



Local Liveable Streets guide

March 2022



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

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Introduction

This Local Liveable Streets document provides guidance on principles and practices for place making in local neighbourhood streets, to achieve collaborative and good design outcomes. It builds upon, rather than replaces, other Council plans and strategies.

Local streets are fundamental to supporting people's quality of life and connection with place. They also play an important role in addressing issues such as environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability.

'Local Liveable Streets' is about improving the amenity and resilience of streets, so that they can continue to support their communities in years to come. It is an incremental approach based on the local conditions and needs, and supported by strategic policies and goals.

Any changes to streetscape infrastructure needs to consider all of the competing needs, and can be costly to deliver. Some actions will be easier to implement than others. Partnerships between Council and other key players such as VicRoads, infrastructure providers, developers, the community and local businesses are essential in order to maximise opportunities.

The purpose of this document is to provide greater clarity for how improved outcomes can be achieved on local streets in Yarra. It is a high level document that sets the expectations for achieving coordinated and high-quality street environments in Yarra.

It sets out the principles and examples of good design in local streets and also explains the various (and often competing) functions of local streets, which sometimes will

influence what is possible.

This document also clarifies how the community can initiate and contribute to improved outcomes in their local street.

This document focuses on local streets in Yarra. This excludes the arterial roads (including main roads, boulevards and retail streets), which are generally covered by other strategic work and have other factors to consider. However, the principles set out in this document are universal and are relevant for all streets and public spaces in Yarra.

This document sits alongside the Yarra Place Making Framework 2022 which identifies the key priority precincts in Yarra for a whole of Council approach to improving the public realm. The Framework does not address local streets therefore this document aims to provide guidance for improvements in these valuable community spaces.

Improving local streets as liveable and dynamic spaces is important in supporting resilient communities and providing a lasting legacy for future generations. Shaping great streets is fundamental to shaping great cities.



What are Local Liveable Streets?

Function of local streets

Our local streets perform many functions to serve the needs of the community. This involves sharing space with services and infrastructure at street level as well as in the air and below the ground surface.

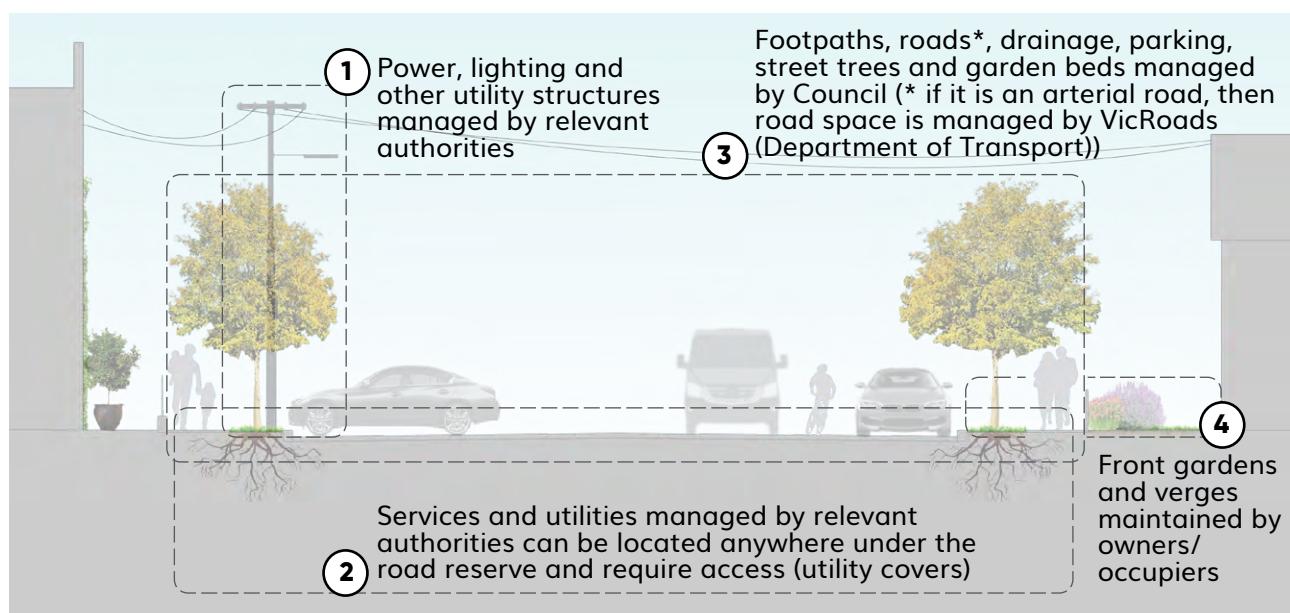
- They provide space for people to move to and from their homes and other places. This may be on foot, by wheelchair/mobility scooter, by bike, or by electric/motor vehicle.
- They provide access for emergency vehicles, waste collection, deliveries, and other services.
- They provide space for residents, workers and visitors to park on street on a short or long-term basis.
- They carry services and utilities to people's homes, businesses and other places, both above and below ground. This includes delivering power, water, gas and telecommunications, and taking away waste water and sewerage.
- They carry stormwater away from

private properties and help to mitigate flooding.

- They provide space for trees to grow, including accommodating canopies above ground and roots below ground.
- They provide space for plantings and habitat to support a range of fauna and micro-organisms.
- They provide space for people to spend time, relax, gather, meet their neighbours, grow food and exercise.

Not all functions are dealt with by Council - many aspects relating to services and utilities are dealt with by other agencies. Private land can also contribute to the amenity of local streets.

