policy](#) so that trees are planted where they don't block future bicycle lanes
- Publish a map showing how people can move around Yarra and within their 20-minute neighbourhood, via an integrated [footpath network](#) and [bicycle network](#) that links residents to shops, jobs, schools, libraries, parks and other services
- Estimate the total investment required to build safe travel networks over the next 10 years; as well as the resulting financial benefits including increased numbers of people moving during peak hour, jobs, income tax, payroll tax, company tax, social inclusion; and decreased personal transport costs, population health costs, and isolation.
- Apply to State and Federal Governments for funding that is commensurate with the benefits that accrue, thus addressing [fiscal imbalance](#)