

Conversation summary

Yarra City Council is changing as more people choose the municipality to live, work, study and do business. The Yarra Planning Scheme is responsible for providing the guiding objectives and considerations to aid planners in sustainably managing change and growth throughout the city.

A series of targeted community workshops and advisory group workshops are being held to supplement the People's Panel deliberative process. These group sessions are designed to seek feedback from special interest and hard-to-reach groups – the findings of which will be considered by the People's Panel.

This is a summary of the Property Focus Group workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Property Industry Focus Group

Reading Room, Fitzroy Town Hall
8.00am – 9.00am,
18 August 2015

13 members were in attendance

Chris Robinson, Elly Gardner (Capire) Liz Brant and Liz Mackevicius (Council) were present from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

A better dialogue between developers, Councillors and the community would result in better outcomes for everyone

Message 2

Focus on heights can result in less than ideal design outcomes and reduce the diversity of dwelling types that can be accommodated in Yarra

Message 3

Approval process uses too many resources; applications refused by Councillors then supported at VCAT, costs applicants and ultimately the community and Council significant amounts of money

Discussion of key messages

1. Discussions between development industry and community
 - o Controls are too prescriptive, particularly around height, should be more objective driven to be able to get better net results through negotiation
 - o Encourage developers to contribute more by opening up a dialogue
 - o Need to engage with the community better to know what they want from developments or precincts so developers can consider providing them
 - o Council need a pipeline of major projects in conjunction with developers to deliver community infrastructure
 - o Look at a more broad precinct approach to improve whole neighbourhood
2. Heights
 - o High density development doesn't have to be a bad outcome, we need to shift focus from height as focussing on this alone can deliver poorer outcomes
 - o Conflict between Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) and the fact it doesn't allow three storey development despite some level of community comfort with these heights
 - o Given small lot sizes, a third storey can make a large difference in terms of accommodating families

3. Education and Communication

- o Councillors need to take the community on the journey of change
- o Council needs to better advocate post-completion to highlight benefits brought by the development (access to river, open space etc)
- o Projects are already providing infrastructure so we need to better promote this
- o Change is inevitable, we need to manage and direct it
- o Need more Councillor education and awareness

Approval process

- o Where Council has identified areas for growth it leads to more proactive discussions and better negotiated outcomes
- o Lack of engagement between Councillors and applicants which happens at other Councils, doesn't give developers the chance to hear what the community might want and respond accordingly
- o IDAC process isn't working, it should be a dialogue but instead Councillors have often already made up their mind before meeting
- o Weight given to objectors is too high
- o Don't judge community sentiments based on number of objections, we don't hear from people who like applications
- o Affordable housing, aged care etc don't get a voice in the process

Observations and Reflections

- Consistent messages and certainty of what is expected from Senior staff is good
- Structure Plans need to be implemented into the scheme to provide certainty and need to consider State/Panels views from the outset
- Divide between planners and Councillors is growing which leads to frustration from applicants and more VCAT hearings
- Need to be more mindful of our context
- Often miss the boat with structure planning, ie they start after key sites have already been developed

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This is a summary of the Business Advisory Committee workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Business Advisory Committee

Fitzroy Town Hall, Reading Room
8.00am – 10.00 am,
20 August 2015

7 Community Representatives and 1 Councillors were present. There are a total of 12 Community Representatives on the Committee.

Councillor Colanzi chaired the meeting. Kim Swinson and Janet McMurray were present from Economic Development and Liz Mackevicius and Liz Brant from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

Support an ongoing mix of uses in Yarra, including spaces for business incubation and true mixed use developments

Message 2

The planning system needs to deliver improved outcomes which are in line with an overall vision. For example, if good design is desired then allow taller buildings, if more co working/ smaller spaces then make it easier to create these

Message 3

Placemaking approach to activity centres. Prioritise people but still function for businesses through a variety of forms of transport

Discussion of key messages

1. Space for a mix of uses
 - o Priority of infrastructure for business – increased residential population will drive or create certain types of businesses and services
 - o Interface between industrial development and residential needs to be carefully managed
 - o Maintain office space in the municipality in a range of sizes and formats
 - o Expansion of commercial spaces and conversion of industrial land for business and mixed use
 - o Have “true” mixed use buildings – not just residential with a token ground floor business element (eg. a cafe)
 - o Spaces needed for business incubation
2. Planning processes
 - o Need support in the Planning Scheme for co-working spaces as they don't neatly fit under any one use which makes navigating the permit system difficult
 - o Have one point of contact to resolve issues, including fast tracking

- o The time it takes to organise a permit is problematic for businesses
 - o New residential zone height limits are detrimental to good design outcomes
 - o Encourage collaboration rather than confrontation through the planning process
 - o Need for different planning policies for low density areas compared to activity centres
 - o Develop recreation facilities to meet growing demands from denser populations
3. Creating places to do business
- o Access to business by customers, services/suppliers, staff - need to support a range of transport types
 - o Yarra as a thoroughfare can be problematic if not managed
 - o Consideration of public transport as part of new residential development
 - o Continuation of movement and sharing of road space needs managing
 - o Partnerships between Council and others to deliver better outcomes for all
 - o Placemaking approach, give developers the opportunity to contribute more

Other discussion points

1. Long term vision statement for the municipality as a whole needed
2. Consider the development of 'land use advisory committee' to help advise officers and Councillors on major town planning/development proposals
3. Prioritise people
4. Partnerships between Council, developers, business and community
5. Identify spaces that could be developed into business incubation spaces
6. Look to construction codes for multi-level development that makes conversion between residential and commercial uses possible

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This is a summary of the Aboriginal Advisory Group workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Aboriginal Advisory Group

Harmsworth Hall, Collingwood

10am – 1.00pm

18 August 2015

6 Community Representatives and 2 Councillors were present.

Cr Phillip Vlahgiannis and Cr Amanda Stone were present along with Clare Murrell, Elly Gardner (Capire) and Chris Robinson (Capire) from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

The significant connection and identity the Aboriginal community have in Yarra, specifically Fitzroy and Collingwood is impacted by gentrification.

