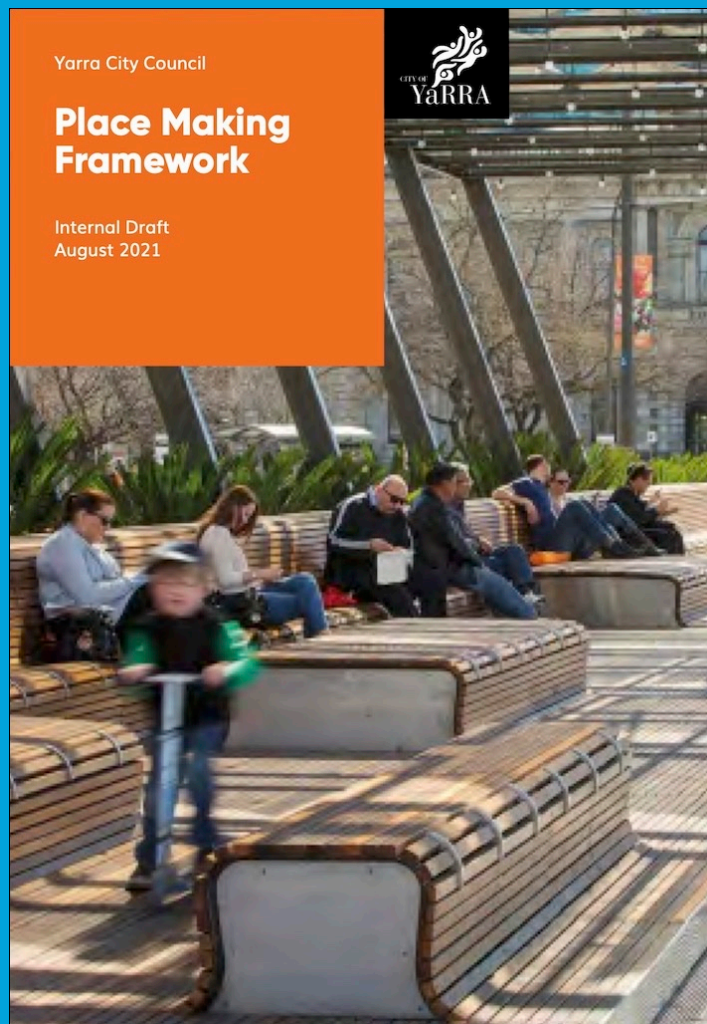


# FEEDBACK ON DRAFT PLACE MAKING FRAMEWORK



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.  
[streets-alive-yarra.org](https://streets-alive-yarra.org)

## 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, roll on a wheelchair, 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 2,800 followers 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 a member of the Victoria Walks Walkability Action Group network.

Further information is available at: [streets-alive-yarra.org/about](https://streets-alive-yarra.org/about).

## Summary

The draft Place Making Framework should not be adopted in its current form. The intent of the policy is admirable, i.e. to guide the planning, design and management of place making in Yarra. Unfortunately, combined with the replacement of the Local Area Place Making Policy with the Road Safety Study Policy, the outcome appears to be that local streets won't be touched. This is disappointing, because:

- Re-imagining how we use our public land (our local streets) offers the best opportunity to build a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city.
- De-prioritising local streets eliminates the single largest opportunity to create new open space, e.g. reallocating land on streets to create pocket parks.
- It abrogates accountability to guide the disparate range of policies affecting local streets, e.g. decisions on adding trees to streets to expand our urban forest, as per the Urban Forest Strategy 2017.

These deficiencies can be corrected by:

- Stating that managing how much space is allocated to on-street parking is a core part of place making, because it has such a major impact upon how places are perceived and enjoyed.
- Stating that place making in local streets is one of the best ways to deliver new public open space in congested neighbourhoods, thus helping to deliver on the Open Space Strategy.
- Stating that place making in local streets is one of the best ways to deliver new trees in congested neighbourhoods, thus helping to deliver on the Urban Forest Strategy.
- Stating that the funding required to deliver place making in both the 'identified precincts' as well as in local streets, is available from the very land that the framework seeks to manage, i.e. by reforming how on-street parking is priced.
- Explicitly including the reallocation of street space along activity corridors, away from on-street parking, toward wider footpaths, protected bike lanes, trees, level access tram stops and kerb outstands, as 'in scope' for future place making activities, including streetscape studies.

