

FEEDBACK ON DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY



A new dawn over Yarra. Image credit: Shutterstock.



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.
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.

Overview

Streets Alive Yarra supports the adoption of the draft Transport Strategy, because we believe it would help build a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city.

Overall, the draft Transport Strategy is a significant step forward, reflecting the Community Vision 2036, the Council Plan 2021-2025, reports from many other community engagements, as well as local, state, federal and international best-practice.

Our feedback focuses on a few opportunities to improve the draft, rather than the many positive and welcome elements within the draft.

Revenue and expenditure

Page 11 states that *parking revenue and a user-pays model provides essential funding that provides alternatives to car travel for everyone*. The draft would be better if it estimated the total expenditure required to deliver the strategy, e.g. \$10 million per year for 10 years. This would help stakeholders understand the magnitude of the strategy's vision and ambition. For example, Wellington City Council in New Zealand recently adopted a NZ\$334 million project to build 166 km of cycleways over 10 years.



The Bike Network Plan will leave around 20% of Wellington roads with separated bike lanes, linking the CBD with every major suburb.

Also, the strategy should acknowledge that to comply with clause 4 (2) (ca) of the Road Management Act 2004 *provides for the assigning of priority to different modes of transport on specified roads*, the strategy must be provided with ongoing funding for infrastructure for walking and biking, just as there is currently a minimum annual spend on road maintenance projects to comply with the Act.

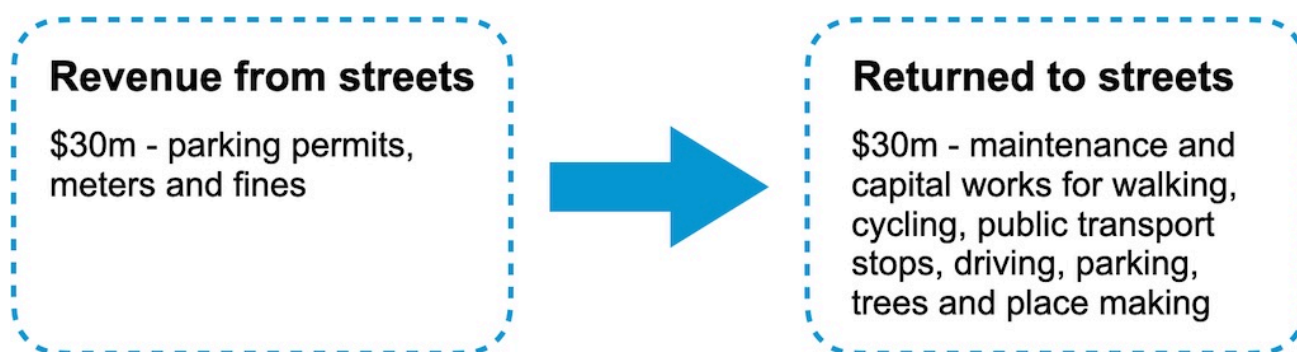
Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/expenditure/>
- <https://micromobilityreport.com.au/infrastructure/all-other-infrastructure/wellington-adopts-nzs-largest-cycleway-network/>

Similarly, the discussion of *parking revenue*..[and]..*essential funding* on page 11 would be better if it described how the required budget can easily be raised by reducing the present level of revenue foregone (or subsidy) for Yarra's on-street parking bays, compared with market rates.

Furthermore, the draft would be better if it introduced and supported the concept of parking benefit districts; where the revenue from parking, such as parking meters, parking permits or parking fines, is re-invested in the local area from which the revenue is derived. Depending upon the extent of flexibility (or geographical cross subsidy) desired by council, the 'local area' could be defined in a variety of ways, such as:

- the whole of Yarra as one district,
- each ward (Nicholls, Langridge, Melba) as one district, or
- each neighbourhood (or Local Area Place Making precinct) as one district.



Revenue from streets should be returned to streets. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Also, the strategy would be improved if it highlighted that an adopted infrastructure investment plan can be partially funded from the Developer Contributions Overlay.