Local streets have to work hard to accommodate these functions. Many of Yarra's streets are typically narrow and have a higher density population, making our streets even more important. Streets are contested spaces and will become even more crucial for the community as the population grows.



Cross-section showing the different responsibilities and functions of a street

Local Liveable Streets

Local streets are an important part of the public realm. They are the public 'face' of every area and the doorstop to people's homes and businesses. Most importantly, they are the places in which people connect and interact. Streets are much more than just transport corridors, they are the places where the Yarra community lives, works and plays.

Local Liveable Streets are places where people can safely and comfortably live their lives. They are multidimensional and dynamic spaces that adapt over time to support environmental sustainability, public health, economic activity, heritage and cultural significance.

Achieving Local Liveable Streets means reimagining the road space as places for people. It recognises the base functions of the road (such as utilities, access, car parking and drainage), but considers opportunities to adapt the space to serve its context and achieve other benefits such as:

- Space for tree planting and garden beds to offer improved amenity, shade, permeability, habitat and biodiversity
- Space for people to meet, relax and play
- Space for people to grow food
- Improved stormwater management
- Unencumbered paths and crossing points
- Adequate connections for people cycling
- Road space shared safely between people cycling and driving
- Slow traffic speeds.

Supporting Local Liveable Streets will help to build more resilient communities through stronger social connections, good physical health, improved guardianship and sense of pride in local areas.

Relevant policies and strategies

Council documents

A number of policies and strategies are already in place to deal with future use and planning of local streets and address specific issues. This document builds on these existing policies and provides some additional guidance for achieving good outcomes in local streets.

- The **Yarra 2036 Community Vision** sets out the community's hopes, aspirations and priorities for the next 15 years.
- The **Council Plan** sets out the priorities and direction for the next four years (2021-25) to meet the Community Vision.
- The **Transport Strategy** provides a plan to respond to various transport challenges in Yarra.
- The **Road Safety Study Policy** analyses road safety issues in locations across Yarra and proposes treatments to address these issues.
- The **Place Making Framework** sets out a place making approach for Yarra, and outlines the key spatial areas of the municipality that would benefit from coordinated planning and delivery.
- The **Urban Forest Strategy** guides the delivery of new trees across the municipality to increase canopy cover, improve amenity and address urban heat.
- The **Integrated Water Management Plan** guides Council's operations in relation to water use, drainage, stormwater management and waterway health.
- The **Nature Strategy** seeks to increase the diversity, connectivity and resilience of Yarra's natural environment.

- The **Climate Emergency Plan** provides actions to respond to the climate emergency.
- The **Urban Agriculture Policy** guides the future expansion of food growing in streets and other public places.
- The **Domestic Animal Management Plan** promotes responsible pet ownership in Yarra.
- The **General Local Laws** provides regulations relating to the use of public land in Yarra.
- The **Car Share Policy** guides future increase of car sharing in Yarra.
- The **Parking Strategy** guides the management of on-street parking in Yarra.
- The **Embedding Green Infrastructure Best Practice Toolkit** helps Council's assess their own practices against best practice green infrastructure guidance.

Other policies and papers

- The **Movement and Place Framework** (Department of Transport (DoT)) provides an overview of 'movement and place' thinking for the future planning and management of roads in Victoria. It also provides an overview of street types based on their movement and place function, which can influence what future changes are possible.
- The **Urban Street Design Guide** (NACTO) provides a recommended approach for design of streets to make them safer, more liveable and more economically vibrant.
- The **Living Streets Discussion Paper** (AILA, AIA, PIA) sets out an approach for achieving 'living streets' and reallocating road space, particularly in areas experiencing rapid infill development.

Aspirations for local streets

The Yarra 2036 Community Vision underpins what we want to achieve in our local streets:

"Yarra is a vibrant, safe and inclusive environment. We celebrate and embrace our diversity and connection to each other and the land. Our community is empowered to work together and support one another with respect and trust."

Building on this vision, our aspirations for local streets are to:

- Create high quality places where people want to spend time in, feel safe and feel connected to their local area and to their community
- Enable safe and comfortable movement for people on streets, including people walking, wheeling and cycling, people with a disability, children, young people, women,

LGBTQIA+ community and older people

- Increase tree planting and greening of streets to improve amenity and biodiversity, and address issues such as urban heat and water management
- Support the community in contributing to their local streets through initiatives such as food growing, activation and events
- Allow for necessary car parking and access, but create environments that encourage people to use sustainable modes of travel.
- Ensure future design responds to the character and heritage, and is well coordinated and designed to provide a lasting legacy and resilient places that communities can be proud of.



Local street typologies

Not all local streets in Yarra are the same. They present different typologies which contribute to the character of the area, reflect the local history, and present different opportunities and challenges.