Message 2

Aboriginal community needs to be including in understanding 'diversity' in Yarra (diversity is not just multicultural communities)

Message 3

Genuine involvement in planning decisions, including statutory processes and stronger references in the MSS vision statement. This should include contemporary Aboriginal considerations not just historic ones

Discussion of key messages:

1. Identity and connection: Yarra, particularly Fitzroy and Collingwood, are nationally recognised significant sites for aboriginal culture and identity. This significance is contemporary not just historical. It's a safe place for Australian Aboriginals to call home. It is a 'nursery' of advancement and social change and this plays out still. Gentrification is having an impact on this connection.

2. Diversity: Yarra is about diversity of people, not just multicultural. Diversity is valued and diverse cultures are accepted. Council should protect this by providing support through affordable housing options, support to local Aboriginal services and businesses to stay in the area, etc. Look at Redfern for examples (community hub).

3. Genuine involvement: involve us from the start of a planning process. Don't come to us at the end to rubber stamp the decisions you've made for us. For example cultural heritage management plans. Consult Wurundjeri Council in statutory processes; strengthen this in the MSS/vision statement, with reference to contemporary Aboriginal considerations, not just heritage and history.

Discussion #1 – Current Concerns in the Local Aboriginal Community

- Emergency accommodation (with food) is a huge issue
- There is no place to get off the streets. People are getting stranded, there is no place that 'the black fellas' have a sense of belonging
- 'Blow-ins' are coming in from other areas (state/interstate) because they are not having any traction with issues in their own area. Harsher laws in other states (locked up for drunkenness), Victorian police seen as softer
- The blow-ins are being welcomed into people's homes (public/social housing) here because it's the culture to welcome friends and family, but they are causing trouble for the housing residents. Sometimes the house is overrun and the resident has to move out due to public/social housing criteria
- People have a right to be safe in their own homes
- Blow-ins don't want their own place, they just want to be transient
- They are ruining the carefully built relationship between locals and the police/shop traders
- The closing of the George Wright hostel (George Street, Fitzroy) has made a big difference. It was a safe spot and people knew they could get a daily feed. It asked 25% of income and included food. This was affordable. Services also linked into this hostel
- Some hostels are complete rip-offs. They take the whole cheque, and some don't even provide food
- Homelessness anecdotally seems to be on the rise
- The Parkies who gather at the "rocks" on Smith St are generally good role models
- There are too many soup vans! Some aboriginal men won't go to them, the soup vans need to come to the homes
- It's going to be a long hot summer. There will be a lot more people around, and this is also when alcohol comes out
- Stronger partnerships between Council and MAYSAR could help

Discussion #2 – Liveable Yarra – what keeps you coming back to Yarra?

- Connection to family, support from other Parkies
- The shops are better in Yarra (Smith Street Safeways)
- Services added at Billabong bbq are better than going to the GP or VAHS
- For the aboriginal community, Yarra helps them to find/retain their sense of identity, culture, family:
 - Gathering point
 - Find where they're from and where they're heading
 - you thrive, feel connected, find yourself
 - you learn how to respect each other and get along
- Fitzroy is the birthplace of many aboriginal organisations. Once they were big enough and strong enough they expanded. This is recognised nationally
- The site of the Royal Exhibition Building (Fig Tree) has been the first aboriginal gathering site for as long anyone can remember
- The diversity of cultures is what makes Yarra a special place. Keep it affordable for all walks of life!

- Aboriginal locals feel more connected to new immigrants than white Australians. They have all gone through similar issues and accepting of each other

Discussion #3 - Are changes being felt, what is the impact for you and your community?

- Expensive, unaffordable housing
- Poor design of studio apartment allocated via community housing, now in a large 1 BR aged facility in North Melbourne. Much better
- Parking is terrible, lots of fines accumulated, slowly paying them back. Assumption with housing allocation that we don't own a car!
- Smith St hasn't changed much. It feels the same as in the 60's/70's/80's. It is still accessible
- The gentrification of the area is causing aboriginal people to become alienated, especially Gertrude Street "I gave up once an organic supermarket opened up"!
- It's attractive for visitors, but not residents. "What do they think of me?"
- Please don't change the landscape of the area, don't cover up open space. Regarding the potential sale of land at Atherton Gardens estate by State Government
- All the new apartments butting up against each other are unliveable "lego lands". It feels locked in. There needs to be a break between the buildings. Needs to be considered in design guidelines
- People have to move out, moving north and become dispossessed
- Can't age in place, no opportunity in Yarra
- There are lots of cultures in Melbourne fighting for their own heritage. Multicultural is described as diversity, but Aboriginal not part of this
- Don't lose the uniqueness of Yarra. Unintended (or deliberate?) consequences of gentrification; planning is diluting the diversity that is valued

Discussion #4 - what can be done, what's your advice?

