

Proposal for a second Parking Forum on Narrow Streets



Image credit: Our Community Leadership Group, via Facebook



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra

www.streets-alive-yarra.org

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Foreword

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a [vision](#) for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving [neighbourhoods](#). We see our streets being used by people from [8 to 80 years old](#), irrespective of whether they choose to walk, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers are able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and can easily find a park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,200 likes on Facebook, increasing by 10-20 per week. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at www.streets-alive-yarra.org.

Overview

Streets Alive Yarra applauds the Council Resolution from 13th December 2019 to investigate issues related to parking in narrow streets. This document suggests that the investigation should include a second ‘parking forum’ that focusses on narrow streets, following up from the first parking forum held on 7th December, that was more of an introductory session.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved: Councillor Jolly

Seconded: Councillor Fristacky

1. That Council:

- (a) note the contents of this report; and
- (b) defer consideration of the proposed removal of parking spaces to enable:
 - (i) further discussions with the MFB and local residents;
 - (ii) further investigation into laneway access, including consideration of width measurements, any other relevant issues and the precedents of traffic treatments across Yarra and other inner Melbourne suburbs;
 - (iii) parking occupancy observations to be made on Studley Street, Yarra Street and neighbouring streets including in the evening; and
 - (iv) a further report to be produced for Council and local residents to investigate the questions raised and solutions suggested by local residents including:
 - a. the effect of the proposed changes on parking on neighbouring streets (based on the occupancy observations);
 - b. the regulatory provisions governing parking vehicles on footpaths, whether Council has the ability to allow footpath parking and its effect on DDA compliance;
 - c. whether line marking of parking bays can be done in such a way to compel drivers to park closer to the curb and increase clearance (as on St Philips St);
 - d. advice from emergency services on whether their vehicles can use rear laneways for access to properties in an emergency and/or whether smaller vehicles can be used to access narrow streets;
 - e. whether footpaths can be redesigned to increase road width and what cost and other implications there would be in this;
 - f. whether angle parking could be introduced; and
 - g. any other issues officers consider relevant.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution from 13th December 2019

Context

The City of Yarra hosted a 'parking forum' on 7th December 2019, and then on 13th December considered the removal of on-street parking from one side of two narrow streets.



Parking forum 7th December 2019. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

The parking forum introduced some of the trends facing Yarra, and some of the trade-offs related to using street space for parking; while the Council Meeting on 13th December considered some of the issues related to on-street parking on narrow streets, including some statements from ratepayers, such as:

- *Parking on the footpath can be legal*
- *Parking on the footpath does not impede people with disabilities from accessing properties*
- *Fire trucks still have enough space even if cars are parked on both sides of the street*
- *Families with children need cars to be parked on-street near homes, e.g. to drive a sick child to the doctor*

A second parking forum, focussed on narrow streets, would allow these issues to be considered in more detail.

Proposed scope

The scope of a second parking forum could be defined as narrow streets in Yarra. This would enable a more focussed discussion than the first parking forum, but not as specific as a discussion limited only to Studley Street and Yarra Street. For example:

- A representative from the Department of Transport could provide expert guidance on the legality of parking on the footpath, including the intent of exemptions.
- A simulated 'narrow street' could be marked out using chalk in the carpark near Richmond Town Hall, with on-street parking on both sides and a 'footpath'; enabling a representative from the Disability Advisory Committee to demonstrate the need for a certain footpath width, free from obstructions.
- The same simulated 'narrow street' could enable a representative from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade to demonstrate, using a real fire truck between real cars, the need for a certain width between parked cars, to access equipment and connections on the side of fire trucks.



Example of the MFB bringing a truck to a community event. Image credit: Our Community Leadership Group, via Facebook

- A representative from the City Works and Assets team could provide expert guidance on the costs to eliminate footpaths from each side, repaving the street without kerbs, and reducing the speed limit; to enable cars to park near property boundaries and for people to be able to walk down the centre of the street.
- A representative from the Department of Transport could provide expert guidance on families from around the world, including in world class cities, who don't need cars at all, or don't need their cars to be parked immediately in front of their homes.

Possible additional content

In addition, further topics related to the use of space on narrow streets could be introduced, such as:

- A representative from the Yarra Urban Design team could provide expert guidance on how other cities around the world allocate space in narrow residential streets, including best practice 'reference designs' for different street widths.
- Local residents who have lived in narrow streets in other countries, such as Japan or Europe, could provide commentary on how families seem to get along quite well without owning and parking a car directly outside their residence.
- A representative from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade could offer expert commentary on the option to source smaller fire trucks to respond to incidences in narrow streets.
 - <https://www.mnn.com/green-tech/transportation/blogs/more-how-designing-streets-fire-trucks-gets-it-backwards>
 - https://www.linkedin.com/posts/cbruntlett_these-compact-fire-trucks-are-widely-used-activity-6616346105410129920-Vvpz
- A representative from the Yarra Environment team could provide expert guidance on the Yarra Urban Forest strategy, the benefits of more trees, and the street space required to support them.
- Local residents who use car sharing could provide commentary on how membership of car sharing has allowed them to decrease the number of private cars they need to park on the street.

Benefits of a full-scale demonstration

A full-scale demonstration, using real cars, a real firetruck, a real person in a wheelchair, and real lane widths marked with chalk, can enable a large number of people to understand a variety of issues in a short space of time. It's often much easier to demonstrate the need for a certain space, than to describe.

In addition, a full-scale demonstration, using chalk on an asphalt car park, can be conducted at short notice for low cost.

Concluding remarks

Streets Alive Yarra applauds the City of Yarra's focus on improving our streets, including the role of parking and how best to allocate our limited street space to competing uses. The first parking forum was a great start, and the recent discussion about narrow streets is a wonderful opportunity to consider these issues in further detail, via a second parking forum that focusses on narrow streets.

We would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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