

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PARKING STRATEGY

Strategy
coming
soon



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra Inc.
streets-alive-yarra.org

What do we want?

- People can find a park when required
- More space for trees, to add beauty and shade
- More space for non-car modes, so everyone can get around safely
- Discourage, or at least stop subsidising (pricing below the market), driving and parking, to decrease carbon pollution, air pollution, micro-plastic pollution (from tyres), and traffic congestion
- Non-discriminatory access to on-street parking
- Lower cost housing

What problems do we see?

- Residents can't find a park when they get home from work
- Shoppers can't find a park close to traders
- Parking (and driving) is being encouraged by sub-market pricing and an excessive allocation of public space, while trees and active transport are being restrained by a lack of revenue and space
- An entire cohort of residents (refer to the 10th December 2003 rule) is being denied access to public space
- Housing is more expensive than it needs to be, owing to costly parking mandates

How can we solve it?

These issues can be solved by reforming how parking is managed, including how public space is allocated and priced. We suggest that 1/3 of existing on-street car parking bays should be reallocated to other uses, and that all on-street parking should require a permit, whether that be a sticker, paper, or digital permit.

Our proposal

- Convert 8,000 bays into space for trees
- Convert 4,000 bays into a network of protected bike lanes
- Deliver a loading bay, disabled bay, corral (for shared micro-mobility) and hangar (for private bikes) within 150 metres of any property, i.e. 1,000 of each across Yarra
- Revise the Car Share Strategy to remove limits on bays for car-share vehicles
- Free parking for visitors for up to two hours, transitioning thereafter to escalating hourly pricing with a daily price cap of at least the Myki daily fare of \$9.20
- Charge residents & businesses at least \$1 per day for permits
- Eliminate parking minimums from the Yarra Planning Scheme

How to implement it

- Change all parking signs to 'Permit Zone / Pay by App'
- Change all parking permits to digital pay-by-app
- Define parking zones, e.g. shopping streets are a different zone to a neighbourhood
- On shopping streets, charge by the hour using demand responsive pricing
- On neighbourhood streets, issue permits with the first two hours free, then charge by the hour with escalating hourly pricing and a daily price cap. Also, define a daily cap on quantity of visitor permits that can be sold in that zone, e.g. 1/3 of the available bays, and then adjust the price so that sales don't reach the daily quantity cap
- Introduce a new higher-priced residential permit, for residents who are caught by the new all-day 'Permit Zone' signs and the 10th December 2003 rule
- Enforce permits using number plate recognition

Expected outcomes

- Permit holders can park as usual
- Shoppers can still park in Yarra for free (for 2 hours)
- Commuters can't 'drive out, then back in' to defeat in-ground parking sensors; instead they pay for all-day parking (linked to their vehicle's number plate)
- Residents are protected from large numbers of commuters via the daily cap on sales
- Parking enforcement officers could double or triple the number of streets they could check each day
- Ratepayers would benefit from increased revenue which could be reinvested for trees, wider footpaths, pedestrian crossings, pocket parks, and protected bike lanes

