

A photograph of a large, leafy tree in a park-like setting. Several people are visible: two men walking away from the camera on the left, a man sitting on the grass reading a newspaper in the center, and two more men standing and talking further back. The background is a bright, overexposed sky.

COLAC CBD & ENTRANCES PROJECT FINAL REPORT

May 2012



Colac Otway
SHIRE

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PROJECT CONTROL

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Executive Summary

WHAT IS THE COLAC CBD & ENTRANCES PROJECT

In May, 2012 Colac Otway Shire completed and adopted the Final Plan and Implementation Plan for the Colac Central Business District (CBD) & Entrances Project. The Project is a 20 year Plan focusing on the design the buildings and spaces of the Colac CBD and the eastern and western entrances to Colac. The Project draws together the outcomes of community feedback, input from the Community Reference Group and Steering Committee and analysis and research undertaken by the study team.

VISION

In the next 20 years Colac's CBD will:

- Become known as the 'Botanic Garden City'
- Be a pedestrian-focussed place, accessible for people of all ages and abilities
- Grow as a thriving rural centre of retail, business and community services
- Connect to its natural systems of the Lake and creek corridors
- Proudly express its heritage in the built and natural environment
- Be renowned for its collection of great buildings from all eras of the City's development
- Present an impressive image along the Princes Highway corridor, from the edges of the City to its core

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The key recommendations for Colac's CBD and Entrances are shown on the map on the [page opposite](#) and described as follows:

Legend



Botanic Garden City: A new image for Colac, the 'Botanic Garden City', with thematic tree planting throughout the CBD linking the Botanic Gardens, Beechy Precinct and Barongarook Creek corridor.

1

Memorial Square: Upgraded western edge with refurbished amenities and a shared traffic space along Gellibrand Street which can also be adapted to accommodate public events. Pedestrians to have priority over cars in shared space that could ultimately be extended around Memorial Square and south along Gellibrand Street to the Station.

2

Eastern CBD Entrance: Improved entrance with enhanced landscaping and views to heritage buildings, widened pedestrian pathways over the bridge and improved visibility of the Visitor Information Centre.

3

Murray Street West: Improved with tree planting and streetscape works, continuing the design theme of the central part of Murray Street.

4

Murray Street East: Improved with road side tree planting, upgraded footpath pavement, pedestrian crossings and street furniture, and infill planting where gaps exist.

5

Bromfield Street: Upgraded with new tree planting, improved pedestrian access and bicycle lanes. Redevelopment opportunities for the underused land at the rear of Murray Street shops to be promoted, with improved pedestrian links through to Murray Street, similar to Johnstones Lane.

6

COPACC & Colac Station: Revitalised with potential closure of Railway Street.



Outer CBD Entrances: Improved to the outer edge of Colac with new landscaping, framing views to the Lake and guidelines for signage.



Priority Streetscapes: Improved as first priority.



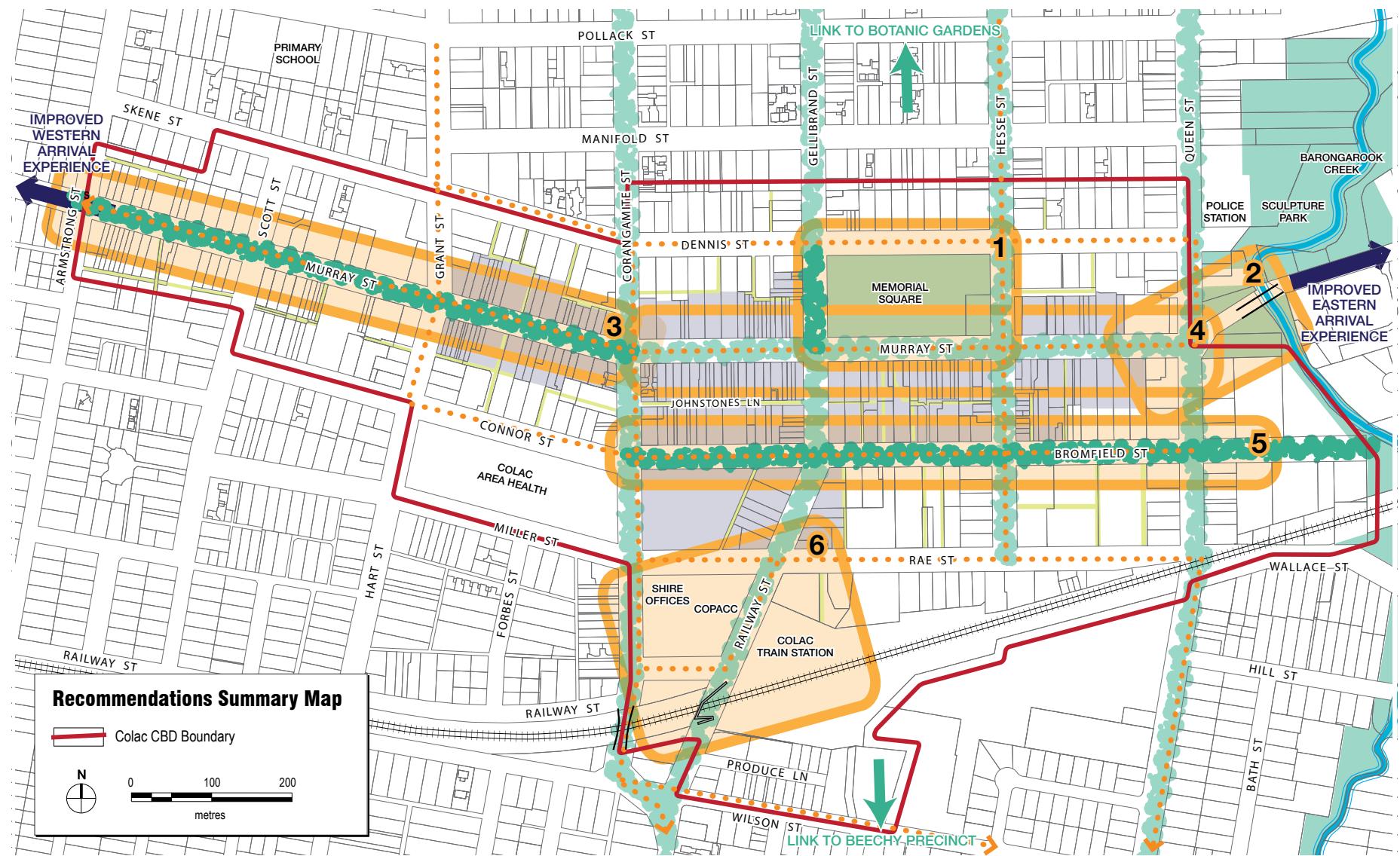
Laneways: Improved network.

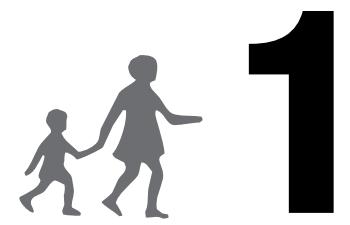


Bicycle lanes: New and improved lanes provided.



Inner CBD retail areas: Built Form Guidelines applied to ensure a high quality of new architecture, protection of heritage buildings and maintaining a 'fine grain' character of these areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY MAP



1

Background

1.1 Introduction

Project Scope

Colac, situated along the southern edge of Lake Colac on the Princes Highway, is a major urban centre in its region. Its proximity to many natural and built features makes it an attractive residential, commercial and business location. The challenge for Colac is to make the most of its many existing assets and to undertake further improvements that will benefit current residents and attract population growth and investment. This project involves the development of a Plan focussing on the design the buildings and spaces of the Colac Central Business District (CBD) and the eastern and western entrances to Colac.

But Colac already has a Plan....

The 2007 *Colac Structure Plan* includes suggestions for the improvement of the entire town of Colac. This project, the *CBD & Entrances Project*, develops on the structure plan in more specific detail, identifying built form and streetscape themes as well as detailed concept plans to help to realise the structure plan's vision 'on the ground'. The Project sets a direction for proposals that will shape access and movement; buildings and land use; and streetscapes and open space; within the CBD and wider context.

In its final form this Project will include streetscape proposals, concept engineering designs, and detailed schedules of works with cost estimates to help Council refine its capital works program and apply for funding when government grant programs are announced.

This concise framework will bring together and build on a number of plans and initiatives already completed for Colac and the wider region, and focus on providing a range of achievable projects that can be undertaken over time.

AIMS

The key aims of the Project are to:

- Set a direction for interventions that will shape access and movement, buildings, land use, streetscapes and open space within the CBD and wider context.
- Promote a sense of vibrancy in the CBD.
- Develop a sense of arrival and sense of place to foster community pride.
- Integrate key elements of the visual, natural and built landscape of the CBD to create a 'place for people'.
- Improve public access, especially walkability and people-focussed public spaces in the town.
- Develop detailed guidance for the implementation of works.
- Create an overall theme to link the CBD with the entrances and key destination points outside the CBD.

TIMING

The Final Plan has been produced in conjunction with the Implementation Plan, a separate and complementary document, both of which were adopted in May, 2012. The next part of the Project will involve:

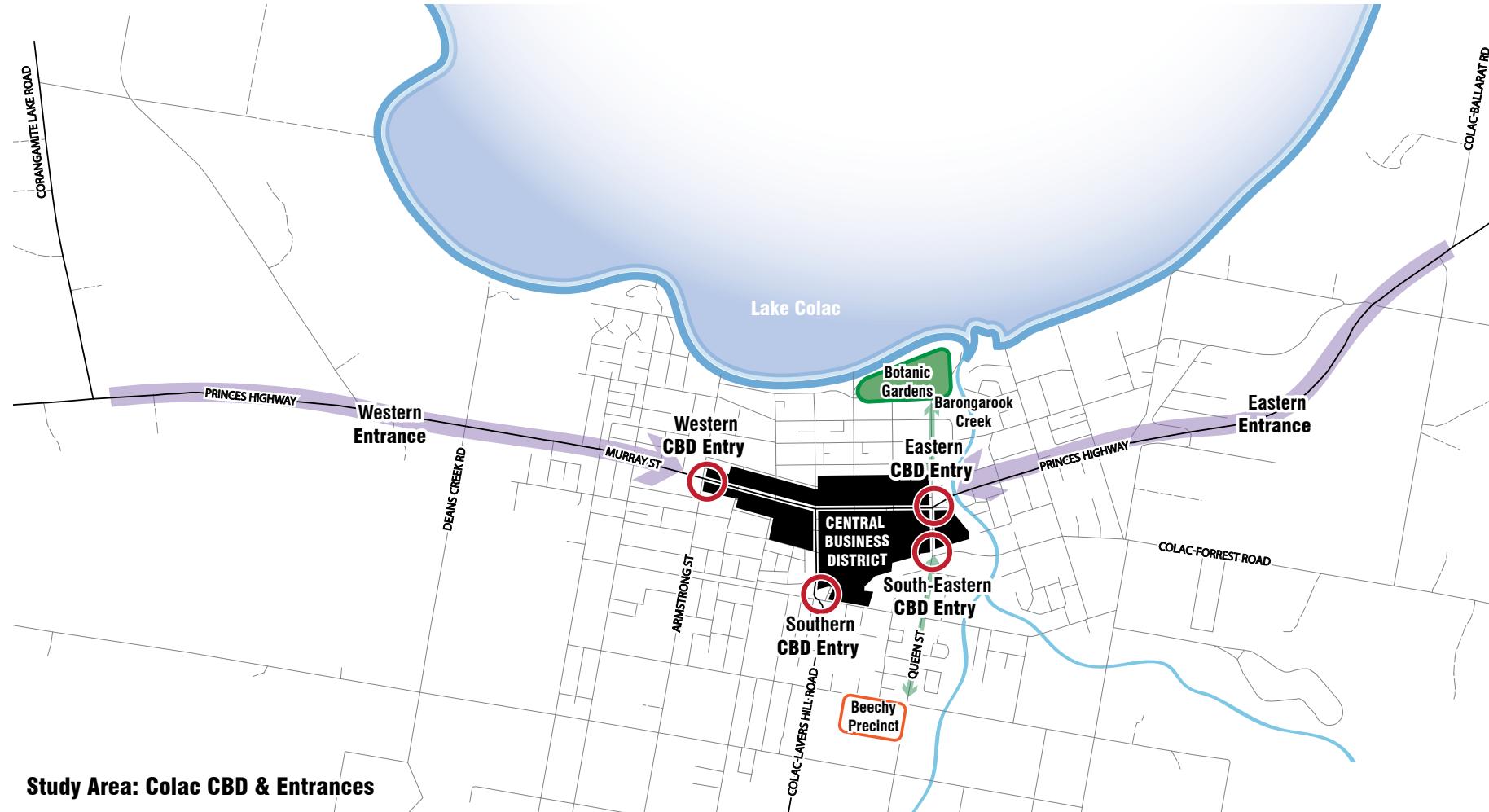
- Detailed designs for priority streetscape areas
- Planning Scheme Amendment
- Capital Works Improvements



STUDY AREA MAP

The study area for the project is shown on the **map below**. It includes the Colac Central Business District (CBD), defined as all of the streets, buildings and public infrastructure within the Business 1 and 2 Zones in the Colac Otway Planning Scheme (shown in **solid black** on the map). The area also includes the outer eastern and western

entrances to Colac as these are the main arrival points for traffic travelling along the Princes Highway. Broad consideration is also given to the areas of Colac surrounding the CBD and entrance corridors.



CONSULTATION

The Plan was developed in four stages and involved consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Stage 1

Stage 1 included:

- Informing the broader community about the project commencement via a media release
- Establishing the Community Reference Group
- Engaging with Council staff and key stakeholders through the Project Steering Committee and Project Reference Group.

The Project Steering Committee was a small group with direct involvement in the planning process. It comprised Council officers and representatives of State Government departments and agencies - Regional Development Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development and VicRoads. The role of the Steering Committee was to monitor the project work program, provide advice and review project outputs.

The Community Reference Group was established in order to directly engage with key community and business stakeholders. The role of the Group was to provide professional and sectoral advice to the development of the project.

Stage 2

Stage 2 of the Plan involved producing a Discussion Paper containing ideas and directions for the study area as well as landscape themes and opportunities. Consultation in this stage aimed to engage with the community, stakeholders, Councillors and key Council staff about the issues and opportunities identified in the Discussion Paper.

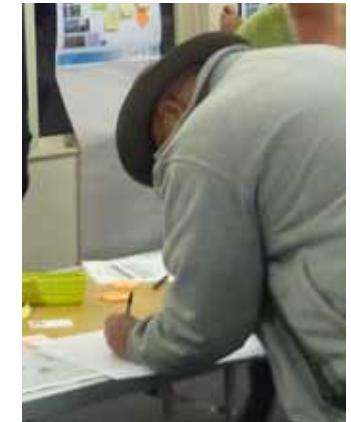
Stage 2 consultation involved:

- A media release
- A Community Bulletin with a Feedback Form sent to all property owners in Colac and Elliminnyt
- Hard copy and on-line surveys targeted at the general community and businesses
- Opportunities for community and key stakeholders to participate in workshops.

Feedback Forms

Over 250 survey responses and feedback forms were received in response to the community mail out. A summary of suggested improvements to Colac is provided below:

- Improve entrances to the town through landscaping, maintenance and signage to promote the town
- Improve cleaning and maintenance of the CBD, particularly footpaths
- Improve maintenance of gardens and trees in the CBD
- Divert traffic, particularly trucks, out of main street
- Improve road surfaces
- Improve the lake and creek areas by better maintenance and more seating, tracks and landscaping
- Improve maintenance of heritage buildings including reintroducing verandah posts to shops
- Restore or remove vacant service stations at town entrances
- Improve pedestrian access including footpaths for pedestrians and mobility vehicles, and pedestrian crossings in Murray Street
- Improve Memorial Square



Stage 3

Stage 3 of the Plan involved producing a Draft Plan and Summary Document that responded to community and stakeholder feedback in the previous stage. Consultation in this stage sought to inform the community on the progress of the Draft Plan and obtain feedback on the Draft Plan.

Stage 3 consultation involved:

- Public notices and a media release
- A Community Bulletin with a Feedback Form
- Hard copy and on-line surveys targeted at the general community and businesses
- A public display of information boards in the Council Offices
- Opportunities for community and key stakeholders to participate workshops and visit street stalls
- Phone contact and meetings with key stakeholders

Feedback

Over 150 hard copy feedback forms and written submissions and 22 online submissions were received including a letter from VicRoads. Other feedback was also gathered at the public display, Business Breakfast Workshop and through direct stakeholder contact.

There were a number of positive responses to the Plan and it was generally well supported. The Plan's most popular suggestions were:

- Upgraded toilets in Memorial Square
- Greening of CBD
- Improved pedestrian access

Popular concerns raised in the feedback included:

- Funding / rates rises to implement the plan
- Loss of parking

- Maintenance of streetscapes and planting
- Better access to Lake
- Maintenance of buildings in Murray Street
- Cleanliness of facilities
- Need for security cameras
- Access & parking for elderly/disabled
- Need for the truck bypass

Feedback covered a range of themes and related to a number of specific areas. Some general feedback included:

- Generally the 'Botanic Garden City' concept was well received and supported.
- There was mixed opinion about shared zones, concerns for safety and loss of parking
- The Eastern CBD Entrance Concept was well supported and it was generally acknowledged that the area is run down and is not presenting a positive image of Colac
- A large number of respondents mentioned service stations as a problem because of their poor presentation
- The majority of respondents supported the plan for Murray Street West, particularly the new trees and the shade/amenity they will bring
- Loss of parking was a key concern as well as the choice of trees and level of maintenance that will be required for streetscape changes
- The majority of respondents supported the Plan for Bromfield Street, particularly the new trees and the shade and amenity they will bring
- Several respondents requested better promotional signage to promote the area
- There were a number of suggestions to close Railway St or Corangamite St

1.2 Snapshot of Colac

Colac's Attributes

A starting point for the project is to gain an understanding of the main attributes of Colac. What are the highly valued elements of the town? What are the issues to be addressed in the project? How could the 'Colac character' be defined?

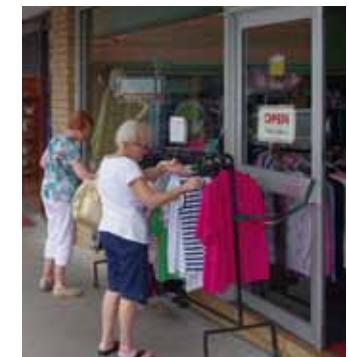
A BUSTLING COMMERCIAL CENTRE

Colac, with its residential population of approximately 11,000 people, is one of two main towns in the Colac-Otway Shire. Situated approximately 150 kilometres south-west of Melbourne and 75 kilometres west of Geelong on both the Princes Highway and a regional railway line, Colac is strategically located within one of Victoria's primary transport and tourism corridors.

The town is the largest service centre between Geelong and Warrnambool (110km to the west), and is the major focus for a range of regional services including retailing, business and professional services, administrative and government functions, and health and community services.

The major industries of the region are primary production (such as dairy, beef, sheep, crops, horticulture and organic farming), food processing, tourism, fishing, timber production and construction¹.

Colac's location on the Princes Highway adds a sense of activity to the town centre, and brings visitors directly to the main street. However, heavy vehicle traffic creates amenity and pedestrian safety issues that are of concern to many residents.



¹ Colac and Apollo Bay Retail Study, Essential Economics, August 2009

NATURAL LANDSCAPE SETTING

The natural landscape setting of Colac is scenic and diverse. Colac is situated in the southwestern part of Australia's largest volcanic province, the Kanawinka Geopark, which extends across western Victoria from Colac into South Australia. Red Rock Lookout, approximately 15km north-west of Colac, provides views across this dramatic landscape formed by volcanic activity, including basalt plains, Lake Corangamite (Australia's largest permanent salt lake), Mt Elephant and a chain of other lakes and hills. To the south of Colac lies the distinctively different landscape of the spectacular Otway Ranges.

The area around Lake Colac was originally the home of the Gulidjan and Kolijon people, who occupied the grasslands, woodlands, volcanic plains and lakes region east of Lake Corangamite, west of the Barwon River and north of the Otway Ranges. The name 'Colac' is thought to derive either from its tribal name or from a Kolijon word referring to the 'fresh water'.

LAKE COLAC

Lake Colac is one of Victoria's largest fresh water lakes. It provides a strong landscape connection for Colac and is an integral part of the town's identity, despite being a short distance from the town centre itself.

The broad flat surface of the lake is a backdrop which reflects the sky, terminating CBD street views and marking a type of mid-distance boundary to landscape vistas seen from Princes Highway.

The edge of the lake is a destination for activities such as fishing or boating, as well as for its atmospheric qualities; for example, when viewed through the trees of the Botanic Gardens from high up on the escarpment.



View of Lake Colac from the Botanic Gardens

Lake Colac (1905)



A GREEN HEART

Trees and vegetation play a very significant role in the overall character of Colac: from the large bands of cypress windbreak planting and eucalypts in surrounding farmland (also around the showgrounds); to the more recent large banks of plantation timber at either end of the town; to the established street trees around Memorial Square and lining Hesse/ Gellibrand Streets (**above right**); to the Botanic Gardens on the northern escarpment looking over the lake (**left on page opposite** and **below left** and **below right** of the photos right). There are also many magnificent private gardens (in the **middle left** of the photos right).

Memorial Square (**above left** and **above right** of the photos right) plays a highly significant role in terms of the character of central Colac, and its established intact perimeter planting acts as a strong formal element marking the centre of town – acting like a large ‘green building’ in the streetscape.

The presence of the park on the main street gives an unusual transparency and softness to the highway experience. The lack of low-level vegetation around the perimeter of the park allows a strong visual connection between Dennis Street and Murray Street. The buildings on the south side of Murray Street facing the park form a continuous wall or backdrop, with their north-facing verandahs providing high quality and highly usable sheltered public space.

Creek corridors define the eastern and western edges of the town. The Barongarook Creek forms a corridor of emerging indigenous landscape alongside the eastern edge of the CBD. Within the corridor the Sculpture Park, shared path network and recent landscaping works have enhanced this important recreational link. On the outer edge of the town to the west is the Deans Creek corridor.

An important part of Colac’s character is its wide streets. Some streets are defined with substantial street trees while others lack planting and are in great need of stronger landscape definition. There are many opportunities to make improvements to the appearance and amenity of streetscapes by introducing new planting.



TOWN STRUCTURE

Colac's first European settler was Hugh Murray, who arrived in 1837 and proclaimed a town, then known as 'Lake Colac', in 1848. Since that time, the town of Colac has evolved to meet the needs of its occupants and support a growing economy and residential population.

The original town boundaries were along Forest Street to the east, and Cants Road to the west. These roads still act as notional outer boundaries to the town and mark shifts in character upon entry to the town centre from either direction.