- Learn from Redfern – a centre of excellence. It still has its history, but is being used in new ways. Despite gentrification there is still connection, contemporary and historical (community hub infrastructure)
- Consider requirements to include a reasonable percentage of social housing in each new housing development, for low socio economic but also specific for local Aboriginal community (University of Sydney research referred to)
- Provide a range of affordable housing options – from small apartments to bigger 3/4/5 bedroom family homes. Most aboriginal people come from large families
- Involve the traditional owners from the **start** of planning projects. Don't come to them at the end to get their approval for something you've already decided
- Cultural Heritage Management plans are under Aboriginal Affairs Victoria because Yarra is in disputed area. Can MSS include/improve Wurundjeri voice in planning?
- Utilise vacant and unused land in Yarra for housing options (eg camping grounds)
- Be more ambitious about decisions
- Are significant Aboriginal sites protected? Once it's gone, it's gone
- Is Aboriginal Heritage considered at IDAC? Need to ensure culturally appropriate developments
- Consider the contemporary needs of Aboriginal culture, not just the past.

- Have better language in planning documents to act as benchmark to work to. Consider putting something in the MSS vision directly supporting strong role for Wurundjeri - traditional owners.
- Wurundjeri should have a stronger role in land management
- Have an open dialogue between the traditional owners and council staff
- Can the planning scheme support diverse housing options? "We've put our opinion forward about more diverse housing options, not just 1 and 2 BR but no influence".

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This is a summary of the Heritage Advisory Committee workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Health Plan Advisory Committee

Richmond Town Hall
3.00pm – 5.00pm,
12 August 2015

5 Community Representatives and 2 Councillors were present. There are a total of 13 Community Representatives on the Committee.

Councillors Barbour and Gaylard were present along with Clare Murrell and Liz Mackevicius from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

Having a mix of dwellings – ie type, ownership, etc – is key to ensure social cohesion

Message 2

Health should be considered in all Council policies, rather than a 'stand alone' policy

Message 3

Better monitoring with indicators should inform policies and decision making

Discussion of Key Messages

1. Integration and dwelling mix
 - o Don't segregate public and private housing
 - o Think about planning through prism of catering for those of all ages, catering for diversity, liveability and age-friendly places
 - o Ensure diversity and affordability remain as key parts of our housing profile
2. Include health in all policies
 - o Wellbeing should be a driver in policy development
 - o 'Healthy by design' principles – eg urban design should inform planning to encourage pedestrian movements and to encourage social interactions
 - o Develop alcohol, social & health impact policies to assess new proposals
 - o Consideration of health aspects with increasing density
 - o Work with abutting LGA's on policy development
3. Monitoring and reporting
 - o Community Indicators Victoria – wellbeing impacts can be measured so look into which ones to use
 - o Dementia friendly city, child friendly city – measure extent to which city is 'friendly' using accreditation (Moonee Valley as an example)

- o Walkability indicators should be used for assessing new proposals
- o Liveable city – which framework and what criteria should be used?

Other issues

- Design elements
 - o Safety and perceptions of safety
 - o Built environment and facilitating social interaction should be better considered
 - o Walking and cycling for a purpose – destinations, design, purposeful access
 - o Lighting, design for public space safety
 - o Temporary uses of land for urban agriculture should be supported
 - o Sustainability, climate change, extreme heat, green roofs all need to be considered
 - o Advantage of Yarra's compact geography for health and wellbeing infrastructure and access
 - o Work with developers to consider the natural environment

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This is a summary of the Arts Advisory Committee workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Arts Advisory Committee

Richmond Town Hall
4.30 – 6.30pm,
12 August 2015

8 Community Representatives and 1 Councillor present. There are a total of 6 Community Representatives on the Committee and 4 on the Room to Create Panel.

Siu Chan from Arts and Culture and Councillor Barbour were also in attendance.
Liz Mackevicius, Liz Brant and Clare Murrell were present from the project group.

Top three messages

Message 1

Supporting long term affordable creative spaces and housing for artists is important to ensure the sector can remain in Yarra.

Message 2

Protect Commercial 2 Zoned land so spaces to create aren't lost to residential development

Message 3

Review how developer contributions work for providing art or art spaces (ie. Council have more control over what and where)

Discussion of Key Messages

1. Long term affordability for spaces to live and create is key
 - o Affordable housing in the local area for artists
 - o Affordable spaces to both make and show art of all kinds (including music)
 - o Need for short-term accommodation for visiting artists
2. Protect existing Commercial 2 Zoned land (prohibits residential uses)
 - o Provides cheaper spaces for artists
 - o Separate artists from residences which is necessary for noise, hours of access, smells, waste etc
 - o Results in creative clusters
 - o Protect the existing creative spaces
 - o Better protect existing uses by not introducing competing uses in close proximity
3. Developer contributions
 - o Current system of negotiating money for public art in developments is problematic and needs more regulation
 - o More diverse ways of spending contributions should be explored including providing spaces on site or money in the charitable fund

Other Issues identified by the Group

- Long term leases for both housing and creative spaces
- Building needs are very different for musicians and visual artists compared to creatives like architects and graphic designers
- 24/7 access key, as well as proper acoustic treatment of buildings
- Red tape and issues around setting up pop-up installations
- Practice spaces for musicians are getting harder to come by as the city gets denser
- Access to creative spaces (eg getting to the Convent) – transport, parking etc
- Make arts spaces more visible to the community to help feed into making the city more vibrant
- Lack of short term accommodation options for visiting artists

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This is a summary of the Disability Advisory Committee workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Disability Advisory Committee

Collingwood Town Hall
4.30 – 6.00pm,
11 August 2015

6 Community Representatives, 2 Councillors, 2 observers and 3 Yarra officers present. There are a total of 9 Community Representatives on the Committee.