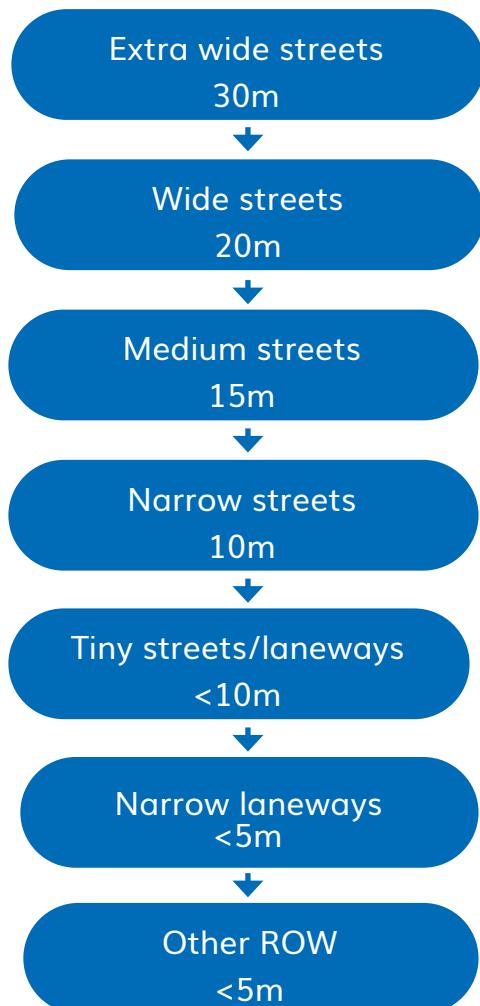
Yarra's main roads, boulevards and major retail corridors form the structure of the road network in Yarra. In some cases these are arterial roads managed by VicRoads (Department of Transport), which make them subject to other requirements and regulations. Many of these streets are also covered by other strategic work.

Within this main street network lies Yarra's local streets, an intricate network of access roads and local streets that provide local connections and where communities are established. Various typologies exist in the local street network – these can fall in the following general categories which are summarised on the right. These broad street types are described in more detail with example photos on pages 11-15.

There are other features that might impact the character and opportunities/constraints within each street typology, such as a park/open space on one side, dead end road, and no footpaths. Adjacent buildings, including their scale, frontages and any heritage features, also influence the character of the street.

It is noted that these typologies do not always reflect the function of the road; for example Rathdowne and Canning Streets have the same width and general characteristics however have been adapted differently over time to change the traffic function of the road.

Local street typologies



Extra wide streets

Typically 30 metres wide

These extra wide streets are typically found in some of Yarra's first residential suburbs such as North Carlton and North Fitzroy but can be found in other places too. The width creates an open character and provides more flexibility in terms of space for tree planting, footpaths, cycle lanes, parking and traffic. A proportion of these streets include generous central medians which allow for continuous tree planting and reduce the extent of asphalt.



Wide streets

Typically 20 metres wide

These wide streets are common in most parts of Yarra and provide a generally open character, particularly in established heritage neighbourhoods with lower scale buildings and front setbacks. The width provides some flexibility for parking, tree planting, garden beds and central medians.



Medium streets

Typically 15 metres wide

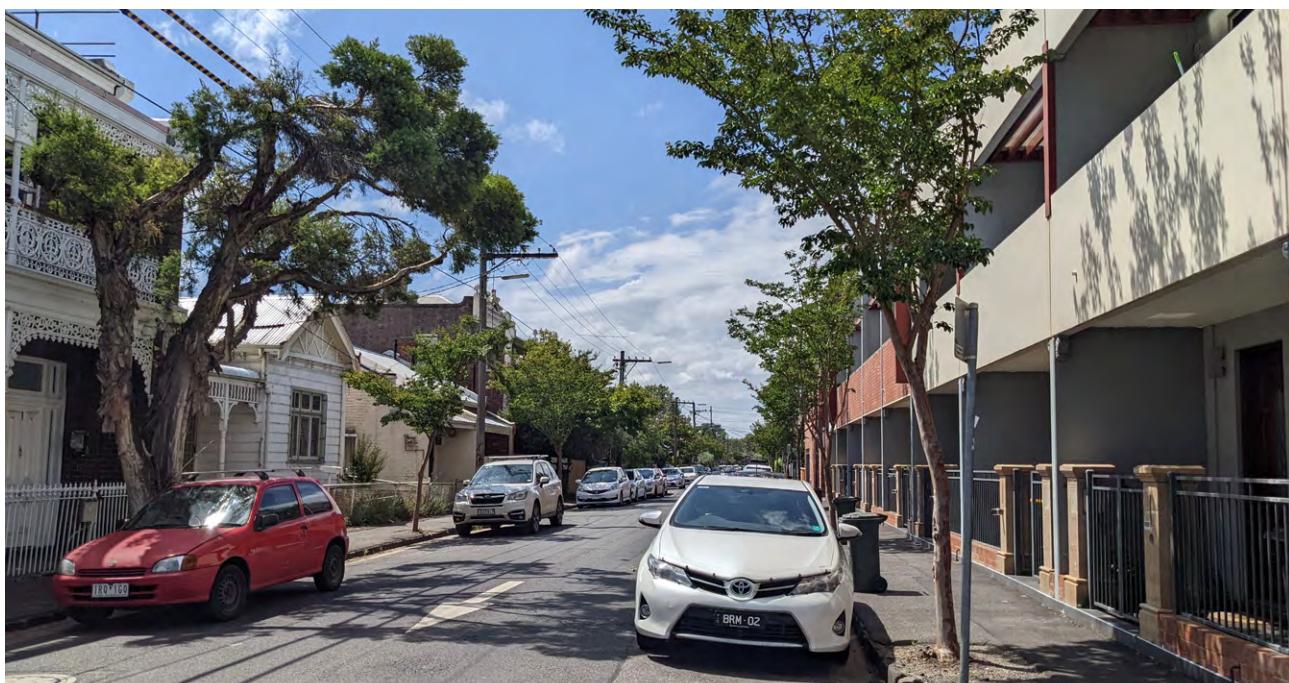
Medium streets are typical in former industrial areas and established residential neighbourhoods. The character varies through building scale and setbacks, historic width of footpaths and trees/verges. These streets can still accommodate two-way traffic however other items such as footpaths, cycle routes and on-street parking start to get tight and space is more contested.



