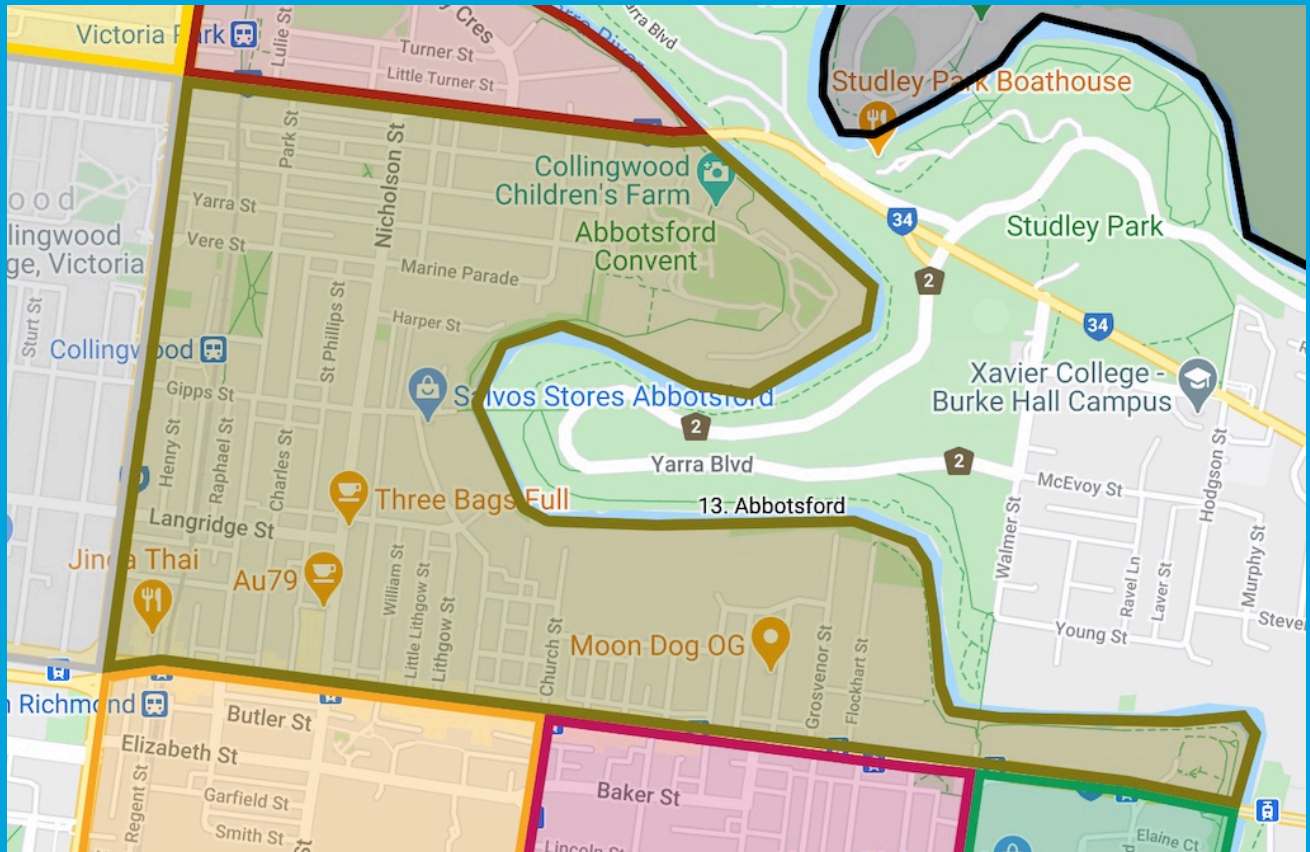


LOCAL AREA PLACE MAKING IN ABBOTSFORD



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.
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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 [all ages](#), irrespective of whether they walk, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers should be able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,600 likes on Facebook. 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: streets-alive-yarra.org/about.

Overview

On Tuesday 15th December, council asked officers to deliver a report in March 2021, considering all the data relating to the Langridge/Nicholson/Mollison treatment, which arose from the Local Area Place Making process for Abbotsford.