Councillors Stone and Fristacky were present along with Max Hardy, Liz Mackevicius and Clare Murrell from project team.

Top three messages

Message 1

The Planning Scheme needs to include disability access requirements to provide housing which is affordable and accessible so people with disabilities can live in Yarra, near their networks and support services, and to visit friends and family.

Message 2

The way the built environment and transport are designed should be improved so people with disability can live their day to day lives in Yarra without barriers to social, cultural and economic participation.

Message 3

Implement a process for assessing universal access for all new developments. This could be similar to the sustainability assessment tool.

Discussion of the Key Messages

1. Disability access requirements in housing developments and urban design
 - o Broader impact of lack of access – people who acquire injury or are ageing may need to leave Yarra as new housing is not designed for accessibility or adaptability; they also can't visit other people's houses/apartments which results in social exclusion
 - o There is a 5% accessible housing target in the Council Plan but not in the Scheme
 - o Not enough consideration of accessibility in the Scheme, we need an accessible housing policy
 - o Renewal of public housing estates should consider wheelchair access
 - o Yarra has a limited range of housing options in new developments for people with disability, older people and families with young children – or for residents who have visitors with a disability
2. Improve access into shops, services and onto public transport
 - o Physical access into these spaces
 - o Cobblestones, footpaths, tree roots etc need considering
 - o Improve access along activity centres, avoid over cluttering footpaths

- o Better mix and diversity of shops and services for locals
 - o There are too many gambling and alcohol venues
 - o Street lighting should be improved, particularly around Victoria Street.
 - o Need more accessible public transport
 - o Bridge Road trams stops are good, and should be available in more places.
 - o There should be more communal spaces and recreation services
 - o Three main barriers for social inclusion of people with disabilities are poor attitudes, poor physical access and cost
3. Adaptable and accessible housing is crucial for Yarra's diverse and ageing population. It should be a requirement in the Scheme that housing be both accessible and adaptable, in the way that heritage and sustainability is considered.
- o MSS outlines sections on affordability, excellence in sustainability design, heritage etc however it does not include a section on excellence in accessibility design. Commitment to accessibility needs to be emphasised in a dedicated section of the MSS
 - o Instigate a process for assessing universal access, much like with sustainability
 - o Implementing a planning permit assessment process is only possible if an Accessible Building Policy is included in the MSS, otherwise the Statutory Planners do not have grounds to request accessibility provisions in new housing developments (or in re-developments)

Other Issues Identified by the Group

1. Affordable housing should be held in perpetuity by government.
2. There should be opportunities at Yarra for employment for those with disabilities, including the City of Yarra.

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This is a summary of the Early Years Reference Group workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Early Years Reference Group

Fitzroy Town Hall
12.00pm – 2pm,
11 August 2015

Representatives were present from Rupert Street Childcare & Kindergarten, North Fitzroy Child Cooperative, Alpha Children's Centre, Boroondara Kindergarten, Isabel Henderson Kindergarten, University of Melbourne Early Learning Centre, EastWest Childcare Association, Gowrie Victoria, Little Sophia Kindergarten, Holden Street Neighbourhood House and the Department of Education and Training.

Adrian Murphy, Sarah O'Donnell and Lisa Wilkins from Councils Family and Children's Services were also present. Liz Mackevicius and Clare Murrell were also present.

Top three messages

Message 1

Improve safety for children around public transport, bikes, and river corridors

Message 2

Increase access to, and provision of, natural open space for childcare centres and kindergartens, using the 'bush kinder' model

Message 3

Community engagement about playgrounds and spaces for children should directly include children

Discussion of Key Messages

1. Improve access and safety
 - o Tension between pedestrians and cyclists on shared paths
 - o Movement along activity centres and main roads
 - o Safety at public transport stops, particularly for parents with prams
 - o Traffic calming in smaller streets
 - o Ensure pusher access over gutters/curbs
 - o Separate bikes and pedestrians along river and other busy routes
 - o Clear pedestrian access along shopping strips and busy roads
2. Improve access to, and provision of, open space for early years services
 - o More bush settings rather than formalized playgrounds
 - o Leave spaces open for interpretation by children of all ages and cultures

- o Locate new centres in close proximity to open space to make it easier to access
 - o Better integration of childcare/kindergartens and open space
 - o More spaces for families to come together
 - o More childcare close to open spaces, particularly 'natural' open space
 - o Maintain, don't reduce, access to open space
3. Include children in consultations
- o Survey parents and children, and deeper involvement where available (Barkly Gardens example referred to)
 - o Regular communication on this project and others
 - o Hear from broad range of cultural and socio-economic background
 - o Stronger community engagement and interaction needed

Other Issues Identified by the Group

- Stronger integration of services
 - o Create community hubs with support services for families
 - o Have access available outside work hours and on weekends
 - o Provide a space for cross generational interaction
 - o Cross generational interaction to improve welfare of all
 - o Link services across different ages, backgrounds, activities
- Flexibility to allow new childcare centres to open
 - o New developments could provide centres or open space on rooftops
 - o Assist landlords to turn vacant buildings into childcare centres

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This is a summary of the Heritage Advisory Committee workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Heritage Advisory Committee

Collingwood Town Hall
6.00pm – 7.30pm,
5 August 2015

5 Community Representatives and 2 Councillors were present. There are a total of 13 Community Representatives on the Committee.

