Yarra City Council

Heidelberg Road Corridor Local Area Plan

13 November 2019

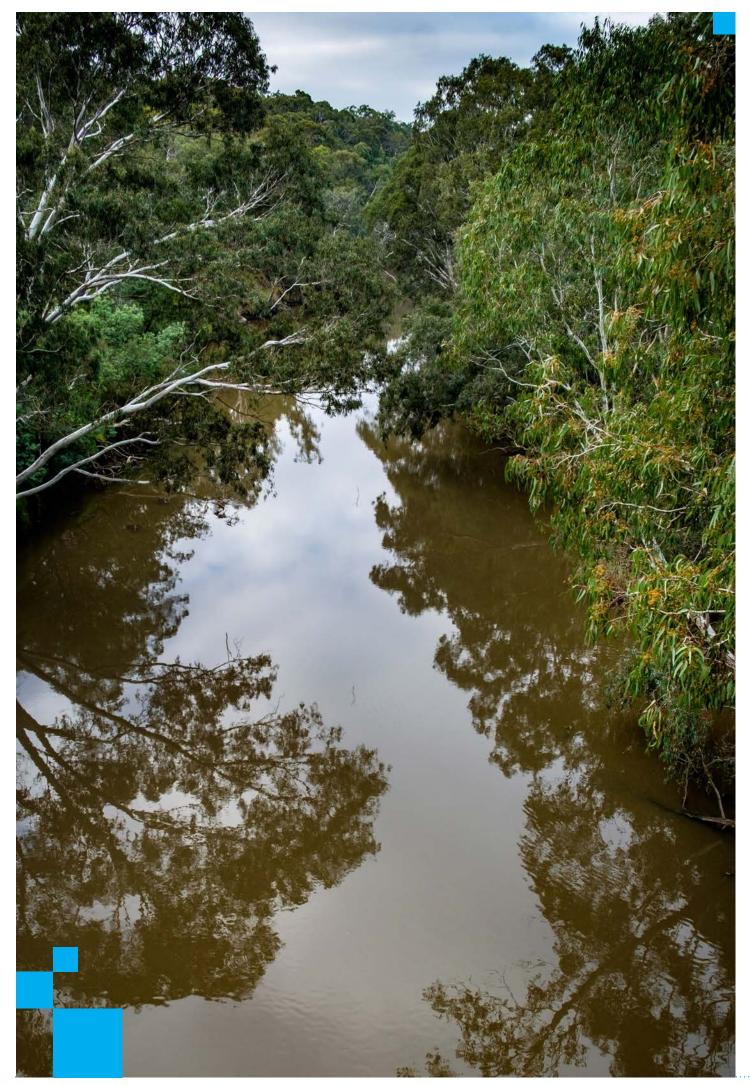
CETTY OF YARRA

Acknowledgement

Yarra City Council and Darebin City Council together acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri people, and pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Yarra and Darebin, and to their elders past and present.

Glossary and Acronyms

• APM	Alphington Paper Mill site (APM) and associated redevelopment Development Plan, endorsed 27 May 2016
• C1Z	Commercial 1 Zone
• C2Z	Commercial 2 Zone
• DDO	Design and Development Overlay
• DELUS	Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy 2014
• DHS	Darebin Housing Strategy 2013 (revised 2015)
• DPS	Darebin Planning Scheme
• GRZ	General Residential Zone
• НО	Heritage Overlay
• HRC-LAP	Heidelberg Road Corridor Local Area Plan
• IN3Z	Industrial 3 Zone
• MUZ	Mixed Use Zone
• NAC	Neighbourhood Activity Centre
• PAO	Public Acquisition Overlay
• Plan Melbourne	Plan Melbourne 2017-2050
• RGZ	Residential Growth Zone
• SBO	Special Building Overlay
• SEES	Spatial Economic and Employment Strategy, August 2018 (Yarra City Council)
• YHS	Yarra Housing Strategy 2018
• YPS	Yarra Planning Scheme



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What is the Heidelberg Road Corridor Local Area Plan?

The HRC-LAP (the Plan) has been prepared by Yarra & Darebin Councils to provide strategic guidance on the future land use planning and development outcomes of the commercial areas along the Heidelberg Road corridor, between the Darebin and Merri Creeks. The Plan responds to the development pressures being experienced along the corridor and the continuing need to provide for Melbourne's housing growth. The Plan has been informed by the background material contained in the Heidelberg Road Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019, which provides a detailed analysis of the three precincts and identifies key issues and potential opportunities (see Appendix A). It is also informed by directions and information from existing Council strategies, policies and feedback from previous community consultations (for example from the Yarra Housing Strategy) and initial consultation by the City of Yarra with the Alphington and Fairfield Appropriate Development Association and Yarra Council's Amcor Community Reference Group.

Draft Vision

"The Heidelberg Road corridor will be a greener, better-connected , more pedestrian friendly and vibrant place."

The Plan sets out a general framework and preferred outcomes, objectives and strategic actions concentrating on three commercial precincts along the corridor, being:

- Precinct 1 Yarra Bend Park;
- Precinct 2 Station Street; and
- Precinct 3 Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre.





Draft key outcomes and objectives to achieve the vision are:

Diverse economic activity

Attract a wide range of businesses now and into the future

Ensure employment-generating land uses are attracted to and retained within the corridor

Community well-being

Support the location of community services closer to their likely area of need

Increase housing diversity and affordability along the Heidelberg Road Corridor

Pursue new green space opportunities north of Heidelberg Road

Improved active transport services and accessibility

Improve public transport service to and along Heidelberg Road

Improve access to existing public transport

Increase connections and safety for bike riders

Increase permeability for pedestrians across Heidelberg Road

Increase and enhance pedestrian connections, safety and amenity.

Minimise pressure on parking in residential areas behind Heidelberg Road

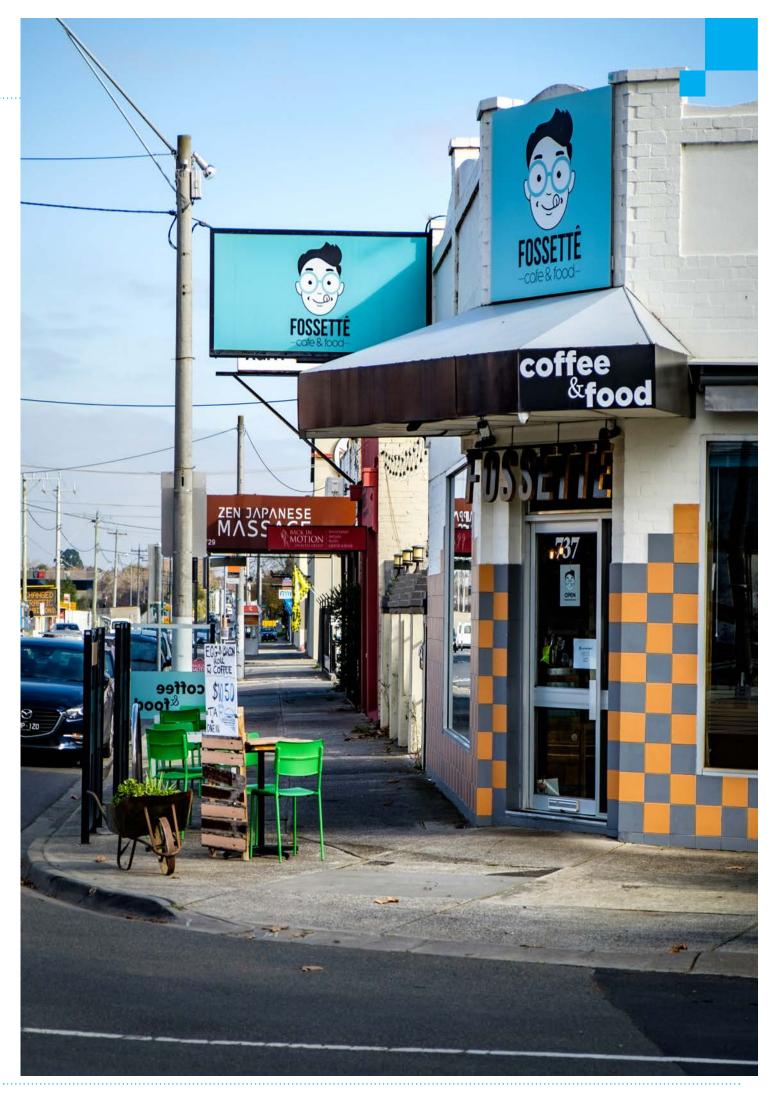
Reduce or limit vehicle crossovers onto Heidelberg Road