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/revenue/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/budget/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/journal/yarras-parking-subsidy/>
- <https://www.accessmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/11/access49-web-almanac.pdf>

Growth of cycling

Page 16 asserts that the growth rate of cycling has *begun to slow*, while page 20 states *rapid increases in rates of cycling*. The draft would be better if these sections were consistent.

On-road priority for trams

Page 20 asserts that *where there is no on-road priority for trams they, too, get stuck in traffic*. This section can be improved by pointing out that separation of trams from cars is not the only solution. A better strategy would be to advocate for the state government to impose demand responsive driving charges on every arterial in greater Melbourne. Demand responsive driving charges are supported by the Committee for Melbourne, the Grattan Institute, and Infrastructure Victoria. Such charges can be designed to keep car traffic volumes below a threshold that allows trams to achieve high average speeds. If cars can remain sharing a lane with trams then tram-based shopping streets can be redesigned to support wider footpaths, more trees, level access tram stops and protected bicycle lanes.

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-trams/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/demand-responsive-driving-charges/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/shopping-streets/>

Rates of car ownership

Page 29 states *rising rates of car ownership by households in Yarra*. We suggest that it is more accurate to state *rising numbers of cars owned by households in Yarra*. Also, the section would be improved by highlighting that only 1/3 of Yarra residents and only half of people working in Yarra drive to work, compared with 61% of workers in Greater Melbourne [source: 2016 census].

Portion of on-street parking that is fee-based

Page 30 asserts that *approximately half of Yarra's on-street car parking has some form of charge associated with accessing it*, while page 15 states that *less than 30% of parking in Yarra has a charge for access*. The draft would be better if these values were consistent.

Policies

Page 32 introduces the policies. Throughout this section, it would be improved if, where applicable, the local government policy referenced the relevant state government policy on which it is based.

Preferred minimum widths

Page 32 asserts that *the preferred minimum width for a footpath in Yarra is 1.5 metres of unobstructed clear path. This is enough for people in wheelchairs or pushing a pram to navigate a street and pass each other.* This isn't consistent with Figure 2 in AS1428.2 which shows that 1.8 metres is required for two wheelchairs to pass each other.

The draft would be better if it defined separate values for minimum width and preferred with; and if it aligned with best practice, such as the NSW Walking Space Guide, which defines a minimum width of 2.0 metres. If space on a specific footpath is contested, the larger value (2.0 vs 1.5) with would strengthen arguments for de-cluttering.

Type 1

Local footpath –
Low activity



Type 2

Local footpath –
Medium activity



Type 3

Main street footpath –
Medium activity
/ Local footpath –
High activity

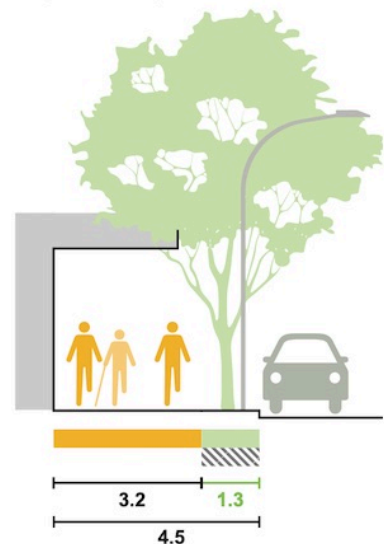


Image credit: NSW Walking Space Guide

The list of actions starting on page 33 should include:

- develop and maintain a map for footpaths in Yarra, using similar green, yellow and red colours to Figure 12, to show if the clear unobstructed width is adequate to support observed volumes of people walking;
- where it isn't possible to deliver an unobstructed footpath width of 2.0 metres, convert the street into a shared zone;
- ensure that extensions into the road space do not block planned future bike lanes, e.g. the bike lanes shown on Figure 12;
- where appropriate, encourage new developments to provide setbacks from the street to increase effective footpath width, e.g. SEEK development in Cremorne St, Cremorne.

The first list item for *priority areas* on page 33 should not be restricted to residential streets, e.g. this would eliminate Cremorne Street as a priority.

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-footpaths/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/narrow-footpaths/>

Similarly, the draft does not appear to define a preferred minimum width for bike paths. The draft would be better if it aligned with best practice, such as the CROW Design Manual from the Netherlands, or the NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox, which define a minimum width of 2.0 metres and a preferred width of 3.0 metres.