<http://webcast.yarracity.vic.gov.au/archive/video20-1215.php>

This document responds to that motion, offering data, analysis and options, including:

- Assessment of risk
- Updated traffic projections
- Options for traffic calming and place making
- Safe System analysis of treatments for Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison
- Opportunity to improve the LAPM process

LAPM policy

Yarra's Local Area Place Making (LAPM) policy states that the purpose is to '*ensure a consistent, fair and comprehensive approach*':



Local Area Place Making Policy 2017

This policy:

- Aims to ensure a consistent, fair and comprehensive approach to the investigation, consultation, designs, implementation and monitoring of Local Area Place Making (LAPM) schemes.
- Demonstrates a commitment to reduce the adverse impacts of motor vehicles in the local street network and to improve road safety and residential amenity.
- Establishes a framework to ensure the service to residents in investigating and installing traffic management treatments is streamlined and to ensure best use of Council's limited funding and resources.

Image credit: City of Yarra

The LAPM process for Abbotsford encompassed multiple stages of community engagement and consultation, including an opportunity to address Council before the program of works was adopted.

In contrast, the decision to reverse the median barrier treatment on Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison was taken via an item of 'urgent business', with no opportunity for residents to make a submission. This is not in alignment with the policy requirement for a '*consistent, fair and comprehensive approach*'.

Assessment of risk

When Council makes decisions that consider risk to the community, then risk should be quantified using the Safe System framework, which is the core of the *National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020* and the *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030*. The procedure for undertaking a Safe System Assessment is outlined in the Austroads publication *AP-R509-16 Safe System Assessment Framework* and the VicRoads publication *Safe System Assessment Guidelines V1.0 July 2018*. An assessment results in a score out of 448, with a lower score being better, aligning with Towards Zero.

