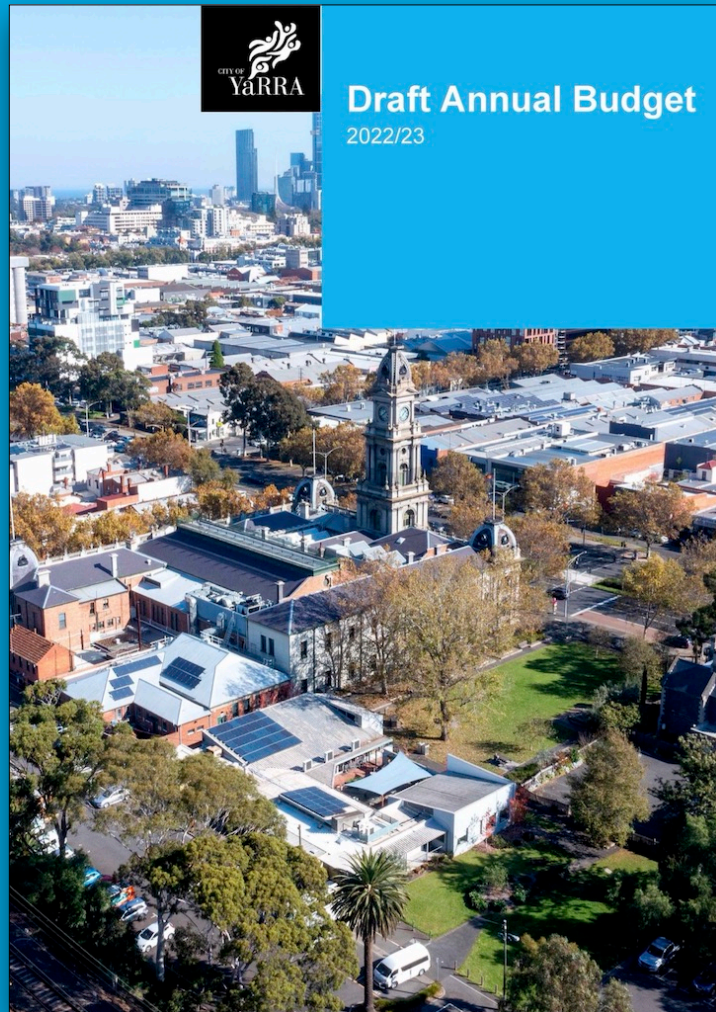


RESPONSE TO DRAFT BUDGET 2022/23



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.

Context

Streets Alive Yarra is a group of people. We have stories about children who feel unsafe walking or cycling to school, about parents who would like to age for longer in their own home, and about friends who want to see more trees as well as experience more public open space. We're people who support social justice and equity, and the freedom to get to schools, shops, sport or the library, irrespective of whether we walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive.



Image credits: supporters of Streets Alive Yarra

Expenditure on active transport

The draft Budget 2022/2023 allocates \$2.83 million to walking, cycling, traffic calming and road safety:

- 1) **Transport Action Plan implementation (\$1.2M)**
Council is allocating funding to commence implementation of the Transport Action Plan that will deliver a range of bicycle projects and network improvements.
- 2) **LAPM Program (\$1.1M)**
Council is delivering traffic calming and placemaking measures to improve safety and encourage walking and cycling in North Carlton, North Fitzroy, Clifton Hill, Abbotsford and Richmond.
- 3) **New and upgraded pedestrian provisions (\$150K)**
Various new and upgraded pedestrian crossings and infrastructure will be delivered.
- 4) **Road safety spot treatments (\$380K)**
Road safety spot treatments, including to support a new pocket park in Otter Street, Collingwood, will be delivered.

Example expenditure on active transport and place making

While we support the allocations, they don't go far enough. Council needs to allocate a budget on the order of \$10 million per year to be able to meet its obligations to:

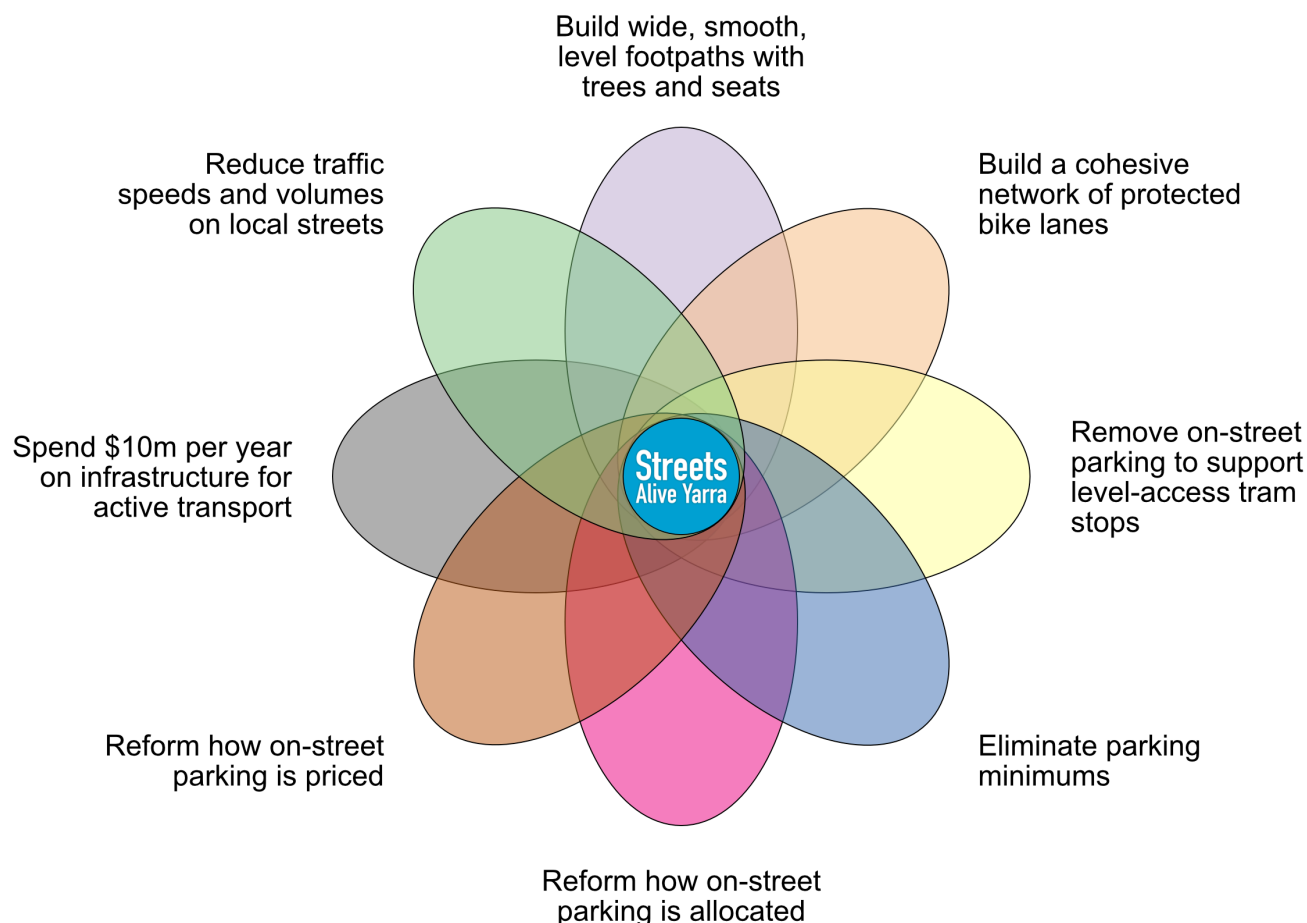
- maintain a functioning city by avoiding gridlock,
- help decarbonise transport by 2030,
- prevent death and serious injury by protecting the public, and
- comply with Strategic Objective 5 of the Council Plan.

As context, council has adopted a social justice charter, which places the principles of access, equity and rights above the Council Plan and all other policies, strategies and plans.



Image source: City of Yarra Social Justice Charter

Social justice means that people of all ages and abilities are able to get from A to B within Yarra, without being exposed to hazards that carry the risk of serious injury or death, irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport or drive. To deliver a social justice budget, council should allocate adequate funds to action the following:



Actions to deliver a social justice budget

For people walking or rolling on wheelchairs, we need:

- Better clearing of vegetation encroaching over private fences onto footpaths
- Wider, smoother, more level footpaths, e.g. investment to bring all vehicle crossovers up to the same level as Yarra's Standard Concrete Vehicle Crossing drawing YSD601, by 2030
- Continuous footpaths, also known as raised threshold treatments
- More pedestrian crossings, ideally raised wombat crossings
- More trees for shade
- More places to sit and rest

For people cycling, we need:

- 30 km/h zones
- More traffic calming on residential streets, to reduce vehicle speeds and volumes
- A network of protected bicycle lanes to link neighbourhoods