Cycleway facility width ([Safe](#) and [Comfortable](#))

An ideal one-way bicycle path should maintain a preferred width of 3.0m, however a suitable width may be 2.0m in locations for up to 150 riders per hour (Austroads minimum 1.5m). The preferred width of 3.0m allows for safe overtaking, caters for future growth in ridership, and accommodates riders of all ages and abilities. A 3.0m width will also allow for higher speeds along the bicycle path to cater for the emergence of innovative forms of micromobility. Where higher bicycle traffic volumes are expected and steeper gradients occur, a wider design should be considered.

Image credit: NSW Cycleway Design Toolbox

One-way path	
rush hour volume (one-way) (bicycles/hour)	width (b)
0-150	2.00 m
150-750	2.50-3.00 m
> 750	3.50-4.00 m

Image credit: CROW Design Manual

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/protected-bicycle-lanes/>

Also, the draft does not appear to define a minimum lane width for access by emergency vehicles. The draft would be better if it defined a minimum unobstructed width of 3.5 metres, e.g. between parked cars, to support access by fire trucks. This value comprises 2.5 metres for the truck and 0.5 metres each side for emergency responders to exit from each side of their vehicle, wearing protective clothing and breathing equipment.

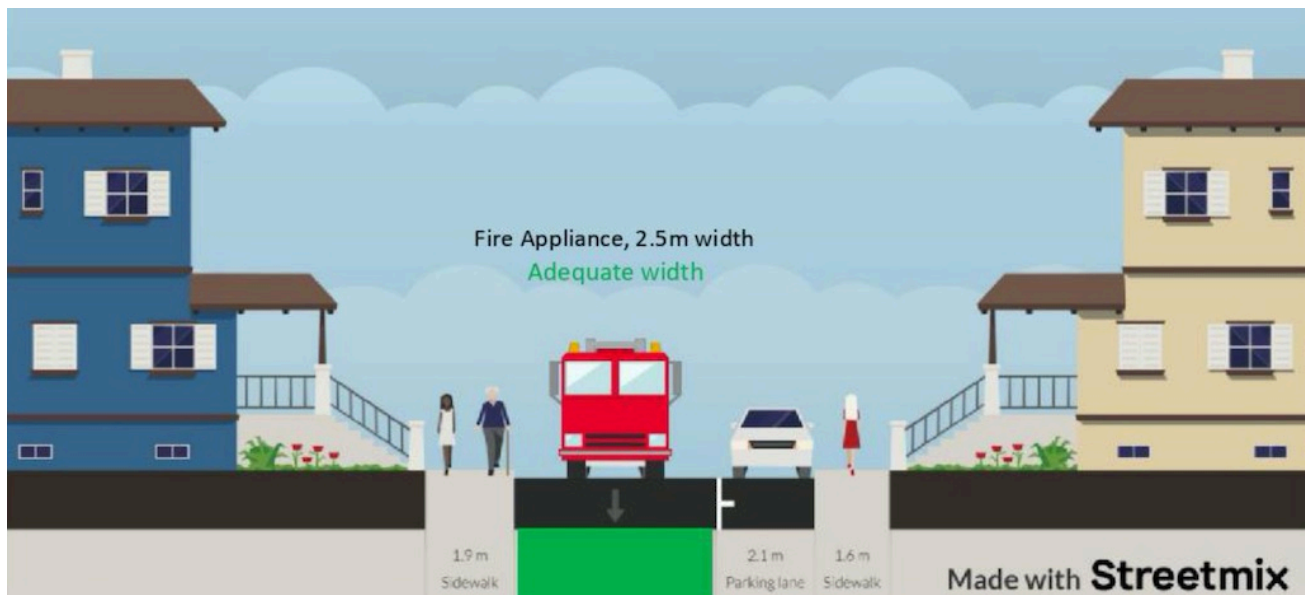


Image credit: City of Yarra

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/studley-and-yarra-streets/>

Monitoring walking and cycling congestion

Page 32 introduces *a new deal for walking*, and page 35 introduces *a new deal for cycling*; these sections would be improved with a commitment to monitor walking and cycling congestion on key routes, to build the evidence base for improved infrastructure. For example, on the Main Yarra Trail during the morning peak, and on Swan Street footpaths before sporting events.