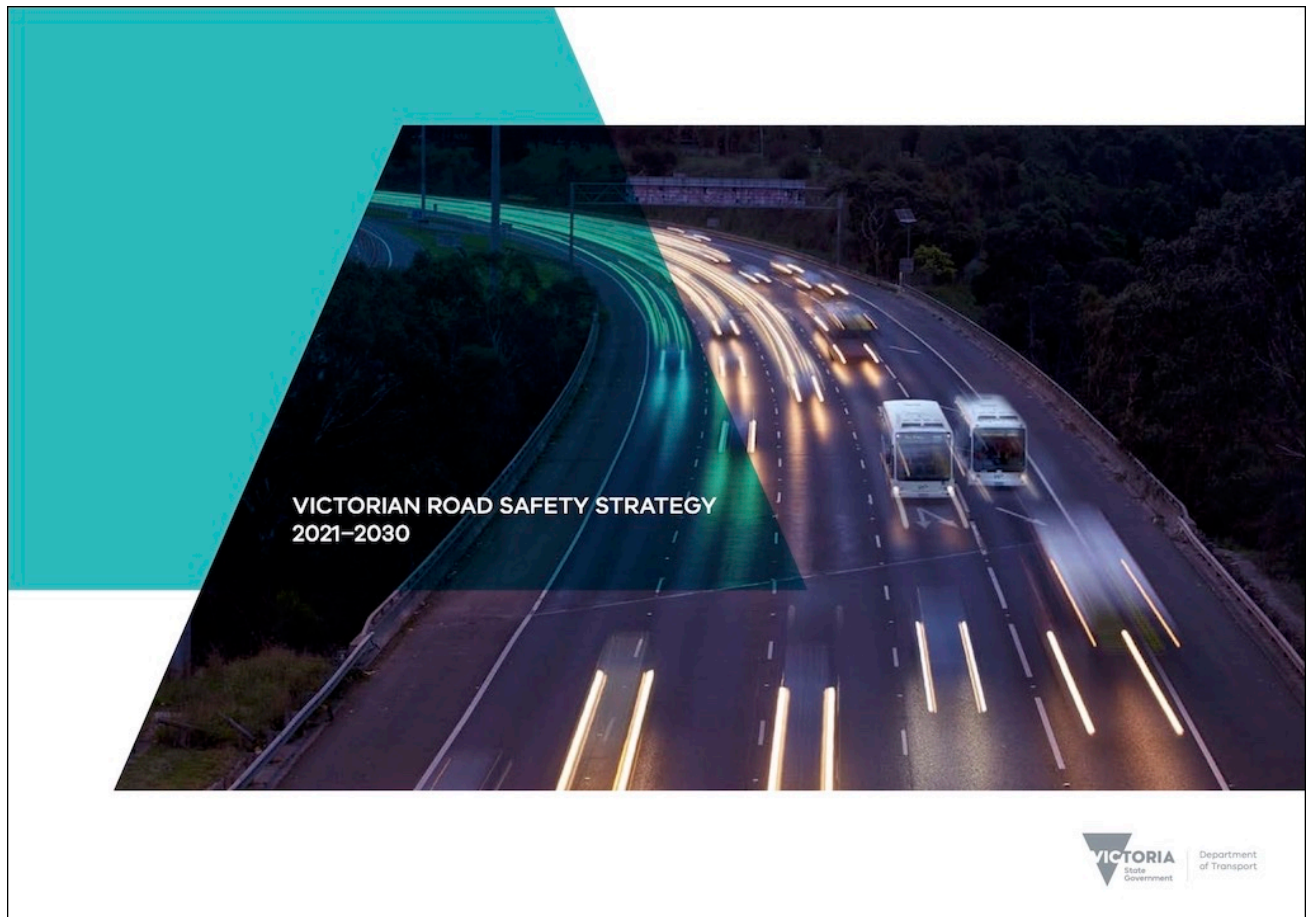


Image credit: Victorian Government

Updated traffic projections

In March 2020, i.e. more recently than the LAPM report, Infrastructure Victoria delivered a report 'Good Move - Fixing Transport Congestion', stating "If we don't change, things will get worse".

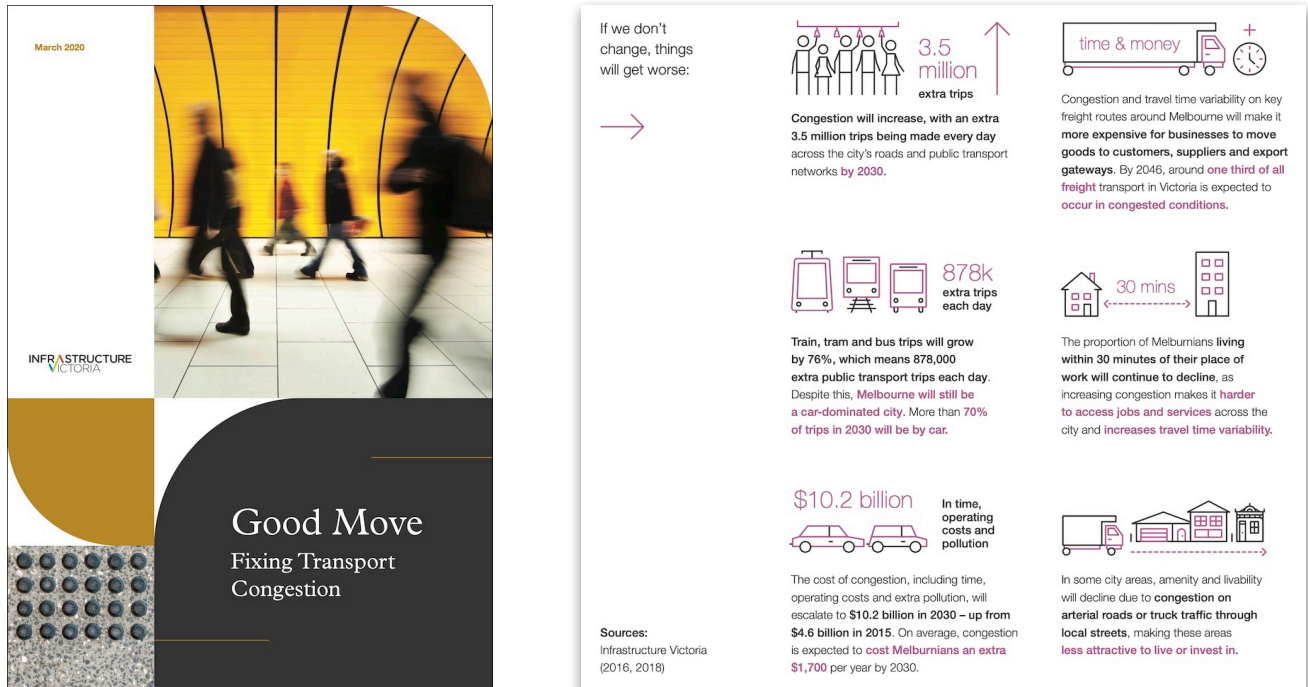


Image credits: Infrastructure Victoria

To paraphrase, as greater Melbourne, the City of Yarra and the neighbourhood of Abbotsford increase in population density, traffic also increases. With the boom in development and construction, we are facing gridlock and parklock on many streets before 2030.