Narrow streets

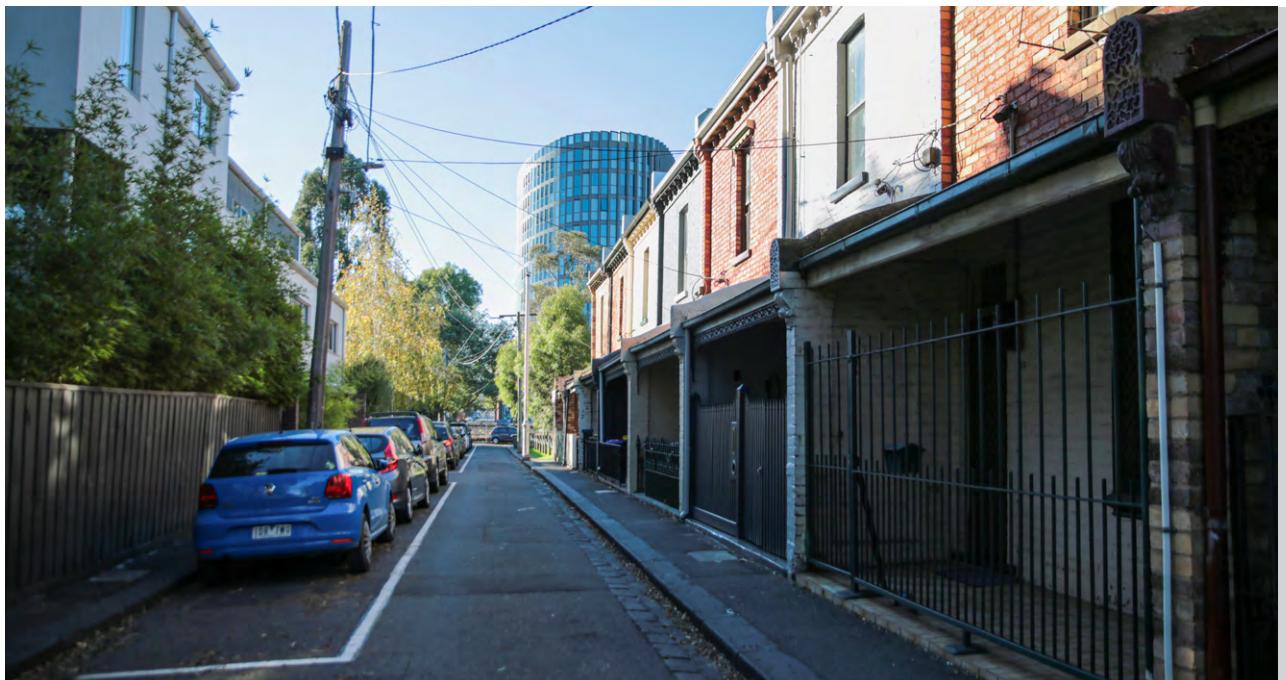
Typically 10 metres wide

Narrow streets are commonly found in Yarra's former industrial areas. Many of these streets are one-way in traffic flow with some on-street parking and narrow footpaths. Tree planting has generally been placed in-between car parking bays or sometimes on the footpaths where possible. These streets are tight and footpaths are more difficult to negotiate, particularly where there are power poles and other obstructions.



Tiny streets and laneways **Less than 10 metres wide**

Yarra's laneways and tiny streets are very constrained given that they still accommodate parking, traffic and property entrances. Many of these streets are in former industrial areas and have a more urban character. Whilst there are more limited opportunities for tree planting, some properties provide small building setbacks which allow for added greening of the street.



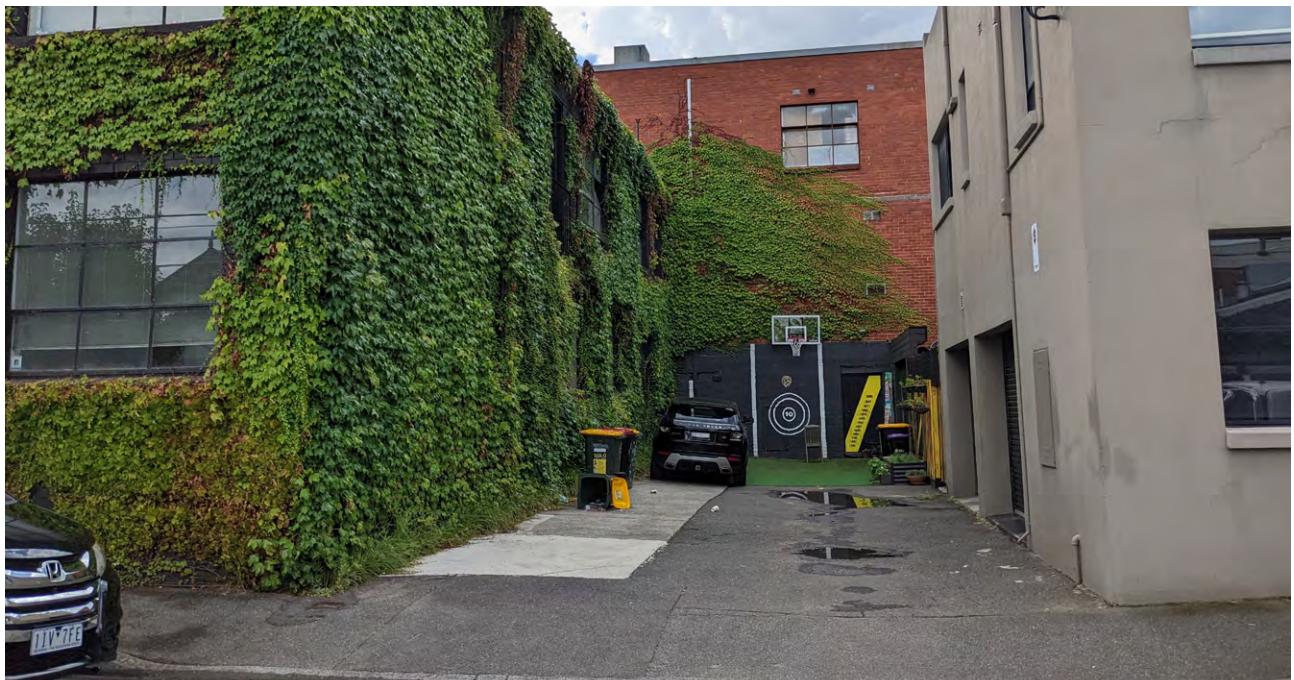
Narrow laneways **Less than 5 metres wide**