Location of scramble crossings

Page 34 suggests locations for new scramble crossings. The draft would be better if it included the following locations for new scramble crossings:

- Swan and Cremorne
- Swan and Lennox
- Swan and Church
- Bridge and Lennox
- Bridge and Burnley
- Victoria and Lennox



Scramble crossing. Image credit: Wikipedia.

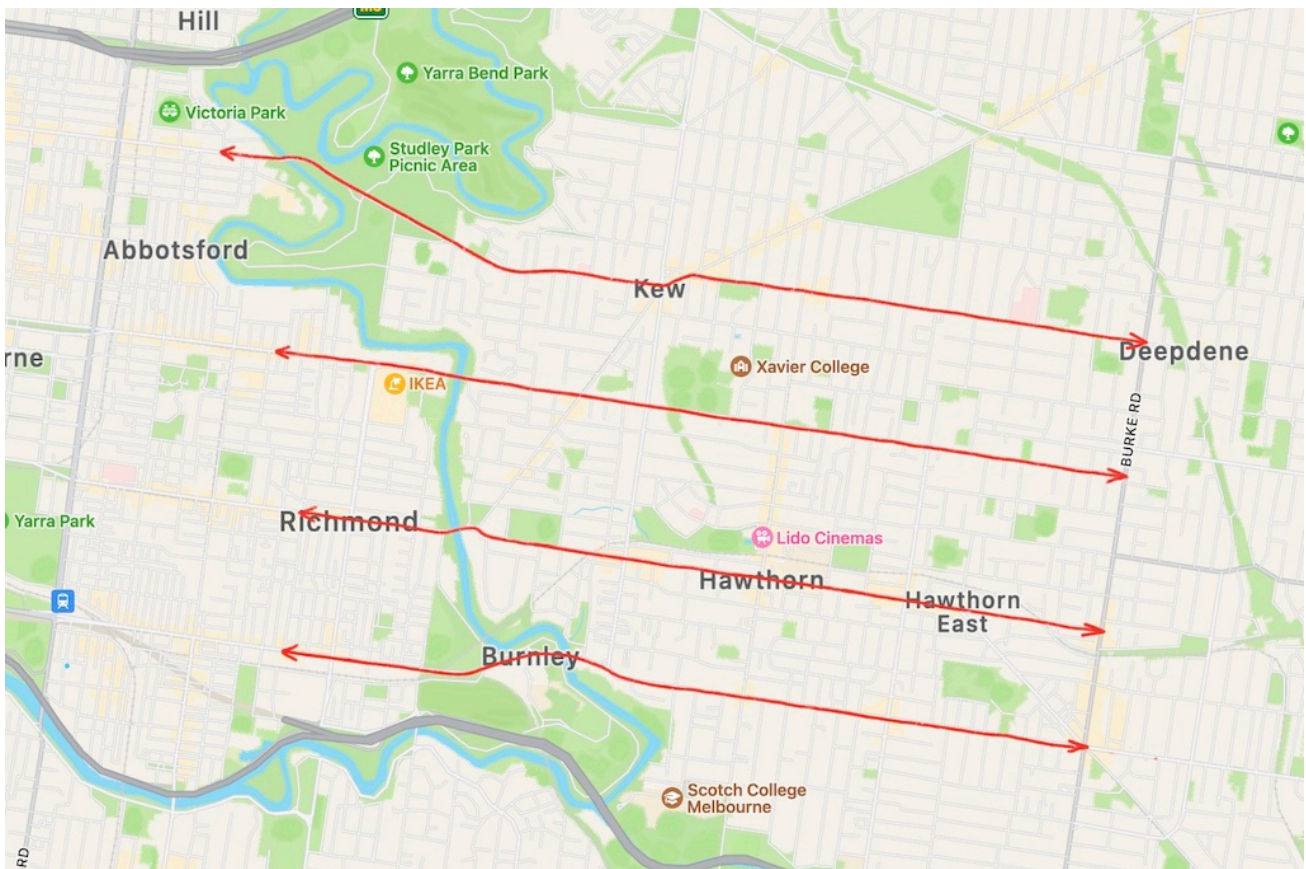
Cycling map

Page 37 shows a map with cycling routes marked as either *good*, *poor* or *very poor*. In contrast, the text indicates that green means *fully compliant* while red means *non-compliant*. It would be better if these terms were consistent.