## Policy context

It's wonderful to see in the draft that:

*Council has developed expectations that a place-based design approach and place making practices are used in designing public spaces in Yarra.*

And:

- *Provide a long term vision for the public realm;*
- *Collate and coordinate existing work across multi-disciplinary Council teams;*



*Excerpt from draft Place Making Framework*

Even better would be to include 'on-street parking' as one of the elements of the 'place making wheel', considering that it occupies so much space and has such a significant impact on how places are perceived.

## Local streets

The draft Place Making Framework highlights community engagement, community ideas, and council and the community working together. This is positive, and aligns with the adopted Community Engagement Policy 2020.

- Incorporating community engagement and involvement in place making that may include community initiated design ideas.

**Council and the community working together to grow the pride, ownership and sense of identity in local places in Yarra. We will collaborate to foster creative sustainable and liveable places that reflect and nurture what we love about Yarra.**

*Excerpts from draft Place Making Framework*

The draft Place Making Framework identifies significant community interest in place making in local streets.

From the community's perspective, place making is probably less about the strategic projects and more about the design of localised places and their opportunity to initiate projects and be involved in the design process such as through "co-design" and community led design practices. The extent and type

*Excerpt from draft Place Making Framework*

7. Be responsive to the community interest in place making projects and continue to provide opportunities for community grants for localised place making projects, such as activation;

*Excerpt from draft Place Making Framework*

This is positive, because re-imagining how we use public land offers the best opportunity to build a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city:



*Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra*

This community interest aligns with design proposals from professionals, such as this concept for Drummond Street from Mihaly Slocombe:



*Existing conditions. Image credit: Apple Maps.*

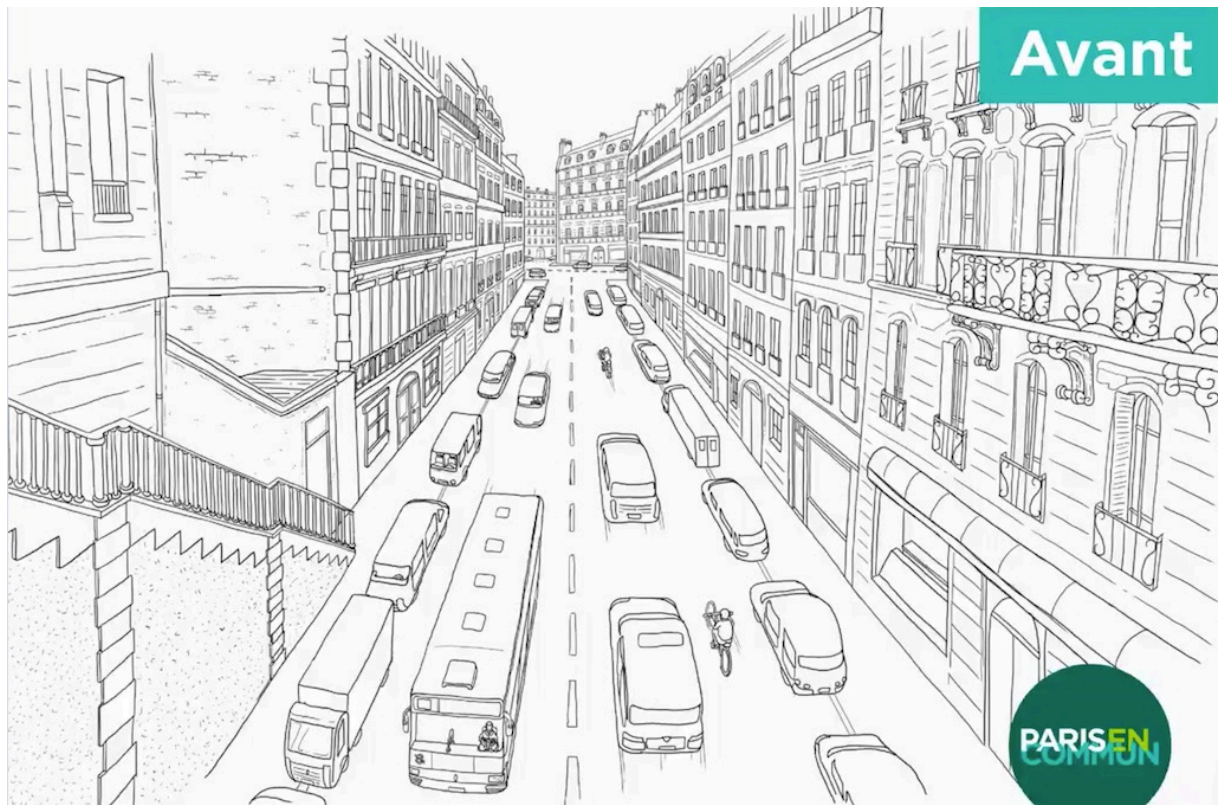


*Place making concept. Image credit: Mihaly Slocombe.*

More information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/drummond-street/>

This community interest aligns with the intent of other world class cities, such as Paris, to conduct place making on local streets:

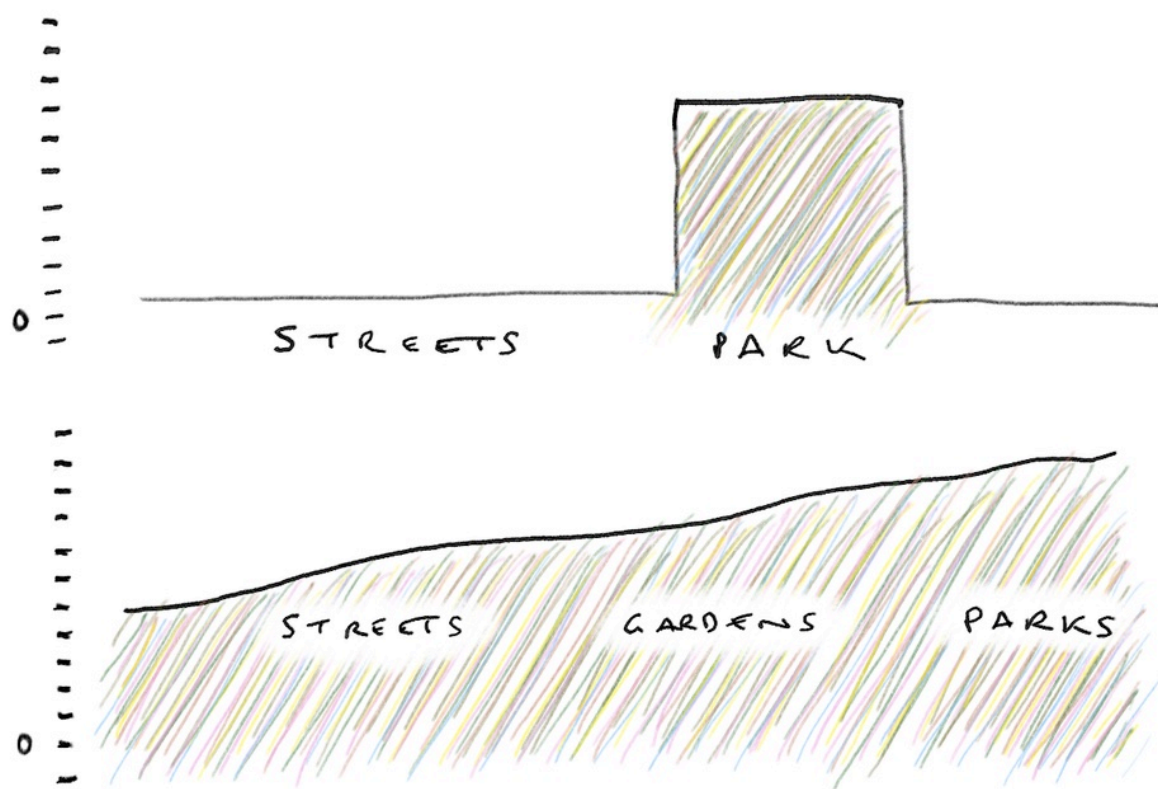


*Image credit: Anne Hildago*

It also aligns with best practice guidance that councils can use place making to blur the line between streets and parks:

# Running a 'find-and-replace' over the city, replacing streets with parks

Adapting Holger Blom's 1946 principles for Stockholm's park programme to inform today's street systems



*Council can blur the distinctions between parks, gardens and streets, by reallocating street space to support grass and trees. Image credit: [Dan Hill](#).*

However, the council report then proceeds to downgrade the focus on local streets so as to free up resources for 'priority' or 'identified' precincts:

Yarra's Place Making Framework is focused on the design and creation of Yarra's public realm, place activation and community engagement to shape the public realm in identified precincts.

Council's capital works program will take into consideration a coordinated approach to implement projects within the priority precincts.

1. Prioritise place making projects to align with the priority precincts in Map 1. Priority locations will adapt over to time to reflect changing needs;

*Excerpts from draft Place Making Framework*

The justification is a lack of resources:

12. It is important to note that a dedicated place making approach cannot be provided to each and every street in the municipality, due to limited capacity and resources of the organisation to do so.
13. In this regard, the Place Making Framework needs to be targeted (in its full approach), to pursue key public realm improvements in specific areas of the municipality.

*Excerpt from council report*

## Funding and resource constraints

The draft Road Safety Study Policy is to be applauded for acknowledging that council has funding restraints. However, the draft is incorrect to claim that place making faces funding constraints, when \$10-50m per year (which can also support further resources) is available from the very public land that the Place Making Framework seeks to manage.

The City of Yarra hosts approximately 47,000 on-street parking bays. These occupy space and affect the sense of place, so are part of place making. Using the 'collaborative working group' described in the draft, the management of on-street parking could be reformed.

Digital parking permits (linked to a vehicles number plate) could be sold in monthly, weekly or daily forms. Prices could vary throughout Yarra depending upon local supply and demand. Some areas could be \$10/day while others could be \$20/day. Out of the 47,000 parking bays, 34,000 bays could be converted from free parking to permit zones to host holders of digital permits. Here are some examples:

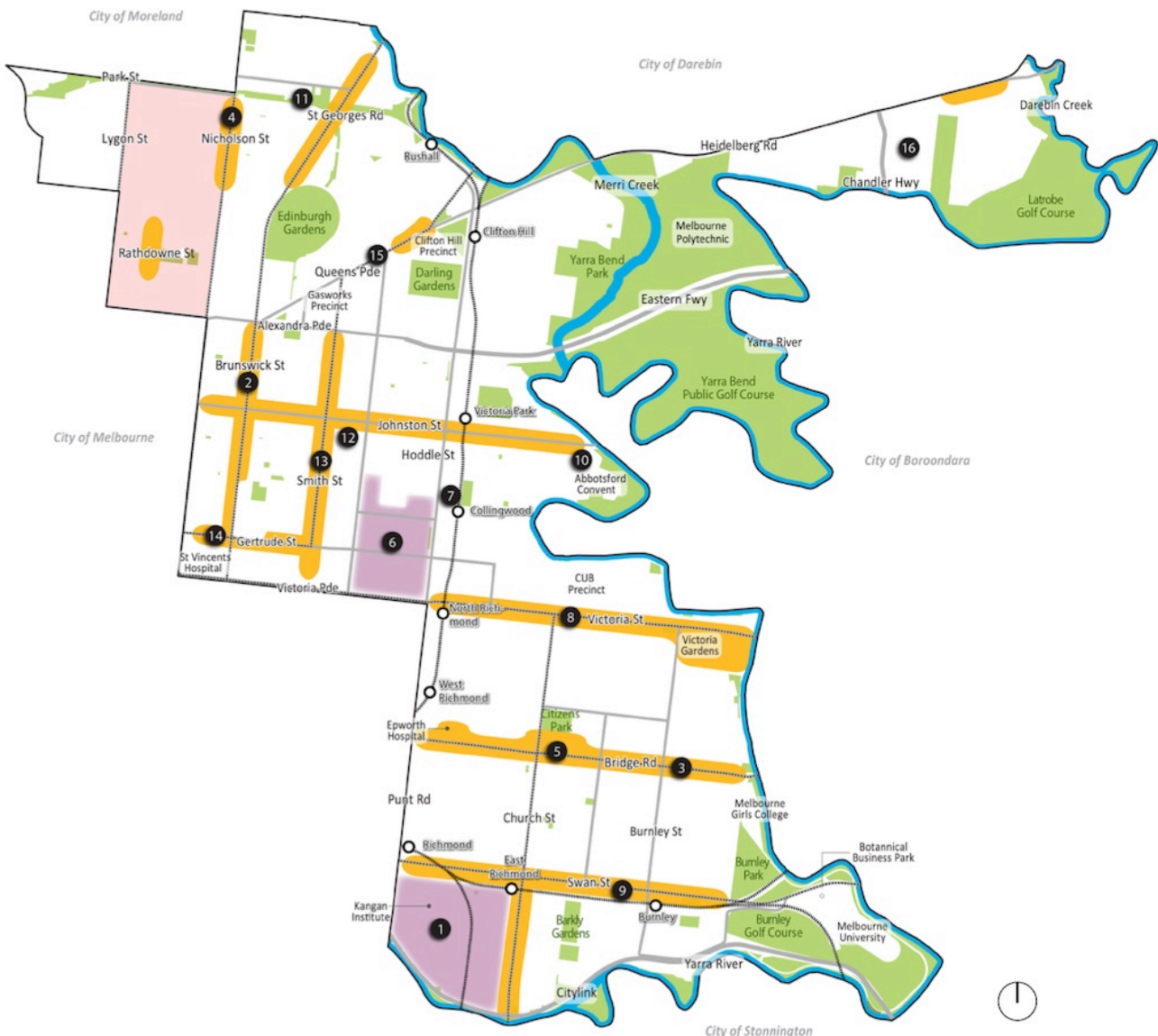
- 4,000 bays at an average of \$10/day for 250 days/year would raise \$10m per year
- 10,000 bays at an average of \$10/day for 250 days/year would raise \$25m per year
- 20,000 bays at an average of \$10/day for 250 days/year would raise \$50m per year