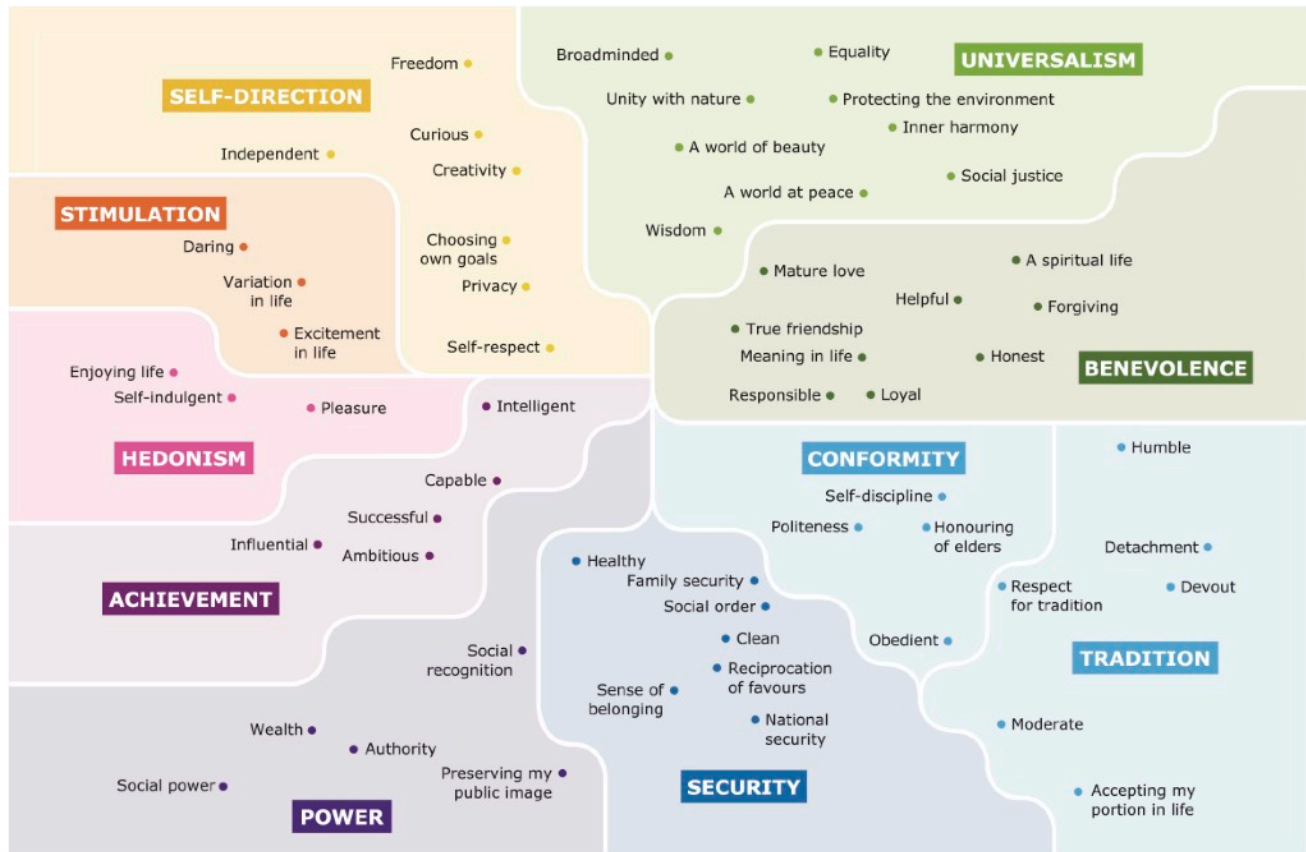
Expected revenue

- \$9.20 per day x 1/3 of 47,000 bays x 250 days per year = \$36 million per year

VALUES, ETHICS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Values, ethics, and social justice

Streets Alive Yarra's values are freedom, equality, social justice, responsibility, and a world of beauty. These can be understood to be part of 'values groups' of self-direction, universalism and benevolence, based on Schwartz's *Theory of Basic Human Values*.



Values Map. Image credit: Common Cause Foundation.

Our proposals are based on our values, including our suggestions on how to reform the pricing of on-street parking. One issue in the community is whether pricing hinders equity of access to on-street parking, particularly for people on lower incomes. Our belief is that framing the topic in that manner demonstrates an poor understanding of social justice.

People on low incomes *already find it difficult to find parking*, because a lot of parking in Yarra is occupied by commuters (or visitors staying longer than the time restriction). Also, unless parking is reformed, this problem is only going to get worse.

A key element of the proposed reform is that it enables council to enforce limits far more efficiently, via automated number plate recognition, and can therefore restrict the number of vehicles parked all-day in each neighbourhood, via the daily cap on permits sold. In turn, this increases the chance that people who need to drive and park (including those on low incomes) can find a park.

Instead of focussing on *equity of access to parking*, the draft Parking Strategy should focus on *equity of access to properties*, i.e. recognise the fact that many people prefer to access properties using non-driving modes of transport, e.g. not everyone can drive and park, including people who are:

- too young or too old,
- permanently or temporarily injured,
- have poor eyesight or motor control, or
- can't afford to own and operate a vehicle.

The reform proposal applies pricing to *maximise overall access*. With this context, pricing is a feature, because it generates revenue which can be reinvested in infrastructure to support other modes, including walking and biking. For example, the City of Portland (in the USA) has concluded that [pricing improves equity](#), and Yarra can do this too:

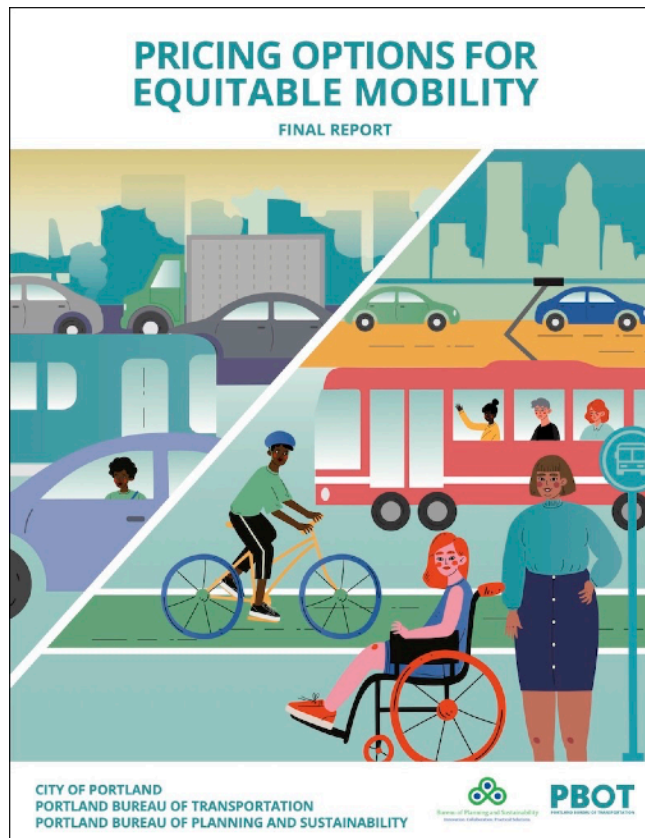


Image credit: City of Portland

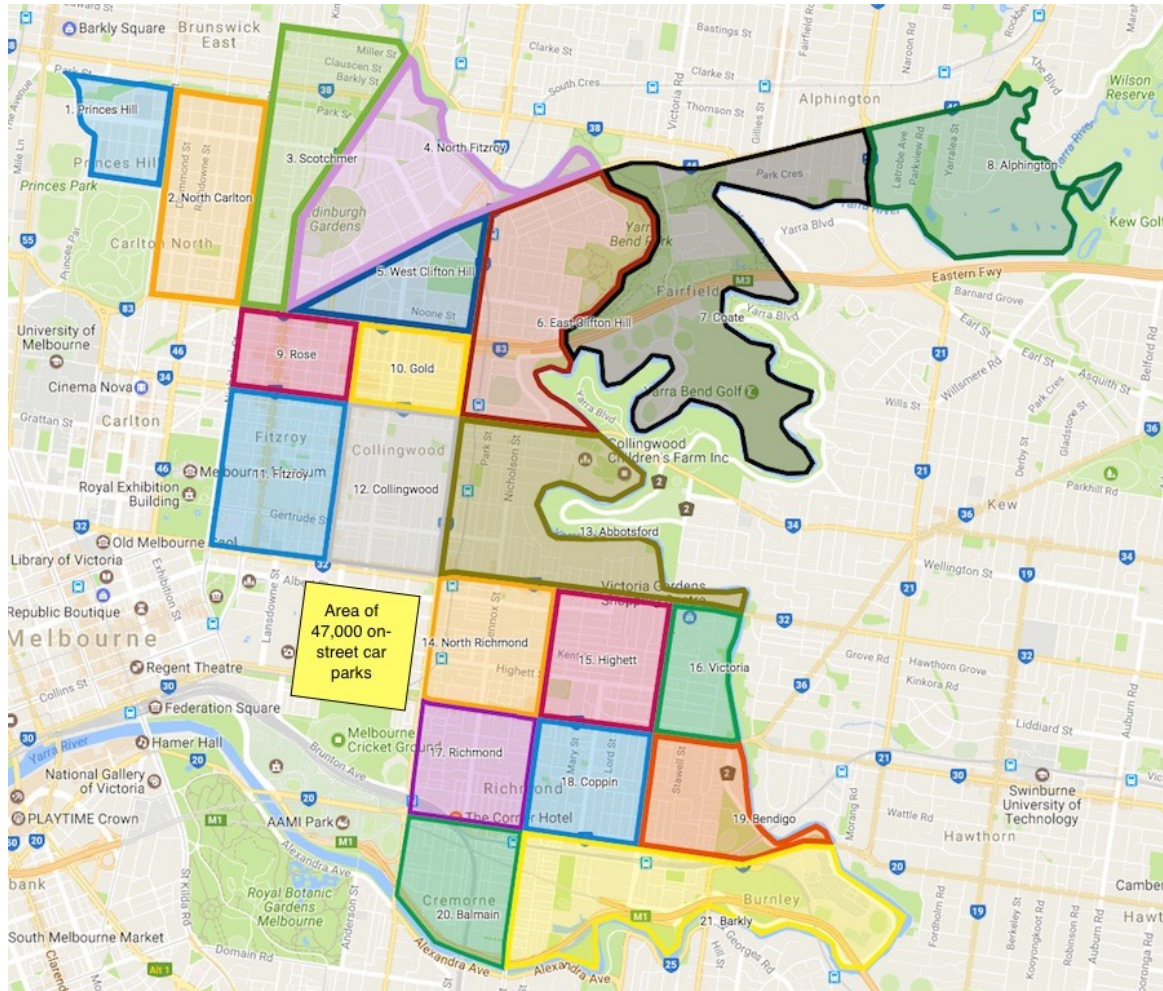
Further information:

- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/ethics/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/better-for-people-on-low-incomes/>
- <https://streets-alive-yarra.org/journal/on-equity-and-social-justice/>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Parking occupies a lot of space

Yarra has approximately 47,000 on-street parking bays, which occupy as much space as an entire neighbourhood. Unlike footpaths or bike lanes, if one person occupies a parking bay, they prevent others from using it.



Area occupied by 47,000 car parking bays. Image credit: Google Maps, City of Yarra, Streets Alive Yarra.

Parking occupies public land

On-street parking bays are **not owned by the adjacent household**. Instead, on-street parking bays occupy public land, which should be open to all members of the public, and which should be open for reallocation to serve different uses. Note that this doesn't mean that access to parking should be free. Also, policies are discriminatory if they exclude some residents from accessing public land. For example, the date that a dwelling was constructed should not determine whether the residents of that dwelling are permitted to park a car on the street (refer to the 10th December 2003 rule) or whether their visitor can park a car on the street. If such discriminations exist, they should be gradually withdrawn.