These narrow laneways were historically planned to manage drainage and waste water from properties, and are also important access points for properties. Most properties are built to the boundary or have high fences, limiting opportunities for passive surveillance. However some newer developments have frontages to these types of laneways.



Other Rights of Way (ROW) **Less than 5 metres wide**

These other Rights of Way are typically very narrow laneways that only service a few properties. They are commonly dead end laneways with no through access, and sometimes appear more as a private driveway. These spaces provide a break in the buildings on a street and can potentially create points of interest, depending on how they are used.



Good design and sense of place

Sense of place

Sense of place relates to someone's belonging and connection to a place, and can be influenced by:

- People and community
- Distinctiveness and unique character
- History and social significance
- Feeling comfortable and safe
- Connection to nature.

There are many elements that contribute to a sense of place in a local area or street, and every place may have its own unique combination of elements that make it different from the next. Also, how people connect with a place can vary from person to person.

Every street can have a good foundation to provide a high amenity, comfortable and safe space, to encourage people to spend time in their local streets and form connections with the place and its people.



Examples of elements that contribute to a sense of place

Connection to nature such as trees, garden beds, food growing, verges, gardens, medians and links to open space / water.



Public spaces to gather such as wider footpaths, parks, play space, medians, and community gardens.



Community centres, local businesses, important sites, events and initiatives that bring people together.



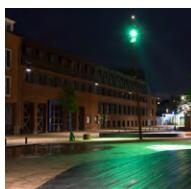
Safe and comfortable movement, including footpaths, crossings, cycle lanes and traffic calming.



Urban character including scale and architecture of buildings, heritage, frontages, setbacks and public art.



Well cared for streets with adequate street furniture and lighting, and clean and well maintained footpaths.



Elements of well-designed streets

Any upgrades or improvements in streets should be appreciated for their usefulness but also their aesthetics. Their design should reflect the character and values of the local neighbourhood they pass through, and provide enhancements where possible. They should aim to make our streets more liveable and achieve the best possible public realm design outcome by addressing the following:

- Aesthetics and quality design
- Simple and refined design detail appropriate for public realm spaces
- Materiality appropriate to the site and any heritage character
- Design that is fit for purpose
- Respecting the surrounding character, including heritage
- Maximising opportunities for street tree planting as a priority or if not

feasible then other plantings to increase greening

- Lighting to provide safer and more functional spaces and to consider wildlife
- An acknowledgement of a hierarchy of movement including but not limited to people walking and wheeling, cycling and driving (including car parking)
- Integration with other capital works or tree planting projects in the vicinity.



Examples of good design in local streets



Traffic calming incorporates greenery and seating next to the school to create a new space to rest/gather.



Garden bed with mass planting and bluestone edge maximises greenery whilst maintaining footpath access.



New garden bed in the road space includes slotted kerbing to help capture runoff.



Flush cut garden beds appropriately placed in between car parking bays and protected by corner tree.



Pedestrian crossing with seats, trees and bike hoops are well integrated and positioned next to library entrance.



New crossing incorporates WSUD and high quality materials to improve amenity and performance of space.

Coordination of streetscape projects

Coordination of streetscape projects in local streets is important in achieving good design and outcomes, responding to place and maximising additional benefits in a local area.

The Place Making Framework outlines the processes for ensuring coordination of capital works projects across Yarra and this model is also appropriate for all streetscape projects, including in local streets. This includes opportunities to collaborate through the annual capital works program and through working groups.



How private land and developments can contribute to improved local streets

Private land can greatly contribute to the quality of local streets, including the design of buildings and how they are presented and maintained to the street. For new proposed buildings, some of this can be influenced by planning controls but once built, is the ongoing responsibility of owners and occupiers.

For new proposed buildings, there are a number of ways they can be designed to provide an engaging and positive frontage to the street. This includes the following where possible, which are influenced by the Planning Scheme where a planning application is required:

- Front setbacks (reflecting the character of the area or on larger sites) to provide greening and tree planting, soften the hard building materials, offset urban heat, provide habitat, and provide colour and interest
- Clear front entrances to provide address to and activate the street
- Engaging frontages with windows and active uses at ground floor to allow views into the development
- Minimising car parking and garages along the frontage to provide a positive interface with the street
- Lower front fences to allow views into the site
- Seating along the property line (within the site) which can be accessed from the footpath.

