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Mayor and Councillors
City of Yarra
PO Box 168
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27 March 2020

Dear Councillors,

Parking on footpaths

Victoria Walks has been advised that the City of Yarra is currently considering allowing car parking on footpaths in Studley and Yarra Streets in Collingwood. We also understand that parking is already permitted on some footpaths in Yarra, including Saint Phillips Street, Abbotsford.

The apparent tolerance of parking on the footpaths in some streets within the City of Yarra is a significant concern. Victoria Walks is particularly concerned that any formal endorsement of parking on the footpath in Studley and Yarra Streets would set or exacerbate a dangerous precedent for the municipality and, more broadly, other inner suburbs of Melbourne.

Car parking on the footpath makes movement for pedestrians, particularly vulnerable members of the community using wheelchairs, canes, walking frames, trolleys, prams or mobility scooters, more difficult or impossible. This leaves those people with the difficult choice of travelling on the roadway, which is probably illegal and potentially dangerous, or not travelling at all. Victoria Walks understands that car parking is often a contentious local issue, but the most vulnerable members of our community need to be given a fair go on our streets (even if they do not speak up in these debates).

In our experience, it is unusual for Australian councils to tolerate parking on the footpath. We are not aware of any other Victorian council that has formally permitted it. The potential precedent is very worrying to Victoria Walks.

The City of Yarra is in many ways a leading council in sustainable transport. More broadly, it has a reputation for progressive decision making. Formalising parking on the footpath would be a retrograde step and would compromise the Council's positive reputation in sustainable transport particularly.

Given the current situation, we will not request an opportunity to meet with you and/or relevant officers to discuss this issue. However, I look forward to receiving your response.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this letter, please contact

Yours sincerely,