Councillors Barbour and Gaylard were present along with Liz Mackevicius, Clare Murrell and Max Hardy from the project team and Sherry Hopkins, David Walmsley and David Cameron from City Strategy

Top three messages

Message 1

Identify sites suitable for development that do not threaten heritage sensitive buildings and streetscapes

Message 2

Elevate the importance of heritage considerations when assessing development applications, and develop guidelines accordingly

Message 3

Avoid 'facadism' or at least pay greater attention to set-backs when development occurs behind heritage facades

Observations of Council

Participants shared observations and acknowledgements of recent Council actions

- Participants acknowledged that resources have been directed towards heritage, such as:
 - o Establishment of Heritage Advisory Committee.
 - o Willingness to engage in gap studies in Yarra, to examine the value of heritage in Yarra.
- Participants also acknowledged an increased prominence for heritage policy through:
 - o The development and adoption of Heritage Strategy.
 - o We are seeing 'some excellent heritage aware decisions in response to development applications'.

Future aspirations

Participants had a number of hopes for the future management of heritage in Yarra

- Clearer policy regarding the built form and the importance of heritage in decision making, including:
 - o Heritage policy and strategy to more strongly integrate into the planning scheme and urban design guidelines.
 - o Clearer policy with regard to acceptable built form in Yarra's shopping strips.

- o Consideration for heritage within and across all four 'topic areas'.
- o Acknowledgement of the economic value of heritage.
- o Ensuring a balance between heritage and development – heritage often seems to lose out.
- o Greater consideration for heritage advice in planning applications – 'heritage advice often seem to be discounted, or conditional'.
- Better acknowledgement of heritage values.
 - o Yarra should be acknowledged (across the community) as a heritage precinct.
 - o The heritage of Yarra should be considered in a holistic sense.
 - o 'Focus on housing/residential heritage at the expense of other forms of built/cultural heritage'
 - o 'Do an audit to determine losses of heritage – not just individual properties but precincts'
- Better discussion of built form policy.
 - o Provide areas and opportunities for meetings/places and connections to discuss heritage and the built form, particularly for those that work full time.
 - o 'Some very ugly developments [have been] tacked onto heritage buildings'.

Ongoing concerns

Key concerns from the group focussed on the rate and scale of change occurring across the City of Yarra.

- Concern about rapid high intensity developments.
- We hope people 'understand that once [heritage] is gone, it is gone forever'.
- Planning 'needs to consider the big picture - think about what Yarra will be in 10 years' time'.
- 'Development and heritage can be achieved' if carefully managed.

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This is a summary of the community workshop held with Environment Advisory Committee. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Environment Advisory Committee

Richmond Town Hall
6.00pm – 7.30pm
26 August 2015

7 participants attended this session

Michael Oke, Coordinator Environmental Management was present as were Liz Mackevicius and Liz Brant from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

Develop our neighbourhoods to include a diversity of uses and spaces

Message 2

Enhance and protect biodiversity, including green spaces purely for their own intrinsic value

Message 3

Plan for resilient communities and future climate conditions

Key Messages to the People's Panel

1. Develop our neighbourhoods to include a diversity of uses and spaces
 - Plan at a neighbourhood or precinct level
 - Think about diversity in all its forms, cultural, activities, jobs, businesses, homes etc
 - The diversity of use is what gives Yarra its charm
 - Support mix of uses within buildings, perhaps trial vertical zoning
 - Diversity should be about what is required to live at the neighbourhood level, reducing reliance on car use, etc.
 - Make better use of our laneways and some roads as shared spaces
2. Enhance and protect biodiversity, including green spaces for their own intrinsic value
 - Ensure there are areas of green/wildlife corridors which exist to protect and enhance biodiversity, have areas of environmental richness for their own sake
 - Make green spaces meaningful spaces that can sustain native birds, animals and insects and ensure new developments are compelled to have an element of native green space in the plans
 - The 'liveability' of Yarra is as much about green spaces, clean air and water, and healthy environment as it is about business, shopping, entertainment/culture
 - When planting of green spaces are built within new developments or public green spaces or street scapes are happening mature, indigenous trees and plants must be considered over non-native in order to help biodiversity of the area proliferate
3. Plan for resilient communities and future climate conditions

- We need to set up our urban spaces with the future climate conditions in mind, not the current ones
- Critical issues include heat minimisation, building materials etc
- Need to plan for localised energy production
- Not just about climate proofing our built form but building resilient communities by creating spaces for community connections and linkages to form
- Make our streetscape a friendly place to be will make them spaces where people will meet, this includes elements like designing walkable, safe, active streets with setbacks, passive surveillance, interaction from buildings etc
- Support buildings that operate at different times of the day to keep the streets activated
- A connected community is a sustainable community
- Front yards and low fences provide spaces for connectivity
- Design considerations
 - Make sustainability features mandatory to all development and not just token elements
 - Emphasis on heritage above all is ridiculous
 - Aim for a more consistent city built form wise – 4 storeys throughout rather than trying to keep everything as it is but with random explosions of height
 - Support creativity in design, size can be compromised for great features in buildings around water efficiency, energy efficiency, passive design etc
 - Create human scale developments
 - Better waste management initiatives, including visionary approaches like community compost/worm farms