Areas of distinct spatial character are created by the shifts in alignment of Murray Street, the gridded street layouts of different parts of the town, the railway reserve to the south and the Lake to the north. The topography also serves to create variations in character, rising from the Lake and creek beds to an apex just west of Corangamite Street.

The earliest residential area, between Murray Street and the Lake, is set out on a regular grid pattern, with topography that slopes towards the lake.

The main commercial centre south of Murray Street was formerly comprised of small sites which would have supported small scale buildings that provided a frontage to the street (see map **right**). This fine grain character still exists, particularly in the core retail area, which has a high level of amenity (see map on **opposite page**).

The historic pattern of development has, however, been substantially eroded by large areas of surface carparking and larger retail buildings such as in Bromfield Street. Bromfield's streetscape also suffers from inconsistent streetscape treatments and parking arrangements.

The amenity of the western part of Murray Street is compromised by its vehicle-oriented retail offer and lack of streetscape treatments and street trees.

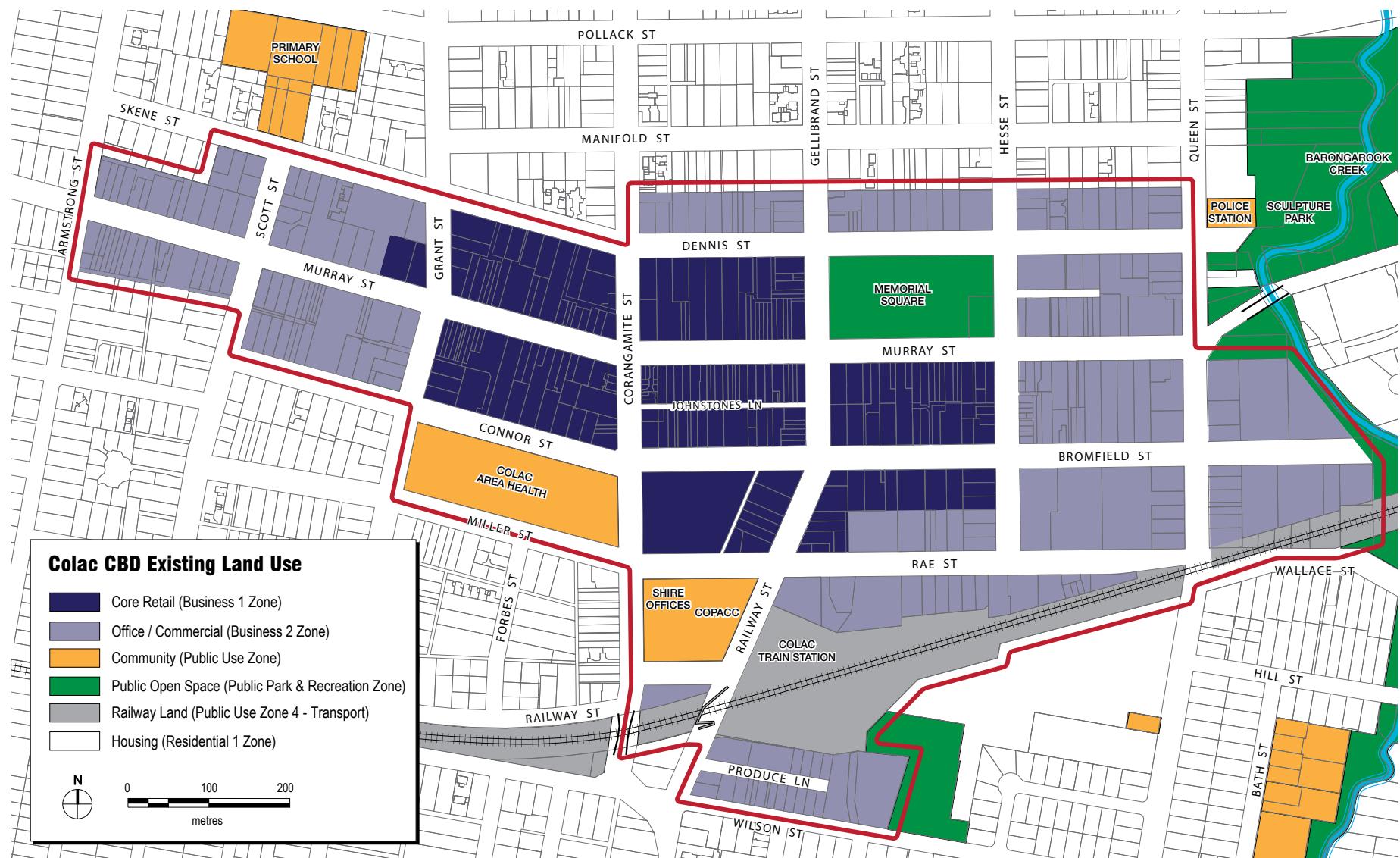
Historic Colac Parish Plan



Some of the office areas, such as Dennis Street, have a mixed quality which begins to blend into the surrounding residential areas.

A few significant pedestrian lanes and arcades linking Bromfield Street and Murray Street retain this sense of a more intricate and pedestrian friendly urban environment.

The close proximity of COPACC, the railway station and Colac Area Health to the centre of Colac are assets to the CBD and its vibrancy.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP**Colac CBD Existing Land Use**

- Core Retail (Business 1 Zone)
- Office / Commercial (Business 2 Zone)
- Community (Public Use Zone)
- Public Open Space (Public Park & Recreation Zone)
- Railway Land (Public Use Zone 4 - Transport)
- Housing (Residential 1 Zone)



0 100 200
metres



2

Directions

Vision

In the next 20 years Colac's CBD will:

Become known as the 'Botanic Garden City'

Be a pedestrian-focussed place, accessible for people of all ages and abilities

Grow as a thriving rural centre of retail, business and community services

Connect to its natural systems of the Lake and creek corridors

Proudly express its heritage in the built and natural environment

Be renowned for its collection of great buildings from all eras of the City's development

Present an impressive image along the Princes Highway corridor, from the edges of the City to its core



2.1 Colac: Botanic Garden City

Colac's remarkable Botanic Gardens is a key feature of the town and an important part of its identity and heritage. The gardens, located adjacent to Lake Colac and within walking distance of the CBD, are one of the most impressive in regional Victoria.

BOTANIC GARDEN CITY

Opportunities exist for strengthening the physical and thematic connection between the Botanic Gardens, the CBD and the town generally. Colac could become renowned as the 'Botanic Garden City', whereby a 'living botanic collection' is extended through the streets of the town.

This concept has the potential to form the basis of the town's urban design themes and to become part of a memorable township identity. It would be brought together in the planning and design for the town's entrances and public realm, and in the creation of pedestrian-focussed streets that are characterised by their tree planting.

Over time, trees can become a major sculptural element within the township and offer seasonal displays of colour and foliage. Different

types of planting could be established within particular locations, such as pocket parks, 'pause places' in key pedestrian streets or the CBD entrances, creating variation in streetscape character. Botanical walking routes around the town could be developed, with identification plaques, educational information and wayfinding signage.

The first priority should be to prepare an 'Urban Forest Strategy' so that the overall vision for the Botanic Garden City can be established, and details established for planting themes, species selection, priority locations, staging of plantings and maintenance regimes. It will be essential that Council ensure ongoing resources and staffing are available to achieve the Botanic Garden City vision.

There are many examples of other towns that derive their identity from planting themes. Some examples are provided on the **following pages**.



Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens, Hobart



Alfred Nicholas Gardens, Dandenong Ranges



Colac Botanic Gardens

TOWNS RENOWNED FOR THEIR TREE PLANTING

PRECEDENTS

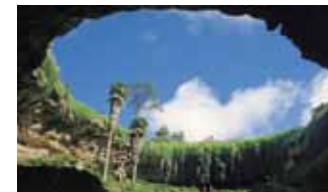
BRIGHT AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Bright runs a diverse and vibrant autumn festival to coincide with the autumnal colours of its deciduous trees.



MOUNT GAMBIER

Mount Gambier is renowned for its sink hole Gardens.



GRAFTON JACARANDA FESTIVAL

The Grafton Jacaranda Festival is well known in Australia for its abundance of purple floral display.



VERNET-LES-BAINS

The whole town of Vernet-les-Bains in southern France is a 'village arboretum' containing over 2000 specimens, many of which are labelled for identification.

Vernet-les-Bains
Village arboretum



MELBOURNE

Often referred to as Australia's 'garden city', Melbourne has an abundance of parks, gardens and tree avenues. It also hosts open garden schemes and Melbourne International Flower Show.



CAMPERDOWN

Camperdown is renowned for its central median strip planting and avenues of mature trees.



AVENUES OF HONOUR

Various country towns in Australia are known for their large tree avenues along the main entrance road and through the town centre using single species as a memorial.

E.g. Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Macedon, Daylesford.

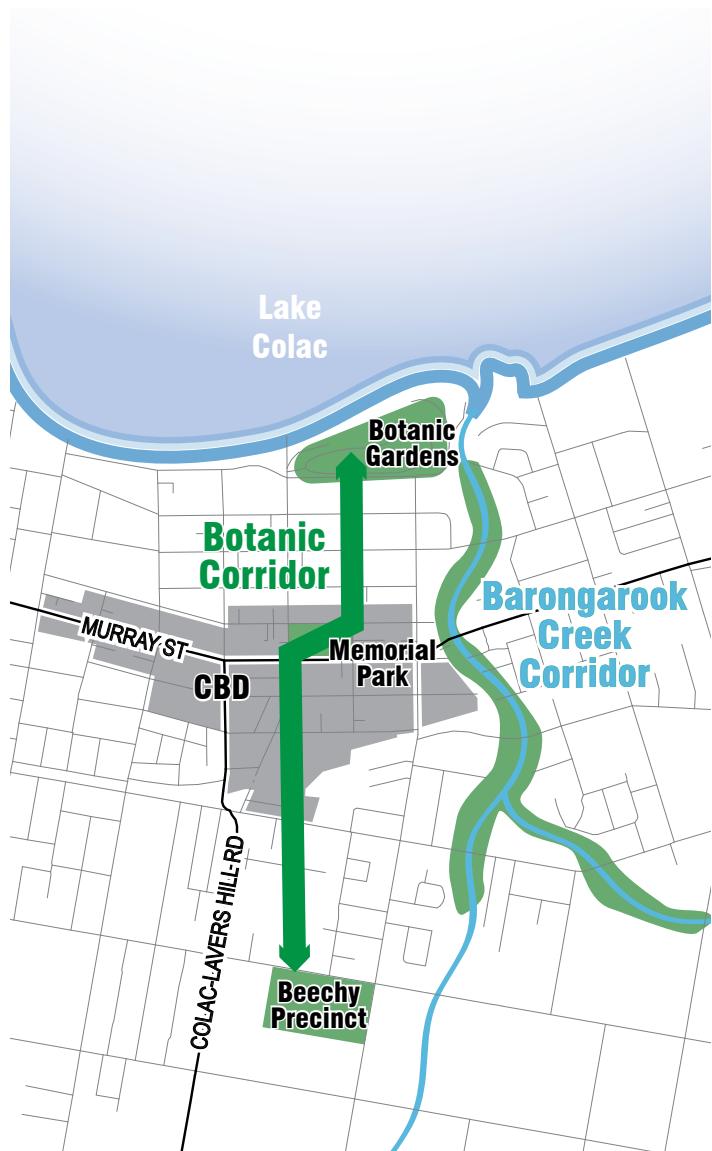


TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE WA

This Town is renowned for its unique and iconic treescapes to the north of Perth.



BOTANIC & BARONGAROOK CREEK CORRIDORS MAP



BOTANIC CORRIDOR

The Colac Structure Plan 2007 recommends that the Botanic Gardens and Lake Colac become better connected to the CBD both visually and physically with improved streetscape schemes, especially along Gellibrand and Corangamite, with the objective of making the streets more attractive and inviting to walk, cycle and drive.

This proposal (shown on the map to the left) encourages corridors of tree planting along Corangamite, Hesse and especially Gellibrand streets, linking the Lake and Botanic Gardens to the CBD, train station and Beechy precinct.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The 'Botanic Garden City' idea offers many opportunities for involvement of the community and local businesses. For example, the project could be enhanced by community involvement in the process of planting and maintenance of individual trees within a particular street or area.

Local timber industries could assist with propagation and training community groups in tree maintenance. They may also be able to offer sponsorship funding. The project could potentially link with public education programs or study units in schools.

PLANTING THEMES

Several different planting theme options could be adopted for the 'botanic living collections' idea. The collection could be based around themes of species, geographic origin or seasonal floral display, for example. Public spaces could also be planted with productive gardens. A selection of possible planting themes are shown on the [next page](#).

Key considerations for the selection of a planting theme are for vegetation to be suitable for a street environment and appropriate for the climatic and environmental conditions of the Colac region.

IDEAS FOR PLANTING THEMES

IDEA 1: GENUS COLLECTION	IDEA 2: GEOGRAPHIC COLLECTION	IDEA 3: SEASONAL COLLECTION	IDEA 4: BOTANIC COLLECTION	IDEA 5: AUSTRALIAN COLLECTION
<p>Planting selection based on a selected botanical genus (potentially rare or diverse) e.g. Quercus (oaks), Corymbia and Eucalyptus (gum trees).</p>   	<p>Planting selections based on a geographic areas e.g. Northern Australian, south-west Victorian, South African. Single or multiple geographic collections could be utilised.</p>   	<p>Planting selection based on a seasonal flower or leaf show. This is an opportunity to create a new festival around the seasonal time, or work with existing town festivals e.g. deciduous trees for autumn colour, wattle or plum trees for their explosive flowering season.</p>   	<p>Planting selection based on rare and iconic trees of the Colac Botanic Gardens e.g. Araucaria bidwillii (Bunya Bunya Pine), Stenocarpus sinuatus (Firewheel tree) and Cupresses forbesii (Tecate Cypress). This would link species in the gardens with the town centre.</p>   	<p>Planting selection based on distinctive trees of Australia which are underutilised within the streetscape e.g. Brachychiton populneus (Kurrajong Bottle tree), Brachychiton populneus x acerifolius (Illawarra Flame Tree) and Stenocarpus sinuatus (Firewheel tree).</p>   

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

To develop a unifying design theme for central Colac - 'Colac Botanic Garden City' - as a memorable and identifying feature of the town.

To create landscape links between the main activity areas of the CBD and its principal open spaces.

To improve the amenity and appearance of Colac's main pedestrian streets and town entrances through the strategic planting of substantial trees and vegetation.

Strategies & Actions

2.1.1 Prepare an 'Urban Forest Strategy' for all of Colac and Elliminnyt to:

- Set a vision for the long term botanic theme.
- Determine species selection.
- Identify priority locations for planting (streets, public space or private land). This might include:
 - Memorial Square
 - Murray Street West
 - Eastern Entrance and Barongarook Creek
 - Outer CBD entrances (particularly the key locations of the cutting and overpass)
 - Other major traffic routes
 - The 'Botanic Corridor' (Corangamite, Gellibrand, Hesse and/or Queen Streets)
 - Pocket parks or small 'pause places' along key pedestrian streets.

- Review existing Tree Asset Management Plan.
- Establish staged implementation program of tree planting.
- Detail required maintenance regimes.
- Establish identification and signage system for botanic collection.

2.1.2 Commence implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy for selected priority locations:

- Undertake arboricultural assessment of existing trees.
- Remove low quality trees and undergrowth, replace with new trees and instal new 'infill' tree planting where required.
- Implement planting within priority CBD streets.
- Implement planting within the 'Botanic Corridor' along key north-south streets and the Barongarook Creek.



Murray St, Colac



Colac Botanic Gardens

- Establish and commence maintenance regimes including the allocation of added Shire resources.
- 2.1.3 Investigate the potential to include local businesses and the community in planting programs, for example:
- Partnerships with local businesses (such as the local timber industry) for sponsorship of planting programs or assistance with propagation.
 - Integration of planting programs with workplace training or work experience for secondary school, TAFE or university students.
 - Opportunities for involvement of community groups or school children in planting programs.
- 2.1.4 Develop marketing programs to promote the ‘Colac: Botanic Garden City’ theme. Consider how this can be incorporated into the city branding for Colac.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.



2.2 Arrival Experience

The Princes Highway forms the arrival experience into central Colac from the east or west, and is a principal point of entry to the town. Attractive in parts, the experience of arrival along the Highway from both directions is reasonably generic with little to distinguish Colac from many other large rural towns.

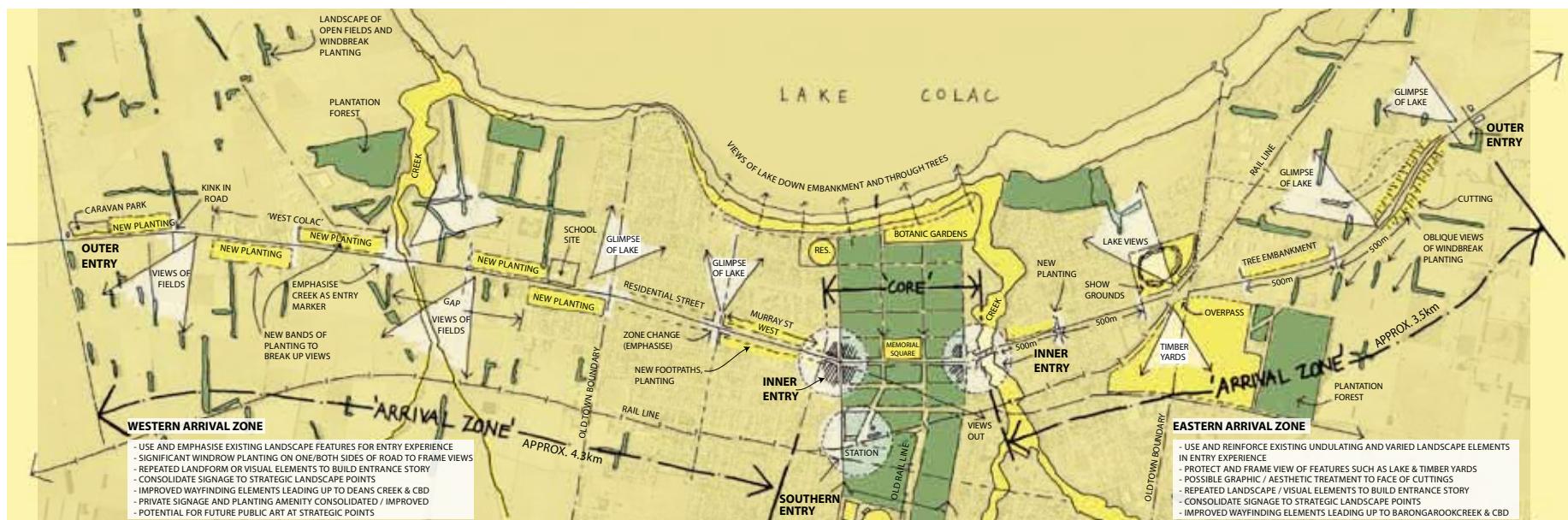
The undulating topography combined with shifts in road alignment at key points in the east-west journey across town create a number of distinct points, pauses or realignments within what might be normally understood as a continuous main street. Side views in different directions give a great variety to the main street, and provide quite different experiences travelling in easterly and westerly directions.

Features of the arrival experience include expansive paddocks, rolling hills, cypress windrows, vegetated creek valleys and occasional glimpses of Lake Colac. Due to the meandering nature of the road from the east the journey from this direction is generally more

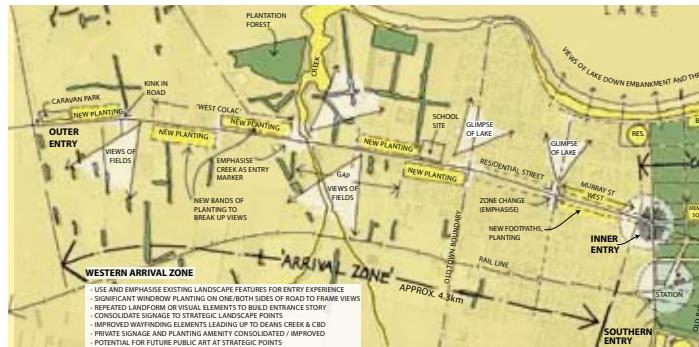
interesting than that from the west. However, in both directions there are features which detract from the experience, including excessive signage on both public and private land, overhead power cables (and associated tree lopping), the disused service stations and inconsistent landscape treatments.

Colac CBD can also be entered from a number of other points including from the south along Colac-Lavers Hill Road and south-east along Colac-Forrest Road (as shown on the Study Area map on page 4). While detailed analysis of these entrances was not part of the scope of this Project, these are also important entrances and further work should be done to upgrade these entrance corridors.

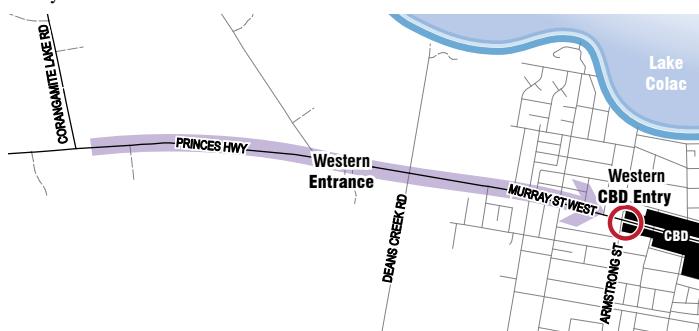
The arrival experience and the unfolding sequence of spaces and landscapes from east and west has been analysed, as shown in the map below and over the **following pages**.



Analysis and concept plan of entrances



Analysis of western entries to the town



Western entries to the town (outer & inner sequences)



Outer western entry point with views across open fields

OUTER WESTERN ENTRY SEQUENCE (from Corangamite Lake Road to Cants Road)

The outer western entry ‘arrival zone’ is characterised by relatively flat topography and a straight road alignment as shown **below left**. The highway passes through different areas of development, interspersed with farmland, including the caravan park, the West Colac peripheral / large format commercial strip and the Deans Creek corridor. The outer western entry is long and has a mixed, dispersed character, and the point of arrival in the Colac township is ill-defined.

This sequence of entry spaces from the west could be improved with pockets of new planting of dense vegetation and other elements such as earth mounds constructed along the road edge. Breaks in this treatment could be used to frame views to open fields and the Lake and increase the sense of drama of the arrival experience.

Deans Creek should be emphasised as an outer entrance marker and important open space / wildlife corridor with additional planting and signage. Emphasis at the point of the road realignment at Cants Road can also be made through new significant planting.