Infrastructure Victoria, in multiple reports, has recommended infrastructure treatments that encourage people to transition from driving to active transport, such as walking and cycling. In Abbotsford, the best way to achieve this is via traffic calming in a Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

Traffic calming

Traffic calming reduces the volume and speed of through traffic. If these are reduced enough, people who are cycling can share a lane with people who are driving. A significantly larger cohort of the population feels comfortable to walk or cycle for short journeys. To be effective, traffic calming actually has to inconvenience drivers, thus encouraging them to change their behaviour, e.g. to drive longer distances on declared arterials instead of on local streets through residential neighbourhoods.



THEGUARDIAN.COM

**So you want to set up a low-traffic neighbourhood?
Here's where to start**

Image credit: [The Guardian](#)

Options

One option for calming traffic across the whole of the Abbotsford LAPM area is to install a modal filter at the intersection of Nicholson Street and Gipps Street, near the centre of the precinct. This would prevent through traffic in both north-south and east-west directions. People who choose to drive would be required to access certain areas of Abbotsford from certain directions. The resulting reductions in through traffic on many streets would make walking and cycling in Abbotsford safer and more pleasant, helping to deliver behaviour change and mode shift. If significant volumes of through traffic were observed on some local streets after the treatment was installed, i.e. if the single treatment did not calm the whole precinct, then additional treatments would be required.



Vehicle through traffic blocked in all directions at Nicholson-Gipps. Walking and cycling would be unimpeded. Image credit: Nearmap and Streets Alive Yarra.

Alternatively, and more directly comparable to the median barrier at Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison, a modal filter could be installed at that location instead. This would also act to significantly reduce through traffic, especially in the north-south direction. Combined with a reallocation of space from car parking, this would also offer a significant pocket park and expanded outdoor seating for the adjacent 'Three Bags Full' cafe.



Possible modal filter at Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison. Walking and cycling would be unimpeded. Open space can be created for the 'Three Bags Full' cafe. Image credit: Nearmap and Streets Alive Yarra.

Median barrier at Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison

One of the outcomes of the 2018 LAPM process was agreement to trial a median barrier at the intersection of Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison.



Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra

After the median barrier was installed, a cohort of residents submitted a petition to council, claiming that the treatment had increased risks to people walking and cycling.

Within Australia's and Victoria's Road Safety Strategies, risk is quantified using a Safe System analysis. Streets Alive Yarra has conducted a Safe System analysis of the intersection (with the assessment area extending 20 metres to the north of Mollison and 20 metres to the south of Langridge), considering three possible treatments:

1. Original, i.e. no median barrier
2. LAPM treatment, i.e. with a median barrier
3. Modal filter, i.e. closing Nicholson to through traffic between Langridge and Mollison

The Safe System assessment shows that the 'Original Conditions' treatment is worst aligned with Safe System, while the 'With Median Barrier' offers improvements and the 'With Modal Filter' treatment offers the best outcome.

Treatment	Safe System Assessment Score
Original conditions - no median	194 / 448
With median barrier	124 / 448
With modal filter	64 / 448