Issues and Challenges

- Environmental considerations in developments
 - Balancing heritage and environmental considerations
 - Maintaining good environmental protections when pressure is being applied for growth and development
 - More thought put into design
 - Loss of 'sky views' as development pressure increases
 - Night light spillage
 - Access to and collection of community level recycled water
 - How to recover more waste and reduce waste to landfill
- Green spaces
 - Balancing density and population growth with maintaining green spaces for urban heat island and urban forestry
 - Ensure there are areas dedicated to parks/open space for both environmental and community wellbeing benefits
 - Protect and enhance biodiversity while still allowing for growth
 - Need open space for health, biodiversity, food production, recreation and heat island effect
 - Maintain green spaces at street level
 - Greenery being introduced doesn't necessarily have eco-system benefits, we need to prioritise indigenous plants
 - How do we introduce policy that is about the intrinsic value of natural spaces, not about peoples use of them
 - Encroachment of the Yarra River
- Population growth
 - Balancing liveability for local residents (eg with local shops) with the need for broader vibrant economy to attract visitors
 - How do we double the number of occupants living in Yarra
 - Can we maintain a low-rise suburb this close to the CBD and what impact does this have on the fringe
 - Losing residents in the 'middle' – gentrification and public housing but losing the remaining diversity of our community
 - Managing population growth while ensuring higher-density development is appropriate (respectful of surroundings, sustainable etc)

- Transport
 - How do we limit cars in and through Yarra
 - Focus on walkability and use of shared spaces/roads
 - Increased amount of public transport
 - Prioritise active transport and public transport and discourage cars
 - Stress on road system given increase in housing
- Planning
 - Need to do precinct level planning with a vision that is bigger than single properties
 - Consider vertical zoning
 - How to use planning to strengthen community relations, more shared spaces, walkability, eg City of Moreland workshop hub
- Education
 - Need more community education about how to save resources and what the reasoning is behind it

Conversation Summary

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A series of targeted workshops with community and Council advisory groups are being held to supplement the People's Panel deliberative process. These group sessions are designed to seek feedback from special interest and hard-to-reach groups – the findings of which will be considered by the People's Panel.

This is a summary of the community workshop held with Youth Advisory Committee. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Youth Advisory Committee

Councillors Lounge, Richmond Town Hall
3.00pm – 5.00pm
27 August 2015

5 participants attended this session from a range of service providers including Headspace, ILLEN, DHHS, Neighbourhood Justice Centre

Cr Vlahogiannis and Cherry were present as were Liz Mackevicius, Clare Murrell and Liz Brant from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

Engage with and include youth in conversations around planning

Message 2

Ensure the built environment encourages community interactions and use by people of all ages

Message 3

Access to local education and employment is key to social and economic mobility

Key Messages to the People's Panel

1. Engage with and include youth in conversations around planning
 - Young people are experts, you won't be disappointed if you speak to them
 - Youth have very diverse views, young people are from different ages, backgrounds (including GLBTQI, CALD etc) so be inclusive and provide support to ensure as broad involvement as possible
 - Have regular, ongoing consultation with young people
 - Give young people opportunities to be consulted, involved and engaged in planning process and developments
 - Enable young people to have positive engagements around things that are important to them
- Ensure the built environment encourages community interactions and use by people of all ages
 - There is competition for space between businesses, community etc, ensure to include young people in this
 - Build social capital through use of space for a strong and equitable community versus for economic outcome as a priority
 - Spaces need to be accessible, safe and affordable to young people
 - Community oriented, equitable planning focus
 - Safe and diverse spaces that support young people to form union and participate in positive activities
 - Safety is key (CPTED design principles)
 - Opportunities for housing mix ie social/affordable spaces
- Access to local education and employment is key to social and economic mobility

- Where are the jobs of the future and how will youth access them
- Access to local jobs and local schools/further education

Issues and Challenges

- Ensure young people's voices are heard
 - They are the experts on what it is they need and want
 - Not all youth voices are the same, so be inclusive of the whole community
 - Redesign of Youth Centre is an example of how to use the youth's input successfully
- Creating inclusive space
 - Focus on ensuring all new spaces are inclusive of young people rather than trying to design specific places for them
 - Access to recreation spaces that are welcoming to youths and affordable to use (basketball courts, outdoor gyms etc)
 - Multi-activity and multi-age spaces
 - Places are being overtaken by economic uses (cafes in public spaces for example)
 - Disadvantaged youths don't feel like they are wanted in spaces
 - Difficult for teenagers as spaces are designed for young children (playgrounds)
 - Need for physical spaces like drop-in places
 - Design streetscapes and street furniture to also meet youth's needs (eg chairs facing each other so they can talk)
 - How do we design our activity centres to be useful for all ages and different times of the day
 - Allow for smaller spaces that youth can use organically (small parks etc)
 - Need for common spaces in new developments to stop social isolation that can occur, particularly with the increase in international students in the new apartment developments
- Equity and disadvantage
 - Need to address inequality and not silo different parts of Yarra, concentrating disadvantage and creating tensions
- Education and Jobs
 - Youth need access to schools and further training including university
 - Access to employment, growth sectors etc
 - Provision of education in Yarra, youth tend to disperse after primary school which makes it difficult for support services to continue to support them
- Safety, access and movement
 - More bike lanes and access to public transport modes
 - Access and movement through housing estates and into the broader community
 - After hours lighting in places youth want to congregate

Conversation Summary

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A series of targeted workshops with community and Council advisory groups are being held to supplement the People's Panel deliberative process. These group sessions are designed to seek feedback from special interest and hard-to-reach groups – the findings of which will be considered by the People's Panel.