INNER WESTERN ENTRY SEQUENCE (Cants Road to Corangamite Street)

To the east of Cants Road, development becomes gradually more defined and dense and the Highway alignment shifts, creating a point along the entry sequence.

This section of the entry sequence, is marked by the long straight road, with relatively flat topography and low scale buildings. Minimal street planting leaves the powerlines and poles and the clutter of large scale highway signage as the dominant features of this approach.

Important sites along this entry sequence are the former Colac High School and the driver reviver site. Regular planting of large scale trees would significantly improve the appearance of the highway at this point. A strategy for the co-ordination and design of signage is also required.

At Armstrong Street, an upgraded streetscape treatment with central median planting of street trees as currently exists in Murray Street east of Corangamite Street could commence, thus defining another section of the western entry sequence. From this point, the key intersections with the Highway could be emphasised through stronger built form that addresses each important corner location – Armstrong Street, Scott Street, Grant/Hart Streets and Corangamite Street. A concept plan has been developed for this section of Murray Street, included in **Section 3.3**.

At Corangamite Street, the road alignment shifts again and the vantage point of the higher ground allows the first view to the heart of the CBD and Memorial Square.

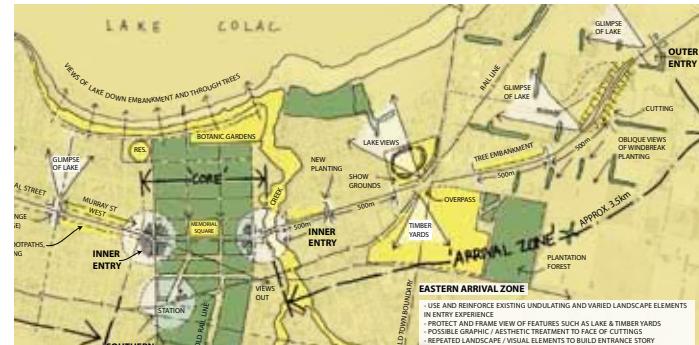
EASTERN ENTRY SEQUENCE (from Colac-Ballarat Road to Barongarook Creek)

The eastern CBD entry has a distinct series of arrival spaces and offers quite a different experience to the western entry. Here the landscaping is undulating and the spatial experience varied, as shown in the images to the right.

'Key moments' define points along the arrival journey. Firstly, glimpses of the Lake can be seen through trees and hedgerows, and pockets of substantial roadside planting. Next, the cutting is a clearly defined space and a point of road re-alignment. Finally, at Forest Street and the bridge, clear views of the Lake, showgrounds and timber yards are afforded - all significant features of Colac.

Barongarook Creek marks the eastern entry of the town proper, at the low point of the valley, looking up and across to the corner of the old Post Office building - a building which seems to recognize its role as a diagonal marker with its façade turning the corner to face this view. A concept plan has been developed for the eastern entrance to the CBD, included in **Section 3.2**.

The eastern entry could be enhanced by additional planting, in theme with the overall CBD planting strategy. The removal or improved appearance of the disused service station is a priority. Planting could create a stronger landscaping feature at the cutting and also be used to screen views to the industrial area from the Clark Street bridge.



Analysis of eastern entries to the town



Eastern entries to the town (outer & inner sequences)



Outer eastern approach to CBD – substantial planting, glimpses of Lake Colac

PLANTING THEMES & CONCEPTS

Colac's entrances are ideal locations to introduce the town's Botanic Garden City theme. For this reason, design treatments for improving the entrance experience from the east and west focus primarily on the creation of strong planting themes for each part of the journey.

Planting proposals within the highway verges depend on a number of specific parameters such as the VicRoads clear zone widths, speed limits, the width of the verges (road easement), negotiation with private land owners and possible future road duplication proposals. Street planting on the side of entrance corridors could be planted with fast-growing and short-lived species to provide a quick 'temporary' roadside landscape for the short term. Species such as Acacia grow quickly and typically have a life span of 10-15 years. If they have to be removed within this time frame due to future road duplication works, their loss will not have a long-term negative impact upon the local landscape and habitat, due to their short life-span.

The VicRoads standards recommend a clear zone adjacent to the edge of the carriageway (or road easement). The clear zone includes an area where trees with a diameter greater than 100mm should not be planted. The clear zone width depends on the operating speed, which is 10km more than the posted speed limits. Speed limits and clear zone widths are shown in the **diagram opposite**. Where there is a cutting into a hillside, the clear zone will not usually apply.

As the easement width varies along the south and north sides of the highway entering Colac township, a number of options are presented to allow for planting themes. Typical proposals include tree planting on low mounds, tree planting in bands /corridors on adjacent private land and short and long term tree planting on the road verges. Different planting themes can be used to mark key locations along the arrival zone, such as landmark buildings or significant changes in road alignment or land use. Stands of vegetation can be used to frame views. Opportunities for planting themes and treatments along arrival zone sections and key 'moments' are proposed on the **following pages**.

REDUCING VISUAL CLUTTER

In order to make the most of proposed landscaping improvements it is essential that these are complemented by a reduction in 'visual clutter' caused by signs, powerlines and other structures along the entrance corridors. Along Colac's entrance corridors there is so much signage that it detracts from the appearance of the town and reduces the effectiveness of individual signs.

Another significant feature of Colac's entrance corridors is the overhead powerlines which dominate the streetscapes. Not only do the powerlines detract from the appearance of the streetscapes, they also necessitate severe pruning of existing street trees and restrict opportunities for proposed plantings.

Powerlines have previously been relocated underground in central Murray Street, supporting a high standard of street tree planting and improved amenity in this area. The relocation of powerlines underground should be progressively extended along all of Colac's entrance corridors.

DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

As a starting point, detailed design development for each entrance corridor and a coordinated planting strategy will need to be undertaken. VicRoads should be involved in this process.

Landscaping around the overpass, to screen the immediate view of the industrial area, and along the cutting are priority projects that could be achieved in the short term. VicRoads have indicated that the highway duplication between Colac and Winchelsea could extend all the way through the cutting and up to Forest Street (near the overpass), and that funding and implementation for the improvement to the eastern entrance could be integrated into the highway duplication project.

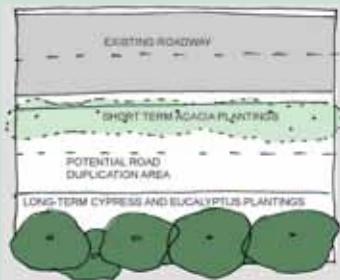
STRATEGIC PLANTING OPPORTUNITIES MAP



Note: This concept plan shows an indicative assessment of the planting opportunities. Detailed design of the planting within the roadside easement should be carried out to consider the specific conditions such as easement width, drain locations, services locations, speed limits, clear zones, private land ownership, cuttings and VicRoads guidelines. See: *VicRoads Supplement to Austroads Guide to Road Design - Part 6, 2010*, and *A guide to tree planting within Road Reserves 1987*, for more details.

100KM/HR SECTION PLANTING THEME

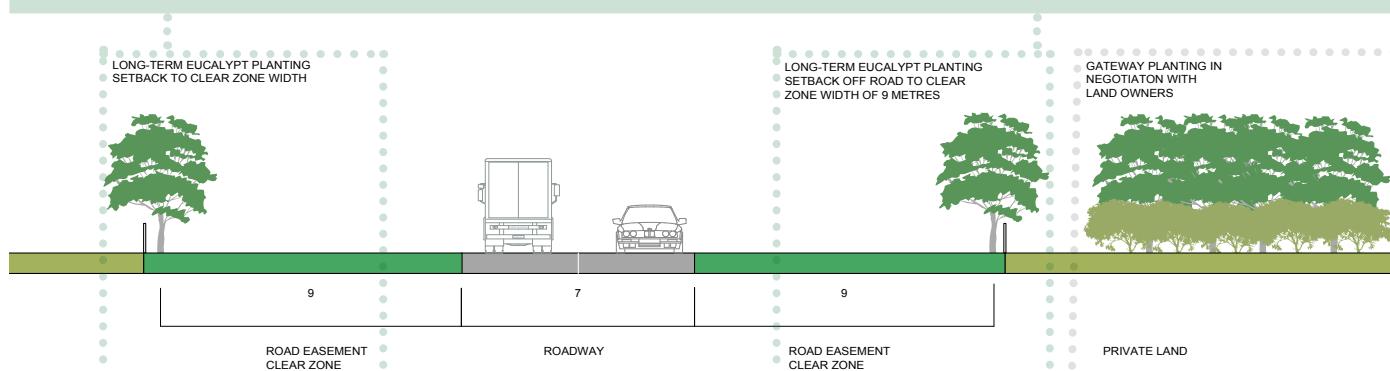
Tree planting on the road verges



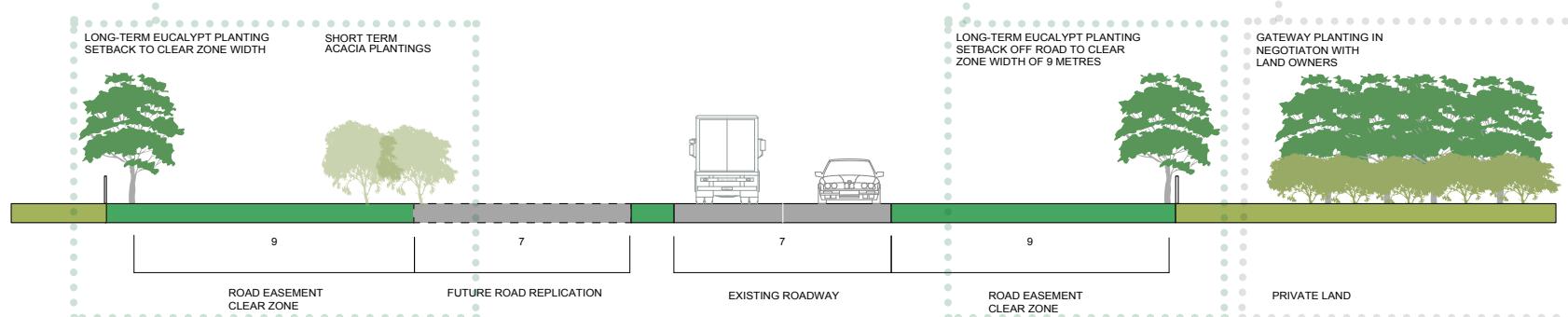
This idea is based on a typical rural roadside species selection, where native vegetation is planted in blocks, to create bold areas of spring colour and structure.

Species to include: Eucalypts and Acacia species.

Due to the possibility of future road widening/duplication, long-term tree plantings of Eucalypts and Cypress species can be set back from current road on the southern edge. Shorter-term plantings of Acacias can be made on current road verge (10-15 years) and incorporated into future carriageway division.



Typical section showing gateway planting, adjacent to an 100km/hr road (with existing roadway)



Typical section showing gateway planting, adjacent to a 100km/hr road (with future road replication)

PRIVATE LAND PLANTING THEME

New 'hedgerow' planting along 100km/hr sections will guide the siteline to geographic and landscape features.

'Road verge' planting



Eucalyptus Species Avenue planting



Acacia ieraphylla - Acacia species

'Road verge' planting treatment



Existing



Proposed

Banded tree planting on adjacent private land

Banded tree planting is proposed on private land adjacent to all the various speed sections of the arrival zones.

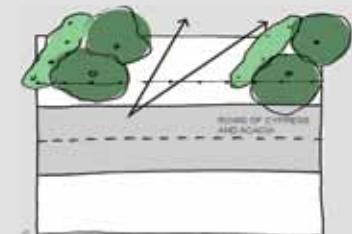
This idea is based on the existing landscape character of the Cypress windbreak planting.

Corridors of tree planting will accentuate the long views towards the lake, hills and the horizon.

Cypress belts, which are an existing feature of the region and the local landscape, will be planted in rows.

Wattle will grow quickly give a late winter/spring colour interest and the Cypress will give all-year round colour and structure.

Please note: This is an aspirational design only as it relies on negotiations between the council and the private land owners.



80KM/HR SECTION PLANTING THEME

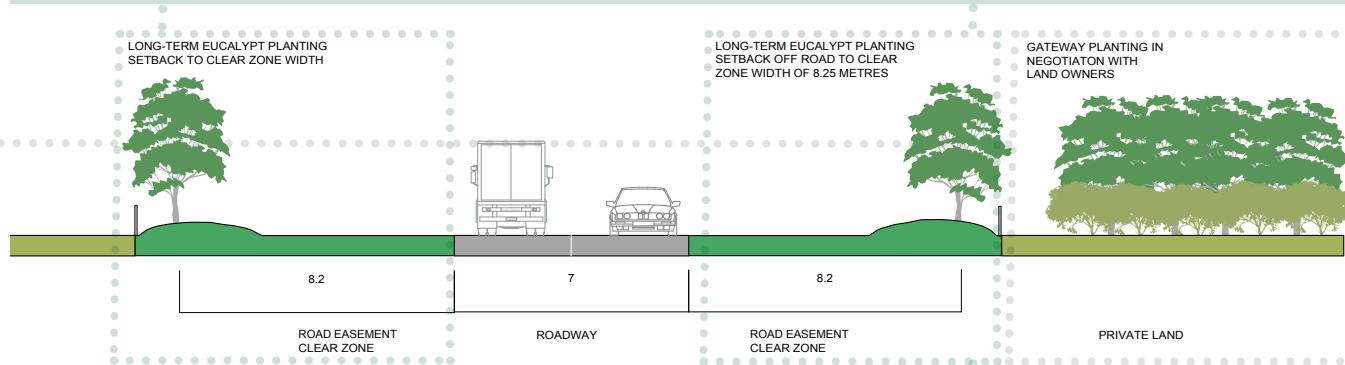
Tree planting within the road easement on low mounds to enhance key views



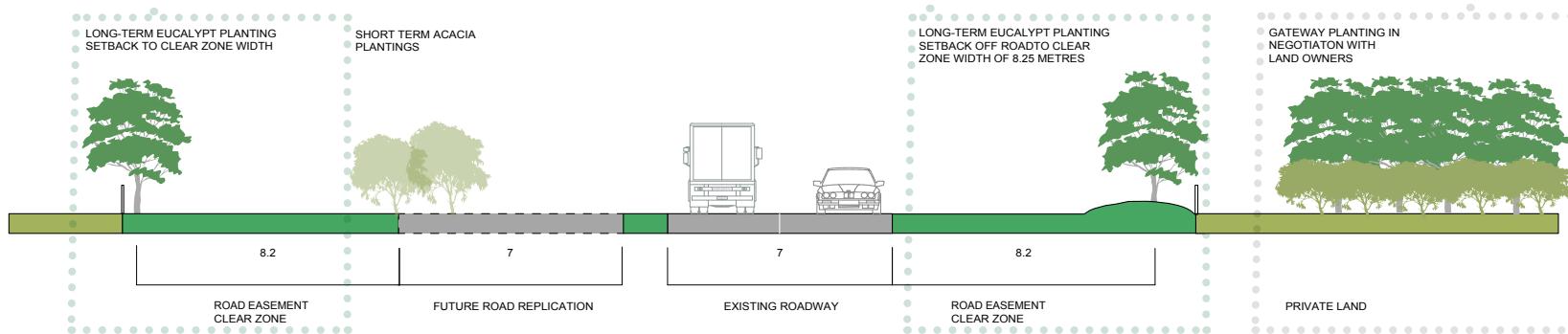
This idea is based on a typical rural roadside verge character, where native vegetation is planted in a ‘natural’ pattern.

Low mounds (set back at least 1m from the carriageway) are placed periodically to frame the key views from the roadway and to provide an town entrance experience. The mounds and vegetation should be kept away from intersection to ensure clear sight lines on the approach to, and at intersections.

Species to include: Eucalypts, Cypress, Conifer and Acacia species.

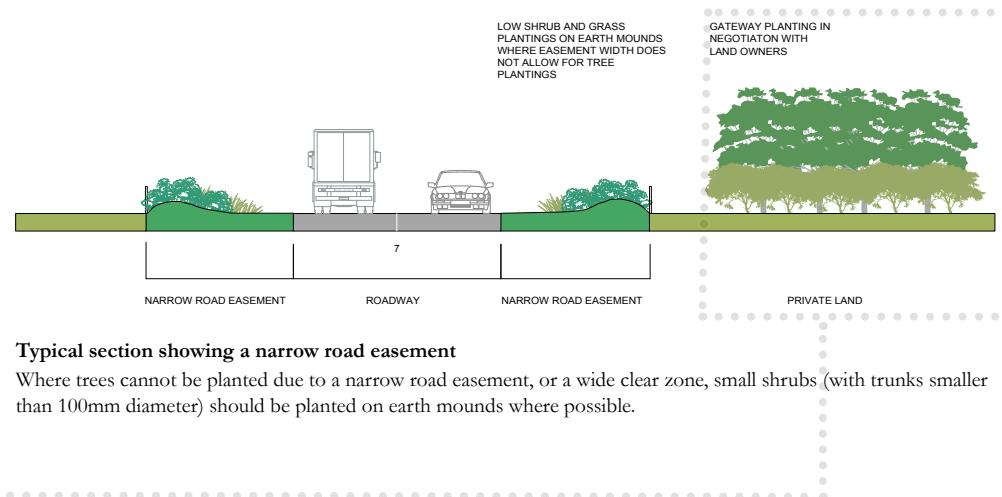


Typical section showing gateway planting, adjacent to an 80km/hr road (with existing roadway)



Typical section showing gateway planting, adjacent to an 80km/hr road (with future road replication)

50 & 60KM/HR SECTION PLANTING THEME



Typical section showing a narrow road easement

Where trees cannot be planted due to a narrow road easement, or a wide clear zone, small shrubs (with trunks smaller than 100mm diameter) should be planted on earth mounds where possible.

'A SERIES OF MOMENTS'

The three types of key entry 'moments' along the arrival zone to the CBD are:

- 1 Views towards the Lake
- 2 The cutting
- 3 Views to the showgrounds and industrial area

These 'moments' are identified on the Strategic Planting Opportunities Map on [page 25](#) and their proposed treatment is explained [right](#) and on the [following page](#).

Moment Types 1 & 3: Framing key views & screening bad views

Street tree planting within the streetscapes around the Eastern fringe of Colac will improve the aesthetics of the area and enhance the 'urban fringe' and 'timber yard' character.

Strategic planting to frame key moments and views (i.e. from the Clark Street bridge to the lake and the showgrounds, and screening the industrial areas).

Strategic screen planting to improve negative views.

Mixture of low planting and some trees.

Moment Types 1 & 3 : Planting to screen and frame views



Moment Type 2: Cutting planting

Planting grasses, native daisies and wildflowers along the embankment will provide colour and seasonal interest.

Higher planting on top of the ridge will emphasize a sense of scale and enclosure.

Moment Type 2 : Potential species for cutting and embankment planting



Carpobrotus spp. - Pig Face



Leucophyta brownii -
Cushion Bush

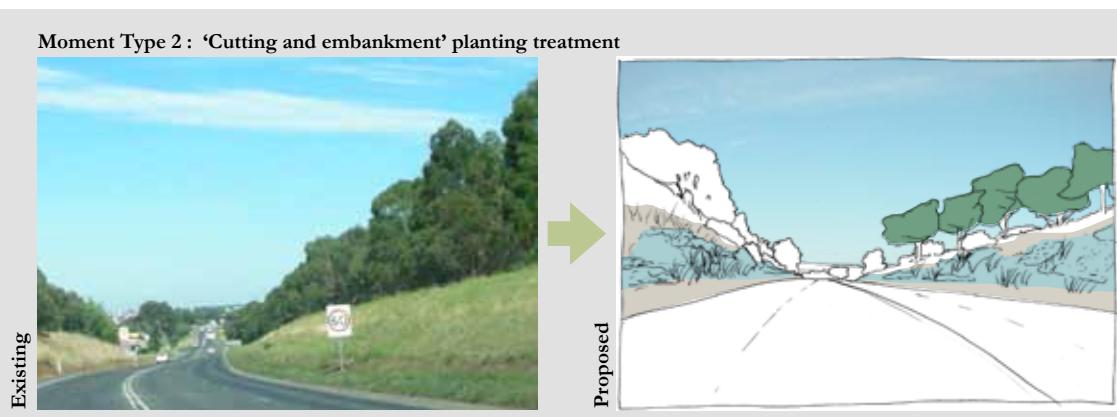


Brachyscome multifida -
Native Daisy

Moment Types 1 & 3 : 'Screen and frame' planting treatment



Moment Type 2 : 'Cutting and embankment' planting treatment



RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

- To enhance the arrival experience into central Colac through the use of distinct planting themes.
- To commence the town's Botanic Garden City theme at its entrances.
- To accentuate and enhance key landmarks in the arrival experience.
- To create a variety of spatial experiences as a part of the entry into the town centre.
- To improve the amenity and safety of entrance corridors.

Strategies & Actions

- 2.2.1 Develop detailed design concepts for the eastern and western entrance corridors in consultation with VicRoads and adjoining landowners. These design concepts will:
- Emphasise important landmarks such as changes in road alignment, creek corridors, significant buildings, land uses or open spaces.
 - Emphasise key moments along the arrival journey.
 - Frame views to the Lake and surrounding countryside.

Eastern Entrance

- 2.2.2 Liaise with VicRoads about the integration of design and funding for landscaping along the eastern entry corridor with the highway duplication project.

- 2.2.3 Undertake landscaping treatment along the cutting within the eastern entrance corridor.
- 2.2.4 Undertake landscaping treatment around the overpass of the eastern entrance corridor.
- 2.2.5 Undertake landscaping treatment to frame key views within the eastern entrance corridor.
- 2.2.6 Undertake general landscaping treatment to enhance the eastern entrance corridor, appropriate to the various speed zones of 100, 80 or 60 km/hr.
- 2.2.7 Engage with private landowners to discuss planting on private property within the eastern entrance corridor, and progressively implement additional planting.

Western Entrance

- 2.2.8 Undertake landscaping treatment to frame key views within the western entrance corridor.
- 2.2.9 Undertake general landscaping treatment to enhance the western entrance corridor, appropriate to the various speed zones of 100, 80 or 60 km/hr.
- 2.2.10 Engage with private landowners to discuss planting on private property within the western entrance corridor, and progressively implement additional planting.
- 2.2.11 Provide updated signage for western entry gateway.



General

2.2.12 Undertake and implement a strategy for the co-ordination and design of all signage along the entire entrance corridor. This would include:

- Audit all signs on public property and within the road reserve for the purpose of reducing excessive, poorly maintained or redundant signage.
- Work with private landowners to remove or improve signage on private property.
- Work with VicRoads or relevant Council Departments to rationalise directional, information and road safety signage within the road reserve and other public land.
- Prepare an advertising signs policy and implement in the Colac Otway Planning Scheme to manage signage on public and private property, particularly pole signs, promotional signs and rooftop signs.

