

Yarra Housing Strategy



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, and
- 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.

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and so far has over 680 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.

More information is available at:

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

Summary

In general, Streets Alive Yarra supports the draft strategy, and feels that it could be improved by:

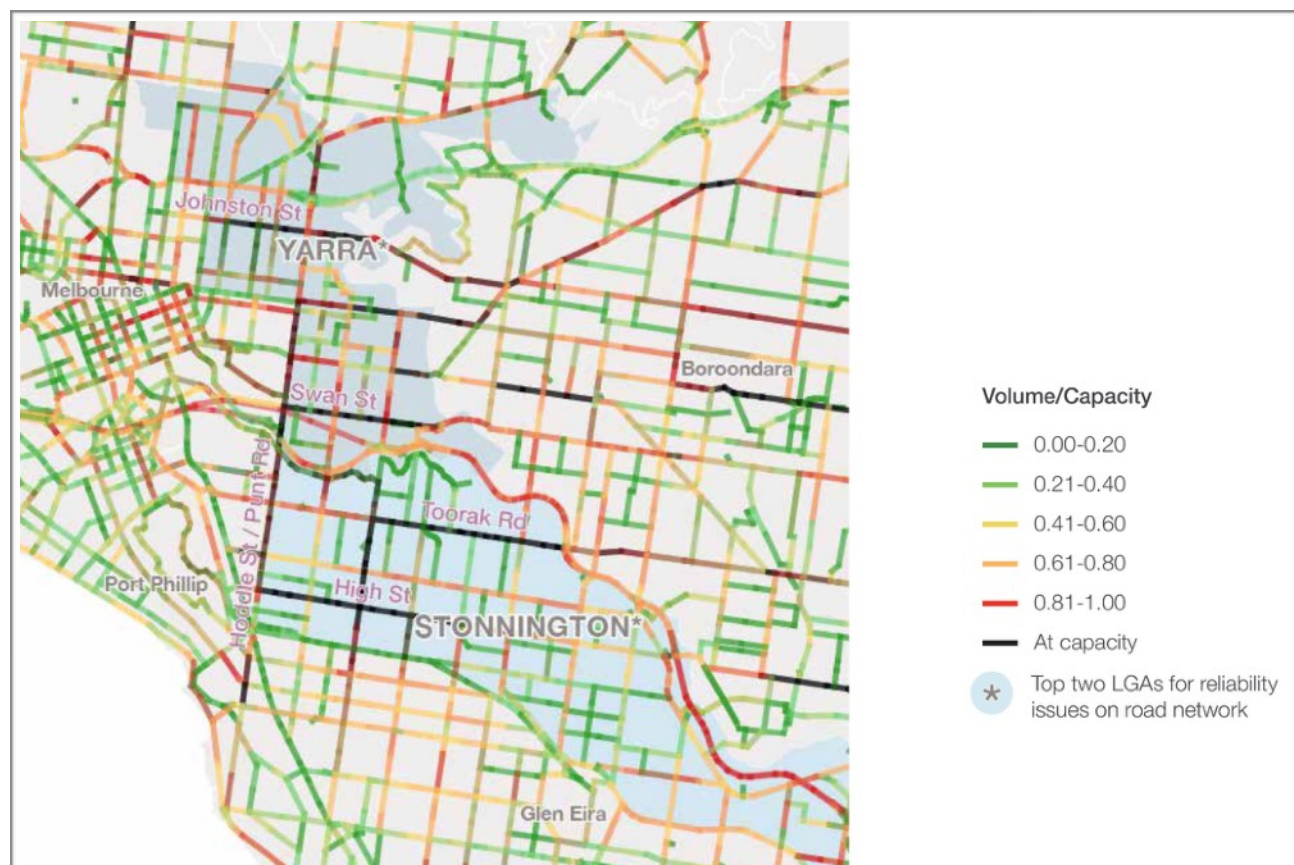
- Further highlighting the interdependencies between housing, transport and congestion
- Increasing the emphasis on supporting higher population densities by investing in safe & active transport

Interdependency with transport

If Yarra's population increases, then traffic and congestion will also increase. This decreases Yarra's livability and amenity.

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*. Relevant excerpts are reproduced here:

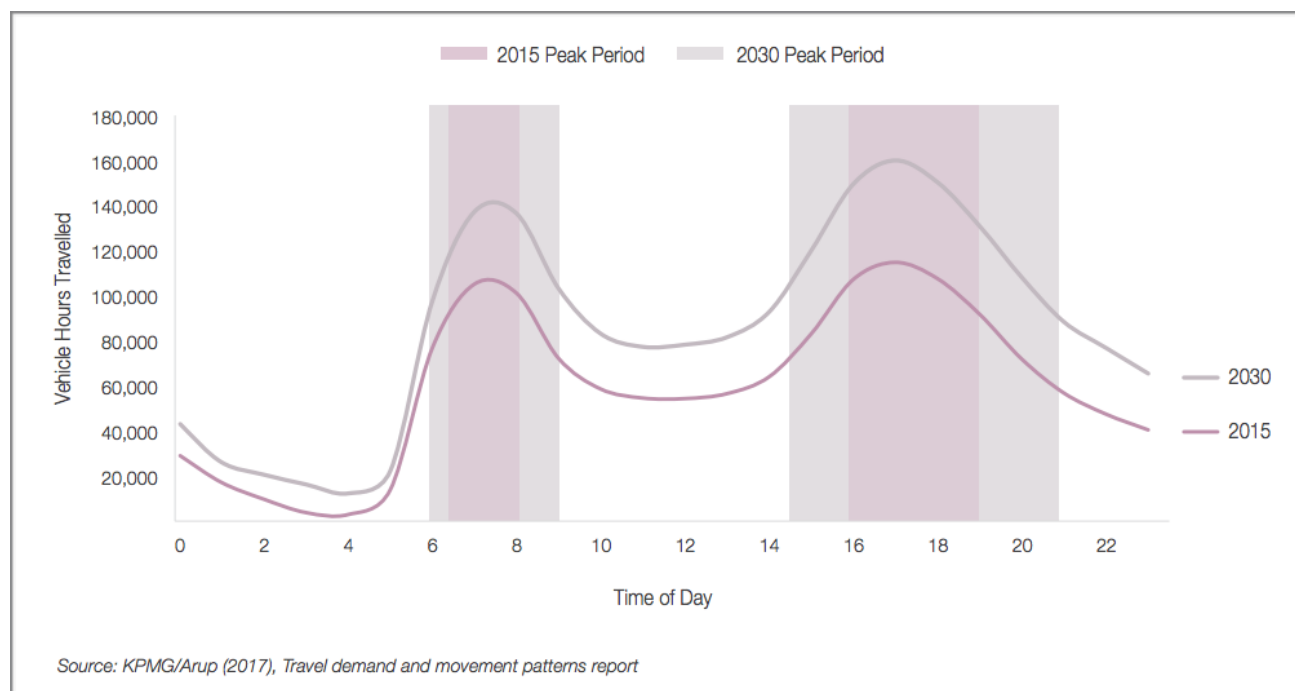
Yarra's streets are already at capacity



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.

Peak hours are getting longer



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

Solution : invest in safe, active transport and reform the parking strategy

Infrastructure Victoria's *FIVE-YEAR FOCUS Immediate actions to tackle congestion April 2018* also recommends solutions, including investing in safe, active transport and reforming the pricing and availability of parking. Relevant excerpts are reproduced here:

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.

Strategic alignment

As the draft strategy points out, 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, active transport would align the strategy with Plan Melbourne.

Community expectations

As the draft strategy points out, transport infrastructure is a key community priority:

2.1 Community Priorities About Planning for Housing Growth and Change in Yarra

● Transport and Infrastructure;

16 Yarra Housing Strategy Draft Document

Transport Infrastructure - Action 3 (Access And Movement) *"Increase Space For Pedestrians And Bikes, Dedicated Lanes/Corridors. Decrease Car Space on the Streets"*

Yarra is well serviced by all modes of public transport and has an extensive cycling and pedestrian network. The public transport network in Yarra has resulted in a large number of people using sustainable transport modes on a day-to-day basis. In Yarra, more residents per capita ride bicycles to and from work than in any other metropolitan Melbourne area. In 2016, 8.6% of people in Yarra travelled to work on a bicycle, compared to the greater Melbourne average of 1.4%. Yarra's compact urban form also promotes shorter travel distances and is conducive to active modes of transport.

The Yarra Housing Strategy should continue to promote Yarra as a place where people can get most of their day-to-day goods and services, or access schools and open spaces, within a short walk or cycle. Identifying areas in activity centres that are appropriate to accommodate housing growth will help achieve this outcome.

The availability of car parking is important in maintaining Yarra's liveability. However there is a need to ensure car parking is supplied and managed to promote more sustainable transport modes. The Housing Strategy should promote reduced car parking provision within new developments, in addition to its integration with other sustainable transport modes, including cycling and public transport.

While Yarra has excellent public transport options, it also includes a number of major arterial roads, which are highly utilised and important for the wider metropolitan region. These through-roads generate increased traffic volumes on Yarra's local road networks and create traffic congestion.

Addressing the impacts of traffic and congestion in Yarra will require a significant societal shift from petrol-based travel to more sustainable forms of transport. This cannot be addressed by the Housing Strategy alone.

In Yarra more residents per capita ride bicycles to and from work than in any other metropolitan Melbourne area.



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

Safe travel throughout Yarra

Safe travel throughout Yarra requires investment in the construction 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>

VicRoads acknowledges the hazards and risks imposed upon vulnerable road users 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.



Recommendations

In general, Streets Alive Yarra supports the strategy, and recommends the following:

1. Add a strategic direction focussed on investing in safe & active transport infrastructure to support incremental, moderate & high change areas; for example:
 - Investing in wider footpaths and protected bicycle lanes along Cremorne Street, linking Swan Street to the new apartment towers at the silos
 - Upgrading quiet residential streets into 20-30 km/h shared zones
 - Constructing [protected bicycle lanes](#) on shopping streets and access streets
 - Constructing [protected intersections](#) where shopping or access streets intersect
2. Add a strategic direction to reform Yarra's parking strategy
 - <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/parking>
3. Classify streets in Yarra as public open space so that investments in safe travel infrastructure can be funded from the open space levy
 - <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/actions>
4. Increase the developers levy to provide further funding for investment in safe & active transport, in addition to investment in traditional open space (parks)
 - <https://www.streets-alive-yarra.org/budget>