This is a summary of the community workshop held with Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee

Mayors Room, Fitzroy Town Hall
6.00pm – 8.00pm
27 August 2015

6 participants attended this session

Cr Gaylard, Lisa Coffa and Kathi Clark-Orsanic were present as were Liz Mackevicius, Clare Murrell and Liz Brant from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

Understand and promote the wider benefits of urban agriculture

Message 2

Improve support for urban agriculture through the planning permit process & planning scheme

Message 3

Consider urban agriculture as part of the public open space provision not taking away from it

Discussion of key messages

1. Understand and promote the wider benefits of urban agriculture
 - Benefits are felt across a diverse sector of the community, not just middle-class greenies
 - Supports community resilience
 - Community cohesion
 - Wellbeing, mental health
 - Beautification
 - Sense of place
 - Community ownership over the public realm
 - Skill building, intergenerational interaction
 - Food equality
 - Physical health benefits
 - Healthy eating
 - Making this visible particularly to our young people
 - Assists in response to climate change
 - Urban heat island
 - Food security
 - Food waste
 - Food miles
 - Convey these benefits to Council and community more broadly to help show return on investment

2. Improve support for urban agriculture through the Planning Scheme and permit process
 - Support through the MSS
 - Need less onerous planning permit expectations
 - Commercial food production eg micro-businesses and how they can be supported through planning
 - Need to improve process for using underutilised land on a short-term basis
 - Conditions around 'horticulture' in the Scheme to assist implementation through planning
 - Defining laneways as roads through planning is prohibitive to them being used for other things
3. Consider urban agriculture as part of the public open space not taking away from it
 - Need a partnership between community and Council to ensure best outcomes – harness grass roots enthusiasm and reflect that with expertise internally (urban agriculture facilitator and open space staff)
 - Include urban agriculture as part of a diverse mix of public open space provision
 - Shared spaces on roads – need to challenge the concept that roads are for cars and use these spaces to introduce urban agriculture

Other issues identified

- Planning process
 - No definition in the Scheme which makes it hard to know if/when permits are required and how to assess them
 - Strong MSS support is required
 - Need a code of practice (like apiaries) to assist permit process
 - ESD provisions need to strongly promote green roofs
 - Onerous planning conditions (eg requiring car parking, public toilets)
 - Process time is inefficient to allow temporary use of potential spaces (eg building sites)
 - High density development is creating problems for existing backyards/gardens that are used for food production (eg reducing solar access)
- Availability of land
 - High density growth is reducing the ability for people to grow food on private land
 - Make sure any land we do use is appropriate
 - High land values make it difficult to get land so we need to value and prioritise this land differently to recognise the social and environmental values of urban agriculture
 - Not making enough use of rooftop spaces
- Public Open Space
 - Urban agriculture is classified as taking away from public open space rather than a contribution to it
 - Use urban agriculture to assist in managing difficult open spaces (eg railway verges, middle of roadways)
 - Why can't urban agriculture spaces be part of the developer contributions process
 - Lack of opportunities to create new forms of public open space that could incorporate 'edible landscapes'
- Education and support
 - Communal urban agriculture spaces rather than high-fenced, closed off locations – re-educate the public around what these could look like
 - Ensuring adequate enforcement when things go wrong



Conversation summary

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A series of targeted community workshops and advisory group workshops are being held to supplement the People's Panel deliberative process. These group sessions are designed to seek feedback from special interest and hard-to-reach groups – the findings of which will be considered by the People's Panel.

This is a summary of the Active Ageing Advisory Committee workshop. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Active Ageing Advisory Committee

Theatre Room, Collingwood Town Hall
10am – 11.15am
31 August 2015

3 representatives attended this special meeting of Active Ageing Advisory committee representatives (Glenda, Lou and Vivien)

Councillor Stone and Frances Moloney were present as were Liz Mackevicius and Clare Murrell from the project team

Top three messages

Message 1

Support older residents to “age in place”; in own homes or remain in neighbourhood through flexible and affordable accommodation options

Message 2

Improve safety and access around streets and to local facilities through infrastructure (lighting, footpath maintenance, seating)

Message 3

Ensure local facilities are available that have age friendly programs and services and allow opportunity for social connections

Discussion of key messages

1. Ageing in place:

- Staying in your own home, and if not in your own neighbourhood as long as possible is important
- Need safe and accessible homes and the associated infrastructure (ramps, fittings)
- Also need safe and accessible neighbourhoods including adequate lighting, maintained footpaths, shade, seating, drink fountain
- Living in the area that you know is very important as you age. If you can't stay in your own home, accommodation that is nearby, affordable and flexible is needed (not just Studio/1BR).
- Many older residents are asset rich and cash poor. Is there any barrier for subdivision of property, dual-occupancy? Need a special initiative for older residents to understand this.

2. Improve safety and access around streets and to local facilities:

- Access to parks and open space. Small and accessible neighbourhood ‘pop-up’ parks are a positive example of age-friendly spaces
- Important to have activity centres that you can walk to, with the local-specific shops. Bridge Road an example of this being lost, apartments replacing shops.