2.2.13 Progressively relocate powerlines underground along the length of Colac's entrance corridors.

2.2.14 Investigate the upgrading of other entrance corridors into Colac CBD.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

2.3 Streets for People

Colac CBD currently experiences a high volume of through traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, due to its location on the Princes Highway. This traffic significantly detracts from the CBD's amenity and safety.

Colac Otway Shire and VicRoads are currently investigating options to provide an alternative route for heavy vehicles and a road hierarchy that will divert freight traffic around the centre. This is a major initiative that will provide opportunities to improve pedestrian, bicycle and local traffic movements, as well as other public realm enhancements within the CBD.

At present, the physical configuration and management of roads in the CBD facilitate car access and circulation. The roads are wide and dominated by moving cars or car parking areas, with limited congestion or traffic calming measures. This results in high traffic speeds and a poor quality pedestrian environment.

Access and movement initiatives developed as part of the Colac CBD & Entrances Project are intended to support:

- Creation of an accessible, safe and inviting public realm that encourages pedestrian and bicycle movement and connections.
- Enhancement of existing connections to, from and between key destinations.
- The future establishment of an alternate heavy vehicle route and calming of traffic within the CBD.
- Resolution of existing traffic management issues.
- Optimal use and management of existing parking facilities.



ROAD HIERARCHY

A hierarchy of road types has been developed in order to clarify the proposed function of key CBD roads, shown in the map on the next page.

Currently, Murray, Corangamite, Rae and Queen Streets (shown in pink) serve as regional connectors, providing access to the heart of Colac from other parts of town and beyond. The role of Murray Street as a regional connector would change over time as an alternative heavy vehicle route is implemented.

Vehicle circulation and access would remain an important function of the CBD lengths of Queen, Dennis, Corangamite, Connor and Bromfield Streets (shown in gold), particularly as these street provide access to the town's major car parks and shopping centres. The remaining CBD streets (shown in green) would serve local access needs.

The proposed road network management structure should inform and complement the official road hierarchy (currently under development). This means that roads nominated as having a town access and circulation function could remain as arterials in the official road hierarchy, but be managed to facilitate local circulation.

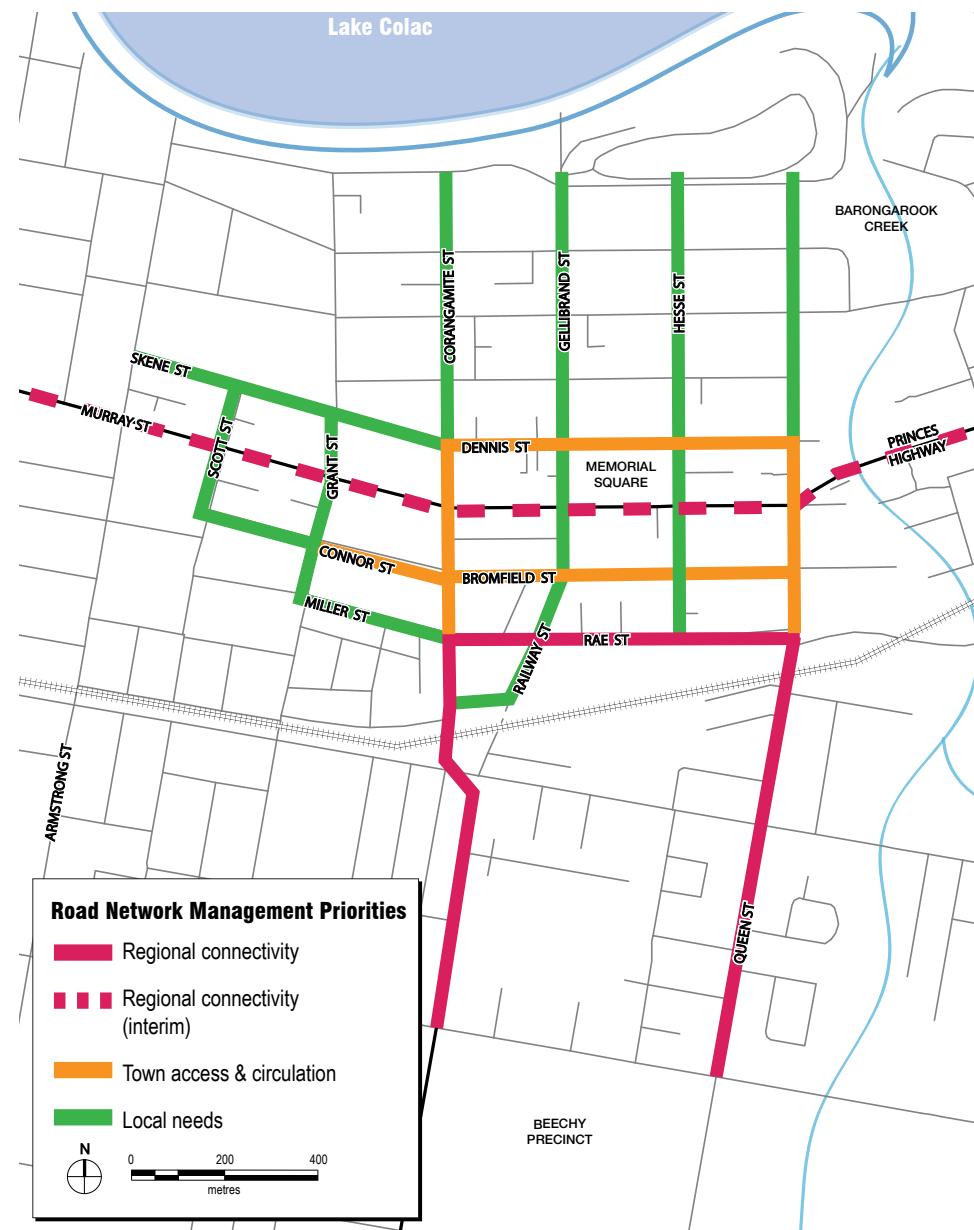
The management of arterial roads to promote local access and circulation is now widespread in activity areas throughout Victoria, and has successfully contributed to improvements in safety and increases in walking and cycling activity.

Traffic Speed

The introduction of a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit throughout central Colac would provide greater amenity and safety for all road users and encourage walking and cycling activity.

The implementation of 40 kilometre per hour speed limit zones within activity and strip shopping centres is now widespread throughout Victoria and has successfully contributed to a substantial reduction in accident occurrences. Importantly, the substantial research that has accompanied the reduction of speed limits in urban

ROAD NETWORK MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES MAP



PEDESTRIANS

areas across Victoria shows that there is an insignificant impact on travel time and congestion.

Heavy traffic diversion

The diversion of through highway vehicles from the CBD will make a significant contribution to the image and amenity of the town. In the short term, the focus should be on establishing an alternative heavy truck route; a longer term measure would be to establish an alternative route for all through vehicles.

The downgrading of Murray Street as a through route will allow further traffic calming measures to be implemented and enhancement of the CBD's main pedestrian street. Detailed concept plans have been developed for Murray Street, included in **Section 3.3**.

As the location and timing of the proposed alternative heavy truck route have yet to be confirmed, the Colac CBD & Entrances Project has identified a series of initiatives that can be implemented immediately and enhanced further when the alternative heavy truck route is fully operational. As a long-term strategy, the recommendations are intended to be both aspirational and flexible. There should be no need to delay implementation pending the outcome of other planning processes.

The promotion of a more pedestrian friendly town centre environment requires greater emphasis to be placed on the amenity of Colac's transport system for walkers and people using mobility aids. The management of streets should no longer be primarily focussed on the needs of the car, but instead aiming to improve access for all people.

Key pedestrian routes within the CBD have been identified, as shown on the map opposite. These routes link the focal points of the CBD's activity, including Murray Street, Memorial Square, Barongarook Creek, the core retail areas around Bromfield Street, the Connor Street Health Precinct, the Railway Station, Lake Colac, the Botanic Gardens and the Beechy Precinct.

Opportunities to enhance the pedestrian network include traffic management projects such as upgraded roundabouts and additional crossing points, discussed over the **following pages**.

As a priority, an accessibility and pedestrian safety audit should be undertaken to confirm the priorities for upgrades to pedestrian crossings and roundabouts shown on the Pedestrian Management Priorities Map.



Heavy vehicles along Murray Street



Roundabouts

There are numerous roundabouts located throughout central Colac. Most of these are designed to facilitate car access and circulation, have no pedestrian crossings and force pedestrians away from the desired travel path along the building line (see two photos right).

In some instances, different legs of the same roundabout have different treatments, creating confusion and safety hazards for pedestrians and drivers.

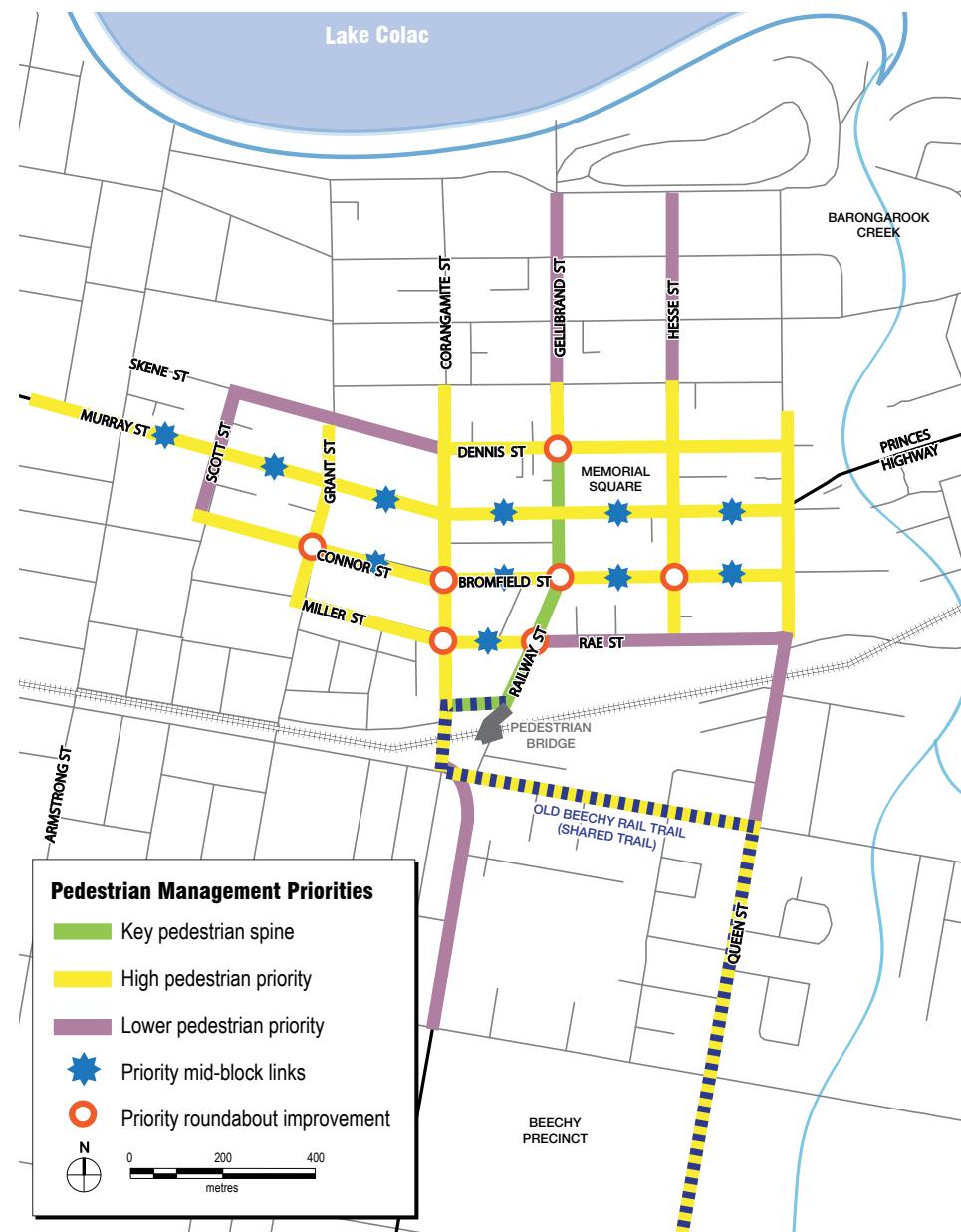
Increasingly in urban areas, roundabouts are now retrofitted with pedestrian (zebra) crossings on all legs. Where budgets permit, these zebra crossings are also accompanied by raised platforms to physically slow down vehicles (see conceptual photos below right of a raised zebra crossing before and after installation on the roundabout at Hart Street and Connor Street).

A program retrofit initiative for all roundabouts should focus first on installing painted zebra crossings on all legs, to be followed by implementation of raised platforms as budgets permit. Priority should be given to sensitive areas (such as Colac Area Health on Connor Street and Corangamite Street) and those intersections experiencing the highest number of pedestrian crossing movements.



Roundabout planting and design treatment, Swan Hill

PEDESTRIAN MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES MAP



Safety issues need to be considered to determine the type of treatment required and ensure that the crossing operates satisfactorily. In areas where raised crossings are not initially implemented and that have high traffic speeds, the location of the crossing relative to the roundabout should be considered to ensure pedestrian safety (while providing as direct a connection as possible). The extent of separation of the crossing from the roundabout, lighting and visibility issues need to be considered to ensure pedestrian safety, as current conditions are inappropriate at a number of roundabouts.

Mid-block Crossings

There are numerous mid-block locations throughout central Colac where pedestrians are crossing the road without the assistance of a formalised crossing. Given the width of the CBD streets, this can be difficult or unsafe, particularly for people with limited mobility. The photos opposite highlight the wide carriageway and lack of pedestrian crossing opportunities.

Safe crossing facilities are required for all key pedestrian routes. Locations in the high activity zones and near Colac Area Health should be prioritised for implementation, as shown on the Pedestrian Management Priorities map on the [previous page](#).

Treatments include painted zebra crossings (ideally with flashing pedestrian lights), raised platforms and pedestrian refuges within the central median or footpath extensions. The conceptual photos on the [right](#) show potential mid-block zebra crossing treatments on Murray and Bromfield Streets.

The type of treatment and priority will be dependent on safety considerations, the volume of pedestrians and the budget allowance. For example, areas that experience high levels of truck traffic may warrant installation of pedestrian signals instead of zebra crossings.



The majority of roundabouts provide no assistance to pedestrians



Conceptual photos of a raised zebra crossing on the roundabout at Hart St and Connor St intersection



Conceptual photos of mid-block zebra crossing treatments on Murray and Bromfield Sts

Pedestrian Permeability

A network of laneways and arcades in the commercial centre can provide opportunities for mid-block shortcuts, opening up a range of inviting, 'hidden' spaces that offer different experiences and enticements. Some of these laneways may be on private land which will require negotiation with owners and developers.

Johnstone's Lane (**below right**) is a great example of the potential that laneways have for creating exciting and intimate spaces within the CBD.

Other lanes such as Amezdroz Lane (**below**) could be enhanced through the introduction of active frontages, pavement treatment, lighting, planting or artwork.

As a frequently used pedestrian connection between the Station, COPACC and the core retail areas, Amezdroz Laneway is a priority project. In addition to upgrading the public realm, there are several redevelopment sites abutting the lane where opportunity is also available for private development to better treat the lane from an urban design point of view with well designed, active frontages.



Amezdroz Lane



Johnstones Lane



Shared Zones

The pedestrianisation of the Colac CBD could be significantly enhanced by the creation of selected shared traffic zones in areas of high pedestrian activity. Here pedestrians have the right of way over motorists and cyclists and can walk across the road space in any place at any time. Cars are permitted at a speed limited to 10 kilometres per hour (as defined by VicRoads) and within a narrowed space. The surface treatment of shared zones is designed to clearly signify a different street condition and communicate to drivers that speeds must be very low.

A shared zone could be created on Gellibrand Street at the western end of Memorial Square, illustrated in the conceptual images. For special events the shared zone could be closed to vehicle traffic completely. A detailed concept plan for this shared zone has been prepared and included in **Section 3**.

This design treatment could be applied around all perimeter streets of Memorial Square and eventually extended south along Gellibrand Street, as shown in the aerial view **below**, linking south to the Colac train station.



Conceptual photos of a shared traffic zone on Gellibrand St on the western end of Memorial Square

PROPOSED SHARED ZONES MAP



Examples of a shared traffic zone

BICYCLE MOVEMENT

Bicycle lanes are provided in some areas of central Colac. The current extent of the bike lane network can be expanded to improve connectivity between destinations within and to/from the CBD. Existing lanes are generally not appropriately linked, limiting the ability for cyclists to travel safely and conveniently. Lane treatments are discontinuous on some streets and inconsistent between streets. Lastly, there is conflict between car parking and bike lanes (both for parallel and angle parking), affecting safety conditions for cyclists. The photos **below** illustrate examples of existing bicycle facilities throughout central Colac.

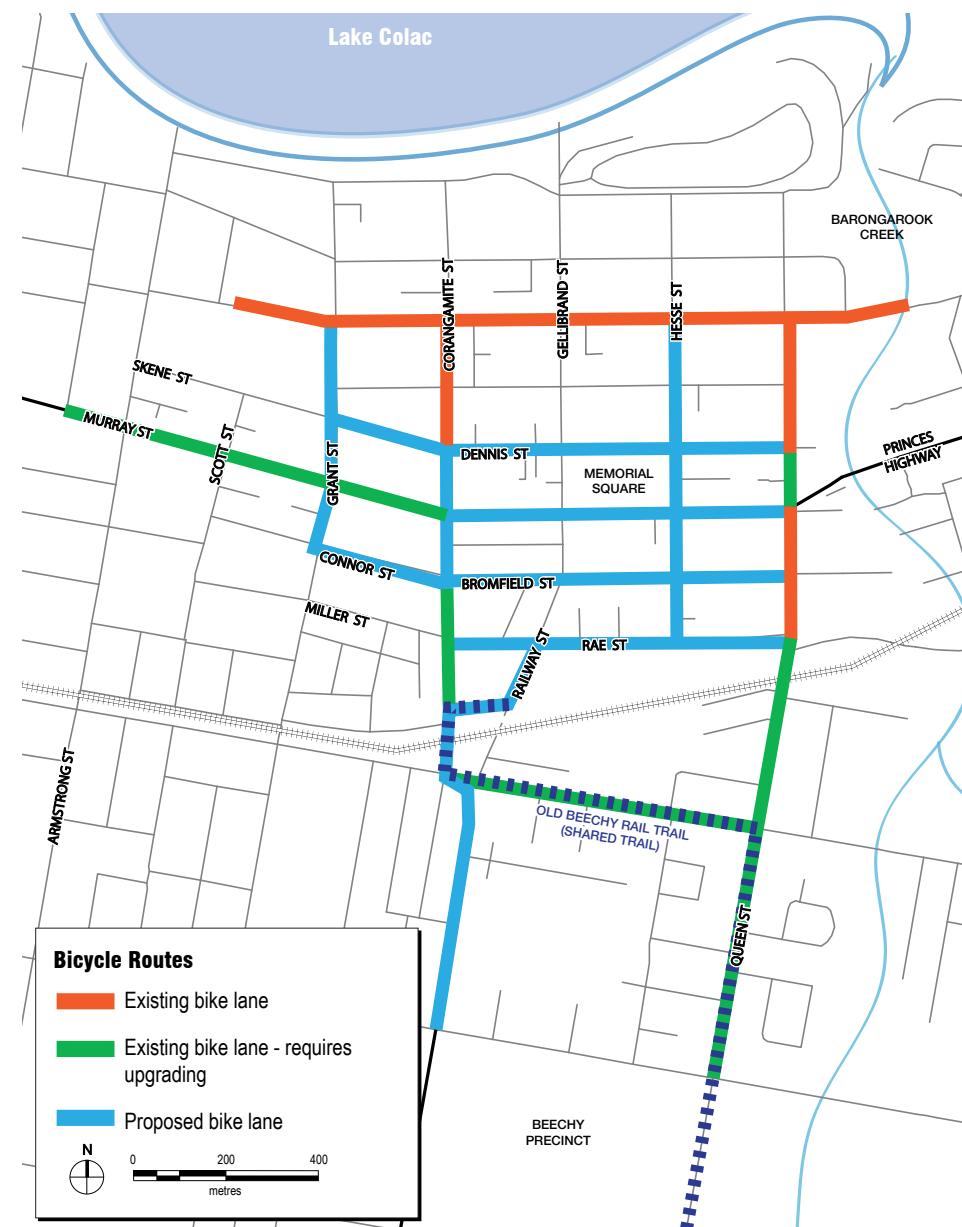
When considering changes to parking configuration, safety implications for other users need to be considered. Specifically, the potential safety impact for cyclists is an issue as angle parking is far more dangerous than parallel parking with respect to cyclists (as motorists are ‘reversing blind’ into cyclists’ paths). Angle parking can give rise to an abrupt right angle conflict to an unsuspecting cyclist who may have no room to avoid collision. Within this context, and as a matter of safe and good design principle, angle parking should be avoided on routes where cycling activity will be promoted.

Additional bicycle facilities are required throughout the CBD. This includes bicycle parking at key destinations such as shopping areas or schools, drinking fountains and bicycle route information.



Existing bicycle conditions in Colac

BICYCLE ROUTES MAP



BUS STOPS

Colac is well serviced by three frequent bus services operated by Colac Transit in and around the town centre. The three bus routes provide convenient access to the shopping centre, healthcare facilities and other destinations in central Colac.

The Colac bus system provides good coverage and services in Central Colac. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of bus stops throughout the bus network. For example, most stops do not have seats or shelter for passengers. Surface treatments are also inconsistent, with some shelters located on grassy areas, making them inconvenient particularly in rainy days.

Opportunity exists to implement a gradual program of improvement of bus stops. Improvements to be implemented may include the provision of shelter and seating in all stops, enhancement of surfaces at waiting areas, and installation of ramps to facilitate access for mobility impaired passengers and people with prams. Where missing, pedestrian crossings close to the bus stops can also be installed to facilitate access from both sides of the street.



CAR PARKING

The CBD is well served by many different car parks, including formalised surface car parks managed by Council or major retailers, small spaces at the rear of commercial buildings for use by occupants and on-street parking (parallel, angle and centre). The Colac Car Parking Strategy (2011) found that over the entire commercial centre the demand for on-street parking during the week is fairly modest with a peak parking occupancy of 58% at around 11:30 am. This compares with levels of 80-90% parking occupancy in busy activity centres.

Based on the relatively low occupancy and spare capacity of on-street parking, the Car Parking Strategy recommended a reduction in parking rates for supermarkets and other retail uses. Within this context, opportunities exist for a more efficient use of the space devoted to car parking within the CBD.