Individual precinct identity

Create a more pedestrian-oriented, attractive and safe public realm

Ensure public realm and built form efforts achieve a stronger place identity that is suitable to each precinct's context and role

Ensure new development is sensitive towards existing residential uses



1. Introduction

Wider Context

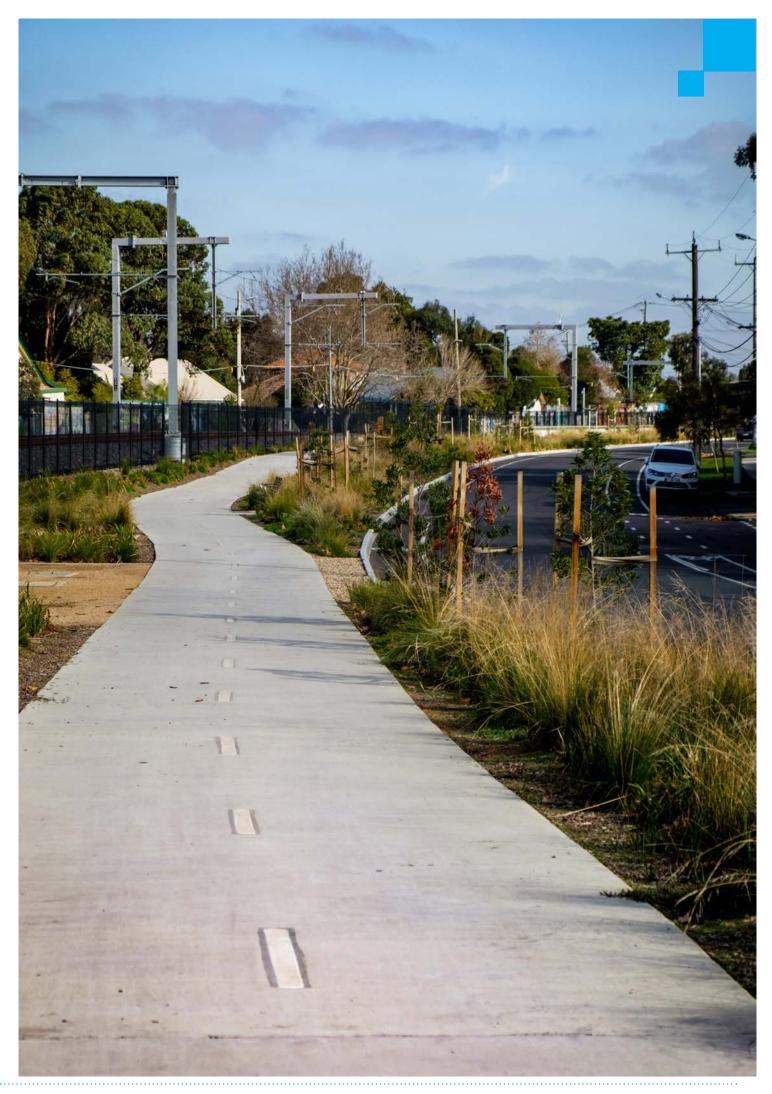
Metropolitan Melbourne is experiencing strong population growth and this trend is forecast to continue as Melbourne reaches an anticipated population of 8 million by 2051 (Plan Melbourne 2017-2050). The cities of Yarra and Darebin are expecting commensurate growth due to proximity and access to employment areas, schools, amenities, transport options and significant parklands along the Yarra River and Merri and Darebin Creeks. This Plan considers how best to facilitate growth within the Heidelberg Road corridor, with a focus on several key commercial/light industrial precincts which front Heidelberg Road.

The study area is broadly defined by the land between the Hurstbridge Railway Line to the north, the Yarra River to the south, and the Merri and Darebin Creeks, to the east and west respectively. The Plan considers the relationship of the corridor to key destinations such as the former Amcor Alphington Paper Mill (APM) site, the Station Street Fairfield activity centre and Alphington and Fairfield Rail Stations, as well as surrounding transport and pedestrian connections (such as the Fairfield Rail Spur), parklands, and low-density residential areas.

The Plan area is approximately 5.5kms from the Melbourne CBD, as measured from the intersection with the Chandler Highway. Heidelberg Road and the Chandler Highway/Grange Road are significant arterial roads that will continue to influence the development of the corridor. At the intersection of these roads, the redevelopment of the APM site is already driving development change in the adjoining activity centre.

The community, and Darebin and Yarra City Councils together have a desire to provide for positive long-term outcomes for the corridor's commercial precincts. Notwithstanding its arterial road status, Heidelberg Road can and should improve to become more user friendly and attractive for businesses.

Map 1 shows the wider context of the Heidelberg Road corridor, its key features, and the three commercial/ light industrial precincts.



The Plan Area

Heidelberg Road is a key arterial road that connects Heidelberg with Clifton Hill, traversing the suburbs of Alphington and Fairfield. The topography of the study area varies, largely depending on the proximity of the land to the banks of the Yarra River and the Darebin and Merri Creeks. The area north of Heidelberg Road between Merri Creek and Grange Road is relatively flat. The land to the remaining north of Heidelberg Road, east of Grange Road, rises progressively towards Darebin Creek. The south side of Heidelberg Road falls increasingly towards the banks of the Yarra River and Darebin Creek.

The key intersections of Heidelberg Road are at Chandler Highway/Grange Road in Alphington, and at Hoddle Street in Clifton Hill (located outside of the study area). A recent upgrade to the Chandler Highway and to the rail crossing separation in Grange Road has improved traffic movements through the area and surrounding bicycle and pedestrian links.

In terms of public transport, the corridor and its precincts are serviced by the Hurstbridge Railway Line and 3 bus routes. Key bicycle routes follow the creek and parklands as well as some on-road routes on Heidelberg Road, Station Street and Westgarth Street. Most of the street network consists of local streets that service the residential areas behind Heidelberg Road. The width of Heidelberg Road varies, though is generally wider to the west of Station Street.

Residential development is characterised by low-density, detached and semi-detached dwellings on medium sized allotments. Exceptions to this include: the public housing estate at the western edge of the study area; several 3-4 storey residential buildings east of Yarra Bend Road; and, a recent townhouse development along Heidelberg Road, west of Grange Road. Adding greater variation to local building heights, the APM redevelopment will include 14-17 storey residential buildings. There are also several residential heritage precincts within the study area.

Surrounding residential areas and parkland are not envisaged to undergo significant change, however both have been included in the study area to acknowledge their role in shaping the character, use and development of each precinct.



AMCOR Alphington Paper Mill Development

The redevelopment of the former Amcor Alphington Paper Mill (APM) site south-east corner of the Chandler Highway and Heidelberg Road will significantly change the land use and economic role of the Heidelberg Road corridor. The redevelopment is already driving new development proposals in the Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre - Precinct 3 and is likely to continue to be a catalyst for further developments and land use changes in this precinct.

The redevelopment of this major strategic site will result in a substantial increase to local housing supply and, with the Alphington Village commercial and mixed-use centre, will expand the retail and commercial function of the precinct. The development will have the effect of extending the length of the neighbourhood activity centre to the Chandler Highway (included within the Precinct 3 boundary).

