

Transport for Yarra



Proposal to reform the Management of Transport Infrastructure and Transport Strategy in the City of Yarra



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; and
- evidence based and economically rational investment in transport infrastructure.

Our vision is for vibrant and profitable local businesses, owing to increased patronage, and traffic that still flows freely. Parking is easy to find because the first 5-10 spots on each side street are allocated for shoppers and deliveries. We see our streets being safely, comfortably, and conveniently used by people from 8 to 80 years old, irrespective of whether 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 1,200 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.

Further information is available at:

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

Introduction

The City of Yarra manages 491 kilometres of footpaths and 260 kilometres of road pavement in accordance with multiple policies and strategies, including:

- Safe Travel Strategy
- Parking Management Strategy
- Car Sharing Policy (draft)
- Encouraging and Increasing Walking Strategy
- Bike Strategy
- Road Management Plan

Unfortunately, the management and implementation of transport infrastructure and transport strategies is spread between multiple departments, including:

- Corporate, Business & Financial Services
- City Works and Assets
- Planning and Place Making

This can lead to a loss of accountability, expenditure efficiency, productivity, and engagement. There is no single department head who can be held accountable for delivering key targets or key performance indicators related to transport. Council Officers find that they have to obtain approval from multiple departments before a project can proceed. Cross-departmental issues, such as how best to allocate street space to different transport modes, have no clear process for resolution. In addition, ratepayers do not have access to a “Transport Advisory Committee”.

Proposal

Streets Alive Yarra proposes that the City of Yarra unify all activities related to transport under a new department titled “Transport for Yarra”.

Transport for Yarra would be modelled after Transport for Victoria or Transport for London, and in Yarra’s case would be responsible for managing:

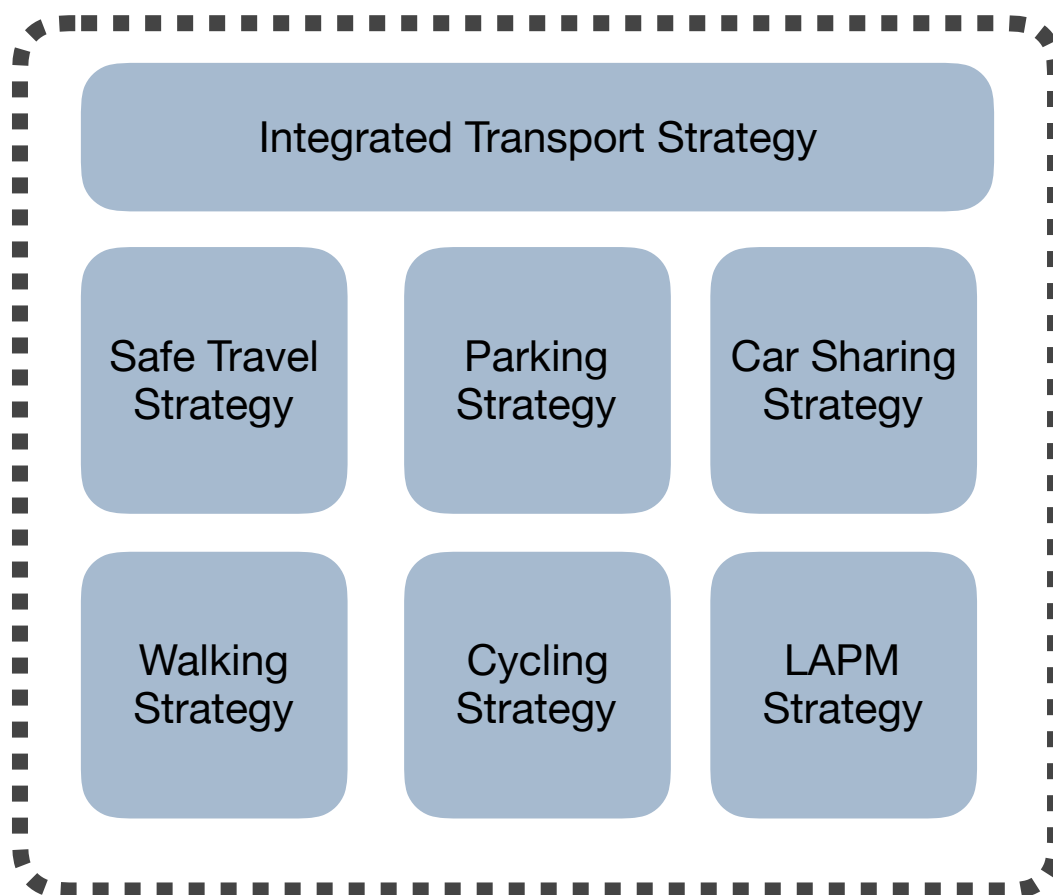
- Infrastructure: design, construction and maintenance of road pavements, laneways, footpaths, bicycle paths, shared paths, off-road paths, public transport stops.
- Strategy: development and execution of the Safe Travel Strategy, Parking Strategy, Car Sharing Strategy, Walking Strategy, Bicycle Strategy, street space allocation, pricing of parking, Local Area Place Making, and Safe Routes to School, with a view to implementing Yarra-wide walking and cycling networks over ~ 10 years.
- Parking: management of on-street parking permits, metered parking bays, parking sensors and public bicycle parking provision.
- Planning: review of traffic impact assessments for major development applications.
- Research: mobility counters and data analytics.
- State government consultation: regarding major roads, public transport and strategic cycling corridors, and application for state government grants.
- Community consultation: via a new Transport Advisory Committee, replacing the Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Revenue: ~ \$30m per year from parking fees, permits and fines, and additional state government grants for specific projects.
- Expenditure: ~ \$10m per year, matching the existing budget for all transport related items, and noting that this is not an increase.
- Dividend: return ~ \$20m per year to general revenue to support other Council services, noting that this is unchanged so no Council service would lose revenue.

Importantly, Transport for Yarra would be responsible for developing and executing an Integrated Transport Strategy, which would be the core method for resolving existing conflicts between subsidiary strategies, such as the Safe Travel Strategy, Parking Strategy, Car Sharing Strategy, Walking Strategy, Bicycle Strategy and LAPM Strategy.

Streets Alive Yarra suggests that a unified Transport for Yarra team is the best way to make best use of the available transport budget. A unified team, under a single departmental head, can leverage all possible synergies, ranging from strategy through to operations and maintenance.

Street Alive Yarra expects that the biggest benefit will occur as the new Transport for Yarra team realises the centrality of parking policy and pricing in any activities that seek to alter or re-allocate how we use our public land (streets) to enhance equity, mobility and productivity (for example to allocate space to wider footpaths, protected bicycle lanes and safer intersections).

To support community and ratepayer consultation, Streets Alive Yarra proposes that the Bicycle Advisory Committee be reconstituted as the Transport Advisory Committee, and that membership be broadened to also include people interested in walking, public transport and parking.



Over time, if Transport for Yarra implements demand-responsive pricing of parking for both annual permits and metered bays, any increased revenue can be split 50:50 between Transport for Yarra (to support investment in safe travel infrastructure) and general revenue (to support other council services).

Finally, any infrastructure changes (e.g. via LAPMs) or street space reallocation will require ratepayer support. To create and maintain ratepayer support it would be beneficial that a fair portion of revenue from parking is, over time, returned to the local district (or Parking Benefit District) from whence it came. The best way to enable this to occur is to unify the parking compliance team, the strategic planning team and the traffic engineering team, i.e. by creating Transport for Yarra and allowing it to both raise revenue and prioritise expenditure.