For larger developments, it may be possible to negotiate additional improvements to adjoining local streets, depending on the size and nature of the development. This includes the following where possible:

- New street trees

- New street furniture (e.g. seats and bike hoops)
- Incorporating public art into a development
- Footpath widening
- Improvements to crossing points
- Creating pedestrian priority streets (e.g. shared zones)
- Potentially under grounding power / consolidating services infrastructure.

Once built, owners and occupiers can contribute to improved local streets by:

- Providing well maintained front gardens and verges
- Designing front gardens to provide permeable area and habitat
- Including trees to provide shade for footpaths
- Providing creeping plants along buildings and fences to add further greening of the street
- Offering something to the community from their front garden, such as street libraries and produce
- Maintaining buildings on a regular basis
- Considering the use of the building during the day and evening (including use of lights and opening blinds in rooms facing the street).

How the community can influence and initiate changes in local streets

This section sets out the various ways the community can influence and initiate improvements in their street. There are currently several avenues and programs (some with funding) which community can explore if they are interested in community-led initiatives. These are summarised in the diagram to the right and explained in the table on page 25.

Medium scale changes to local streets (e.g. kerb outstands, garden beds) are generally not covered by business-as-usual activities and can generally be delivered in one financial year. These types of requests will be assessed through a new process as detailed in Appendix A, as part of the Local Liveable Streets program.

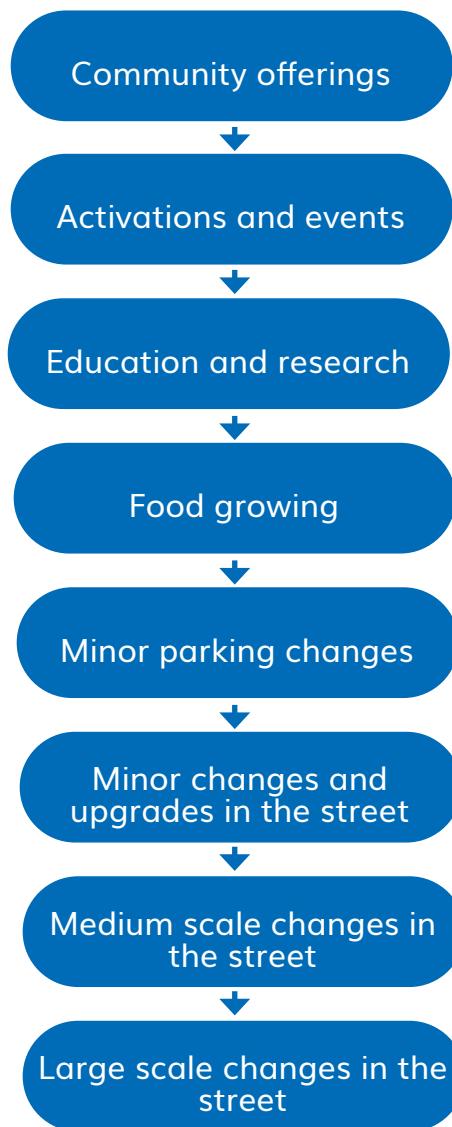
Larger scale changes to local streets require significant funding and resources. These generally require detailed feasibility work, particularly if they impact kerbs, drainage, parking and utilities. Suggestions from the community are welcomed; however, these need to be carefully considered against strategic policies, priorities and available funding.

Minor changes to Council infrastructure, minor requests (for example a new tree, seat or accessible parking bay) can be processed through Council's customer request system.

Prior permission from Council is required for any privately maintained planted verges/nature strips in front of properties. Planting out of Council managed assets (e.g. the area directly around trees or in Council maintained garden beds) is not permitted.

The community can also provide feedback on Council-led projects in their area through Your Say Yarra. You can subscribe to yoursayyarra.com.au to stay up to date on consultations in your area.

Residents receive direct notification of any street wide planting as part of Council's street tree planting program, and can contact Council if they have any questions or concerns.