Also, it's not clear if or how intersection safety was considered as part of the rating. For example, a bike route which requires crossing of an arterial road without a signalised intersection should not, in our opinion, be classified as *fully compliant*, and should be prioritised for intersection upgrades.

The map would be better if:

- the legend was consistent with the text;
- the ratings included assessments for intersections, not only mid-block treatments;
- it clarified whether some blue dots (labelled as river crossing upgrades) that are located not at a river, are perhaps intended to indicate overpasses/underpasses; and
- it included the four east-west routes shown in the image below, with on-road protected bike lanes, including on the bridges.



River crossing upgrades are required to support east-west connections to Boroondara. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra and Apple Maps.

Furthermore, it would be better if the three maps, Figure 9, Figure 12, and Figure 13, were more consistent, e.g.:

- the bike routes on Figure 9 (walking map) don't appear to match the bike routes on Figure 12 (cycling map);
- the intersection upgrades on Figure 9 (walking map) don't appear to match the intersection upgrades on Figure 12 (cycling map); and
- the interchange upgrades on Figure 13 (public transport map) don't appear to match the intersection upgrades on Figure 9 (walking map), noting that we understand interchange to mainly mean walking.

For Figure 12 (cycling map) the following intersections should be planned for an intersection upgrade:

- Swan and Coppin
- Bridge and Church
- Bridge and Coppin
- Highett and Burnley
- Richmond shimmy route at Burnley Street
- Palmer and Burnley
- Somerset/Crown and Burnley
- Somerset and Church
- Lesney/Adolph and Church
- Punt Road and Gough / Harcourt, i.e. the entrance to the Main Yarra Trail, which is lacking bicycle signals, bicycle lanes, or a shared path, meaning cyclists must either dismount or ride in the traffic lane to legally enter the Main Yarra Trail

Innovative approaches

Page 38 introduces innovative approaches, including pilots, pop-ups, and trials. This section would be improved if it included new content with respect to the process of implementing such approaches, including:

- defining what are the specific parameters being tested and what elements are fixed or non-negotiable to safely deliver the project;
- stating what specifically will be measured to determine whether the trial is successful (eg qualitative feedback, pedestrian/cyclists/traffic counts, proportion of women and children cycling, crash statistics, etc.);
- acknowledging and accounting for the fact that in many cases the ultimate success of a project will not be fully measurable until the network is complete, particularly for bicycle routes where there are still missing links when the trial is in place; and
- noting that the aesthetics of the trial implementation are likely to be poor in comparison with a permanent solution.

Eliminating parking minimums

Page 39 states that *off-street parking levels in new developments should be restraint based*. The draft would be better if it used clearer language, such as:

- Costly minimum off-street car parking mandates will be eliminated for the whole of Yarra, via amendments to the Yarra Planning Scheme.
- Maximum off-street car parking limits will be imposed for properties within the Principal Public Transport Network area, e.g. a maximum of 1 bay per 100 m² of floor area.



Image credit: MRCagney

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/parking-maximums/>

Vehicle turning movements

Page 40 describes *decision-making on projects, policies and operations*. This section should add:

- phase out slip lanes on non-arterial roads;
- remove vehicle turning lanes on bicycle routes where necessary to make space to extend the bike lane up to the intersection, e.g. Coppin/Swan, Coppin/Bridge, Lennox/Swan, Lennox/Bridge;
- prioritise pedestrian and cycling movements to create continuous flow along major bike and pedestrian routes by use of priority or signalised crossings across/along side streets, e.g. Inner Circle Linear Reserve, Madden Grove at Coppin St.