More information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-parking/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/revenue/>

## Priority locations

It's wonderful to see in the draft that council would like to conduct place making on activity corridors such as Brunswick Street, Smith Street, Johnston Street, Victoria Street, Bridge Road, Swan Street and Church Street.



*Excerpt from draft Place Making Framework*

Unfortunately, this doesn't align with council's previous streetscape master plans, which have explicitly excluded the reallocation of space on the street, e.g. converting parking to space for wider footpaths, protected bike lanes, trees, level access tram stops and kerb outstands. If council is going to prioritise place making along activity corridors, the draft Place Making Framework should explicitly include such items as 'in scope' for future place making activities, including streetscape studies.

## Community engagement

The draft Place Making Framework repeatedly highlights the value of community engagement, while failing to recommend community engagement on the content of the framework itself. Officers should acknowledge that council as a whole delivers better decisions when councillors and officers have the opportunity to assess feedback from the community before putting a new policy up for adoption.

## Recommendations

The draft Place Making Framework is a good start. Unfortunately it is deficient by failing to highlight multiple important points. These deficiencies can be corrected by:

- Stating that managing how much space is allocated to on-street parking is a core part of place making, because it has such a major impact upon how places are perceived and enjoyed.
- Stating that place making in local streets is one of the best ways to deliver new public open space in congested neighbourhoods, thus helping to deliver on the Open Space Strategy.
- Stating that place making in local streets is one of the best ways to deliver new trees in congested neighbourhoods, thus helping to deliver on the Urban Forest Strategy.
- Stating that the funding required to deliver place making in both the 'identified precincts' as well as in local streets, is available from the very land that the framework seeks to manage, i.e. by reforming how parking is priced.
- Explicitly including the reallocation of street space along activity corridors, away from on-street parking, toward wider footpaths, protected bike lanes, trees, level access tram stops and kerb outstands, as 'in scope' for future place making activities, including streetscape studies.

## Concluding remarks

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

[info@streets-alive-yarra.org](mailto:info@streets-alive-yarra.org)

[streets-alive-yarra.org](https://streets-alive-yarra.org)