Parking is a private good

Car parking bays are a private good, because they are rivalrous (if one person uses the good that prevents another person from using it) and excludable (access can be managed via fees and enforcement). This differs from a public good, such as public radio, which can be used by everyone without affecting anyone else.

	Excludable	Non-excludable
Rivalrous	<p>Private goods food, clothing, cars, parking spaces</p>	<p>Common-pool resources fish stocks, timber, coal, free public transport</p>
Non-rivalrous	<p>Club goods cinemas, private parks, satellite television, public transport</p>	<p>Public goods free-to-air television, air, national defense, free and open-source software</p>

Parking spaces are a private good. Image credit: Wikipedia.

Parking undercuts private operators

Council's 47,000 parking bays dominate the business of car parking in Yarra, and council's pricing undercuts that of private operators. The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge that, and commit to ending the practice. In addition, many people **cruise streets in an attempt to locate a vacant under-priced on-street bay** before they look for an off-street parking area, which adds to congestion and pollution.



Example of how council car parking competes with private car parking, in this case on either side of Bridge Road. Image credit: Apple Maps, highlight from Streets Alive Yarra.

Parking is subsidised

If the price for on-street parking is lower than the market price for off-street parking, then the on-street parking is being subsidised. The cities of Melbourne, Merri-bek, and Darebin use the word ‘subsidy’ in their parking policy documents, and Yarra should too. The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge that [on-street parking is being subsidised](#) by the ratepayers of the City of Yarra, and commit to publishing an estimate of the total subsidy (or revenue foregone) each year.

Number of on-street parking bays	47,000
Market price estimate (annual)	\$3,000
Revenue if priced to market	\$141,000,000
Actual revenue from meters and permits	\$14,000,000
Subsidy	\$127,000,000

Estimate of Yarra's parking subsidy in 2022. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Parking fails to comply with Competitive Neutrality

Council's Revenue and Rating Plan [states that council must comply](#) with the government's Competitive Neutrality Policy. The City of Yarra has stated, in an email dated 24th November 2022, '*Council has not determined that the regulation of street parking constitutes a significant business, and does not believe that on street parking is comparable with off street parking areas.*' Both parts of that statement demonstrate a failure of policy. The Parking Strategy should review that statement and determine:

- on-street parking constitutes a significant business, and
- on-street parking is comparable with off-street parking areas.

If Competitive Neutrality applies, council's Pricing Policy states that pricing must align with market pricing, or a competitively neutral price. Demand responsive pricing is one form of competitively neutral pricing. The Parking Strategy should comply with competitive neutrality by clearly committing to market pricing or demand responsive pricing.

Parking is often full

Parking on residential streets is often full, especially when people are coming home from work, which is a problem. The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge that problem, and commit to solving it. Options include:

- Remove eligibility for any '3rd permits'.
- Remove eligibility for a '2nd permit', if a property has a crossover (which reduces the available parking on the street).
- Reduce demand by increasing the price.



This driver can't find a park because the street is full. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Parking increases the cost of housing

Parking, via mandatory parking minimums in the Yarra Planning Scheme, increases the cost of housing, because it is expensive to build off-street parking. Yarra's Transport Strategy states: *Reforms to planning regulations mean that people are free to choose their parking arrangements and are no longer forced to build or purchase car parking that they do not want or need. This results in improved housing affordability, better building design, reduced building heights and enhanced street amenity.*

The Parking Strategy should align with the adopted Transport Strategy, and clearly acknowledge that **eliminating parking minimums** can help decrease the cost of housing in Yarra.

Parking induces driving

Offering free or low cost parking influences peoples' decision to drive and therefore has an impact on congestion. The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge that requiring people to pay for parking can reduce traffic congestion by reducing the incentive, relative to other modes, of driving to Yarra.

Car parking availability and prices are important components of people's travel decisions. The availability of free or low cost parking can be a strong determining factor in the decision to use a car in everyday travel. Conversely, high parking costs or difficulty finding a parking spot can be a strong deterrent. Our community research shows that the availability of free, time unlimited parking at the destination is a critical determining factor in driving during the weekday peak (Box 6).

Source: Infrastructure Victoria *FIVE-YEAR FOCUS*, April 2018

Parking is central to integrated planning

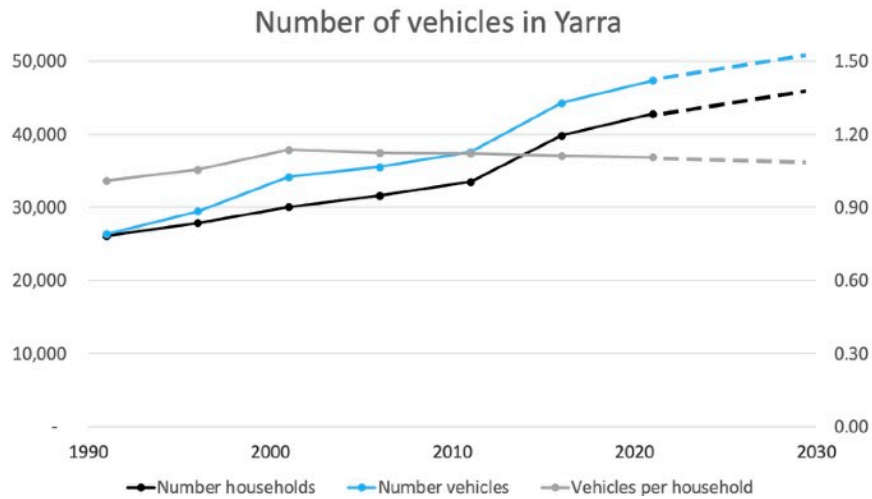
Parking is central to integrated transport and land use planning, not only because it occupies so much of our limited inner-city space, but also because it impacts on many ways that people interact with our city. The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge the inter-dependencies between parking, trip generation, traffic congestion, place making, space for active transport, and revenue.