- More places to park bicycles near shopping and activity centres

For people using public transport, we need:

- All the points listed above for walking and cycling, so people can get to public transport stops
- Advocacy to the state government for level access public transport stops
- Better management of parking demand, so that it's OK to remove some car parking spots to build level access public transport stops

For people driving and parking, we need:

- Advocacy to the state government for demand responsive driving charges, to keep traffic flowing
- All parking in Yarra to be converted to paid permit zones, so that occupancy can be managed through the pricing of permits
- Demand responsive parking charges, to ensure a park is usually available on each block
- Offering user pays permits for sale to any worker or commuter, so that people can park in the new expanded permit zones, and avoid a fine
- Enforcement of parking using automated number plate recognition, so that people don't unfairly occupy parking bays without paying

Together, these actions require an expenditure of at least \$10m per year for 10 years:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/expenditure/>

Proposal for a new pocket park in Charlotte Street

The draft Budget 2022/2023 proposes a new pocket part at Charlotte Street. We support this proposal, because it offers important new public open space near a community hub.

CHARLOTTE STREET

600m² NEW PUBLIC SPACE



We support this proposal

Changes to parking fees

The draft Budget 2022/2023 increases the fees for parking permits, e.g.:

Name	Unit of measure	GST	Year 21/22 Fee (incl. GST)	Year 22/23 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase %	Increase \$	Statutory
Parking Permits – 1st Resident permit	Per Permit	N	\$41.60	\$50.00	20.19%	\$8.40	N
Parking Permits – 2nd Resident permits	Per Permit	N	\$101.50	\$122.00	20.20%	\$20.50	N
Parking Permits – 3rd Resident permits	Per Permit	N	\$191.00	\$229.00	19.90%	\$38.00	N

Example increases to fees for parking permits.

While we support the changes, they don't go far enough. On-street parking is about access to public land. Council should develop a policy that allows any citizen of Australia to store their vehicle at designated on-street parking areas, albeit with discounts for residents, where the maximum discount from market (or demand responsive) rates is 90%. This would result in residential annual parking permits closer to \$300 instead of \$50.

	Residents eligible for traditional permits	Residents ineligible for traditional permits	Non-residents (commuters & shoppers)
Hourly	n/a	n/a	First hour free, then demand responsive
Daily	\$2	\$10	\$20
Weekly	\$10	\$50	\$100
Monthly	\$30	\$150	\$300 (reference)
Yearly	\$300	\$1,500	\$3,000

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

In addition to improving the fairness of access to public land, and reducing inequitable subsidies from one class of householder to another, reform to how parking is priced would generate more than the \$10 million that we propose needs to be allocated to active transport.

Further information is available at:

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

Proposal for a separate waste charge

The draft Long Term Financial Plan states that council will be investigating the potential introduction of a separate waste charge in the 2023/2024 budget.

Council will also be investigating the potential introduction of a separate waste charge in its 2023/24 Budget. Yarra is one of only eight councils in Victoria that does not have a separate waste charge. This investigative work has yet to commence but will be undertaken in close consultation with the community where Council will consider a range of options and the implications of those prior to making any decision about this. A separate waste charge would bring Yarra into line with the overwhelming majority of councils across Victoria and may potentially allow for further investments in its waste collection services to ensure Yarra remain a leader in the sustainability space. It will also assist Council in meeting upcoming legislative requirements.

Image credit: Draft Long Term Financial Plan

We support this proposal, because if the cost for waste services increases significantly faster than the rate cap, it will negatively impact upon other council services unless it is moved out to a separate charge.

We also support the proposal because it aligns with our commitment to valuing equality, i.e. the inequitable requirement for some households (who pay rates but don't get waste removed by council) to subsidise other households (who do get waste removed by council).

Long term infrastructure investment plan

The draft Long Term Financial Plan claims:

- *to provide the community with high quality and required services and infrastructure into the medium and long term*
- *commitment to sustainable asset renewal and maintenance of the community's assets*