The APM redevelopment will include:

- Up to 2500 dwelling with a houses, townhouses and apartments,
- 13,500m2 retail floor space including two supermarkets, shops and hospitality,
- 11,500m2 commercial floor space
- a community building with meeting spaces and indoor multi-

purpose court (to be owned by Council)

- a minimum of 5% affordable housing
- 3 new local parks
- Landscaping improvements and public access to the river front land
- Improvements to bus stops, crossings and pedestrian and cycling links to the Alphington Station.

The form and density of development will change the appearance of this part of Heidelberg Road. The tallest buildings will range from 14 to 17 storeys in height, which are to be concentrated around the north-west corner of the APM site. Building heights will reduce to 8 to 6 storeys along Heidelberg Road (to the eastern edge of the APM site) and to the remaining section adjoining the Chandler Highway. Townhouses and low-rise apartments will occur across the remainder of the site.

Fairfield Rail Spur Site

The Fairfield Rail Spur site is located diagonally opposite the APM site and has long provided an important pedestrian link between the Fairfield Railway Station and the APM. The land also has an extensive history of use by the local community.

The Fairfield Rail Spur is owned by the State Government and managed by VicTrack. It is expected that any site-specific planning for the long-term use of the site will be managed by VicTrack, and that it will include engagement with the local community and Darebin City Council.

Darebin City Council has an adopted position to advocate to the State Government to ensure that the Fairfield Rail Spur:

- Has a direct shared user path and linear park through the length of the site;
- Provides open space to serve the local community, such as skate facilities and basketball/netball half court; and,
- Provides that any residential use should be exclusively for public or social housing at accessible locations on the site.

It was also resolved that Council would advocate to the State Government to retain the Fairfield Rail Spur site as public land, and that the State Government consult with Council and the community about any future uses or development of the Fairfield Rail Spur Site, to inform any decision about its future use.

The retention of the Rail Spur link as public land will be key to safeguarding pedestrian connectivity between the Fairfield Railway Station (and broader Fairfield residential area) and Precinct 3 - Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

Precinct Characteristics

There are three commercial/light industrial precincts along the Heidelberg Road Corridor (see Map 1). Each precinct is distinct in their economic role & function, built form, appearance, and feel of the public realm. The Heidelberg Road Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019 and this HRC-LAP mainly focus on the three commercial/light industrial precincts along Heidelberg Road. Some consideration has been given to the entire Heidelberg Road Corridor where relevant:

Precinct 1 – Yarra Bend Park

consists of a small commercial and light industrial area around Jeffrey Street, Northcote, and Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield. Most significant elements along Heidelberg Road are the large parkland, industrial and warehouse buildings next to public housing flats, and the increased width of Heidelberg Road. Of note is the 'island'-like location of properties on the south side that are surrounded by parkland. Next to the large parklands leading to the Yarra River are the historic factory buildings and chimney of the Porta Pty Ltd site at 224-256 Heidelberg Road. The public housing estate adjacent to the Merri Creek on the northern side of Heidelberg Road is also a visible landmark. Heidelberg Road is approximately 26 to 29 metres wide in this area, reinforcing a disconnection between the two sides. A small nature strip separates the footpath from moving traffic along the south side. The northern side of the precinct differs as a service road and small nature strip separates the footpath and frontages from Heidelberg Road lanes and the area is more accessible by a local street network. Landscaping is inconsistent or missing on both the sides.





Precinct 2 – Station Street

contains showrooms, bulky goods services and a light industrial area between Panther Place and Austin Street. The more continuous row of warehouse buildings on the south side of Heidelberg Road is complemented by a more varied built form to the north, consisting of warehouses, a car sales yard, residential buildings and most notably the three storey heritage building of the Grandview Hotel on the corner with Station Street. Heidelberg Road narrows slightly at this point, gaining a sense of enclosure. The precinct has no nature strip on either side of Heidelberg Road, landscaping is sporadic and the footpath is hard on edge with the road. Numerous properties have front setbacks that are occupied by car parking, whilst others have retained the building line with the footpath.



Precinct 3 – Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre

is located predominantly east of the Chandler Highway and Grange Road intersection, within which Heidelberg Road narrows significantly (13 metres approx.). Currently, warehouse buildings and a storage facility dominate the northern side up to Harker Street, with future development on the APM site creating a modern identity to the south. A small nature strip separates footpath from road. The approved Development Plan for the APM will allow a mix of medium and denser housing, a new shopping centre with supermarkets, specialty shops and office space. The APM will create a new contemporary architectural character with taller buildings, widened footpaths, and tree planting along the south side of Heidelberg Road. East of Harker Street and Park Avenue, the built form changes towards a more traditional shopping strip of smaller shop fronts. The narrow corridor of Heidelberg Road reinforces a sense of enclosure. The precinct includes an island site at 582 Heidelberg Road, although it is not part of the NAC proper.



Planning Policy Summary

Plan Melbourne and the Darebin and Yarra Planning Schemes indicate that the highest level of growth and development along the Heidelberg Road Corridor is to occur within the APM. The approved Development Plan for the APM site concentrates the tallest and most intense development towards the Heidelberg Road and Chandler Highway frontages. The respective municipal housing strategies and/ or local policies, support moderate (Yarra side) or incremental (Darebin side) levels of housing change along Heidelberg Road. All the residential land (either with or without heritage protection) along and behind the Heidelberg Road Corridor on the Yarra side is identified as a minimal change area. On the Darebin side, the residential land is identified for incremental change, and minimal change where the Heritage Overlay applies.

The Strategic Framework of the Darebin Planning Scheme identifies parts of the industrial zoned land along Heidelberg Road as potential future housing change area. The Yarra Planning Scheme identifies the commercial land on the eastern end of Heidelberg Road as a neighbourhood activity centre (NAC). The adopted Yarra Housing Strategy 2018 (YHS) states that the estimated supply of new dwellings within Yarra's NACs is 4,400 dwellings up to 2031. Given recent approvals and commencement of construction at the APM, it is likely that the estimates are conservative and will be exceeded. Yarra City Council's local policy for built form in neighbourhood activity centres (Clause 21.05-2) expresses preference for a lower

street wall height and lower built form. The protection of heritage fabric is important in both planning schemes.

The various strategies and policies of both planning schemes generally support a public realm and infrastructure that is pedestrian and cycle friendly. They aim to reduce negative impacts of climate change (for example a locally reduced heat island effect through canopy landscaping) and they recommend providing urban infrastructure and development that is more resource and energy efficient.

Creating better connections across Heidelberg Road is identified as a key objective that is needed to improve cycling and walking as transport options and to better connect the community and visitors with services and existing assets (such as parks, community houses, schools, and railway stations). The importance of significant parklands and waterways along the Yarra River, and Merri and Darebin Creeks is recognised and needs to be protected and enhanced as change occurs.