Will Yarra acknowledge the elephant in the city? Image credit: [Bizarro Comics](#).

The number of cars is increasing

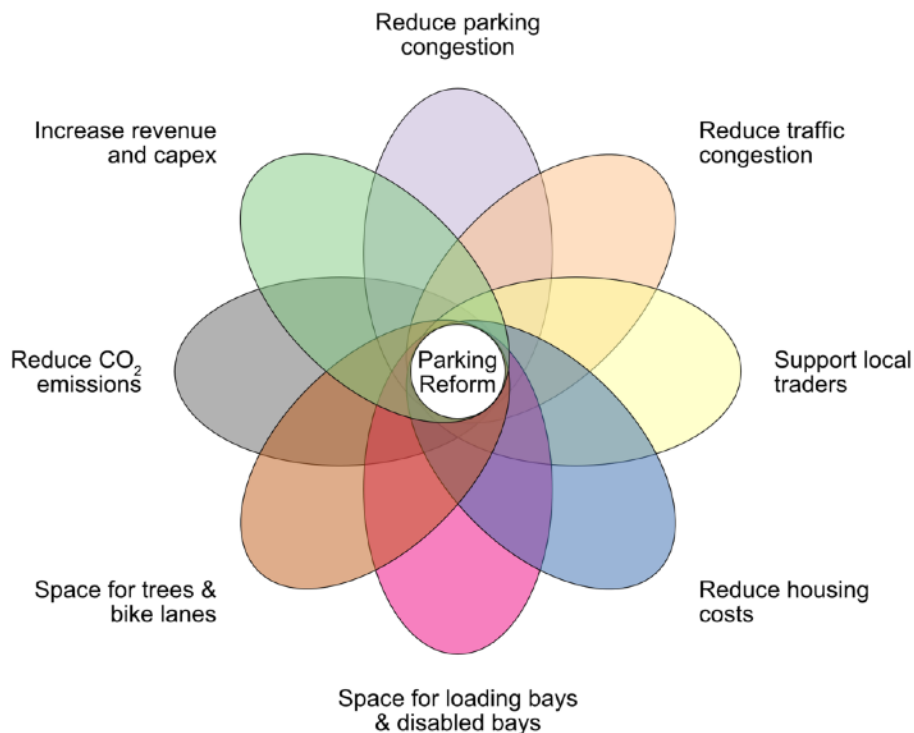
The number of cars in Yarra has increased above the number of on-street car parking bays in Yarra. The Parking Strategy should propose methods of managing demand that will work for the number of vehicles that are projected to be in Yarra in 10 years time.



Number of vehicles in Yarra that are owned by residents. Data source: Australian Census. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Benefits of parking reform

The Parking Strategy should acknowledge the multiple significant benefits of parking reform.



Parking reform has multiple significant benefits. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Objective

The Parking Strategy should have an objective to deliver *safe access to properties*, because this reflects the Community Vision, the Council Plan, and the Transport Strategy:

- Community Vision: *Yarra is a vibrant, safe and inclusive environment. Our streets and public spaces are clean, maintained and free from hazards.*
- Council Plan: *Transport and movement is accessible, safe and well connected. Yarra prioritises sustainable and active transport, to help people move safely and sustainably through and within our municipality.*
- Transport Strategy: *Manage car parking in a way that supports the use of active and public transport and the role of cars in an urban environment. Car parking revenue and a user-pays model provides essential funding on a consistent basis that provides alternatives to car travel for everyone.*

To clarify, *safe access to properties* means *people of all ages and abilities are able to access any property in Yarra, irrespective of whether they walk, roll on a wheelchair, cycle, use public transport, or drive and park, without being exposed to hazards that have the risk of serious injury or death.*

To further clarify, such an objective has consequences, including:

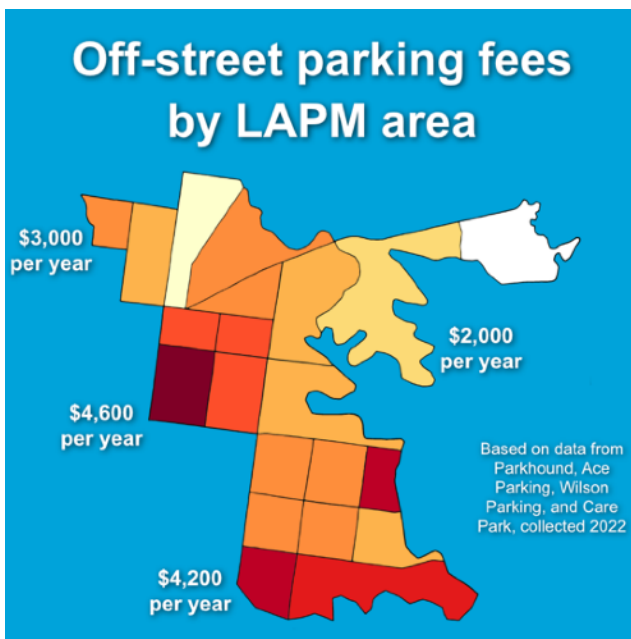
- Space needs to be reallocated for wider footpaths and safer crossings
- Space needs to be reallocated for a network of protected bike lanes
- Revenue from parking needs to be allocated to active transport infrastructure

Parking demand

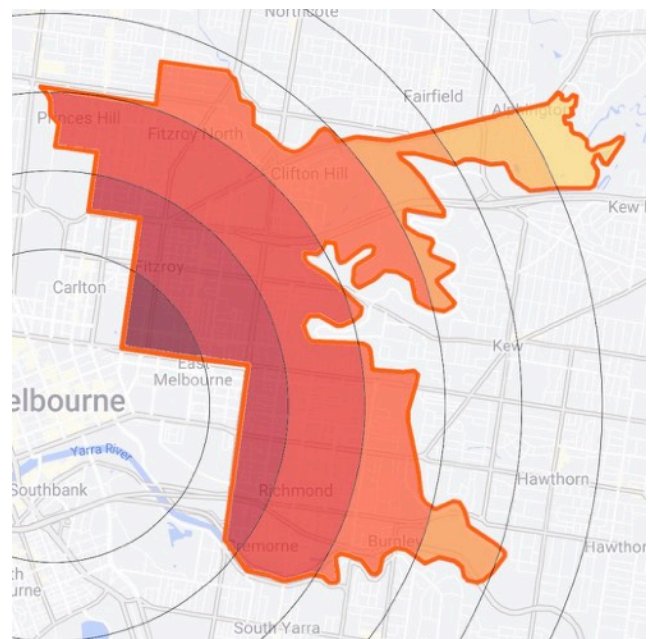
The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge:

- that demand can be measured,
- that demand varies across Yarra, with higher demand closer to the CBD, and
- the **massive revenue opportunity** from charging visitors for parking.

The demand for parking in Yarra can be quantified by examining the price charged for private off-street parking, because commercial operators adjust their pricing to match demand. Also, the City of Yarra has the luck of being located close to the CBD and the Melbourne Sports & Entertainment precinct, which increases the demand for on-street parking, and means that Yarra can earn tens of millions per year by charging visitors, e.g. commuters or sports fans, for parking.



The price for off-street parking varies across Yarra, from \$2,000 per year to over \$4,000 per year. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.



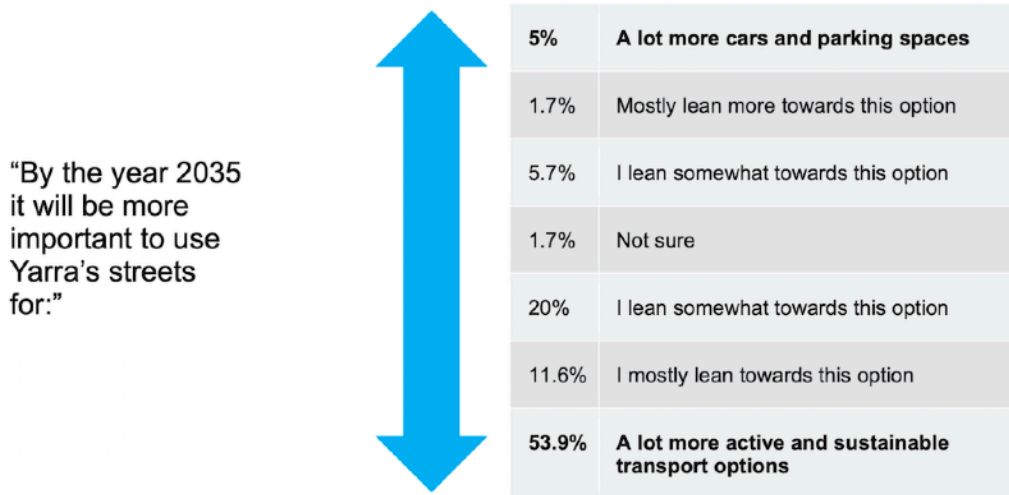
Yarra is close to the CBD and the Melbourne Sports & Entertainment Precinct. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Residents support reform

The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge that most Yarra residents and ratepayers support a reallocation of space to support safe, active and sustainable transport.