Car parks that are not used to their full capacity take up valuable land within the core commercial areas and this land could be redeveloped for new business or retail uses. Selected existing car parks could be redesigned to improve their layout, capacity, pedestrian safety and appearance, or nominated as redevelopment opportunities. The number and location of family car parks (that provide extra width for families with strollers and for children to get in and out of cars) should be considered when examining alternatives to consolidate and relocate parking.

Community concern about the potential loss of car parking spaces in the CBD was clear in response to the draft plan. While there are several projects for streetscape upgrades that will see reconfiguration of car parking spaces, across the CBD no net loss of car parking is now proposed. Those projects that require reconfiguration of car parking will be accompanied by an analysis of car parking in that area and recommendations of alternative car parking options.



Recommendations

Objectives

- To create a pedestrian-focussed, accessible and well-connected public realm, particularly for those with limited mobility.
- To promote sustainable methods of transport, supporting walking and cycling as viable alternatives to car travel.
- To enhance existing connections to, from and between key destinations.
- To manage the road network to optimise its safety, efficiency and amenity for all road users.
- To ensure that there is no net loss of car parking within the Colac CBD.

Strategies & Actions

- 2.3.1 Use the proposed road network management structure (refer to Road Network Management Priorities Map) to inform and complement the official road hierarchy (currently under development).
- 2.3.2 Undertake an accessibility and pedestrian safety audit to confirm priorities and staging of upgrades to pedestrian crossings and roundabouts, as shown on the Pedestrian Management Priorities Map.
- 2.3.3 Implement pedestrian network and streetscape improvements to priority pedestrian areas.
- 2.3.4 Increase pedestrian crossing times in locations with significant walking activity.
- 2.3.5 Introduce a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit in the CBD.

- 2.3.6 Develop a permeable network of laneways and arcades. This involves:

- Negotiating with business operators, property owners and developers to include laneways in new development or upgrade existing laneways.
- Including guidelines for laneway design and activation in the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.
- Implementing public art works in laneway spaces, which could include community participation.



Johnstones Lane car park

- 2.3.7 As a priority, improve the appearance and safety of Amezdroz Lane, including better integration with adjoining commercial premises.
- 2.3.8 Introduce a shared zone within Gellibrand Street, on the western edge of Memorial Square, as a pilot project. This will include raised streets, road narrowing and upgraded paving.
- 2.3.9 Investigate the potential to increase the shared zone area to the other streets surrounding Memorial Square and south along Gellibrand Street to the Colac train station. Prepare and implement detailed design concepts for this project.

- 2.3.10 Upgrade existing bicycle lanes, or design and construct new bicycle lanes, as per the Bicycle Routes Map.
- 2.3.11 Improve cyclist facilities such as bike hoops, drinking fountains and bike route information.
- 2.3.12 Undertake a gradual program of improvement of bus stops, prioritising those within locations of high pedestrian activity.
- 2.3.13 Investigate options for rationalising car parking within the CBD, whereby underused car parks are nominated for either redevelopment or improvement.
- 2.3.14 Redesign existing car parks to improve their layout, capacity, pedestrian safety and appearance.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

2.4 Green Streets

The streets are the principal areas of public space within the Colac CBD and form the backdrop to everyday activity.

The streets of the CBD are generally very wide, which is an important part of the town's character. However, some places within the CBD appear to be dominated by paving or bitumen as a result, having not incorporated opportunities for planting in their design. Within key pedestrian streets, basic amenities such as seating and shade are often lacking. Pavement treatments also appear to be out of date or in need of repair in many places.

Streetscape and open space initiatives developed in support of the Colac CBD & Entrances Plan should encourage:

- Enhancement of key pedestrian streets through planting and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Well connected open spaces areas and corridors.
- Expression and enhancement of the natural environment.

STREET PLANTING

Existing street tree planting within the CBD has been analysed in terms of the location and quality of significant trees, shown on the Existing Tree and Vegetation Assessment Map on the **following page**.

This analysis shows that many CBD streets benefit from mature planting. However, in a number of streets planting is lacking or trees have been dramatically pruned to avoid powerline disturbance, giving streets a somewhat barren appearance.

There are opportunities to introduce additional planting throughout the CBD. Coupled with the pedestrian prioritisation initiatives detailed in **Section 2.3**, there are many locations in which the space dedicated to cars and parking could be reconfigured to allow for additional landscaping.

Existing kerb lines could be extended into the wide road reserve to provide opportunities for additional planting of canopy trees. This would significantly add to the appearance of streetscapes and enhance pedestrian amenity by providing shade and shelter from the elements. Extended kerbs and additional planting will also create a more favourable environment for al fresco dining or small 'pause places' with seating and add to the vibrancy of the CBD's streets.

The option of creating new central medians is an alternative approach to adding canopy trees within a streetscape. Central medians, if wide enough, can also act as pedestrian refuges for road crossing, as currently occurs in Murray Street.

Powerlines

An important consideration for future planting of new canopy trees is to avoid the severe pruning required for powerline clearance. Central median planting is one approach, and the other would be the eventual undergrounding of powerlines. The relocation of powerlines underground should be progressively undertaken throughout the CBD and implemented concurrently with the upgrading of street lighting or other streetscape works.

EXISTING TREE & VEGETATION ASSESSMENT MAP



WSUD

New streetscape works and reallocation of roadspace to areas of landscape offer opportunities to introduce water sensitive urban design (WSUD) in the urban areas of the CBD (see photo of example treatment in Zetland, Sydney [right](#)). Many streets have a road camber that would facilitate water run-off to the road edge, allowing WSUD gardens to capture and treat water run-off before entering the drainage system. WSUD tree pits could be installed at other locations throughout the CBD.



Before



Before and after concept design study for Armstrong St, Ballarat. Central car parking removed and planting beds introduced in central median and kerb extensions.

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY

A streetscape improvement priority plan has been developed ([next page](#)) identifying Murray Street and Bromfield Streets as having the highest priority for improvement based on existing retail activity. Streetscape improvements involve provision of better connections, planting, pavement treatments.

Murray Street is regarded as the principal street of the CBD. The focus should be on maintaining the highest quality streetscape treatments and attention to design detail, to enhance the visitor experience and perception of Colac. The upgraded streetscape treatment would extend from the eastern section into the western section of Murray Street, to Armstrong Street as well as remove the chain in the central median strip between Corangamite and Hesse Streets.

Bromfield and Rae Streets are core retail activity streets, where the focus should be on practical and comfortable streetscape treatments that enhance the day to day pedestrian experience.

Corangamite and Queen Streets are the key north-south connecting streets, that provide for an enhanced pedestrian experience as well as improved bicycle connections, in addition to carrying higher volumes of vehicular traffic.

Gellibrand and Hesse Streets are the key north-south pedestrian connections between the Station, Memorial Square, Murray Street, the Botanic Gardens and Lake Colac. With lower traffic volumes, Gellibrand and Hesse Streets have the potential to be downgraded as a vehicular connection and upgraded as a higher pedestrian amenity street, by extending the landscape connection suggested in the Lake Masterplan further south to the Station and implementing traffic calming measures.

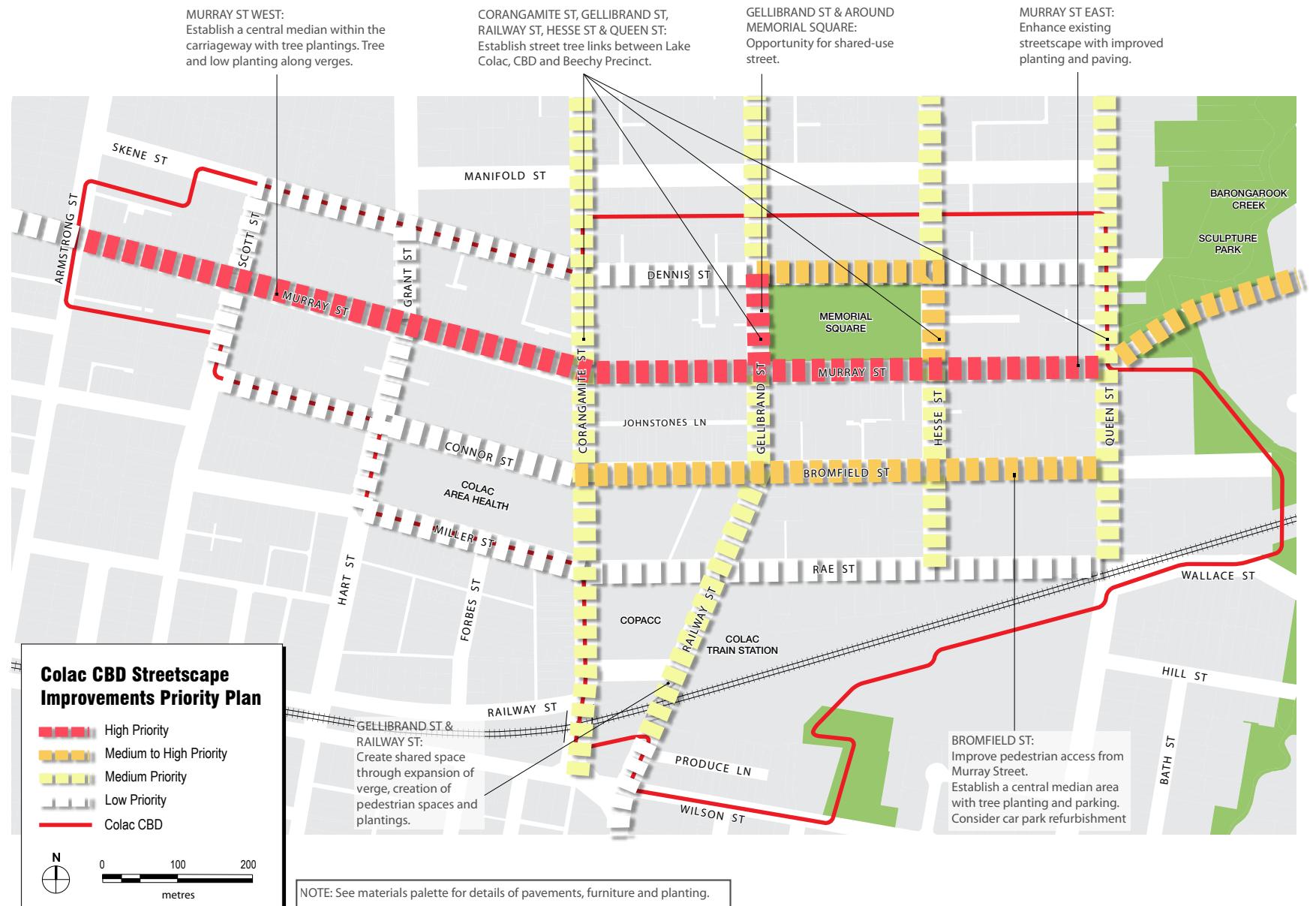


WSUD treatment, Zetland, Sydney



Johnstones Lane

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY PLAN



STREET FURNITURE & MATERIALS

As part of an overall approach to identify and enhance the character of Colac, a series of ‘hot spots’ could be identified within town, centred on the main destinations or attractions within the CBD. These spots could then be the focus for initial improvements to the quality of materials used and street furniture elements provided for users. They could also become the location for any future public art or feature treatment through signage, shelter or lighting.

In addition, a footpath trading strategy would assist in managing outdoor dining, retail stalls and temporary signage within footpath spaces to ensure pedestrian safety and access is maintained and a co-ordinated appearance.

Overall, the location and style of all street furniture of the CBD should be reviewed to adopt a consistent approach to the style and location of items such as seats, rubbish bins, recycling bins, drinking fountains, bicycle hoops and electric gopher recharge points.

A hierarchy of streetscape treatments should be developed to complement the role of each part of the CBD and to reinforce the range of spatial experiences. This would include paving surfaces, planting themes and a co-ordinated suite of street furniture and signage. The **following pages** show the existing suite of street furniture and possible enhancements.

PUBLIC ART

Public art can make an important contribution to local sense of place as a means of celebrating a community’s culture and history. Public art projects can take many forms, ranging from significant commissions in prominent locations to art that is incorporated into general elements of public infrastructure, such as street furniture, paving or lighting. Within Colac, the ‘Botanic Garden City’ theme in itself may become a form of the town’s public art program.

It is essential that public art is installed in a strategic and co-ordinated way. A public art strategy should be developed that seeks to engage artists from the local region and specifies a clear curatorial process to oversee the selection, siting and procurement of each art piece.

There is potential for community involvement in public art projects, such as ‘paint a tile’ to be laid in a public space, design competitions for blank walls or laneway activation. Sponsorship can be sought from local businesses for public art programs.

SPACES

Memorial Square is the principal open space within the CBD. It is an iconic feature of Colac and is highly valued symbolically and as a place to enjoy outdoor life. Memorial Square benefits from mature planting and a range of facilities such as toilets and the playground. While the layout of the park is functional and attractive, in several areas it appears to be in need of additional maintenance and upgrading. Memorial Square is discussed in detail in the following section.

The proximity of the Botanic Gardens and Lake Foreshore is a key feature of Colac CBD. There is a lack of a sense of connection to these important spaces.

Street trees and creek corridors also play an important role in defining Colac’s character and providing vegetated linkages between built up areas and the lake. Although the quality and consistency of street tree avenues has diminished over the years, there are still excellent examples such as Hesse Street that provide a unique character that could be further enhanced.

LIGHTING

Many streets and intersections in the CBD have poor lighting. Additional lighting should be provided where it is lacking, particularly at roundabouts. Lighting upgrades should be co-ordinated with powerline undergrounding and other streetscape works.

Lighting provided in the CBD could also be decorative, such as the uplighting of trees or significant buildings. The uplighting of trees is a particular opportunity in Memorial Square.



Australian examples of public art

EXISTING STREETSCAPE PALETTE

ANALYSIS

Existing Furniture Types

A review if the existing pavements has been undertaken and the following assessment taken:

- Various furniture types are throughout the central area.
- The most common type is maroon coloured bins, bollards and seats.
- The maroon / brown colour, although dominant in the streetscape, can 'date' quickly and is well utilised in many rural towns and cities of Victoria. However it is a well established Colac town colour and should be continued.

BINS

Steel bins in the Colac central areas are coloured 'heritage red' or maroon. Services boxes are also coloured with the 'heritage red' colour.



PAVEMENTS

A variety of surfaces including in-situ concrete, concrete pavers, brick pavers and bitumen. Many of these surfaces are in disrepair.



SEATS

A mixture of seating styles are found across the Colac CBD. Materials include painted timber or metal with stainless steel. The unifying colour is 'heritage red'.



OTHER

Artwork, signage, light poles, bollards and feature brick work all follow the 'heritage red' colour theme.



RECOMMENDED STREETSCAPE PALETTE

PROPOSED	COLOURS	PAVEMENTS	FURNITURE	OTHER
<p>Proposed Furniture Types</p> <p>Over time replace and upgrade the existing furniture with a palette that is more sensitive to the rural character of the area, making better utilisation of timber and stainless steel.</p> <p>Design Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stainless steel (or galvanized steel with non-rusting finish). Timber or other sustainable material (e.g. wood and recycled plastic combination timber). Use of maroon / brown finish on selected elements only (i.e. bins and seats). <p>Key streetscape palette materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timber furniture Concrete paver Asphalt path 	<p>The overriding colour within Colac is a dark maroon brown/red, commonly called 'heritage red'. It is suggested that the colour continues to be used but sparingly only on selected objects (i.e. seats and bins but preferably not on lights and bollards).</p>	<p>The pavement should be a 'neutral' ground plane. People, street activities and planting provide colour and attraction. Use only light beige or charcoal coloured pavement. Remove the use of brick and brighter coloured 'orange' tones pavers.</p> <p>TYPE 1: Main retail streets (e.g. Murray St and Bromfield St)</p> <p>E.g. of exposed aggregate precast concrete pavers</p> <p>TYPE 2: Secondary streets (Gellibrand St) - Option A</p> <p>E.g. of typical precast concrete pavers and cream concrete pavers combination</p> <p>TYPE 2: Option B</p> <p>E.g. of asphalt path with precast concrete pavers as edging</p> <p>TYPE 3: Shared-use street construction & materials to be confirmed</p> <p>E.g. of asphalt path with stone pavers as edging</p>	   	<p>New seats and bins recommended to utilise plain materials to ensure their recessiveness in the streetscape. Simple natural timber bollards to be used where appropriate. Stainless steel bicycle hoops and water fountains.</p>   

Recommendations

Objectives

To develop a network of well planted streets throughout the CBD.

To improve the appearance and pedestrian amenity of streetscapes as the key activity areas of the CBD.

Strategies & Actions

2.4.1 Identify a series of 'hot spots' in the CBD (key destinations and pedestrian attractors) as priority locations for public realm upgrades, based on the Streetscape Improvement Priority Plan.

2.4.2 Prepare concept designs for priority public realm upgrade projects. Refer to the Recommended Streetscape Palette to guide a co-ordinated approach to future public realm upgrades. Treatments to include:

- Extended kerb lines and creation of additional footpath space
- Creation of central medians for additional planting space
- Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) treatments such as rain gardens
- Additional street tree and low scale planting
- Pedestrian amenities such as streets and water fountains
- Bike lane construction or upgrades
- Undergrounding of powerlines to avoid severe pruning and reduce visual clutter
- Improved lighting at intersections and roundabouts.

2.4.3 Implement public realm upgrade projects, commencing with the highest priority pedestrian streets around Memorial Square, along Murray Street and within the eastern entry to the CBD.

2.4.4 Implement public realm upgrade projects for medium priority pedestrian streets (which form part of the 'Botanic Corridor' connection):

- Corangamite Street
- Gellibrand Street (for section not included in Memorial Square concept)
- Railway Street
- Hesse Street (for section not included in Memorial Square concept)
- Queen Street

2.4.5 Implement public realm upgrade projects for other CBD streets as a longer term priority:

- Skene Street
- Dennis Street (for section not included in Memorial Square concept)
- Connor Street
- Miller Street
- Rae Street
- Wilson Street

2.4.6 Review existing street furniture, pedestrian amenities and wayfinding signage. Refer to the Recommended Streetscape Palette to guide a co-ordinated approach to future public realm upgrades.



2.4.7 Develop a strategy for the undergrounding of powerlines within the CBD:

- Identify priority locations for undergrounding powerlines (e.g. Murray Street).
- Seek funding opportunities.
- Co-ordinate proposals to underground of powerlines with improvements to street lighting.

2.4.8 Develop a strategy for inclusion of public art in Colac's CBD:

- Establish a curatorial process to oversee the selection, siting and procurement of each art piece.
- Investigate ways in which the community can be involved in public art projects (e.g. 'paint a tile', laneway or blank wall activation).
- Seek sponsorship from local businesses for public art programs.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

2.5 Built Form

Buildings relate to all aspects of a township's functions and amenity, and are a key factor in creating attractive and liveable streetscapes. The Colac CBD comprises built form of varying quality, including a range of architectural styles that reflect all eras of the town's development.

There are many older buildings within the CBD that are of great interest or heritage significance, and these buildings tell a story in bricks and mortar of the town's development. However, there are also many buildings in need of improvement that present poor quality facades and landscaping to the street, many of which are located in core activity or pedestrian areas.

To support the overall objectives of this project, built form and land use initiatives developed in support of the Colac CBD & Entrances Plan should encourage:

- Well designed, good quality buildings that contribute to an attractive and liveable streetscape.
- Better use of underused sites and buildings throughout the CBD.
- Activation of streets to the north and south of the Murray Street retail area.
- Identification of key sites that present development opportunities.
- Protection and conservation of heritage buildings and trees.
- Re-activation of existing historic and architecturally notable buildings as an important aspect of Colac's character.
- Orientation of buildings to laneways and public spaces.
- Better utilisation of mid block links between streets and creation of new links.

HERITAGE

Many intact historic commercial, residential and civic buildings contribute to the strong 'country town' character of Colac. Most of these buildings were constructed in the early twentieth century and represent the Edwardian, Interwar and early modern eras. A number of significant individual early buildings remain; among them the former Post Office (1889) and Shire Hall (1892) at the eastern entry to the CBD.

Murray Street in particular is lined with an eclectic mix of architectural styles that illustrate all eras of Colac's history. Many of the buildings are remarkably intact (particularly between Queen and Hart/Grant Streets), with deep verandahs providing excellent pedestrian amenity. The verandahs are generally cantilevered without kerbside supports, in keeping with the predominantly early 20th-century period of construction.

Other qualities that contribute to the positive built form character of Murray Street and other areas of a 'finer grain' character include the



Corangamite St

existence of parapets, often with decorative pediments, concealed roofs, a mix of materials and the presence of regular windows at first floor level.

There are also a number of old industrial buildings that add to the character of Colac's CBD, and these buildings may have the potential for retention and adaption to new uses over time.

Protection and conservation of the buildings that contribute to Colac's image and identity is fundamental. Several of the historic buildings in Murray Street, particularly the old Post Office, would benefit from repainting. Opportunities exist to encourage the creative re-use of older buildings that will see them enhanced, well utilised and maintained.

IDENTITY & CHARACTER

The key built form elements that contribute to the identity and character of the CBD's streetscapes are the scale of buildings, the 'grain' of development within the street (i.e. frontage widths of buildings) and the location of buildings on the site.

The central retail and key pedestrian areas of the Colac CBD have a markedly different character to the outer streets of the study area, principally due to a 'finer grain' of development comprising narrow shopfronts, a slightly higher scale and buildings set to the street edge. This traditional type of development makes a positive contribution to streetscape amenity and supports pedestrian activity, and should be encouraged within these areas. Specific guidelines have been prepared for these 'finer grain' areas to reflect this character.

In other parts of the study area, buildings have a larger footprint and are surrounded by a greater amount of space, which is often used for car parking and in many instances have inadequate landscaping. This type of development is designed to accommodate car traffic and detracts from pedestrian amenity.

Overall, the CBD has a low scale character, with most buildings being single or double storey in height. Due to the wide nature of the main streets in the CBD single storey buildings look 'squat', lack

presence and do not define the streetscape.

However, many older double storey buildings would equate to a modern three storey building due to their tall floor to ceiling heights. These taller buildings, particularly in the 'finer grain' retail areas, are a positive architectural presence. Being constructed to the front boundary, they define the streetscape, and often present an active frontage. For this reason, and many others, including the promotion of mixed use developments, the development of three storey contemporary buildings should be encouraged.

PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

As noted, buildings make a significant contribution to the level of activity and amenity within a streetscape. Nevertheless, there are instances where buildings are not well designed and fail to make a positive contribution to the streetscape; for example, by presenting blank facades to the street or including car parking within the



Former Fire Station, Dennis St



Connor St



Former Depot, Dennis St



CBD Eastern Entrance



CBD Eastern Entrance

Many older and distinctive commercial buildings show much promise for creative re-use options

frontage setback. These typologies do nothing for the street life or pedestrian amenity of the town centre.