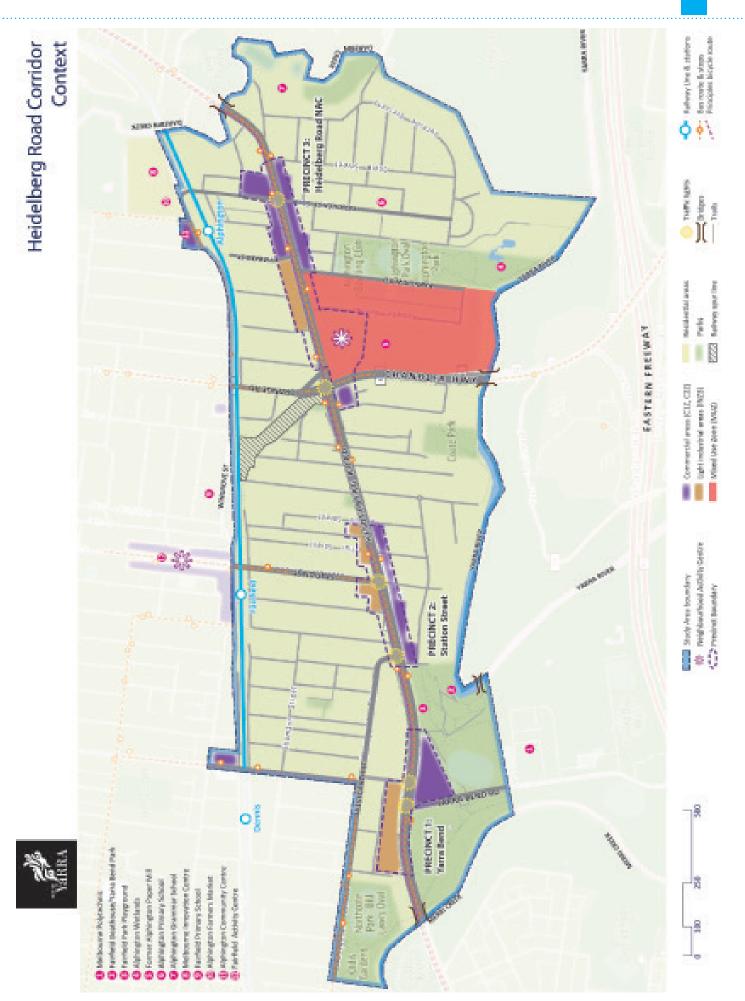
Zoning

The main purpose of zoning is to guide the use of land. The Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) is generally applied to land designated for retail and shop uses with denser residential development above, often within activity centres. The Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z) is most suitable for restricted retail premises (for example bulky goods stores), offices, warehouses and low-impact manufacturing. The Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z) is intended to be applied to light industrial areas and manufacturing, often surrounding more heavy industrial uses. The Mixed Use Zone is part of the suite of residential zones and is to provide for housing at higher densities (than other residential zones), whilst still allowing the consideration of some commercial and lighter manufacturing uses.

The zoning of industrial land along the north side of Heidelberg Road is to be reviewed in consideration of the directions contained in the Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy (2014), the Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework and Implementation Plan (2018) and from additional strategic work where necessary. The recently adopted Yarra Spatial **Economic and Employment** Strategy, August 2018, supports the retention of the C2Z in the Station Street Precinct and the strengthening of the Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre in Alphington. The highest level of economic growth is expected to occur in the Heidelberg Road NAC, particularly in the APM site. With the exception of some Heritage Overlay sites, specific local built form guidance for areas outside of the APM is missing in each planning scheme.

For a more detailed summary and analysis please refer to the Heidelberg Road Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019 (the Paper). In the Paper, the metropolitan and local policy context was analysed. For a zoning and overlay map please refer to Appendix B).

Map 1: Context



2. Place Qualities, Key Issues and Opportunities

The Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019 identifies a series of issues that relate to community infrastructure, transport and access, urban design, built form and economic activity within the precincts along Heidelberg Road (see Map 2). These were identified through:

- Feedback from previous strategic consultations (such as the Yarra Housing Strategy consultation);
- Advice and feedback from the Alphington Paper Mill Community Reference Group and the Alphington and Fairfield Appropriate Development Association;
- The APM Development Plan;
- Recent planning permit applications and VCAT decisions;
- Existing strategies and policies in Plan Melbourne, the Darebin and Yarra Planning Schemes and adopted strategies;
- General enquiries and feedback from residents and visitors to Darebin's and Yarra's sustainable transport, traffic engineering, urban design, statutory planning, strategic planning and social planning units in relation to for example road safety, parking, planning applications;
- Desktop analysis and site visits.

The advice and feedback provided from the Alphington Paper Mill Community Reference Group and submissions from the Alphington and Fairfield Appropriate Development Association can be summarised as follows:

- Support for lower moderate heights in the remainder of the Heidelberg Road NAC (outside of the APM) with mandatory controls to provide greater planning certainty;
- Strong protection towards the rear interface with residential land;
- Valuing of the intimate 'village' character of the Heidelberg Road NAC;
- Support for environmentally sustainable design in development;
- · Support for a greater mix of uses;
- Support for better connections across Heidelberg Road, particularly within the Heidelberg Road NAC;
- Concerns about pedestrian safety, especially around Yarralea Street due to school traffic;
- Concerns raised about additional pressure on residential car parking in side streets and new development needs to supply car parking as required per planning schemes; and,
- Concerns about change resulting from the APM developments in general.

For details please see the Heidelberg Road Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019. The below provides a brief summary of the qualities, key issues and potential opportunities that could arise out of future changes. Some apply to the entire Heidelberg Road Corridor, whereas others are highlighted as precinct specific where applicable. As corridor-wide and precinct specific issues are linked, they are addressed within each topic.

Economic Activity

As an arterial road, Heidelberg Road offers a high level of exposure that is especially beneficial to restricted retail businesses (such as bulky goods stores). Being proximate to the CBD and offering a variety of building types and sizes, the precincts are likely attractive to a variety of businesses.

Redevelopment of the Alphington Paper Mill (APM) precinct will change the economic role of the wider Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre (Precinct 3) and is likely to trigger further land use and development changes, opportunities and challenges. It is also likely to influence changes in other parts of the corridor (Yarra Bend and Station Street Precincts).

The zoning of IN3Z land along the north side of Heidelberg Road should be reviewed in consideration of the Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy, the Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework and Implementation Plan, and additional strategic work where necessary.







Population, Housing, Community Services

The residential parts of the study area can be described as green, leafy suburbs with older intact (and partially heritage protected) suburban housing stock. The attractive aesthetic qualities of local streets and the proximity of railway stations and the CBD, are reflected in the high land values.

High housing prices for relatively large allotments with detached houses makes it difficult for middle to lowerincome households to live close to services and employment. A relatively small population and low housing densities have led to lower levels of local commercial and other service provision because activity is dispersed across the wider study area.

The APM redevelopment will boost the local population, diversify dwelling types and provide additional services and community facilities (as per the Alphington Village planning permit), particularly in Precinct 3. Pressure for redevelopment will increase in Precincts 1 and 2, and issues of housing diversity and dwelling type will need to be addressed, as will the need to define preferred development intensity.

There is an opportunity to concentrate growth within the precincts along Heidelberg Road, in response to pressure and demand for housing in proximity to employment areas and services. Existing suburban areas to the rear of the corridor can therefore remain for minimal and incremental growth.

An increase in housing density in focussed locations will increase housing diversity and provide, in relative terms, more affordable housing stock in the otherwise expensive suburbs. There is a need to ensure that affordable housing is provided as part of any rezoning or major development that occurs in the precincts. A more diverse and larger population would also help to support existing businesses and would likely attract other businesses and services. A stronger case for improving public transport services could also be made.

On the southern side of the corridor, the highest level of change and capacity will be contained within the APM with an estimated 2,500 dwellings over time. The YHS 2018 estimates that in Yarra's NACs approximately 4,400 dwellings could be supplied until 2031. Comparing this with the future dwelling numbers in the APM does not mean that other areas along the Heidelberg Road Corridor are automatically minimal change areas. However, the figures for the City of Yarra demonstrate that areas within Yarra that are outside of APM

are not required to accommodate high change levels in order to meet the required housing capacity. A moderate to lower moderate housing capacity change is likely sufficient to meet longer term capacity needs. The Porta Pty Ltd site within Precinct 1 is mentioned as a strategic site in the Yarra Planning Scheme and identified as moderate change. Precinct 3 within the City of Yarra is also designated as moderate change. The current detailed built form investigation for commercial land within the City of Yarra will help determine where the differences within the moderate change designation lies.











Transport & Movement

The study area has the potential to be a well-connected multi-modal transport area. Heidelberg Road acts as an eastwest connector (Heidelberg to Clifton Hill) and Chandler Highway/Grange Road as a north-south connector, there are three railway stations, and a bus service operates along Heidelberg Road between Heidelberg and Melbourne University. The study area also includes a variety of bicycle routes (commuter and recreational purposes) and number of walking paths along significant parklands. There are however several key factors that limit the effectiveness of some transport modes and the serviceability of the study area.