Room for active and sustainable transport

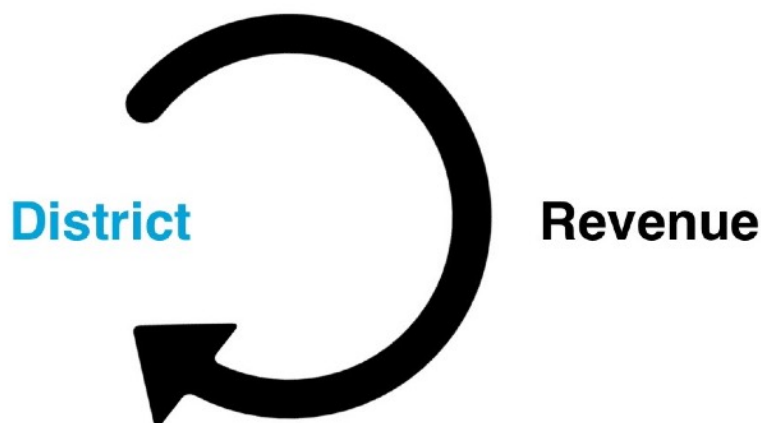
Using a slider scale with the two statements at either end we asked you which you agreed with more. Responses are grouped here into seven categories.



Source: *Engagement Report on Community Vision 2035*

Parking Benefit Districts

Parking Benefit Districts are areas where the revenue from parking in a certain district is reinvested back into that district as infrastructure to benefit residents, such as wider footpaths and protected bike lanes. Each Local Area Place Making (LAPM) precinct in Yarra could be a [Parking Benefit District](#), catalysing a cycle of appreciation for council management of on-street parking.

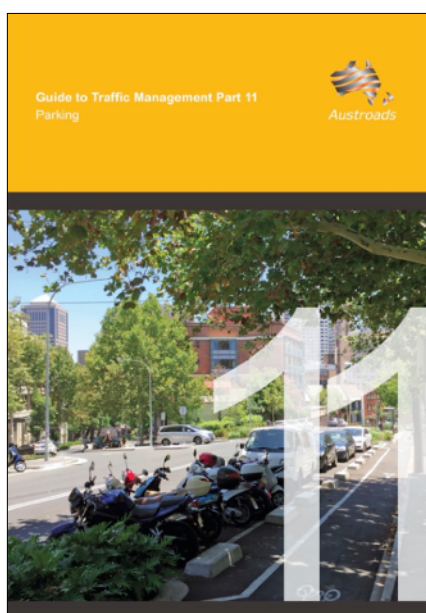


Each neighbourhood, or Local Area Place Making (LAPM) district could be a Parking Benefit District. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Using pricing to manage demand

The Parking Strategy should clearly acknowledge that the demand for on-street parking can be managed via pricing, as described in multiple guides and in other council parking strategies, including:

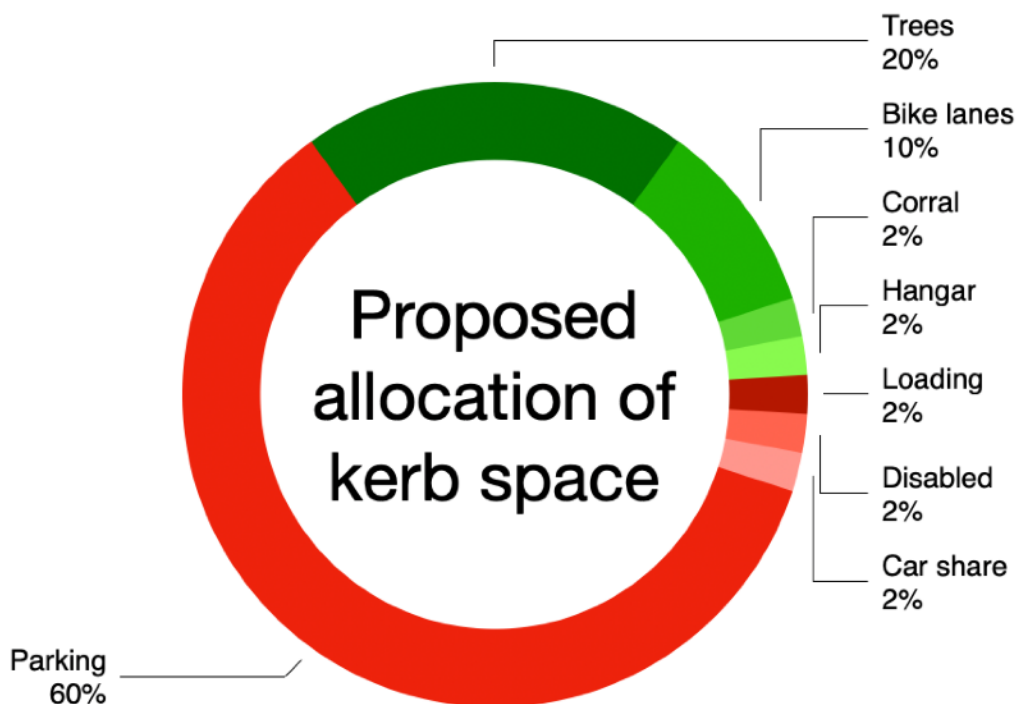
- [Guide to Traffic Management Part 11, Parking](#), Austroads
- [National Parking Management Guidance](#), New Zealand Transport Agency
- [On-Street Parking Pricing](#), ITDP
- City of Melbourne parking strategy
- City of Greater Geelong parking strategy



Multiple best practice guidelines describe how demand can be managed via pricing

Reallocation of space

We suggest that 1/3 of existing on-street car parking bays should be reallocated to other uses. In the image below, the various shades of red indicate allocation to driving modes (total 66%), while the shades of green indicate allocations to non-driving modes (total 34%).