All buildings should address their streetscape context with some form of considered design response. This might include articulation through materials selection, building form, placement of windows and doors, landscaping or an art installation.

Within the retail areas, where business livelihoods depend on a higher degree of pedestrian movement, buildings should maintain a physical and visual connection with the street to contribute to its activity and offer a sense of surveillance. Buildings can also contribute to streetscape amenity by providing awnings over footpaths for protection from rain and wind.

Another urban design element that adds to the positive qualities of the CBD is the existence of secondary streets and laneways, providing mid block pedestrian connections. While the urban design strengths of many of these secondary connections is yet to be realised, those that have been redeveloped with active uses e.g. Johnstones Lane, provide a point of interest in the town's CBD (see photo **above right**).

SIGNAGE

Signage is essential to the safe and efficient function of urban areas and can add vitality to business areas. However, excessive directional signage, pole signs and rooftop signs are particularly obtrusive.

Signage should be rationalised so that clutter is reduced, particularly in road reserves, as well as on other parts of the public realm and on private land. Intrusive signage could be removed as sites are redeveloped or change their use. New signage should be incorporated into building design and avoid freestanding or above verandah signs.

An audit of public signage should be undertaken aimed at reducing the quantity of direction and traffic signage within the road reserve and on public land. Similarly, land owners should be encouraged to tidy up excessive and redundant private signage. This should be supplemented by the preparation of an advertising sign policy to

guide future planning decisions about signs.

More information and directional signage is required throughout the CBD. This can assist in promoting attractions, such as the Botanic Gardens, future areas of botanic themed planting or tourist walking trails.



Johnstone Lane, a point of interest in the CBD

QUALITY OF NEW BUILDINGS

Currently there is a lack of contemporary buildings of a high design quality that convey a strong or positive message for the CBD. The many opportunity sites within the CBD present scope for development of new buildings to support additional activity and to improve the CBD's image as a progressive place.

New development must be designed to make a positive contribution to the image and character of the CBD and enhance its streetscapes (like COPACC as shown **below**). Throughout the CBD, and particularly on key sites, a high standard of architectural design must be required of applicants.

Guidelines for new development have been prepared to assist Council and applicants, setting out basic parameters to address the key design issues of the CBD's heritage context, encouragement of contemporary design responses and the contribution buildings make to the street, particularly within retail areas.



COPACC is a well designed contemporary building



The redevelopment of buildings or sites offers the opportunity to incorporate Ecologically Sustainable Design (ESD). Simple design measures can have a powerful effect – providing shade protection, improving thermal performance of buildings, allowing cross ventilation and reducing wind effects. Progressively, the value of ‘green buildings’ will become increasingly recognised in regional Victoria, as it has in the capital cities. Council can play a lead role in demonstrating the advantages of ESD in Council projects and actively encouraging ESD in private development, for example larger commercial buildings present opportunities to apply techniques such as water harvesting and solar power generation.

CBD BOUNDARY

The CBD is developed at a low density, with land uses spread over a large area. An important part of creating a town centre that is vibrant, people-focussed (as opposed to a dispersed town centre where car access will dominate) and economically viable is to consolidate activity within the central area as much as possible.

The Colac Structure Plan (2007) and the Retail Assessment (2009) both emphasise the importance of maintaining the role of the CBD as the focus for commercial and retail activity, utilising the existing supply of Business zoned land for future growth. In addition, providing for a range of residential development within or close to the CBD is an important initiative, to maintain the CBD’s vibrancy and provide a range of accommodation options.

The identification and redevelopment of opportunity sites within the CBD should be encouraged to foster a more efficient use of space and contribute to an improved urban environment.

OPPORTUNITY SITES

The CBD has many underused sites that are vacant, comprise surface car parking or are occupied by buildings at the end of their useful life or single storey in scale. All of these scenarios offer great potential to ‘fill in the gaps’ in the CBD with new, well designed buildings.

In addition, there are many opportunities to develop space at the rear

of buildings, particularly along Murray Street, which would assist in creating street frontages to the rear and encouraging a network of laneway connections. Some buildings also have underused spaces in the upper levels, such as in the inner retail area. This could be used for residential for example. Many existing single storey buildings offer an opportunity to extend upwards.

Given the potential demand for additional large floor space redevelopment, it is important that sites suitable for large scale retail development (up to 3000m² plus car parking), within easy walking distance to existing retail areas, are identified.

Safeway Site - Opportunity Site Example

The Safeway site is located within the heart of the CBD retail area. Currently the building presents blank walls to Rae Street and COPACC opposite, as well as Amezdroz Lane which is a very well used thoroughfare, and a large expanse of surface car parking to Bromfield Street.

Ideally, these blank wall edges should be redeveloped with active uses and transparent frontages to the street and laneway. However, until the site is redeveloped, the pedestrian environment and safety of these interfaces could be improved with the creative use of lighting and landscaping. This might include espaliered vegetation to create a vertical garden on the walls adjacent to Amezdroz Lane, or an art lighting installation. As an example, the Coles supermarket in Wodonga has transformed an unsightly blank wall on its key pedestrian street into a vibrant artwork which is appreciated by locals and visitors alike.



Address blank walls at Safeway site



Transformation of Coles Wodonga's blank wall into an artwork and community focal point
Images: creative-communities.com

Guidelines For New Development

APPLIES TO ALL OF CBD

New Development

- Protect important view lines and town entrances from inappropriate development and its associated signage.
- Orientate building entrances and windows to streets and lanes, with 0m setbacks from street boundaries and car parking located to the rear.
- Ensure that buildings adjoining or opposite open spaces provide active frontages to increase interaction with and passive surveillance of the space.
- Avoid the construction of blank walls facing streets, lanes or public spaces.
- Demonstrate that there will be no overshadowing of public spaces or private open space from 11am-3pm on 21 March and 22 September.

Heritage

- Ensure that new development within, or adjacent to, an identified heritage place respects the scale, form and siting of the heritage building.
- Retain key views to landmark heritage buildings.



Provide active frontages opposite open spaces

Identity & Character

- Promote high quality contemporary architecture that complements the older buildings of the centre, and adds to the story of the town's development and its distinct eclectic character.
- Show design innovation and careful composition of all the elements that comprise the design of built form – openings, colours, materials, textures etc.
- Consider how lighting could be used creatively to enhance the night time appearance of buildings and pedestrian safety in the retail and pedestrian areas.
- Encourage the incorporation of advertising signs into building design and under awnings, avoiding roof top, above verandah and freestanding signs.
- Encourage the removal of existing roof top, above verandah and freestanding signs, particularly as sites are redeveloped or uses changed.

Residential Development

- Ensure that dwellings have a street address.
- Encourage the provision of outdoor areas in higher density development through the inclusion of small courtyard spaces, balconies at the upper levels or rooftop gardens.
- Locate and orient residential buildings to minimise adverse amenity impacts from adjoining uses, such as shops, cafes or loading/service areas.
- Ensure the provision of adequate servicing access.
- Provide acoustic insulation in mixed use developments or in residential developments that are located near potential noise sources.

Guidelines For New Development cont.

APPLIES TO ALL OF CBD

Environmentally Sustainable Design

- Encourage ESD measures that are integrated into new buildings or incorporated in the retrofitting of existing buildings e.g. energy efficiency and solar passive design, rooftop gardens, greater water efficiency, waste management practices, use of sustainable materials and adaptability of design.

Signage

- Avoid creating clutter in the development of new signage.
- Incorporate new signage into building design and avoid freestanding or above verandah signs.

APPLIES TO FINER GRAIN AREA

The following guidelines apply to the finer grain area shown on the following page.

New Development

- Require all new development to be constructed to the front boundary at ground, first and second floor levels (i.e. 0 metre front setback), creating a continuous ‘wall’ of buildings to the street.
- Encourage development that is a minimum of three storeys (or the equivalent of two storey Victorian buildings).
- Encourage the development of landmark buildings that address the intersection, on prominent corner sites.
- Discourage site consolidation and maintain or reinstate the traditional fine ‘grain’ (i.e. frontage width) of the narrow shopfronts.
- For buildings on wide frontages, the design of facades should reflect the fine grain of traditional shopfronts through an emphasis on vertical articulation. This can be achieved through the placement of windows and doors, and the use of other architectural details such as colour, texture and materials.
- Vehicular access to buildings should be provided from rear and side laneways. Driveway entrances and the visual impact of garage doors on building frontages within the core retail area is discouraged.

Pedestrian Amenity

- Retain laneways that provide a pedestrian connection between main streets, and encourage their upgrade and redevelopment with active uses.
- Provide weather protection for pedestrians on key



Provide weather protection in finer grain area



Retain laneways providing links in finer grain area



Encourage development with minimum height of 3 storeys, consistent with 2 storey Victorian buildings in finer grain area

pedestrian routes by ensuring that awnings and verandahs are incorporated into the design of new developments.

- Enhance the pedestrian environment through considered design of ground floor facades e.g. transparent shop or office fronts, entrances directly off the footpath and visually interesting design details.
- Ensure that higher scale buildings avoid an increase in wind effects at street level. This could include greater articulation of wall surfaces, or the provision of awnings.
- Encourage new lane connections between streets.

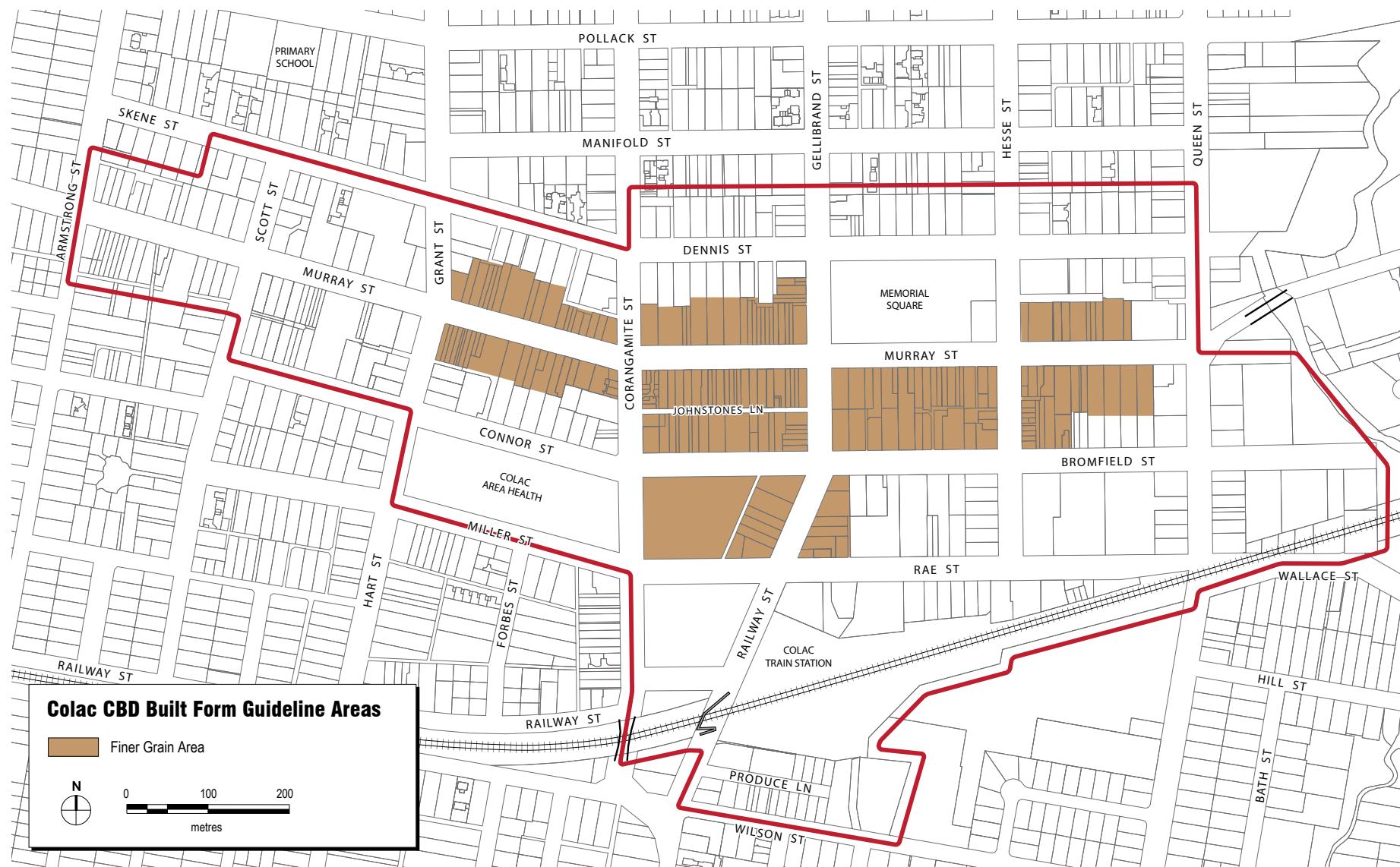
Heritage

- Retain older buildings that contribute to the streetscape character, and retain, recycle or re-use existing buildings of architectural merit or character wherever possible.
- Encourage the restoration of heritage shopfronts, particularly those which are part of an intact group of buildings and obscured by unsympathetic painting, signage or false facades.



Discourage site consolidation in the finer grain area

BUILT FORM GUIDELINES AREAS MAP



Recommendations

Objectives

Within all areas of the CBD:

To encourage the development of buildings that maximise use of available space within the CBD, and create a vibrant and people-focussed centre.

To protect the heritage buildings of the CBD.

To create a distinct character and image for the CBD through the quality of new buildings.

To support high quality residential development within the CBD.

Within the finer grain area:

To ensure that all buildings promote activity and enhance the pedestrian amenity of the core retail area.

To require a high standard of architecture and urban design that enhances the street life of the core retail area.

To encourage a consistent minimum scale of buildings within the core retail area that define the streetscape and add to the identity of the centre.

To create pedestrian-scaled and focussed street interfaces and reduce the visual, amenity and safety impacts of car parking and accessways.

Strategies & Actions

2.5.1 Provide strong policy direction within the Colac Otway Planning Scheme to ensure that major retail and commercial developments locate within the Colac CBD (Business 1 and Business 2 zoned land only), rather than outside the town centre.

2.5.2 Encourage redevelopment of underused or vacant sites in the CBD and discuss redevelopment options with site owners. This may include surface car parks, vacant land at the rear of buildings (particularly along Murray Street), upper levels or single storey buildings which could potentially be developed for mixed use.

2.5.3 Ensure the preservation of significant heritage buildings and encourage their adaptive re-use or restoration.

- Undertake heritage investigation for buildings of potential significance as required.
- Provide appropriate protection for buildings of significance via the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.
- Investigate the potential to establish a heritage grant scheme (with contributions from Council that could be matched by property owners) for the upgrade of prominent buildings.
- Investigate the potential for funding from Heritage Victoria for restoration of buildings of State significance.

2.5.4 Undertake public realm improvements as required to enhance the setting of key heritage sites (e.g buildings at the eastern CBD entrance).

2.5.5 Encourage and assist businesses to upgrade shopfronts and building facades, particularly on Murray Street:

- Work with businesses to improve their image, identity and display of merchandise.
- Seek sponsorship from paint companies to restore and repaint facades and offer assistance with colour selection.
- Investigate the potential for an incentives scheme to provide design support and ongoing funding.



Redevelop underused sites



Maintain the traditional fine 'grain' nature of the centre

- Initiate and fund demonstration projects of building or image upgrades and promote the outcomes via Council newsletter or local media.
- 2.5.6 Encourage the removal of excessive roof top, above verandah and free standing signs, and other visually dominant signs, as sites are redeveloped.
- 2.5.7 Encourage new development within the CBD to incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) initiatives.
- 2.5.8 Encourage and facilitate a high quality of architecture within the CBD by:
- Encouraging developers to use qualified and experienced design professionals (and suitably experienced heritage professionals for heritage sites) and reinforcing the message that good design can save long-term costs and increase property value.
 - Establishing a design review panel for major development applications.
 - Continually fostering urban design skills in planning staff and provide design advice for applicants.
- 2.5.9 Implement building design guidelines through the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.



3

Design Concepts

A number of ‘design concepts’ have been developed for specific areas within the CBD. These areas have a great opportunity to enhance the activity and appearance of the CBD. This section provides detailed analysis, directions and recommendations for each area. Detailed design guidance regarding the future implementation of works and potential funding for these areas will be addressed in the next stage of this Project (Stage 5).

The six areas are:

1. Memorial Square
2. Eastern CBD Entrance
3. Murray Street West
4. Murray Street East
5. Bromfield Street
6. COPACC & Station Precinct

Each concept comprises a series of smaller projects that could be developed in stages as time and budgets permit. The concept plans offer possibilities for immediate action as well as longer term projects.

3.1 Memorial Square

Memorial Square is the social and civic heart of Colac. It is a place of remembrance, but also relaxation. It is the ‘village green’ of Colac that supports a range of activities, from people stopping to rest and enjoy outdoor life, to the staging of major social events and gatherings.

Memorial Square is an established and traditional park space, with a formal symmetrical layout and exotic planting. The War Memorial is of great significance to the town and a focal point of the park. The predominantly intact perimeter planting of mature elms is heritage recognised and creates a distinct enclosed park space.

Memorial Square has an important role as a key tourist stop-off point along the Princes Highway and provides a number of well-used facilities for locals and visitors, such as a bus shelter, toilet block, playground, barbecues, picnic tables and seating.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The importance of Memorial Square is recognised through the planning scheme by means of heritage and vegetation overlays. Given this area is a key defining element of central Colac, there is a need to ensure appropriate management of this highly significant and valued space. It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan be carried out to:

- Maximise the future potential of the landscape to the town
- Preserve the character and historic layout of the park
- Better understand the evolution of the park over time

To balance the heritage value with future social activation of the space, the conservation plan should be integrated with a concept design plan. The concept plan could consider upgrading path surfaces and review path connections, potentially with a view to returning to the original path layout.

PARK FACILITIES

As a key stopping place for visitors to the town, there are opportunities to enhance the facilities within Memorial Square and provide an improved tourist focus. Facilities such as seating, water fountains, toilets and shelters should be strategically located around the Square.

A co-ordinated design theme is required for facilities, some of which appear outdated or in need of upgrading. New street furniture and materials should complement both the heritage elements within the Square as well as the proposed street furniture materials along Murray and Gellibrand Streets. Natural and plain materials are to be used to ensure their compatibility within the historic setting.

Local information and signage should be provided at the Square to encourage visitors to explore key destinations in Colac.



WESTERN EDGE

The western edge of the Square along Gellibrand Street has been identified as a particular focus for improvement (pages 75-77). The existing toilet block forms an unattractive edge to the Square and obstructs views to the Memorial. The buildings and street treatments along Gellibrand Street could also provide a better sense of connection and activities with the Square.

Detailed concept maps and a photomontage have been prepared showing the western edge of the Square developed as a community space accommodating additional tourist facilities and events infrastructure. The photomontage demonstrates how the view to the Memorial could be opened up. The concept designs show the western edge of the Square in two different scenarios - how the space would look everyday and how the space might look in the case of an event where the street is closed to traffic.

The existing toilet block would be removed and replaced with a new amenities block. The new structure would provide a range of facilities that includes updated public toilets (mens, womens and disabled), possible coffee cart point, infrastructure for events and tourist information displays. It would incorporate the existing public bus stop and taxi rank.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS & SHARED TRAFFIC ZONES

The redevelopment of the western edge of Memorial Square could include the creation of a shared traffic zone along Gellibrand Street, which would provide a more pedestrian focussed environment and offer scope for temporary street closure for events.

Shared traffic zones give pedestrians right of way over motorists and cyclists. The surface treatment for shared zones is designed to clearly signify a different street condition and communicate to drivers that speeds must be very low. Speed limits are defined by VicRoads in these areas as 10 kilometres per hour.

Creation of a shared traffic zone would involve raising the road pavement to the same level as footpaths and narrowing the roadway

to allow greater space for landscaping. Landscaping could include high quality planting beds, grassed areas and trees representing chosen planting themes for the area.

A long term vision for the Memorial Square area could see the shared traffic zone extended around its northern and eastern perimeter to reduce the impact of traffic. Adjoining businesses or cafes would be encouraged to provide an active frontage to Memorial Square and take advantage of views across the park.

Pedestrian access could also be improved by providing better lighting and a raised pedestrian crossing in Murray Street.

EVENTS

To better utilise the Square for local community and regional events, the existing events programme should be promoted and enhanced. Events could include outdoor concerts, art walks, craft fairs, parades, theatre, seasonal botanic festivals and farmers markets.

Use of the Square for more public events and activities could also be enhanced through the provision of additional event-related infrastructure.



A view of Murray St showing Market Square and Fire Brigade, now the site of Memorial Square

TREES

New perimeter planting along Gellibrand, Dennis and Hesse Streets on the side away from the park is proposed to enhance the area around Memorial Square. This planting should not block views to the memorial. Planting is not proposed along the street on the side of the park because the edges of the park are already well lined by trees. This will also ensure flexibility in the activities that will be possible along the edge of the park, particularly along Gellibrand Street.

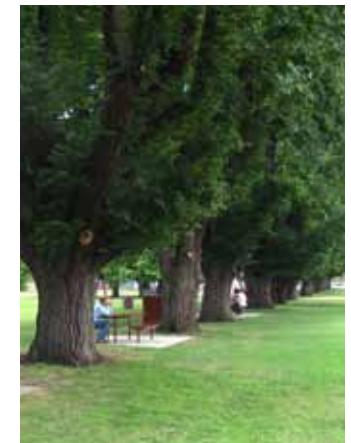
A tree condition survey should be carried out by a qualified arborist. Root protection areas should be established to ensure activities which may cause compaction of the tree roots are not permitted.

Any building works within the root protection area should be sensitively designed to minimise tree root disturbance. Long term irrigation options should be considered.

BUSES, TAXIS & CAMPERVANS

The existing taxi rank, bus stop and shelter with local information will be retained along Gellibrand Street as part of the redeveloped western edge.

Upgraded tourist bus and campervan parking is proposed along the south side of Dennis Street. Additional long vehicle parking can be extended along this edge as required.