- We don't currently have across-Yarra travel (getting around).
 - Share paths are an issue, need to widen or separate from bikes zooming past
3. Access to local facilities that are age friendly and opportunity for social connections with peers and across demographics:

- Leisure/Recreation Centres are currently at capacity, with more people there is a need for another facility. There is a great need for a hydrotherapy pool in Yarra. Consideration is also needed for age-friendly gym equipment (such as for hip and knee replacements).
- Age-specific gym program and space is important. The Richmond Living Longer Living Stronger program is a positive example of this.
- Affordable and local health services, investment in palliative and preventative care is important.
- Library facilities are highly used and need to be improved. Age-friendly and comfortable. U3A (and other groups) use for meeting spaces
- Council needs to support neighbourhood connectivity – social connection between and across ages.
- There is no problem with more people coming to the area, it's the way the space is used.
- Create spaces to meet/congregate.

Other issues identified

- Projected population increase for older residents in Yarra (Fran's handout), implications for service delivery and facilities
- Concerns about the HACC service with change of funding, affordable community care services are important
- Business investment and job creation... but for whom? What are the job creation opportunities for older people, considering the fastest growing demographic for unemployment and underemployment are older Australians? What is the role for Council in this?
- It's only "liveable" if you can live in it, have money to spend
- Age Friendly and child friendly cities: unsure as to how the various policies and plans are integrated and relate. For example; Council Plan, Age Friendly City, Positive Ageing Strategy and MSS.
- One stop information hub, online as well as face-to-face with up-to-date information. The stress of getting older is not being able to find the information you need. It's very important to be able to speak to a person. Yarra does this quite well.
- Employment opportunities and job creation for older residents. The types of business and jobs growth is largely out of Council's area of influence but efforts are being made in the internal Employee Diversity Strategy and the work of the Economic Development unit.



Conversation Summary

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A series of targeted workshops with community and Council advisory groups are being held to supplement the People's Panel deliberative process. These group sessions are designed to seek feedback from special interest and hard-to-reach groups – the findings of which will be considered by the People's Panel.

This is a summary of the community workshop held with Bicycle Advisory Committee. It acknowledges the full range of ideas, concerns and views of the participants that were documented in the discussion.

Bicycle Advisory Committee

Mayors Room, Fitzroy Town Hall
6.00pm – 8.00pm
27 August 2015

6 participants attended this session

*Cr Gaylard and Alistair McDonald were present
as were Clare Murrell and Liz Brant from the
project team*

Top three messages

Message 1

Improve planning controls to ensure sustainable forms of transport are supported in new developments

Message 2

Promote the broader benefits of active transport in creating a healthy, liveable city

Message 3

Educate and lead the change, become the benchmark Council in Melbourne and Australia

Discussion of key messages

1. Improve planning controls to ensure sustainable forms of transport are supported in new developments
 - Bike parking rates are too low, we need rates that will be appropriate for the next 50 years of bike growth
 - We need to enforce Green Travel Plans if developers want a parking dispensation
 - Ensure a mix of bike parking is included in developments to be suitable for a range of bikes and people (including cargo bikes and electric bikes)
 - Need to ensure planning will support a shift towards electric vehicles through effective planning provisions
 - Include dedicated car share pods in new developments
 - Developers should provide on street bike facilities or contributions

- Improve bike parking and end of trip facilities for visitors, employees, residents, in prime access locations
 - Remove red-tape to converting existing private car parking to bike parking (needs a permit currently)
 - Planning needs to help us get to a decarbonised future
2. Promote the broader benefits of active transport in creating a healthy, liveable city
 - Increase in active transport use results in less air and noise pollution
 - Use planter boxes, with urban agriculture, to block off cars to streets
 - Creates safer cities and healthier cities
 - Improve the approach to facilities at public buildings including gyms, libraries and schools
 - Low carbon lifestyle is key to a sustainable future
 - One car parking bay can accommodate 8 bikes which brings broader benefits
 - There are economic benefits to creating people oriented places
 - Cycling is an integral part of Yarra's wellbeing into the future
 - We need to do everything in our power to create healthy, safe, active, liveable cities at a precinct level and active transport is a key element of achieving this
 3. Educate and lead the change, become the benchmark Council in Melbourne and Australia
 - Design and plan for people not cars
 - Don't just choose the 'easy' streets to put cycle lanes but the most important ones
 - Don't be afraid to prioritise cycling
 - Aim for improved flow, connectivity and permeability of cycle routes
 - Create pedestrian and bike malls, eg Gertrude Street should be more like Swanston Street
 - Have the confidence to implement the policies and initiatives that already exist
 - Extend the bike share system into Yarra
 - Look to great overseas examples of other cities to trial
 - Aim for less cars in Yarra by 2020 than there are today, including cars driving through, within and owned in Yarra
 - Become the 'Copenhagen' of Melbourne and Australia, the Council that other Councils want to be like

Observations and Reflections

- Budget is key
 - Ensure sufficient budget to implement all the great ideas that are developed
 - Better coordination and integration of road works – cycling infrastructure should be funded from the overall roads budget not require a separate budget
- Number of cyclists is going to rise
 - Both residents and cyclists travelling through Yarra
 - Change in demographics, trends towards higher cycling rates etc
 - We will need the infrastructure to support this
- Improve on-road routes
 - Incomplete bicycle routes make it difficult for all but the most robust riders
 - Need to provide for all types of cyclists and confidence levels
- Car parking
 - 'free' parking on roads is an incentive for people to drive, this needs to be reconsidered
 - Make it easier to change car parks into bike parking bays
- Don't fear development or increasing population, it is an opportunity to reinvigorate and provides the basis for new and better services
- Think about where people go on holidays eg the piazzas in Europe where there are no cars and no parking but they are thriving places to visit and live
- It should be easy for someone to choose active transport, it should be favourable and become the default choice
- Think about how you want your children to be able to get around into the future