Current high traffic volumes in Heidelberg Road and Chandler Highway / Grange Road are likely to increase, thereby exacerbating existing issues such as pedestrian and cyclist safety, and comfort of travel. The number of traffic lanes on Heidelberg Road currently varies from four to six along the length of the corridor. This not only impacts traffic flow, it significantly limits the ability to achieve better pedestrian, cycling and public transport outcomes due to mode share conflict in the roadway. A lack of designated, separated bicycle lanes along Heidelberg Road, combined with poor crossing opportunities and prioritisation at traffic lights, make bike riding unsafe and less attractive to a wide range of users. The limited bus operating hours also limits the potential to reduce private vehicle reliance in the study area.

Several factors also dis-incentivise walking, including poor separation from fast moving traffic, lack of crossing opportunities and short traffic light cycles. This not only affects pedestrian accessibility to services, it reduces the potential connections and synergies between businesses on either side of Heidelberg Road. Poor conditions and connections, especially to the south of Heidelberg Road, also constrain the role played by railway stations and rail services for populations along the corridor.

Upgrades to Chandler Highway (including the new Yarra River bridges), additional pedestrian / cycle crossing points in Precinct 3 and the eastwest bicycle route along the Eastern Freeway will address some issues, but many traffic and access issues remain unresolved.

Heidelberg Road is an arterial road and controlled by VicRoads. A Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) applies to southern side up to the Yarralea Street intersection and along the north side from Yarralea Street to the west of Station Street. Implementing the PAO to facilitate the movement of vehicle traffic is likely to exacerbate safety, character and amenity issues.

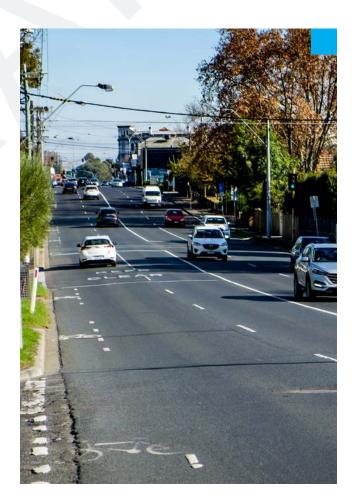
Through advocacy to the State Government, there is an opportunity for a shared user path to be provided through the length of the Fairfield Rail Spur site to provide a non-vehicular connection from the APM site to Fairfield Station and the surrounding residential area. Reinforcement of this historic link will enhance walkability and service connection to the Precinct 3 neighbourhood activity centre.

Vehicle access to some sites from Heidelberg Road may be constrained. In some locations, rear or side street access is not feasible. The provision of new access points (crossovers) to the Heidelberg Road frontage are likely to be discouraged or refused for traffic management reasons. The applicable clearway times also reduce parking availability on Heidelberg Road during peak hours. These conditions have the potential to increase overflow car parking into residential side streets.

As changes to the road network occur, there is opportunity to improve existing bus services, including in a north-south direction to capitalise on the Chandler Highway bridge duplication. There is also the potential to improve access to train stations to provide a more effective alternative to private vehicle reliance. Better safety for bike riders would also likely assist to increase the local uptake of this mode for a wider range of users as well as reduce conflicts between vehicles and more vulnerable cyclists. The attractiveness and safety of crossing options in key locations in each precinct would assist to improve exchange between north and south side of Heidelberg Road, making it more attractive for pedestrians to visit and navigate each precinct.







Public Realm & Built Form

Each precinct is distinct in terms of its immediate surrounds and functional role. Yarra Bend Park (Precinct 1) has the most unenclosed feel of the three precincts, with parkland located opposite its northern part. It also has a more fragmented and industrial feel compared to the southern side of Precinct 2, owing in part to a variety of commercial built form and an inconsistent pattern of setbacks. Station Street (Precinct 2) marks a crossing and connection point between the Station Street retail shopping strip and the restricted retail (such as bulky goods) strip on Heidelberg Road. The Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre (Precinct 3) is a changing and emerging small activity centre that has maintained its sense of a local retail strip at its core. Within each precinct, there are shortfalls that prevent a greater sense of place and identity creation.

Across the precincts, walking is made uncomfortable by narrow footpaths, poor separation from traffic, and a lack of crossing points along Heidelberg Road. Landscaping (in particular canopy trees) is missing or inconsistent, making walking and visiting the precincts less comfortable physically, as well as less visually attractive. The built form character along the corridor is inconsistent and geared to address transient needs and passing traffic rather than also catering for a local catchment. Implementing the PAO to facilitate vehicle traffic along Heidelberg Road may cause poorer public realm outcomes, such as a wider and more dominant road space and inappropriate building setbacks.

The APM development will help improve parts of the public realm and some built form issues in the Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre, though it will not resolve all public realm issues in Precinct 3.

Recent development proposals have used the APM Development Plan as a precedent for taller buildings which exceed moderate change levels and the Yarra Planning Scheme local policy for 5-6 storey building heights. Recent VCAT decisions and associated analysis highlight the potential impacts of more intensive redevelopment of commercial zoned land at the interface with residential zoned land. These impacts can include; overshadowing, loss of privacy and building bulk. These impacts tend to be greater when the new development is north of the residential zone land, as is the case on the south side of Heidelberg Road. Allowing change to occur also means needing to protect sensitive rear interfaces more directly.

Areas of identified local heritage significance are limited to a relatively small number of commercial or industrial buildings across the 3 precincts along Heidelberg Road. They include some older shops near Yarralea Street, Alphington, prominent hotels such as the Grandview at Station Street, Fairfield and the Porta Mouldings building opposite Jeffrey Street, Fairfield. There are more substantial Heritage Overlay areas covering adjoining residential and parkland areas.

Going forward, there is a benefit in defining each precinct's future identity and character to guide public realm and built form changes so to create a stronger sense of place. Collaboration between Darebin and Yarra City Councils will be important to achieve as much alignment and consistency as possible in relation to streetscape upgrades, built form, and potentially heritage investigations. Public realm improvements should aim to increase landscaping in each precinct and potentially investigate opportunities on side street corners.

A positive relationship between the ground floor of buildings and footpaths that provides a pedestrian friendly and higher-amenity public realm should be sought.











Open Space & Environment

Fairfield and Alphington are well known for significant parklands and recreational opportunities along and/or near the Yarra River. However, there is an imbalance in the spatial distribution of those open spaces.

Within Alphington and Fairfield, 10% of households do not have access to public open space within a 500 metre walking catchment. Poor or constrained connections for pedestrians and cyclists limit the accessibility of existing open space. Heidelberg Road, for example, is a major access barrier constraining access to parkland along the Yarra River. A lack of canopy tree and landscaping along Heidelberg Road reduces potential habitat linkages. The limited tree canopies and the lack of shade and other landscaping along the corridor do not assist in reducing the local 'heat island' effect.

Increasing and/or improving pedestrian and bicycle connections across Heidelberg Road creates an opportunity to overcome the uneven distribution of open space. This is of particular importance for precincts where housing growth will occur as it will likely encourage people to be more active and to reduce car reliance in higher density areas. Addressing landscape inconsistencies along Heidelberg Road will assist to increase habitat linkages and reduce the urban heat island effect. Utilisation of the Fairfield Rail Spur site for a shared user path and formalised open space, would also improve open

space provision and the promotion of sustainable transport.

To ensure that efforts are coordinated, a guiding plan is needed that establishes and communicates use and development expectations for all three precincts.