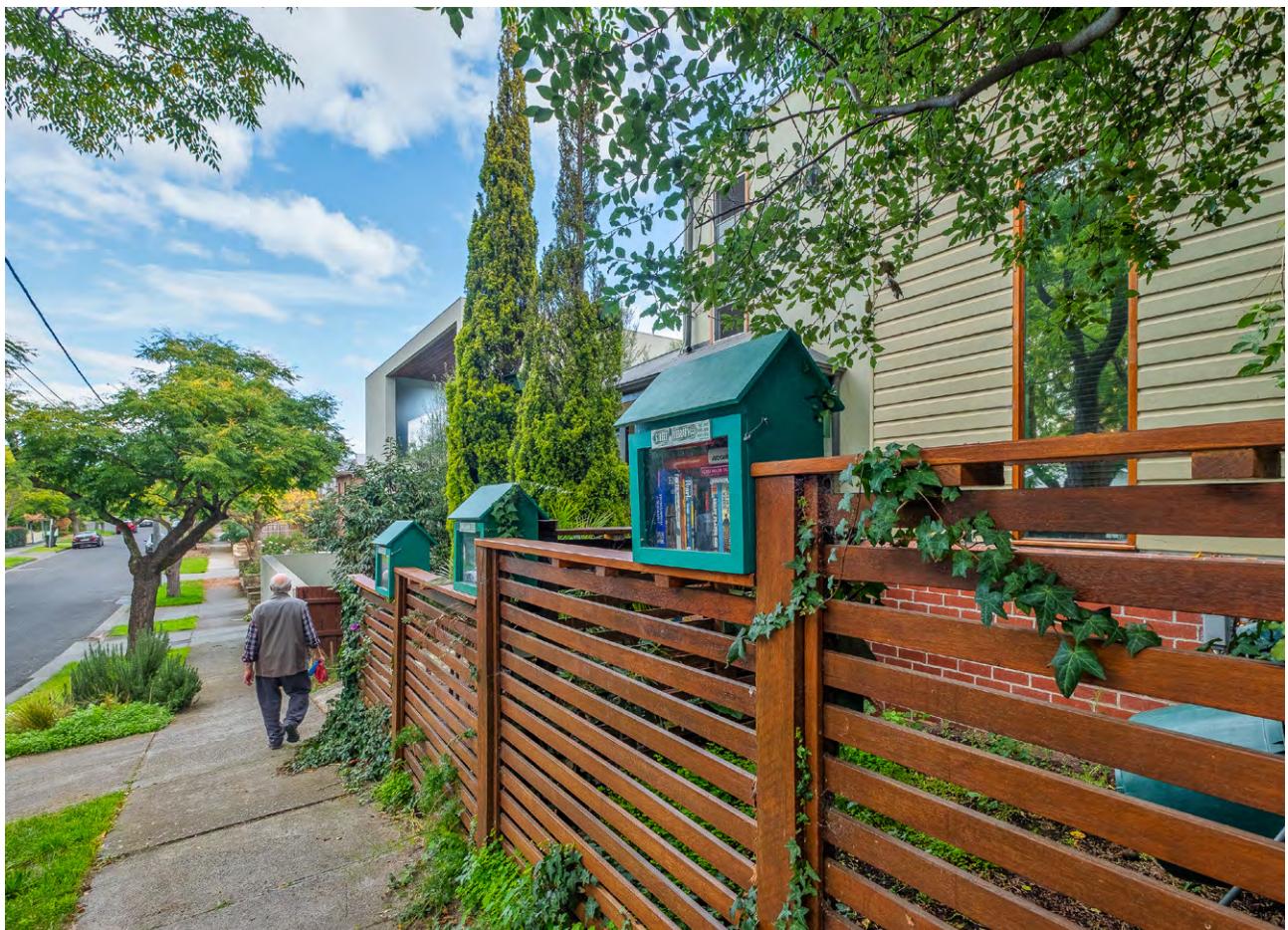


Examples of community led initiatives in streets

Type of change	Examples	Considerations and links to more information
Community offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greening of walls and fences • Shared produce • Street libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offerings from within the community member's property are welcomed. • Consider your responsibilities as well as any permissions required to use public/private land or street space. The design and/or location of the proposal may trigger the need for a permit so check with Council beforehand.
Activation and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events • Street stalls • Garage sales • Community artwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any permissions required to use public/private land or street space. The design and/or location of the proposal may trigger the need for a permit so check with Council beforehand. • Some proposals of this type may be eligible for funding under the Annual Grants Program.
Education and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education • Citizen Science projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These projects allow community members to collect data (e.g. local flora and fauna, urban heat) and contribute to research. • Some educational/research projects may be eligible under the Annual Grants Program
Food growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food growing planter boxes • Temporary laneway gardens • Development or upgrade to community gardens • Community compost hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-street planter boxes and temporary laneway gardens may be eligible through Council's Urban Agriculture program. • Speak to the Urban Agriculture team for any requests about community gardens or community compost hubs set up to support local food gardens. • Consider any permissions required to use public/private land or street space. The design and/or location of the proposal may trigger the need for a permit so check with Council beforehand.

Type of change	Examples	Considerations and links to more information
Minor parking changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible parking bay • Car share bay • Changes to parking restrictions • Loading zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for minor changes to parking/loading bays can be lodged via Council's website.
Minor changes and upgrades in the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street tree • Seats • Bike hoops • Maintenance • Minor upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members can contact Council about these types of minor requests, which will be forwarded to the relevant officer to consider. • Requests for new seats will be carefully considered to avoid amenity impacts (particularly in residential areas) and to understand the level of community support.
Medium scale changes in the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting and garden beds in the road space • Kerb outstand • Non-standard traffic calming treatments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These types of changes will require feasibility work to determine if they are technically possible (e.g. in terms of drainage). • Any requests of this type should be lodged with Council by firstly submitting an Enquiry Form, which will be forwarded to the relevant officers to consider. Appendix A sets out a broad process for how officers will assess these types of proposals. • There is no allocated funding for these types of requests. Any eligible proposals would be subject to Council's annual budget process and would be considered alongside other Council projects and priorities. • In assessing these types of proposals, Council will consider a number of criteria including alignment with the Community Vision, Council Plan and other relevant policies, feasibility and deliverability, level of community benefit/support and level of social, environmental, climate adaptation and economic benefits.

Type of change	Examples	Considerations and links to more information
Large scale changes in the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger kerb outstands • Footpath widening • New crossing • New pocket park • Whole street redesign (reallocation of road space) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger scale projects generally require more significant changes to the kerbs, drainage, parking and traffic flow. These types of interventions are expensive and require extensive design and feasibility work as well as consultation with the community. These projects usually require multiple stages and can sometimes take at least one to two years to deliver. • Requests from the community for these types of projects would be considered by the relevant officers to establish if they align with strategic plans and priorities and are feasible to pursue. Any requests of this type should be lodged with Council by submitting an Enquiry Form, which will be forwarded to the relevant officers to consider.