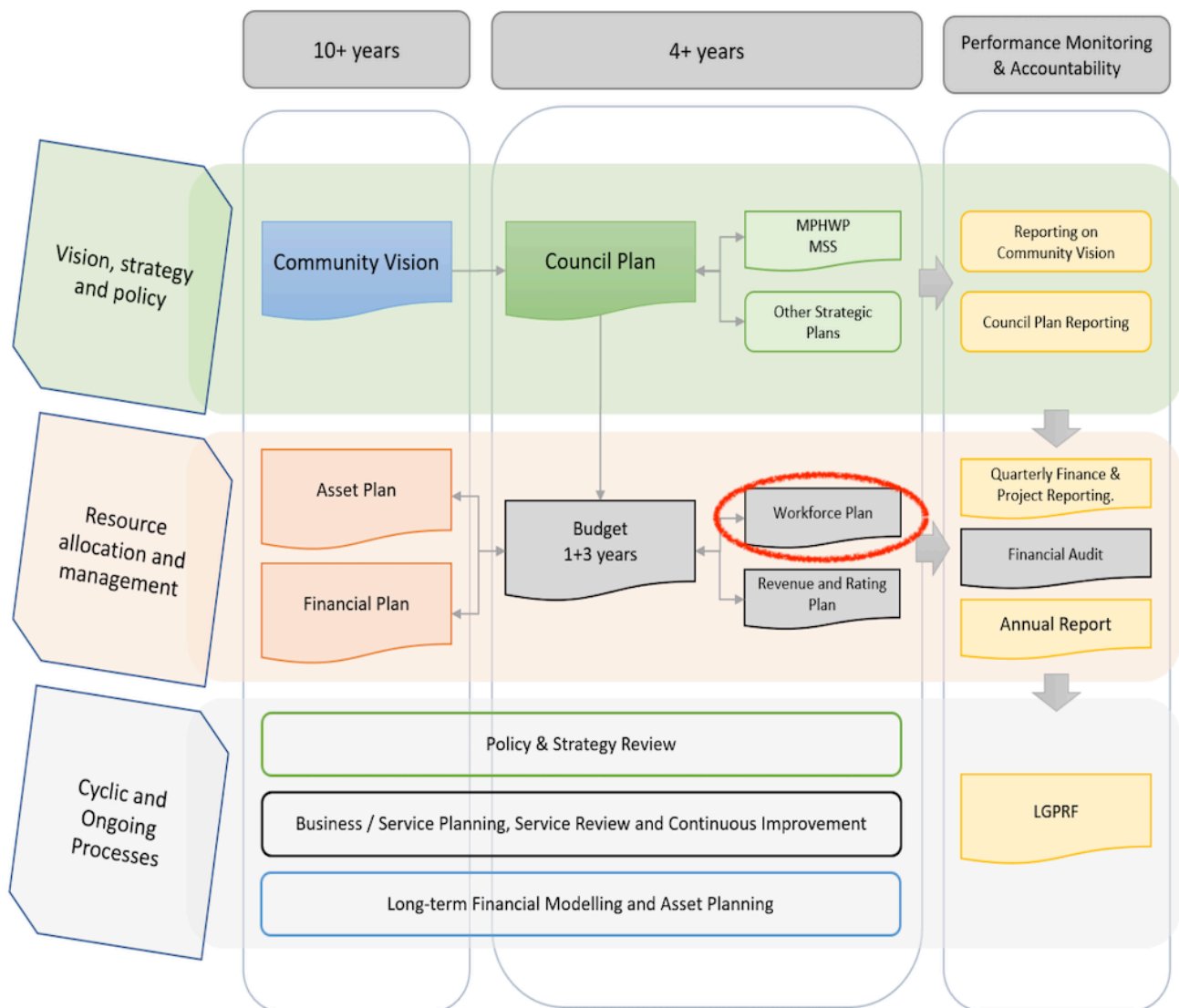
We interpret these phrases to include major maintenance cycles for assets such as buildings and grounds. The Long Term Financial Plan should extend beyond the legislative requirement for a 10-year horizon, and consider the major investment 'bumps' within a 50-year infrastructure investment (or renewal) plan.

Efficiencies

The draft Long Term Financial Plan claims:

- Council expects to deliver financial improvements and efficiencies over the next 10 years of at least \$23 million.

This is \$2.3 million per year, or 1% of council's budget of \$219 million per year. This doesn't look impressive. While every saving is welcome, council should be looking for savings on the order of 10% or 20%. To help deliver this, by working with the community, council should commit to publishing the Workforce Plan.



Council should go beyond legislative requirements and commit to publishing the Workforce Plan

Concluding remarks

The council budget should better align with the Social Justice Charter and the Council Plan, including greatly increased investment in walking, cycling, trees and place making. Although Yarra has often led the way in the past, compared with other municipalities, this does not mean that council is doing enough to comply with its own adopted policies, or even to align with the [broad community support](#) for a more beautiful, liveable and accessible city.

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

info@streets-alive-yarra.org

streets-alive-yarra.org