Buildings and street treatments on Gellibrand Street do not provide a sense of connection with Memorial Square



Toilet block facility is outdated and forms an unattractive edge to Memorial Square



Existing conditions: The toilet block obstructs views to the Memorial from Gellibrand Street



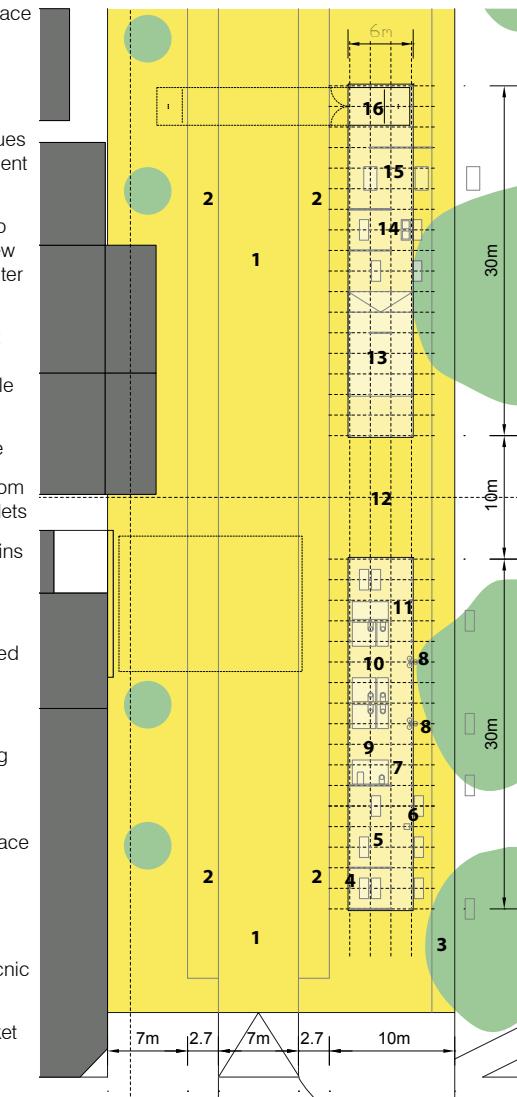
Proposed concept: Shared traffic zone with paved street surface, proposed new amenities pavilions on western edge of park and the view to the Memorial restored

WESTERN EDGE CONCEPT MAPS

EVERYDAY SCENARIO

Legend

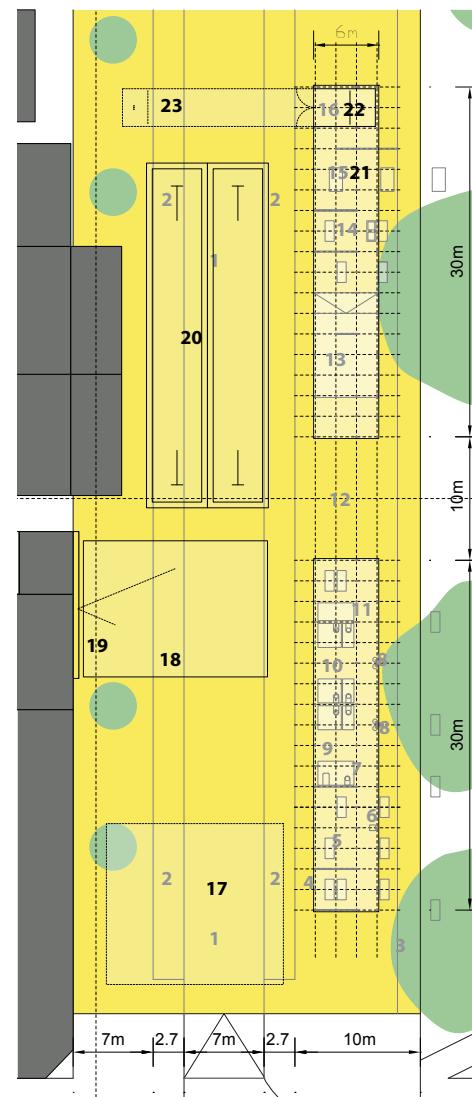
1. New shared surface with pedestrian priority
2. New carparking
3. Footpath continues in line with adjacent blocks
4. Existing bus stop replaced with new seating and shelter under pavilion
5. Seating & tourist information displays, possible coffee cart point
6. Public telephone
7. Baby change room and disabled toilets
8. Public hand basins
9. Female and disabled toilets
10. Male and disabled toilets
11. Cleaning store
12. Central gathering space on axis to memorial
13. Raised event space / stage
14. Seating and barbecues
15. Table tennis / picnic tables
16. Wire store / cricket net



EVENT SCENARIO - SPORTS EXAMPLE

Legend

17. Temporary event / exhibition space
18. Ball sports court
19. Hit up wall
20. Temporary lawn bowl lanes
21. Table tennis / picnic tables
22. Wire store / cricket net
23. Temporary cricket pitch



0 10 20
metres

CAR PARKING

Various options exist for the treatment of car parking spaces within Dennis and Hesse Streets, adjacent to Memorial Square. The concept plan (**opposite**) shows a change from angle to parallel parking with a reduction in the road space. This is intended to allow additional space for planting, to reduce the visual dominance of the bitumen and to promote pedestrian movement. Other options for the roadspace treatment are possible and indicative images are provided (**right**).

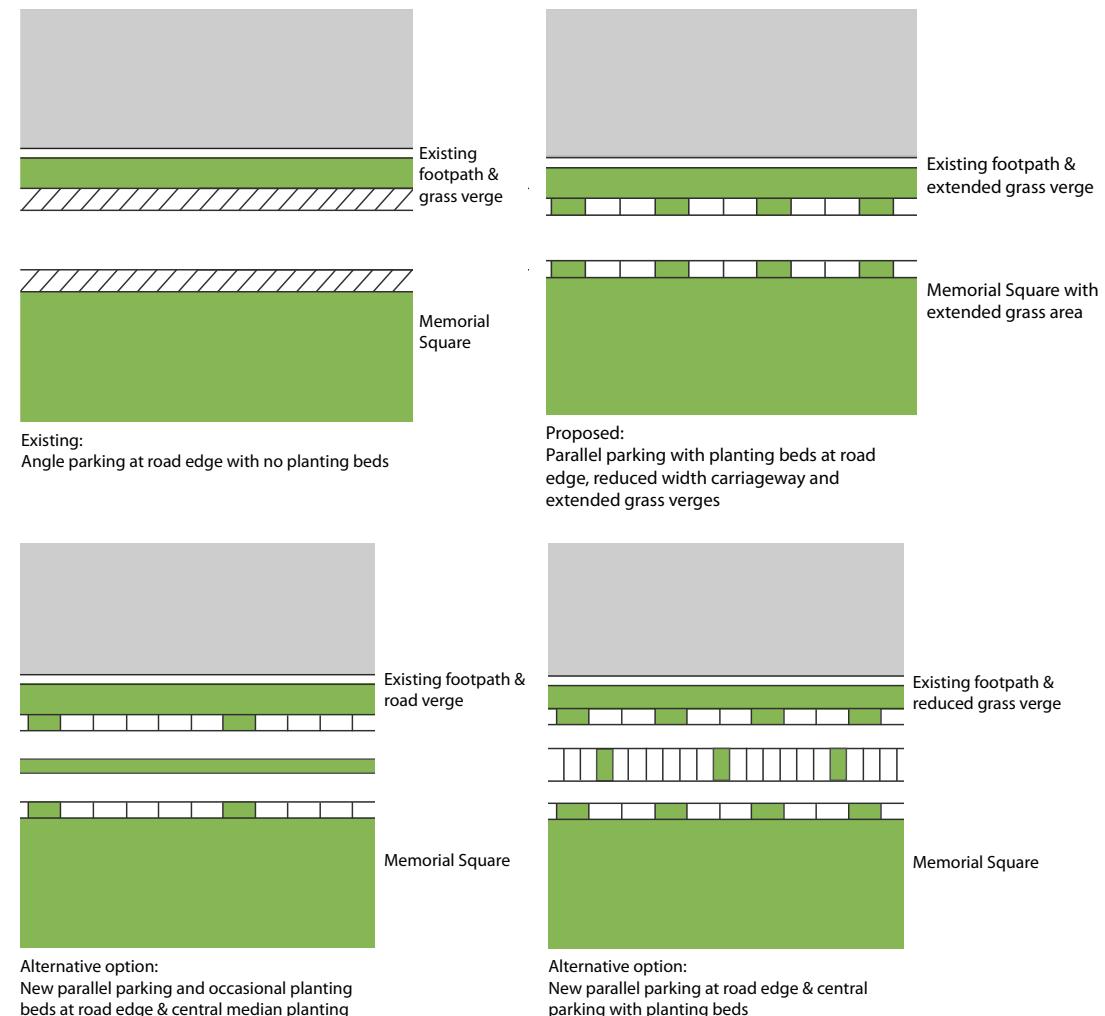
CONCEPT PLAN

A concept plan has been prepared (shown on the page **opposite**) that includes the ideas described in this section:

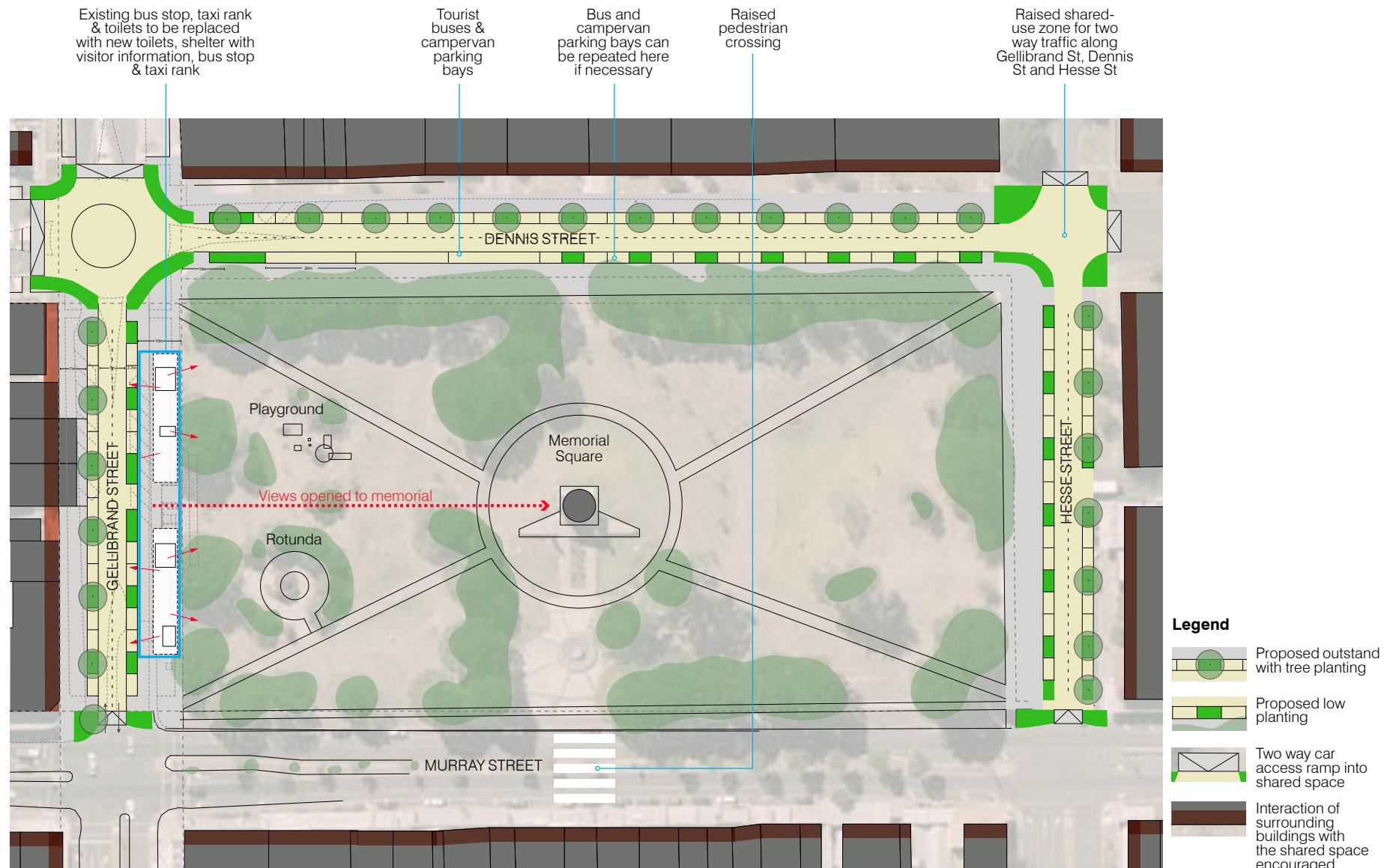
- Creation of a shared traffic space zone along Gellibrand Street and the western edge of the Square developed as a multi-functional community space.
- Raising the road pavement on Gellibrand, Dennis and Hesse Streets to the same level as the footpaths.
- Converting all car spaces from angled parking to parallel parking.
- Reducing the width of the roadway to approximately half the size to slow traffic and create more space for landscaping.

It is important to note that where car parking spaces are converted to pedestrian or landscaping areas, they would be reallocated elsewhere nearby. Alternative approaches, such as the retention of angled parking on Dennis and Hesse Streets as shown in the illustrations (**right**), could also be considered if required.

CARPARKING OPTIONS



MEMORIAL SQUARE CONCEPT PLAN



RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

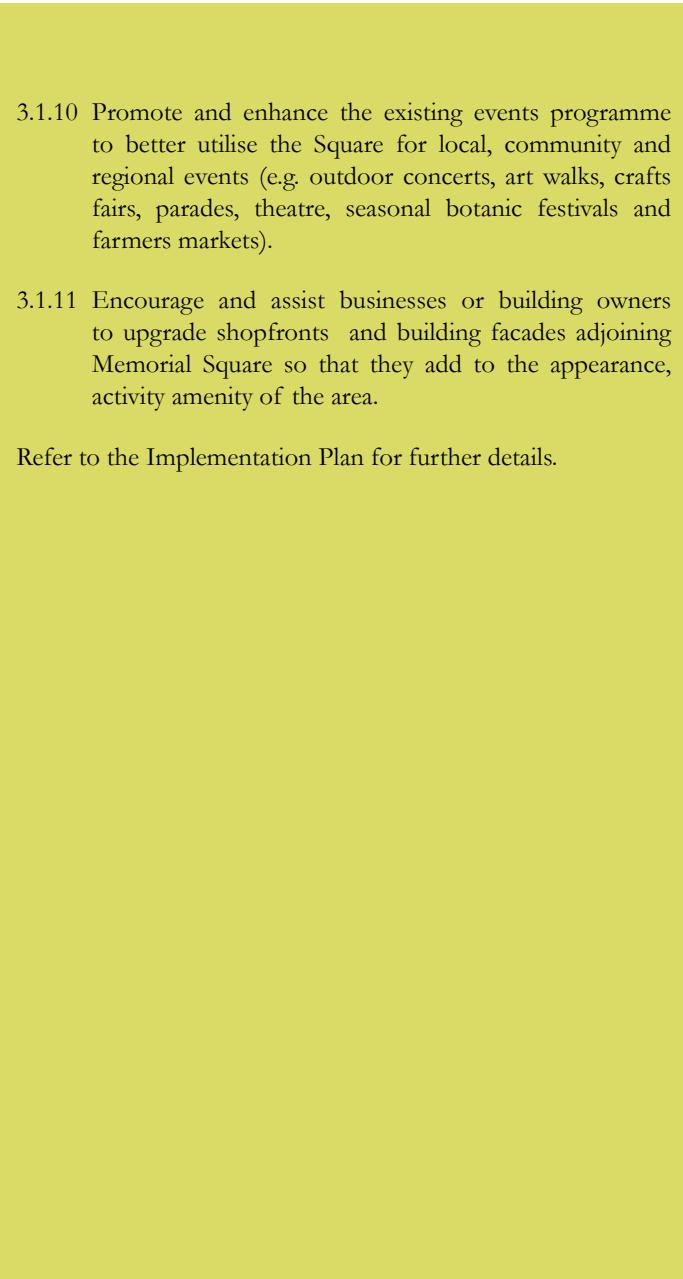
- To maintain Memorial Square as the 'green heart' of Colac's CBD.
- To provide improved facilities for town events and activities.
- To provide improved tourist facilities around Memorial Square.
- To protect and enhance the tree canopy of the park and surrounding roads.
- To restore views to the Memorial from Gellibrand Street.
- To develop a pedestrian friendly area within and around Memorial Square.
- To enliven the western edge of Memorial Square for community and tourism use.

Strategies & Actions

- 3.1.1 Prepare a conservation management plan and concept design plan. This will include a review of existing facilities to determine the upgrades required (e.g. seating, water foundations, signage, path connections).
- 3.1.2 Protect existing trees. Undertake a tree condition survey by a qualified arborist and establish options for root protection and long-term irrigation.
- 3.1.3 Provide uplighting for trees within Memorial Square.
- 3.1.4 Improve safety of taxi rank with funding opportunities available through Taxi Safety Program for security measures such as CCTV.

- 3.1.5 Investigate car parking options for the streets surrounding Memorial Square.
- 3.1.6 Review the trailer and coach parking on Dennis Street and expand as required.
- 3.1.7 Redevelop the amenities of the western edge of Memorial Square on Gellibrand Street. Prepare and implement a detailed concept design to include:
 - Demolition of existing toilet block.
 - Construction of new amenities buildings incorporating bus stop, taxi rank, visitor information display, visitor toilet and event infrastructure.
 - New pavements for road and pedestrian areas.
- 3.1.8 Progressively prepare and implement design concepts to upgrade the streetscapes and public realm surrounding Memorial Square, including the creation of a shared use traffic zone, additional street planting and undergrounding of powerlines:
 - Commence this project with an upgrade for Gellibrand Street, with new street planting, paving and a raised shared use zone.
 - Introduce new planting to Dennis and Hesse Streets.
 - As a longer term project, introduce a raised shared use zone for Dennis and Hesse Streets, and underground powerlines.
- 3.1.9 Install new street furniture clusters (including seating, bins, bike hoops) within streets around Memorial Square.



- 
- 3.1.10 Promote and enhance the existing events programme to better utilise the Square for local, community and regional events (e.g. outdoor concerts, art walks, crafts fairs, parades, theatre, seasonal botanic festivals and farmers markets).
 - 3.1.11 Encourage and assist businesses or building owners to upgrade shopfronts and building facades adjoining Memorial Square so that they add to the appearance, activity amenity of the area.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

3.2 Eastern CBD Entrance

The eastern entrance to the Colac Central Business District is marked by an attractive gateway experience at the point where the Princes Highway crosses Barongarook Creek. The Barongarook Creek Bridge provides a natural arrival point to the Colac CBD.

This gateway is defined by a change in alignment as the highway meets the CBD grid, with a vegetated break provided by the creek corridor and a change in urban character as the suburban stretch of the Princes Highway rises up to become the retail-focussed Murray Street. Heritage buildings on the corner of Murray and Queen Streets provide a strong and distinctive entrance to the town centre. This entry point, however, is currently dominated by road space, traffic infrastructure and uncoordinated and cluttered signage. Its key features of the heritage buildings and creekside planting also require improvement.

BARONGAROOK CREEK ENTRY & BRIDGE

There is potential to open up and strengthen view lines and landscape links to the Barongarook Creek from Murray Street. Historic

photographs show how the entry to the creek once supported a low fence, as shown in the photos on the [following page](#). A new low timber fence could be erected to frame the creek landscape and provide a gateway to walking trails.

A small, formally designed open space with paving and landscaping would enhance and highlight the entry point to the Barongarook Creek. This space would also provide an opportunity to include landscaping that introduces the Botanic Garden City theme at the CBD entry. Access to the creek trails from this point could be improved, supplemented by improved directional and information signage.

The bridge is currently not wide enough to comfortably accommodate pedestrians and cyclists as well as highway traffic. A light weight cantilevered structure could be used to extend the existing bridge on both sides and enable separation of pedestrians and bicycles from highway traffic. As part of this project the existing chain wire fence would be removed.

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

The heritage buildings at the Murray and Queen Streets corner are key features of the eastern CBD entry. However, several are in need of restoration and upgrading. The rehabilitation of the former Post Office is a priority, as it is such a highly visible and significant building (refer photo left). Discussion with the owners of these heritage buildings should be initiated to encourage and assist their upgrading.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE SITE

The setting of the heritage buildings at the corner of Murray and Queen Streets is marred by the telephone exchange site which is used for car parking, has no landscaping and is surrounded by a chain wire fence.



Former Post Office (1917-1930)

Historical photographs of this corner show how the site was previously a garden with low fencing (see the photos [right](#)), and this provides a useful reference for the potential future upgrading of this setting. In its highly visible location at the entry to the CBD, this site presents an opportunity to feature landscaping that reflects the Botanic Garden City theme.

Discussion should be initiated with the site owner about options for redevelopment or improvement of the site's landscaping and fencing.

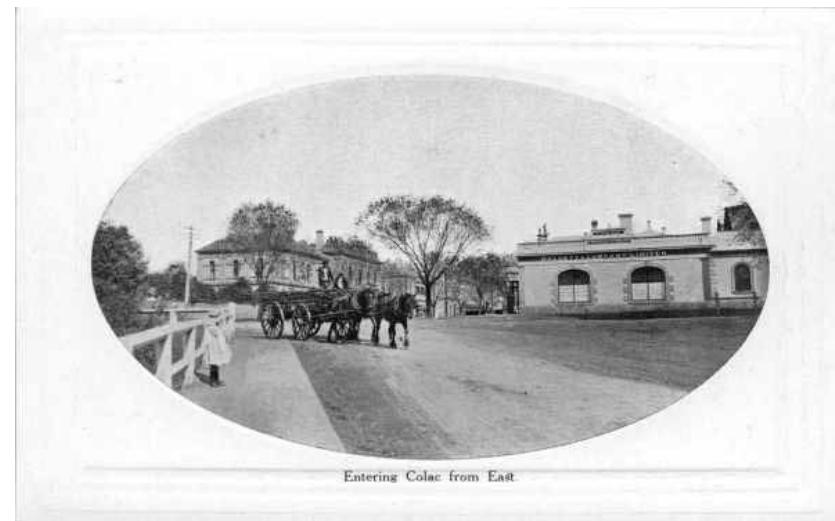
VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Visitor Information Centre is a visually interesting building, funded by the community and constructed of local materials. However, overgrown vegetation currently obscures views to the building. Landscaping around the building should be improved to enhance its connection with the attractive creekside setting and to increase the visibility of the Information Centre from the highway to encourage visitors to stop.

CONCEPT PLAN

A concept plan has been developed to improve this important entry space (see the [following pages](#)). The concept plan comprises a series of discrete projects that could collectively enhance its various elements. This includes:

- An improved setting for the heritage buildings by opening views to these buildings and introducing landscaping.
- A redesigned entry point to the Barongarook Creek with a paved area, low fencing and the introduction of Botanic Garden City themed landscaping
- Improved or new pedestrian connections to the CBD and creekside spaces, including the upgraded bridge with cantilevered pedestrian footpaths (shown in photomontages on the [following pages](#)).
- Improved visibility of the Visitor Information Centre.