Proposed targets for allocation of kerb space. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Issues and opportunities

Parking in Yarra is related to a variety of issues and opportunities:

Issue	Opportunity
<p>People who need to drive & park are severely delayed by traffic congestion in peak hours</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Reduce the number of on-street parking bays in Yarra by 3% per year, each of which contributes to trip generation and traffic congestion (2) Change from 'parking minimums' to 'parking maximums' to slow the growth in the number of off-street parking bays in Yarra, each of which contributes to trip generation and traffic congestion (3) Change from 'free parking' to 'paid parking', which will reduce the attractiveness of driving & parking in Yarra relative to other modes, thus reducing traffic congestion (4) Increase the number of car-share vehicles in Yarra to 1,000 (up from approximately 300), each of which enables 5 to 10 households to reduce their use of a private car, thus reducing traffic congestion
<p>People who need to drive & park can't find a vacant parking bay near their destination</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Change from 'first in gets the free parking' to 'demand responsive pricing', delivered via permit zones (covering all streets in Yarra), digital permits, and 'pay by app', targeting 85% occupancy (2) Increase the number of loading bays in Yarra to 1,000 (up from approximately 370) (3) Increase the number of disabled bays in Yarra to 1,000 (up from approximately 300)
<p>Streets near the Melbourne Sports & Entertainment precinct experience 100% occupancy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Change from 'free parking' to 'paid parking', delivered via permit zones (covering all streets near the precinct), digital permits, and 'pay by app', with surge pricing for sports & event days, targeting 85% occupancy (noting that residents would continue to park using their low cost resident permit)
<p>Residents can't find a vacant bay in their street when they come home from work</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Reduce eligibility for resident permits, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eliminate the '3rd permit' - households with a crossover lose eligibility for their first (lowest cost) permit (2) Reduce demand for resident permits by increasing the price, e.g. increase the price for resident permits until most streets in Yarra have an overnight occupancy of less than 85%

Issue	Opportunity
Residents are limited to one visitor permit, so can't invite more than person (& vehicle) to visit at the same time	(1) Change from a single 'paper' visitor permit per property to digital permits, and allow multiple permits to be purchased for the same day
Residents illegally sell or rent their visitor permit, e.g. to commuters	(1) Change from a transferable 'paper' visitor permit to digital permits which are valid for one day only, linked to a vehicles number plate, and escalate in price, thereby making them cumbersome and uneconomic to sell to commuters
Commuters don't pay for parking in Yarra	(1) Change from 'free parking' to 'paid parking', delivered via permit zones (covering all streets in Yarra), digital permits, and 'pay by app', with demand responsive pricing targeting 85% occupancy
Residents of properties built after 10 December 2003 aren't eligible for a resident permit, i.e. don't have equity of access to public land	(1) Introduce a new class of resident permit for those properties, priced at a higher level (to manage demand)
Council is making value judgements that some professions are more deserving of parking than others	(1) Eliminate the 'Medical Practitioner Parking Permit' and treat all professions equally
Ratepayers missing out on revenue	(1) Change from 'free parking' to 'paid parking', delivered via permit zones (covering all streets in Yarra), digital permits, and 'pay by app', with demand responsive pricing targeting 85% occupancy
Properties with a crossover reduce the number of available parking bays on a street	(1) Remove the eligibility for the first (lowest cost) permit for properties with a crossover

Issue	Opportunity
<p>Parking enforcement is cumbersome, expensive, and time consuming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Change from 'time restricted' parking to 'digital' permits, enabling a parking inspector to eliminate 'walking and chalking', and instead confirm eligibility to park with a single visit, via automatic number plate recognition (i.e. either the vehicle has a valid digital permit or it doesn't) (2) Enable residents to check if a vehicle has a valid parking permit, via a check of the number plate, and then sending an enforcement request to the parking team
<p>It's expensive for Yarra to expand metered parking to cover more shopping streets and activity centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Change from high-cost 'metered' parking to low-cost 'digital permit' parking, via permit zones, digital permits, and 'pay by app', targeting 85% occupancy

CONCLUSION

Concluding remarks

Implementing a reformed and best practice Parking Strategy would bring massive benefits to Yarra, including:

- delivering safe access to properties,
- providing extra revenue for services or capital expenditure, and
- aligning with the Community Vision, Council Plan, Climate Emergency Plan, and Transport Strategy.

Further detailed evidence for, and description of, any concept described in this document, is available in the seminal work *The High Cost of Free Parking*, which is available for loan from Streets Alive Yarra.



Streets Alive Yarra understands that parking policy has multiple nuances and interdependencies, which may be better to talk through; we 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