Appendix A

Process for assessing any medium scale proposals in local streets

Council's website provides more information about the program and how to apply for medium scale proposals.

[www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/the-area/
local-liveable-streets](http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/the-area/local-liveable-streets)

Community members can contact Council to get feedback on their proposal and understand if there are any feasibility issues.

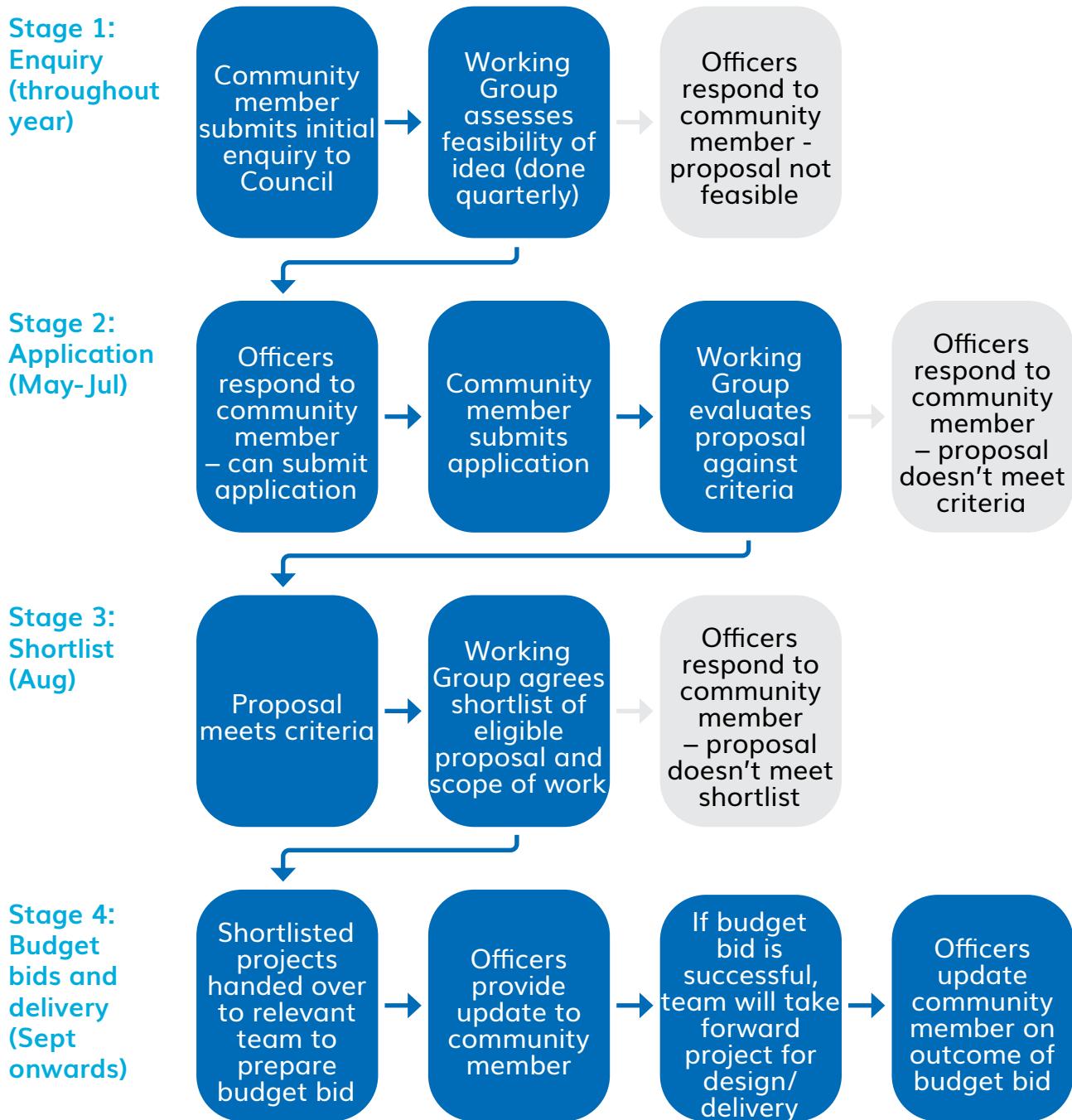
If community members are interested to apply for this program, their application needs to include details of the proposal, including the expected benefits and how the proposal supports relevant Council policies.

Applications also need to demonstrate broad support from the local community.

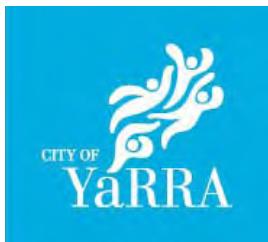
Applications will be assessed against criteria including how well the proposal aligns with the Community Vision, Council Plan and other relevant policies, feasibility and deliverability, level of community benefit/support and level of social, environmental, climate adaptation and economic benefits.

The flowchart on page 29 sets out the broad process for how medium scale proposals will be assessed by Council officers. This is subject to review and revision as needed.

Flowchart for medium scale proposals in local streets



Note: The timescales for Year 1 (2022) differ from above, refer to Council's website at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/the-area/local-liveable-streets for Year 1 timeframes.



Yarra City Council
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Customer service centres

Richmond Town Hall
333 Bridge Road, Richmond
Collingwood Town Hall
140 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford
Connie Benn Centre
160 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library
182 St Georges Road, Fitzroy North