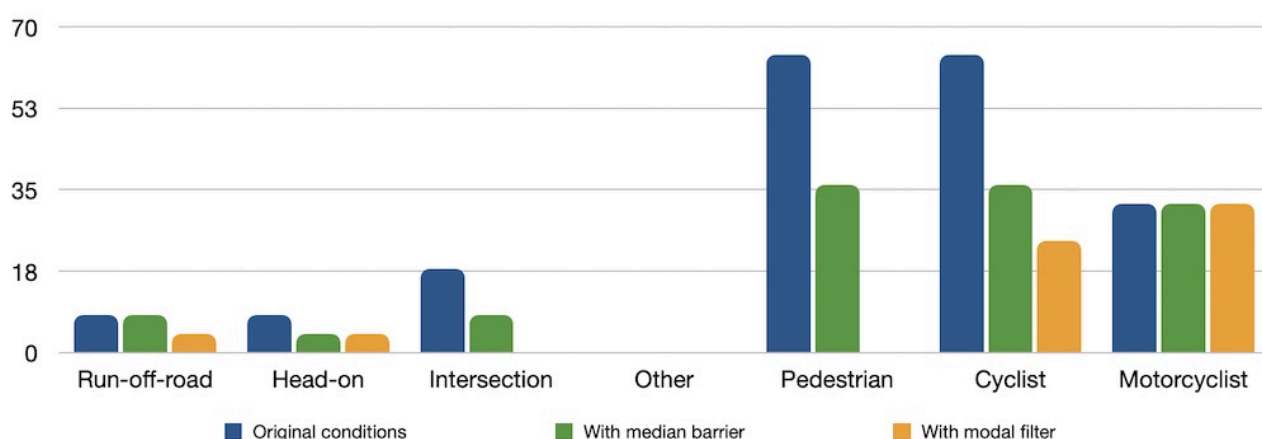


Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra report "Safe System Assessment - Nicholson Street"

These results show that claim made by the petitioners (i.e. that the median barrier increased risk) is not supported by the evidence. Note that a similar difference of understanding occurred on Elizabeth Street, where the Safe System analysis showed a reduction in risk, while a cohort of residents alleged that risks had increased.

Opportunity to improve the LAPM process

Yarra's Local Area Place Making (LAPM) policy states a commitment to '*reduce the adverse impacts of motor vehicles in the local street network*':

This policy:

- Aims to ensure a consistent, fair and comprehensive approach to the investigation, consultation, designs, implementation and monitoring of Local Area Place Making (LAPM) schemes
- Demonstrates a commitment to reduce the adverse impacts of motor vehicles in the local street network and to improve road safety and residential amenity.
- Establishes a framework to ensure the service to residents in investigating and installing traffic management treatments is streamlined and to ensure best use of Council's limited funding and resources.

Image credit: City of Yarra

Streets Alive Yarra believes that this commitment reflects the common values shared most residents, workers, businesses and visitors to Abbotsford, including:

- People should be able to safely access all properties in Yarra, irrespective of whether they choose to walk, cycle, use public transport or drive.
- Children deserve independent mobility, such such the ability to safely walk or cycle to school, sport, the library or their friends' houses.
- Seniors deserve the ability to walk (or roll on mobility scooters) to local shops and services, enabling them to live independently for longer in their own home.
- Each new generation deserves to inherit streets, a city and a planet that is in better condition than their parents inherited.

However, the LAPM project in Abbotsford identified flaws in how the process is being implemented, which indicates how the process could be improved. For example, the LAPM report delivered in 2018 by O'Brien Traffic should not have stated:

Nicholson Street, Langridge Street, Gipps Street, Victoria Crescent, Albert Street (north of Murray Street) and Murray Street have higher traffic volumes, consistent with their function as Major Council Road/Collector Roads.

Image credit: LAPM study Abbotsford 30th November 2018

If LAPM review supports 'higher traffic volumes' on 'collector roads', then there is little opportunity for people cycling and people driving to share the lane, and protective bicycle lanes are required, for which council does not have the budget. Instead, future LAPM reviews and reports should state something similar to:

Within each LAPM area, all council controlled streets must have vehicle volumes less than 1,000 vehicles per day and 85th percentile speeds below 30 km/h.

This single, clear, measurable target would help LAPM stakeholders to realise how far we are away from delivering safe streets, and would help guide the selection of treatments.

Concluding remarks

To retain vehicle access to each property in Abbotsford, or in Yarra, as our population grows, while preventing gridlock or parklock, we need to significantly increase the percentage of the population who walk or cycle for short journeys. In turn, this means we need infrastructure, such as median barriers or modal filters, to dissuade through traffic within LAPM areas. The consequence is that, if driving, some properties in Abbotsford will need be accessed in a different way, e.g. approached from a certain arterial, instead of driving through the neighbourhood. Overall, this delivers a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city. On this basis, Streets Alive Yarra recommends that the median barrier on Langridge-Nicholson-Mollison be reinstated, or that alternative traffic calming treatments be installed, such as a modal filter at Nicholson and Gipps.

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

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