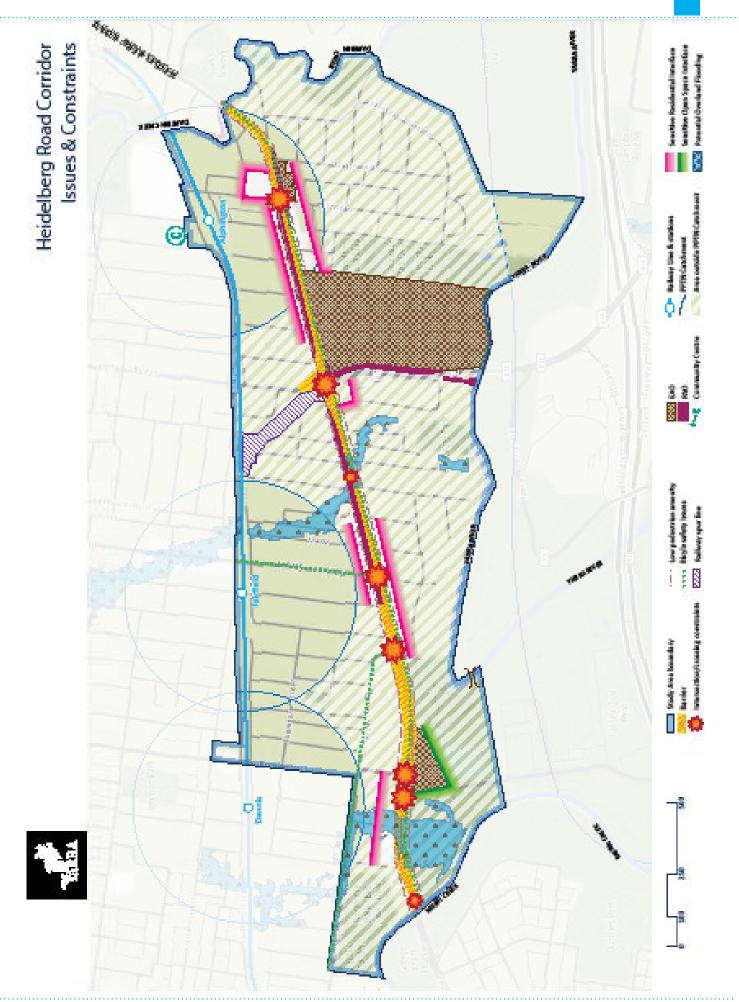








Map 2: Issues



3. A Draft Plan for Heidelberg Road

A vision was drafted to ensure future projects and works achieve a common goal for each precinct along the corridor. Key outcomes and strategic actions will assist in guiding future work on how and what to achieve so the vision is realised over time.

Draft Vision

"The Heidelberg Road corridor will be a greener, better-connected , more pedestrian friendly and vibrant place."

The three distinct precincts along the Heidelberg Road corridor will become livelier, by accommodating new and more diverse businesses and, where appropriate, housing in the form of apartments to accommodate growth and support existing and future businesses.

The public realm will be improved, providing a more welcoming place for residents, visitors and workers, with improved building frontages, landscaping to the streetscape, and a greater sense of openness.

Outside of the APM, the scale and form of buildings will be lower, reinforcing the primacy of the APM site's built form and achieving a more moderate scale suited to the local context and role of each precinct. Guided by this Local Area Plan and new design controls, modest, mid-rise commercial, apartment and office buildings will improve the appearance and character of Heidelberg Road.

The pedestrian and cycling environment will be much more attractive, with improved and increased crossing options, better and safer links to parkland, improved public transport service, community facilities and schools. The corridor will benefit from stronger links to the local and regional parkland along the Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and Yarra River. The existing small neighbourhood activity centre (Yarra City Council) east of Chandler Highway / Grange Road will be transformed by redevelopment on the APM site and changes within the adjoining commercial land on both sides of Heidelberg Road. Improvements to the existing shops in the neighbourhood activity centre will assist to create a destination with an identity as a modest, local, modern shopping strip.





Draft Key Outcomes

Diverse Economic activity

The corridor will support a wider range of activities and business, providing employment and services to the local and regional population.

Precinct 1 – **Yarra Bend** will build on its role as a destination for a mix of light manufacturing, restricted retail, creative uses, offices and potentially emerging commercial uses. A moderate extent of denser more diverse housing will benefit from proximity to parkland, and will increase the levels of business activity in the precinct.

Precinct 2 – **Station Street** will strengthen its role as a destination for restricted retail, offices, lowimpact manufacturing and potentially creative and residential uses to make use of the high exposure on Heidelberg Road (and its intersection with Station Street) in an inner urban location.

Precinct 3 – **Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre** will strengthen its role as a local mixed-use neighbourhood centre that provides new employment options, offers services and retail options for the community. Denser and more diverse housing provision will concentrate at the APM with more moderate built form outcomes at the surrounding areas to the east and west.

Community well-being

The community will be well connected to local destinations on both sides of Heidelberg Road. More affordable housing will improve access for lower income households to employment opportunities and services. Better connections will increase the accessibility of open space. Community spaces at the APM will assist to provide services where the highest level of change will occur.

Improved sustainable transport services and accessibility

Transport will become more sustainable and safer by giving greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists at intersections and improving routes. Public transport services will improve in frequency, reliability and operation times to become a better, true alternative to driving. Additional crossing points and paths will assist to connect the community across the north-south divide and improve access to existing services and parks. New bus services will connect the precinct to northern and southern destinations.



Individual precinct identity

The **Yarra Bend** Precinct 1 marks the entry to significant parklands with views of remnant bushland along the Yarra River. Changes should integrate the park setting into the public realm and built form to create a more visible connection.

Lower street wall heights (of up to 4 storeys where in the City of Yarra) will achieve a balance between street enclosure and pedestrian scale, as well as forming an appropriate lower interface to the parklands from the north side of the road. Opportunities to integrate the landscape character into site frontages and streetscape will be utilised.

Larger strategic sites adjacent to the parklands need to ensure ground floor activation is achieved to the edges. View lines and pedestrian connections need to achieve a sense of openness and connection with the parklands. The Porta site is a strategic site in the Yarra Planning Scheme, though not located within an activity centre. It can accommodate moderate heights of up to 8 storeys in certain parts, ensuring a lower transition to the existing heritage fabric, associated chimney and adjoining parklands. There is an opportunity to better define the interface with parkland to the south side through lower building interfaces, and careful material and colour choices that fit in with the park setting. Retaining visibility of the industrial past in buildings towards Heidelberg Road is also important to the precinct's identity. The Station Street Precinct 2 will benefit from an improved pedestrian environment in the public realm and improved building frontages. A greater degree of separation from Heidelberg Road will increase a sense of openness at pedestrian level, allow extra space for landscaping to soften the hard edges and increase the attractiveness of this commercial strip. The PAO may be an opportunity to provide for a more generous public realm, in the form of a landscaped street setback on the northern side of Heidelberg Road. Lower street wall heights (of up to 4 storeys where in the City of Yarra) will achieve a balance between street enclosure and pedestrian scale. Generally, future development could achieve a moderate building height (between 5 to 6 storeys within the City of Yarra), depending on lot depths, rear interface conditions and site accessibility.

The Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre Precinct 3 will resemble a traditional, retail shopping area at its core between Harker St/Park Avenue and Yarralea Street, book-ended by more robust forms at the western and, to a lesser degree, at the eastern end. The western area of the APM will mark the most prominent built form and highest levels of activity along the entire Heidelberg Road corridor. Small front setbacks at ground level allow for a greater sense of separation and pedestrian-friendliness with higher street walls providing a greater sense of enclosure along Heidelberg Road. The retail core of this precinct will have lower street wall heights (around 2

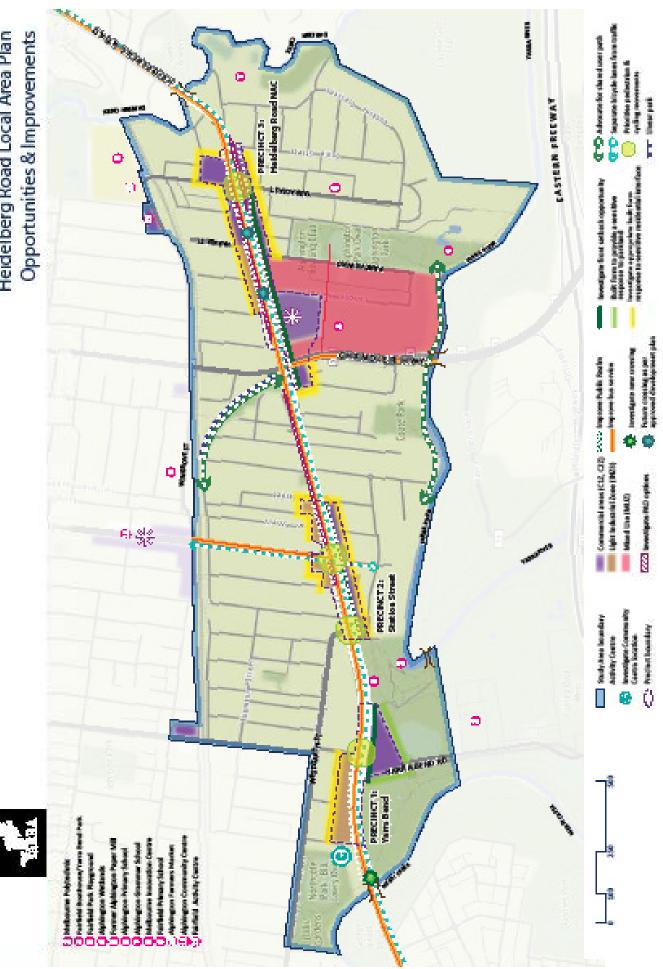
storeys within the City of Yarra) to retain the traditional fine grain character and to achieve a balance between street enclosure and pedestrian scale. The smaller lots would likely accommodate only modest building heights (between 4 to 5 storeys within the City of Yarra), particularly due to the PAO on the north side of the road reducing the developable depth of these lots. Larger lots could accommodate moderate mid-rise buildings heights (up to 6 storeys within the City of Yarra), depending on the capacity to limit overshadowing and create greater separation to minimise bulk.

The eastern end of the precinct could potentially accommodate more robust forms with landscaped front setbacks to address the street setback space created by the PAO.

A higher quality public realm, and improved building frontages, along with upgraded pedestrian and bicycle crossing points will improve street amenity, helping to attract visitors, encouraging them to linger, and facilitating movement between retail premises on the north and south side of Heidelberg Road and destinations beyond.

Map 3: Opportunities





Draft Key Objectives and Strategic Actions

The objectives and strategies were drafted to address and provide direction on key issues and opportunities within each precinct and across the Heidelberg Road Corridor. Adhering to these objectives and actions, will ensure that the precincts along Heidelberg Road become more people-oriented, better connected, and more attractive places for the community and businesses.

Table 1: Draft Key Objectives and Strategic Actions

Outcome	Key Objective	Strategic Actions	Applicable Areas	Responsibilities
Higher Economic Vibrancy	Attract a wide range of businesses now and into the future	Review the zoning of Industrial land (currently IN3Z) along the northern side of Heidelberg Road. Consider the directions provided in the Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy, the Darebin Creative and Cultural Framework and Implementation Plan, and in any additional strategic work deemed necessary for determining the future zoning of the IN3Z land.	All precincts	Darebin City Council Darebin City Council
	Ensure employment- generating land uses are attracted to and retained within the corridor	Retain the Commercial 2 Zone on the south side of Heidelberg Road as per adopted Yarra SEES 2018. Rezone land as part of the Alphington Village development from MUZ to C1Z.	Station Street Precincts Heidelberg Road NAC	Yarra City Council Yarra City Council
Community well-being	Support locating community services closer to their likely area of need	Support the provision of community infrastructure as per APM Development Plan and relevant planning permits.	Heidelberg Road NAC	Yarra City Council
	Increase housing diversity and affordability along the Heidelberg Road Corridor	Support moderate housing change allowed by the applicable zone and direction in respective housing strategies/policies. Encourage a mix of dwelling types in new significant development along the corridor to support household diversity. Pursue the provision of social and/or affordable housing as part of rezoning, and in significant redevelopments along the corridor (as per the City of Yarra's Social and Affordable Housing Strategy 2019, where within the City of Yarra). Advocate to the State Government to ensure that any residential use on the Fairfield Rail Spur site be exclusively for public or social housing at accessible locations on the site (while maintaining a shared user path connection between the Fairfield Station and the Heidelberg Road NAC).	All precincts All precincts All precincts Adjacent to Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin and Yarra City Council Darebin City Council Darebin and Yarra City Council Darebin City Council
	Pursue new green space opportunities north of Heidelberg Road	Advocate to the State Government to ensure that the Fairfield rail spur site has a linear park through the length of the site and provides open space to serve the local community, such as skate facilities and basketball/netball half court.	Adjacent to Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin City Council

Outcome Key Objective Strategic Actions		Key Objective Strategic Actions Applicable Areas		Responsibilities	
Improved Transport Services and Accessibility	Improve public transport service to and along Heidelberg Road	Advocate to Department of Transport to extend the service hours for bus route 546 into the weekend and for later hours, upgrade bus shelters and provide for additional bus priority measures along Heidelberg Road.	Entire Heidelberg Road Corridor	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Advocate to Department of Transport for a bus service on Chandler Highway across the Eastern Freeway to Kew/Hawthorn/ Burnley.	Heidelberg Road NAC Station Street	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Advocate to Department of Transport that if the PAO is acted upon, it is to be utilised for public or active transport purposes.	Precinct and Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
	Improve access to existing public transport	Advocate to the State Government (Department of Transport, DELWP and VicTrack) to ensure that the redundant Fairfield rail spur site has a shared user path through the length of the site to provide a connection from the APM to Station Street, Fairfield.	Adjacent to Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Advocate to VicRoads for the additional Heidelberg Road crossings at Latrobe Avenue and Harker Street are implemented to increase access to bus stops and railway stations.	Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
	Increase connections and safety for bike riders	Advocate to the Department of Transport as the responsible authority for Heidelberg Road for a fully separated bi-directional bike path on the south side of Heidelberg Road - including across the southern side of the Merri Creek Bridge.	Entire corridor	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Investigate options to increase safety for bike riders and potentially advocate to the State Government.	Entire corridor	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Ensure bike rider safety when pursuing additional Heidelberg Road crossings at Harker. Street and improving intersections, for example Yarralea Street, Station Street and/or Jeffrey Street.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Investigate upgrading the footpath along the railway line between Fulham Road and Yarralea Street to a 3m shared user path, as well as provide connections onto all intersecting side streets.	Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin City Council	
		Investigate better connectivity options to the Merri Creek Trail, including new Heidelberg Road crossing at the Merri Creek Bridge to improve access to the wider bicycle network.	Yarra Bend Precinct	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Investigate the opportunity for a shared user path along the Yarra River from Alphington Street to the APM Site.	Heidelberg Road NAC	City of Yarra	

Outcome	Key Objective	Strategic Actions	Applicable Areas	Responsibilities
Increase permeability for pedestrians across Heidelberg Road		Implement the additional Heidelberg Road crossings at Latrobe Avenue and Harker Street as part of the APM Development. Pursue a new Heidelberg Road crossing at the Merri Creek Bridge. Support new pedestrian connections between the two sides of Heidelberg Road to achieve better access to existing open spaces south of Heidelberg Road.	Heidelberg Road NAC All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council Darebin and Yarra City Council
	Increase safety for pedestrians	When undertaking built form investigations, consider ways to create greater separation and/or a stronger sense of openness from Heidelberg Road.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Advocate for longer pedestrian light cycles at intersections, in particular Yarralea Street, to improve pedestrian safety.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Advocate for signal prioritisation at intersections to increase safety for pedestrians. Advocate to raise pedestrian crossings across Yarralea Street and investigate whether other intersections along Heidelberg Road may require similar upgrades as change occurs.	All precincts All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council Darebin and Yarra City Council
	Minimise pressure on parking in residential areas behind Heidelberg Road	Investigate potential options to limit overflow of car parking from new development into existing residential areas behind Heidelberg Road.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
	Reduce or limit vehicle crossovers onto Heidelberg Road	When undertaking built form investigations, consider vehicle access from side streets and/or lanes to achieve a pedestrian- friendly and safer outcome towards Heidelberg Road.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Support lot consolidation for narrower development sites fronting Heidelberg Road otherwise creating sufficient vehicle access would lead to a poor urban design outcome for pedestrians.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council