Reduce traffic volumes

Page 40 introduces actions to *implement traffic management measures as required through one or a combination of the following and other measures*. The strategy would be improved if the first point in this list read as *turning bans or remove turning lanes at intersections*.

Car sharing vehicles

Page 40 describes Policy 11 to encourage the use of shared transport, and Page 45 suggests a target of 283 spaces by end FY2024. The draft would be better if it:

- supported the location of car sharing vehicles on residential streets, so they were as easy to access as privately owned vehicles parked on the street,
- described the advantages of a higher target for car sharing vehicles, which would enable more households to reduce their dependency on privately owned vehicles, and
- defined a target of 2,000 car sharing vehicles by 2030.



Image credit: GoGet

Further information is available at:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-car-sharing/>

Streets for community development

Page 41 describes the use of streets for pop-ups, and states *movement for active and public transport needs to be maintained wherever possible*. This section should be strengthened, e.g. *if temporary street closures for festivals, roadworks etc disrupt active transport routes, appropriate detours should be provided including temporary footpaths and bike lanes on alternative routes*.

New bus service

Page 41 describes the *introduction of a new bus service between Amcor and Burnley Station via Chandler Bridge*. This proposed service may be more useful to Yarra residents and workers if it ran along Burnley Street and then east along Victoria Street.

Cycle logistics hub

Page 43 states *encourage transition to zero emission road vehicles*. This section should mention e-cargo-bikes, not only for residents, but also to support businesses that are located in Yarra or operating in Yarra. This addition would also add weight for wider bike lanes and improved bike parking facilities that support wider and longer bikes.

Even better would be to consider the issue of logistics, e.g. by proposing one or more cycle logistics hubs in Yarra. Cycle logistics hubs can help reduce traffic on local streets by using cargo bikes for the 'last mile' of deliveries.



Image credit: cyclelogistics

Further information is available at:

- <http://cyclelogistics.eu/index.php/downloads/source-material/guide-planning-cyclelogistics-hubs>

How we will measure success

Page 44 describes how the strategy will measure success. The strategy would be improved if it highlighted which indicators are more 'Covid-proof', and which are not, and therefore which indicators should not be used in decision making until we have achieved a 'new normal'. For example, the percentage share of female riders is a more robust indicator than the percentage change in the total number of bike trips, particularly on 'commuter routes' heading towards the CBD. We consider it is important to discuss these details in advance, to reduce disagreement on how success will be measured over the next few years, particularly in relation to pilots and trials.

Other potential measures and targets include:

- number of compliant, continuous north-south and east-west cycling routes that cross through the whole of Yarra, e.g. along the full length of Swan Street or Bridge Road; and
- total number of private vehicles in Yarra, i.e. the strategy is aiming to decrease or at least stabilise this over time as population continues to increase.

Table 4 would benefit from adding a separate column that shows the present status of the metric.

Effectiveness

Page 51 describes the effectiveness and cost of different treatments. We believe that the descriptions related to painted bike lanes should be redefined as followed:

- Low cost, low effectiveness: Painted bike lanes next to parked cars on moderate to high- speed / moderate to high- traffic volume roads
- Low cost, high effectiveness: Painted bike lanes next to parked cars on low speed / low traffic volume roads
- High cost, high effectiveness: Off-road bicycle paths adjacent to roads with any combination of speed and traffic volume; or as a route that is not adjacent to a road, e.g. beside a railway line or through a park.

Noise

The draft Transport Strategy should describe the benefits of a quiet or low-noise city, noting that cities aren't loud, cars are loud.



Melissa & Chris Bruntlett is at Haarlemmerstraat (Amsterdam).

11h · Amsterdam, Netherlands · 🌐



The sensory experience of being in a low-car city can't be communicated through a photograph.

The sounds of church bells, chirping birds, and cheerful conversations. The smells of budding flowers, blossoming trees, and busy kitchens.

It can transform any cynic into an advocate.



Benefits of a quiet city

Further information is available at:

- *Chapter 5: The Hearing City* within the book [Curbing Traffic, The Human Case for Fewer Cars in Our Lives](#)

Concluding remarks

Streets Alive Yarra supports the adoption of the draft Transport Strategy, because we believe it would help build a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city. We would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

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