

Spatial, Economic & Employment 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:

- Highlighting the interdependencies between land use, economic development, employment, transport and congestion
- Increasing the emphasis on protecting the amenity of residents where residential zones adjoin commercial zones

Vision & objectives

Streets Alive Yarra supports the proposed vision:

The vision for Yarra's employment lands:

Yarra's employment lands play a vital role in the economy of Metropolitan Melbourne. They support a diversified and modern economy across a variety of retail, mixed employment, industrial, and health and education precincts. Yarra provides employment and services that are local, metropolitan and global in their reach; and vital to the Melbourne's brand as a creative urban economy.

Despite successive waves of economic change, Yarra's economy has continually adapted and evolved. Yarra's employment lands support both emerging and established businesses alike. By virtue of its central location, accessibility and amenity, Yarra's employment lands will increasingly attract high value adding economic activities. They are drawn to its established inner city employment precincts for their agglomeration benefits, their unique character, and the diversity of built form.

Streets Alive Yarra supports the proposed objectives:

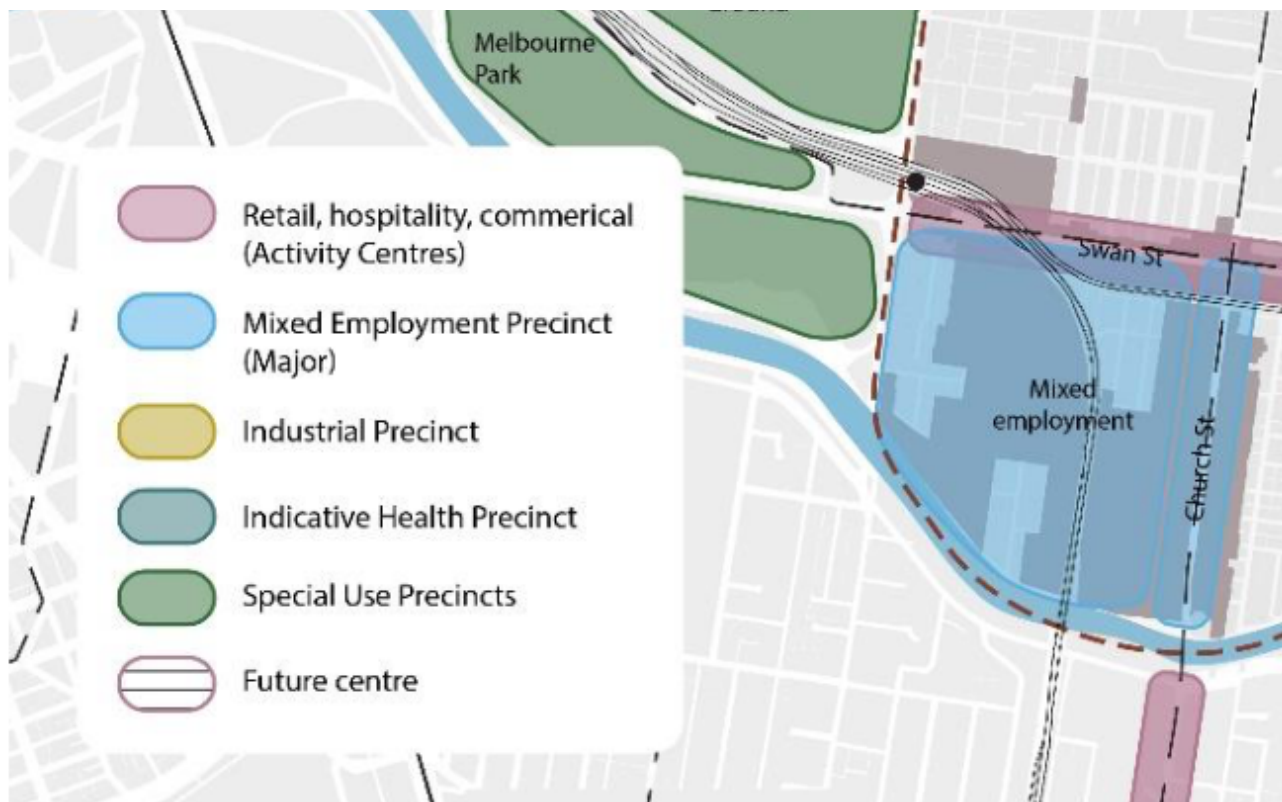
The objectives for Council to achieve this vision for Yarra's employment lands are to:

- Provide sufficient employment land and capacity to support projected growth
- Minimise pressures for residential conversion of employment precincts
- Promote Yarra's Activity Centres as the preferred locations for retail, services and facilities, and entertainment opportunities for Yarra's residents and visitors alike.
- Promote Yarra's major employment precincts as locations for a wide variety of businesses and services that are a vital part of Melbourne's inner city economy.
- Support the growth of Yarra's two health and education precincts.
- Manage the transition of larger industrial uses, if and when these transitions occur.

What is missing is an acknowledgement that economic development will suffer if congestion is not managed; and that economic development can be managed in a way that minimises the negative externalities imposed upon adjoining residences.

Designations

The “Mixed Employment Precinct (Major)” designation should not apply to the whole of Cremorne, only to the commercial/industrial area. The blue coloured shading should not cover residential zones, particularly residential zones with a heritage overlay.



Source: SGSEP Pty Ltd, 2016.

Negative externalities

The strategy acknowledges that economic development and employment can impose externalities on adjoining land uses. The strategy would benefit from amending and strengthening the recommended strategies, so that these externalities and amenity impacts are minimised. Specifically, the boundaries between residential and commercial zones need to be better managed, for example to require commercial developments to “step down” to adjoining residential zones.

In addition to determining the appropriate zoning to support employment, land use planning can also:

- Minimise the negative externalities associated with employment uses on adjoining and neighbouring land uses
- ~~Maximise the potential for positive externalities (e.g. business clustering)~~
- Manage interfaces between land uses
- ~~Establish a hierarchy for activity centres~~ to assist decision making about the mix and intensity of retail activities, broadly defined, and also inform decision-making around infrastructure and service provision
- Shape policies relating to traffic generation, parking requirements, loading and servicing
- Outline policies relating to urban design, such as streetscape interfaces, urban character considerations and open space requirements.

The purpose of this SEES is to provide guidance on managing growth and change in employment and economic activity. The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Articulate the role of Yarra’s centres, precincts and other economic clusters in a metropolitan context
- Articulate the role of Yarra’s employment areas, both for the local community and their wider economic role
- Set out projections for the likely land and floor space demand for employment
- Provide a spatial strategy to accommodating growth and change in economic activity to 2031
- Identify those locations that are best suited to accommodating growth and change
- ~~Identify issues, challenge or opportunities for specific employment precincts or activity centres~~
- ~~Identify actions that Council needs to undertake~~ to support growth and change in employment and economic activity
- Identify new policy directions for the Yarra Planning Scheme
- Detail the logic and evidence base used to develop the Strategy.

Cremorne precinct

Seek has not yet been approved

The draft report is incorrect to state that the Seek corporate head office is located in Cremorne. Seek does not yet have a planning permit, let alone a built and functioning office.

The Cremorne Major Employment precinct has transitioned from a former industrial precinct to become a significant commercial node with small innovative manufacturers (e.g. vW Maps who convert spatial data into 2/3D maps) to corporate head offices (e.g. CarSales, Seek and realestate.com). The precinct is supported by its position relative to key private vehicle and public transport corridors, and is ideally situated to access the educated labour pool of Melbourne's eastern and southern suburbs. The precinct is also conveniently located in relation to other businesses in the CBD. Cremorne also has a significant institutional asset in the Kangan Institute (9,000 square

Swan Street Structure Plan does not have planning weight

VCAT has determined on multiple occasions that the Swan Street Structure Plan is not a formal planning document, and thus has little weight. Therefore, the Strategic Redevelopment Sites nominated in the Plan do not have formal support.

The Church Street South Major Employment precinct sits either side of a north-south tram corridor and connects into the rapidly developing Chapel Street. The strip has a focus on restricted retail, however, unlike other homemaker-oriented shopping centres, it provides a unique offer including high end retail. It is also home to a number of high quality cafes, restaurants and bars. The Swan Street Structure Plan identifies a number of Strategic Redevelopment Sites and Further Investigation Areas within the Church Street precinct.

Interdependency with transport

If employment in Yarra increases, then traffic and congestion will also increase. In turn, this can hinder further economic development and employment.