Outcome	Key Objective	Strategic Actions	Applicable Areas	Responsibilities
Individual Precinct Identity	Create a more pedestrian- oriented, attractive and safe public realm	Investigate options for greater separation from Heidelberg Road to provide relief from heavy traffic and create a greater sense of space for pedestrians and potential trading/commercial space.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Investigate ways to increase canopy landscaping and level of landscaping consistency in each precinct.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Investigate ways to achieve more active frontages at ground level (and other Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design approaches), fine grain facade articulation and lower street wall heights of 2 to 4 storeys to maintain a human scale and general sense of openness for each precinct.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Pursue lower speeds for Heidelberg Road to increase safety and improve place quality in the Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre.	NAC	Darebin and Yarra City Council
	Ensure public realm and built form efforts	Both municipalities pursue a streetscape and planting palette to achieve consistency in the streetscapes.	Entire corridor	Darebin and Yarra City Council
achieve a stronger place identity that is suitable to each precinct's context and role	Increase canopy landscaping within each precinct and investigate ways to soften the public realm.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council	
		Create a connection to the Yarra Bend Parklands in the Yarra Bend Precinct and be sensitive to the parkland (increase canopy cover on larger sites, create view lines and/or connections, maintain lower interface edge).	Yarra Bend	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Support a modern, more attractive commercial strip in all precincts while preserving its own idenity.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
		Strengthen the Heidelberg Road Neighbourhood Activity Centre as a fine-grain, lower-scale local shopping strip with increased staying-quality for people.	Heidelberg Road NAC	Darebin and Yarra City Council
	Ensure new development is	Encourage moderate mid-rise development that is lower and subservient to the APM.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council
	sensitive towards existing residential uses	Prepare built form controls that minimise overshadowing of adjoining sensitive spaces, minimises visual bulk and overlooking.	All precincts	Darebin and Yarra City Council





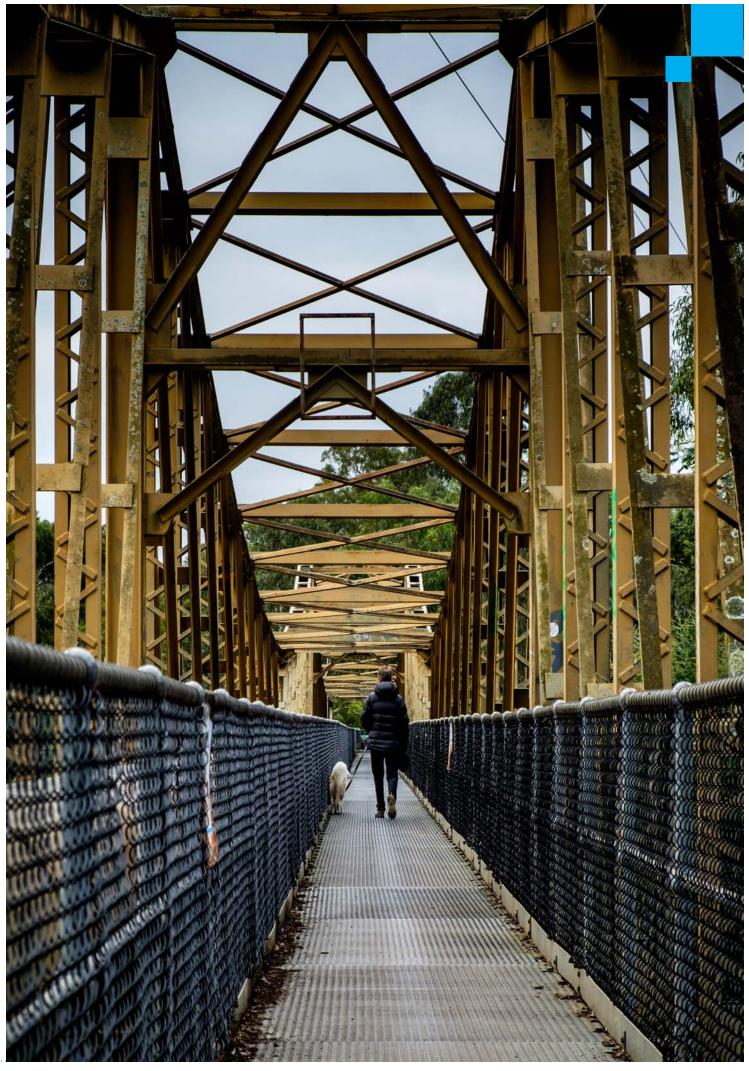
4. Implementation

This Local Area Plan identifies key issues and opportunities for the use and development of the Heidelberg Road corridor, with particular focus on three predominantly commercial precincts. The key outcomes of this Plan envisage a future for the corridor that is more connected and pedestrian oriented as growth and change occurs.

Some of the objectives and strategic actions can be pursued jointly between Yarra and Darebin City Councils, whereas others are likely to be independent projects involving a consultative approach with the other Council. Advocacy work is more likely to be successful when undertaken collaboratively. Whereas built form work and heritage investigations can be undertaken independently, in consultation with the other Council, and in alignment with the key outcomes and objectives of this Plan.

The vision of this Local Area Plan will be achieved by ensuring that future private and public projects are guided by the Plan's actions and outcomes.





Reference List

Alphington Paper Mill Development Plan, endorsed 27 May 2016 – Volume 1 & 2

Chandler Highway Modelling 2015 – Aecom for VicRoads

Community Infrastructure Plan -Yarra City Council 2018

Community Infrastructure Planning Policy - Yarra City Council 2016

Darebin Planning Scheme

Darebin Housing Strategy 2013 (revised 2015)

Darebin Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Framework and Implementation Plan 2018

Darebin Cycling Strategy 2013-2018

Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy 2014

Darebin Greenstreets Streetscape Strategy 2012-2020

Darebin Transport Strategy 2007 – 2027 (and review November 2015)

Darebin Urban Forest Strategy 2013-2028

Darebin Walking Strategy 2018-2028

Demographic Estimates and Projections Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018

Heidelberg Road Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019

Heidelberg Road Built Form Framework

(Part 2): Design Strategy and Recommendations 2019

Id Community – Demographic Resources: Community Profile, Social Atlas, Population Forecast

NE Link – Environment Effects Assessment – Appendix C Forecast traffic volumes

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Strategic Community Infrastructure Framework – Yarra City Council 2016

The Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy 2014

VicRoads Movement and Place: https://www.vicroads.vic.gov. au/traffic-and-road-use/trafficmanagement/smartroads

VicRoads Open Data

Yarra Housing Strategy 2018

Yarra Planning Scheme

Yarra Social and Affordable Housing Strategy 2019

Yarra Spatial Economic and Employment Strategy, August 2018

Yarra Urban Forest Policy 2017

A. Heidelberg Road Background Issues and Discussion Paper 2019

- B. Zoning and Overlay Maps
- C. Photographic Survey

Version Number	Date
0.1	31/10/2019
0.2	21/11/2019

Status of this document

This draft Strategy is currently an internal working draft, has not been endorsed by the Yarra City Council and is not intended for further distribution.



Heidelberg Road Corridor Local Area Plan