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:

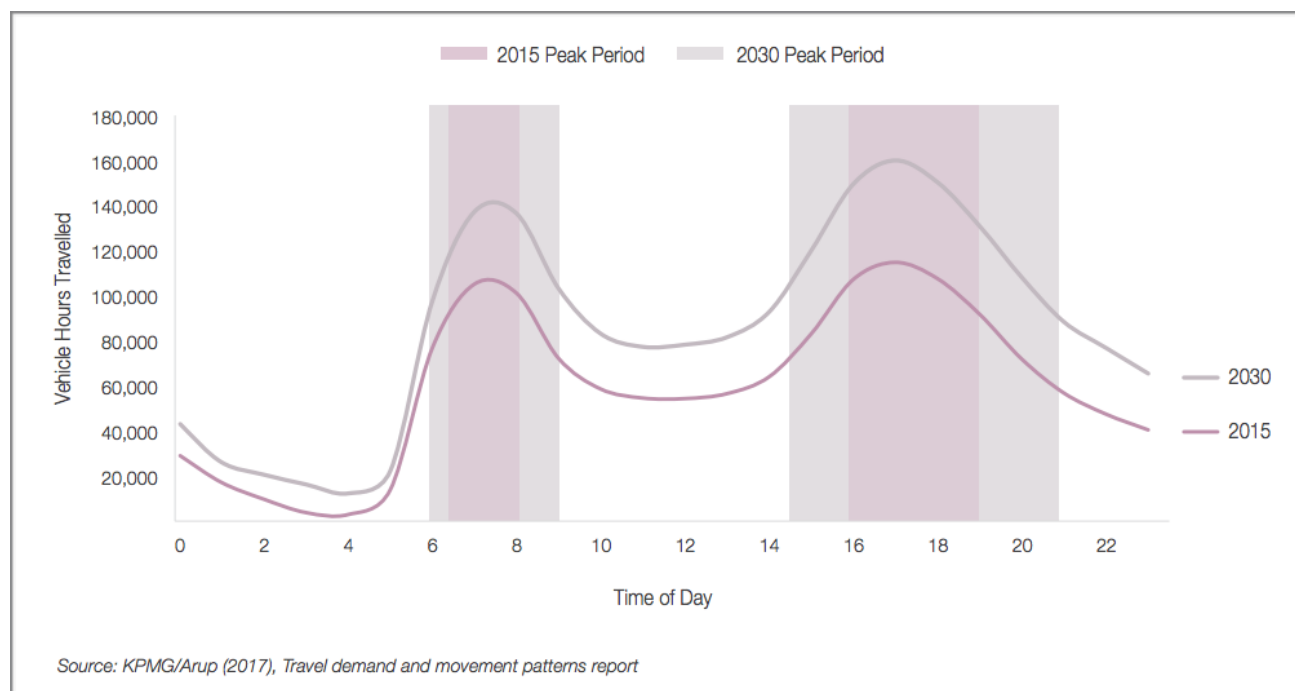
Yarra's streets are already at capacity



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

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 Spatial, Economic & Employment strategy with Plan Melbourne.

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

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, i.e. encouraging the redevelopment and transition of industrial areas to commercial uses for knowledge workers.

Streets Alive Yarra recommends the following:

1. Adding a new section (e.g. as section 3.7) highlighting the interdependency between economic development and effective, safe transport (that mitigates the economic burden of congestion) and referencing reports from Infrastructure Victoria
2. Amending Section 5.1 (the vision) to include a reference to support for new employment being balanced with support for the amenity of existing residential residential uses
3. Amending Section 5.1 (the objectives) to include a reference to minimising the negative externalities on adjoining residential land uses, by drawing on the text from Section 1.3 (employment, economic activity and land use planning):
 - Minimise the negative externalities associated with employment uses on adjoining and neighbouring land uses
 - Manage interfaces between land uses
4. Amending Figure 39 so that residential zones in Cremorne are not included within the blue-shaded “Mixed Employment Precinct”
5. Adding a new strategy (e.g. Strategy 7) of maintaining amenity for residents located on the boundary between residential and commercial zones by requiring commercial developments to “transition down” to 3-4 storey structures on the boundary
6. Adding a new strategy (e.g. Strategy 8) of investing in safe, active transport by:
 - 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