Historic view of the eastern entrance: Entering from the east (1908)



Historic view of the eastern entrance: Entering from the east (1905)



Historic view of the eastern entrance: Low timber fencing over the bridge and creek (1905)



View along Princes Highway to Barongarook Creek bridge with the CBD, corner of the telephone exchange site and notable historic buildings



Corner of Murray St and Queen St where there is potential increase the relationship to the creekscape along the eastern side and enhance the setting of heritage buildings



Telephone exchange site where there is potential to improve the side of the former Post Office, which needs restoration and painting

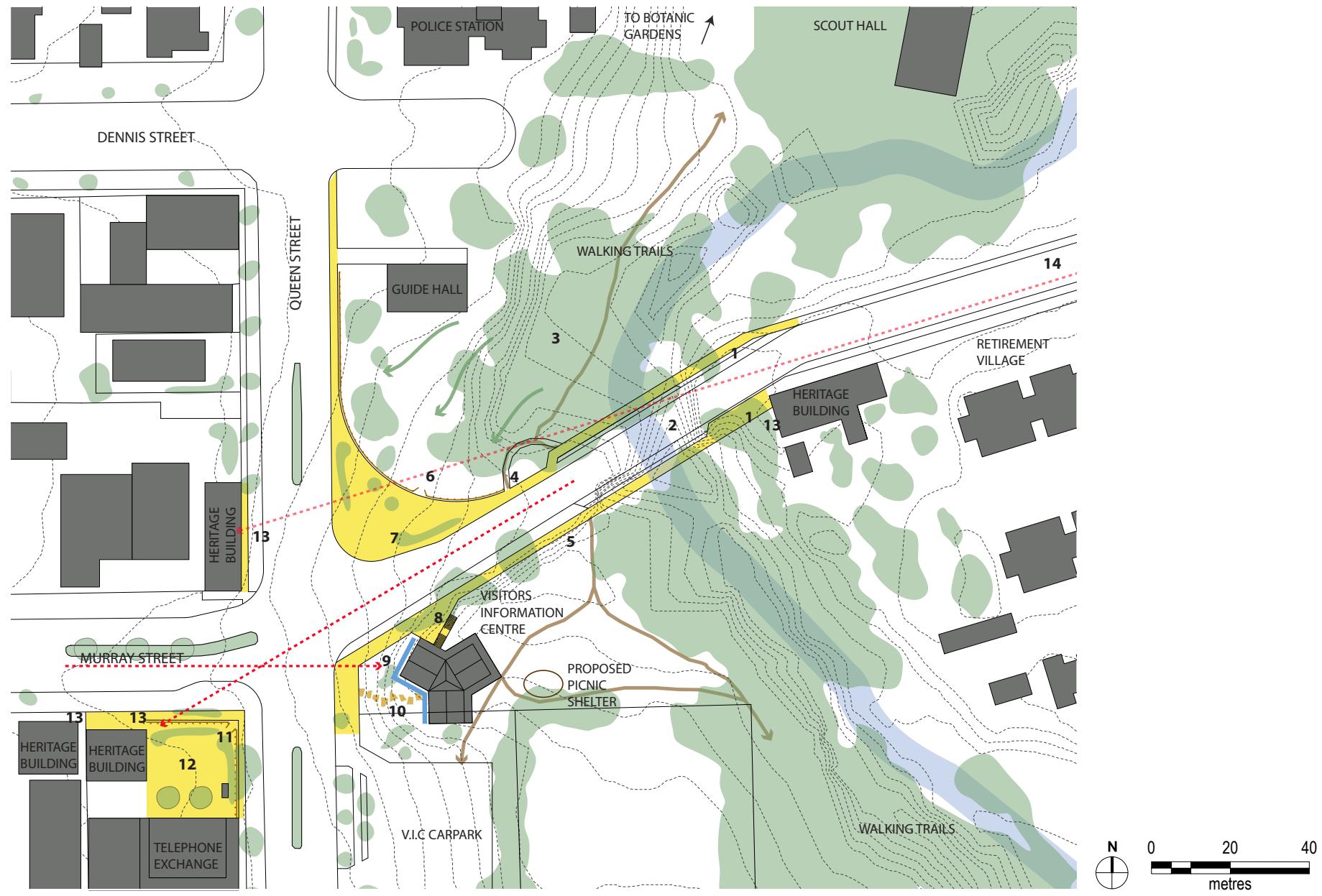


Barongarook Creek bridge is currently dominated by infrastructure, signage etc. and has poor pedestrian access
There is potential to improve the pedestrian link over the bridge and to the Visitor Information Centre and creekside trails



Visitor Information Centre with potential to connect with creekside setting beyond

EASTERN ENTRANCE CONCEPT MAP



Legend

1. New cantilevered footbridge over creek to provide safe pedestrian passage from East Murray Street to township. Existing chain wire fencing between carriageway and footpath to be removed.
2. Improved cycle lanes over bridge.
3. Extension of creek planting into township entry junction.
4. Improved signage and access to new creek walking trails.
5. Works to trees and landscape to improve visibility to Visitor Information Centre for vehicles entering town.
6. New low timber fence to frame creek landscape with gates to access creek walking trails.
7. Mark the entry to the Barongarook Creek reserve with a landscape treatment that integrates a botanical collection and paving.
8. Direct link from new pedestrian footbridge to Visitors Information Centre.
9. Facade treatment including possible new openings to Visitors Information Centre to enliven east facing views from Murray Street.
10. New landscaping steps to allow connection under Visitors Information Centre to creek landscape beyond.
11. New low timber fence to site at corner of Murray and Queen Streets.
12. Redevelopment of corner site in co-operation with owner. Landscaping and planting works to screen telephone exchange. Potential to integrate a botanical collection into the landscape treatment.
13. Enhanced views of heritage buildings by measures such as trimming vegetation, moving signs, encouraging painting and restoration.
14. Investigate potential for new pedestrian crossing.

EASTERN ENTRANCE PHOTOMONTAGE OF FOOTPATH AT ENTRY

EASTERN ENTRANCE PHOTOMONTAGE OF PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



Looking towards entry plaza from proposed pedestrian bridge over Barongarook Creek: rejuvenate gateway with improved pathways and low fencing to north-east and south-west corners to relate town and creek

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

To enhance this area as a key entry point to Colac CBD.

To provide opportunities to establish the Botanic Garden theme at the entrance to the CBD.

To highlight key heritage buildings at the town entrance.

To integrate the creekscape and walking trails network into the township.

To improve the visibility of and access to the Visitors Information Centre.

To allow safe and pleasant pedestrian movement from Murray Street East to township activities.

Strategies & Actions

3.2.1 Improve the appearance of heritage buildings through encouraging painting and restoration of their facades or removal of excessive signage. Work with building owners to assist in development of design options or applications for funding through heritage grants.

3.2.2 Improve the appearance of the telephone exchange site. Work with the site owner to implement measures such as replacement of the existing chain wire fence and new landscaping.

3.2.3 Improve the entry to the creek at the north east corner of Queen and Murray Streets. Design and implement public realm works that include an area of new paving at the entry to the creekside reserve and a low timber fence. Use this space as an opportunity to establish the Botanic Garden theme at the entrance to the CBD.

- 3.2.4 Extend creekside path connections to the Queen and Murray Street entry junction. Restore creekside vegetation with new planting and removal of weeds.
- 3.2.5 Remove excess planting around the Visitors Information Centre and improve existing path networks around the Centre.
- 3.2.6 Create a new stepped path connection from the Visitors Information Centre to the creek trails.
- 3.2.7 Upgrade the pedestrian and cycle connections across the bridge. Prepare and implement detailed designs for construction of cantilevered footbridges on both sides of the bridge and upgraded bicycle lanes.
- 3.2.8 Provide a new pedestrian crossing to the east of the bridge.
- 3.2.9 Rationalise road signage within the road reserve.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

3.3 Murray Street West

Murray Street West is emerging as an important retail and commercial centre within Colac's CBD. It is also the arrival zone into Colac from the west.

The experience heading into the Colac CBD from the west is a marked contrast to that encountered travelling from the east. After passing through a low scale, low density residential area the traveller is confronted by a car dominated environment between Armstrong and Corangamite Streets (see photo **below**). Here, the vista is harsh and jumbled with a mixture of building styles, drive-through take away food shops, signs and powerlines.

A strong sense of arrival does not commence until Corangamite Street is reached, where the design of the road space changes significantly with the introduction of median and street edge planting. The existing conditions are illustrated as part of the concept map on the **following page**.



Existing Murray St West streetscape

STREETSCAPE TREATMENT

It is proposed that the streetscape treatments that have been successfully applied to the central portion of Murray Street be extended west to Armstrong Street (see photo **below**).

Key recommendations for Murray Street West include increased street planting within a new central median and kerb outstands, and an upgraded public realm. Rather than replicate the existing works within Murray Street central, here a contemporary palette should be used, with colours based on the recommendations of this report. A different species of street tree may be appropriate in order to create a distinct character from the central part of Murray Street and Memorial Square.

Active street frontages should be encouraged, with zero front setbacks, parking provided to the rear of buildings and weather protection over the footpaths.



Existing planted median theme in Murray St central, to be continued along Murray St West

A co-ordinated approach to signage in the street is required, with guidelines regulating the size and siting of signs.

Concurrent with the streetscape works, it is recommended that the undergrounding of powerlines is also investigated. This would significantly enhance the visual amenity of the streetscape by reducing clutter and allowing more canopy trees to be planted.

PEDESTRIAN & CYCLIST AMENITY

Improving pedestrian and cyclist amenity and safety is also a key consideration. This will be achieved through improvements to pedestrian crossings with extended signals at existing pedestrian crossing points and new mid block zebra crossings. Designated bike lanes should also be introduced.

CAR PARKING

It is recommended that on-street parking is reconfigured from angle to parallel to allow additional space for tree planting and landscaping, pedestrian areas and bike lanes. However, the option of angle parking could also be considered if maximising on-street parking is considered to be a priority.

CONCEPT PLAN

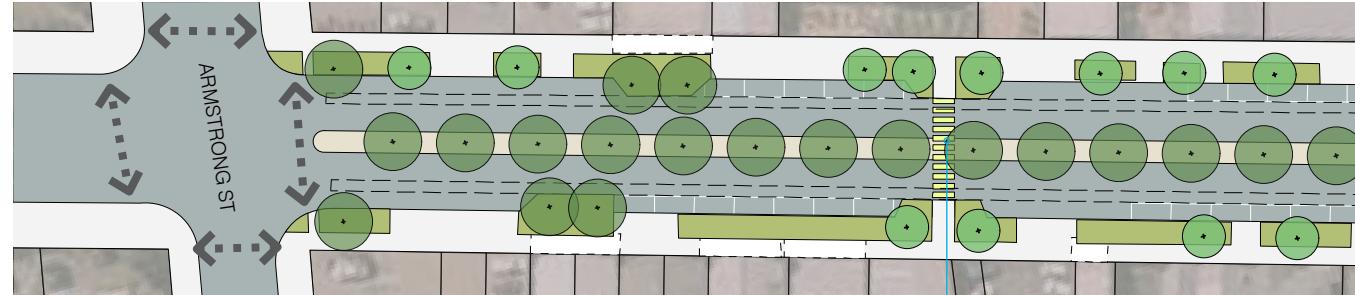
The recommendations for the area are illustrated by the detailed concept plan, sections and photos of similar treatments in other places shown to the **right** and on the **following pages**.

MURRAY STREET WEST CONCEPT MAP

Existing Conditions



Proposed Concept



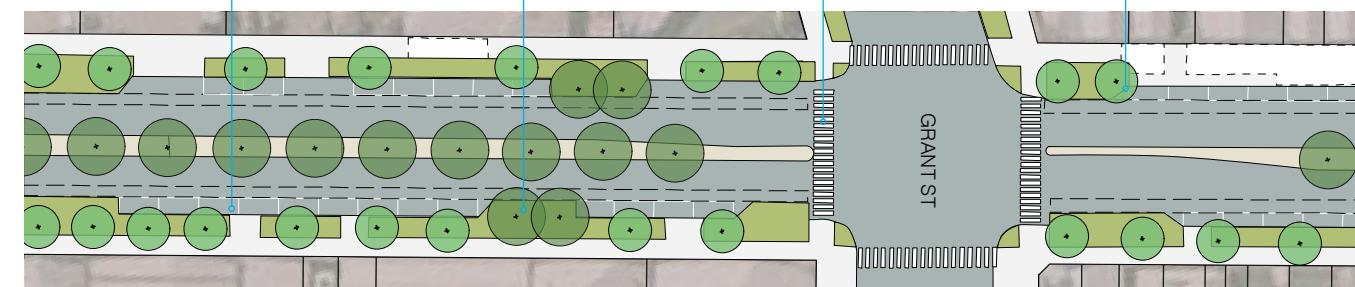
Change from diagonal to parallel parking where possible to maximise planting and pedestrian areas

Outstands and central median to lessen dominance of traffic and improve pedestrian movement

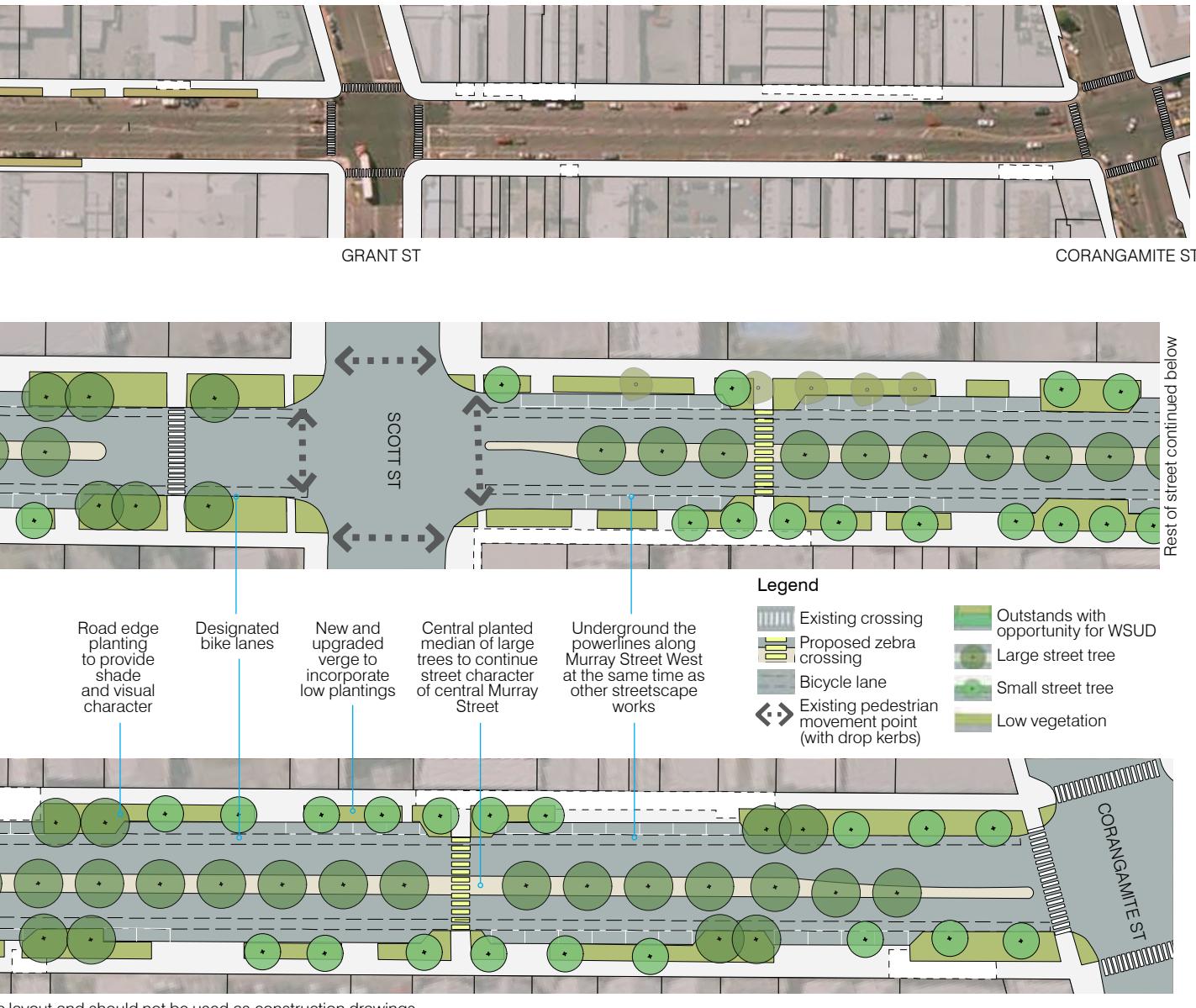
Existing signalled pedestrian crossing points

New zebra crossings at key locations to improve pedestrian movement

Planted outstands at regular intervals with seating. WSUD beds to harvest stormwater



Note: These concept maps show an indicative



Integration of planting and pedestrian crossing



Large shade giving tree in a central reservation



Successful use of native species in median planting



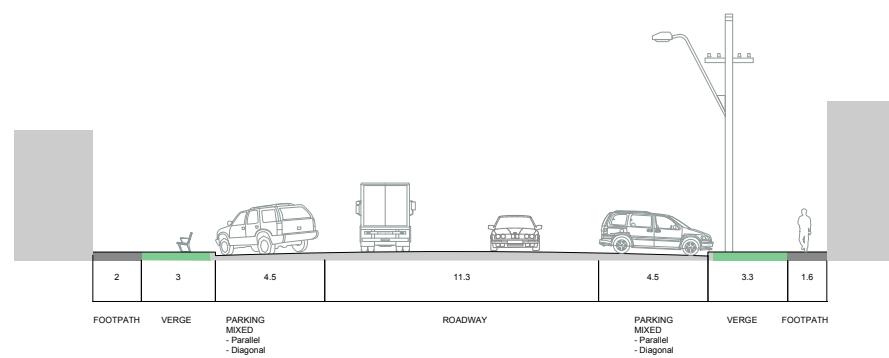
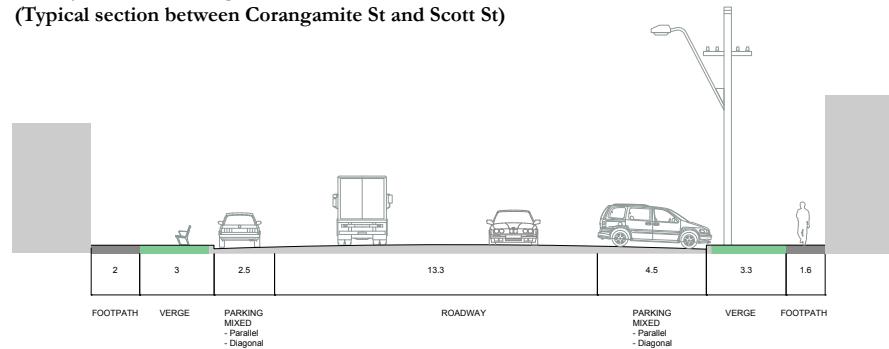
Grasses and low shrubs within the road reservation



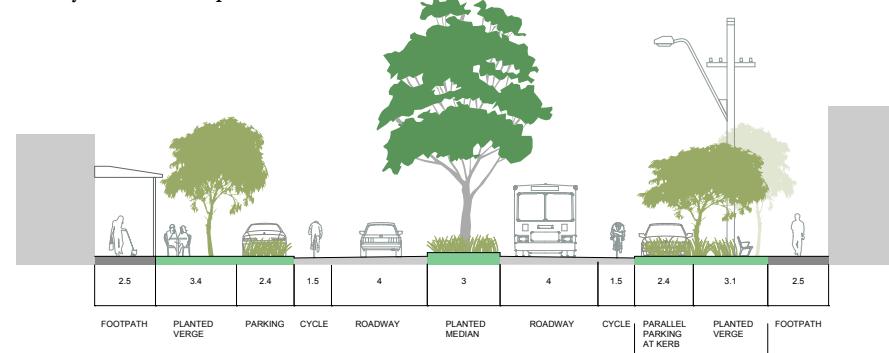
Successful use of native species in median planting

MURRAY STREET WEST CONCEPT PLAN SECTION

Murray St West Existing Conditions Sections
(Typical section between Corangamite St and Scott St)



Murray St West Concept Plan Section



RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

To enhance the amenity, character and activity of Murray Street West.

To extend the vegetated character of Murray Street Central to Armstrong Street.

To enhance pedestrian safety and amenity.

To maintain appropriate vehicle access and car parking provision for businesses.

3.3.2 Maintain appropriate vehicle access and car parking provision for local businesses via design guidelines within the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

3.3.3 Encourage active street frontages in new development.

3.3.4 Rationalising signage via design guidelines within the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

Strategies & Actions

3.3.1 Develop and implement a detailed design concept for streetscape and public realm upgrades to Murray Street West that includes:

- Creation of a new central median with street tree planting
- Improved planting along the road edges within kerb outstands and water sensitive urban design garden beds
- Improved pavement and pedestrian amenities such as seats, bins and bicycle hoops
- Reconfiguration of the road space to introduce parallel parking and create bicycle lanes
- Construction of mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Improvement to street lighting
- Undergrounding of powerlines.

3.4 Murray Street East

Murray Street East is the main shopping street in Colac and the heart of the town. The roadway forms part of the Princes Highway and is a major thoroughfare for vehicles and pedestrians. A key element of Colac's image is the strong street tree planting along Murray Street, which complements the established trees of Memorial Square.

The general layout of the roadscape with the central median and street tree planting is of high quality, however, the footpaths are in need of upgrading. Enhancing this area is vital not only because of its core retail role, but as a key tourist destination within Colac.

STREETSCAPE

To complement the established canopy tree planting, lower level planting requires upgrading. Active street frontages must be required of all new buildings, with zero front setbacks and weather protection provided over the footpaths. Where absent, verandahs should be reinstated on older buildings and provided on new buildings. A co-ordinated approach to signage is also required, with guidelines to regulate the size and siting of signs.

Improved street lighting is required for safety, particularly at crossings and intersections. In addition, atmospheric lighting could enhance the street's night time appearance, such as fairy lighting in trees and uplighting of significant building facades.

FOOTPATHS

The street's footpath is wide and well used by street traders and pedestrians. Updating the existing pavement treatments will enhance the centre's appearance and activity as well as delineate areas for pedestrian flow from areas for street furniture.

In Point Cook's town centre, as shown in the images **below right**, a 'furniture zone' was defined by the use of a separate pavement treatment. The furniture zone includes seating, signs, bins, outdoor



The existing streetscape with strong tree planting within the central median and occasional footpath planting



The existing footpath is well utilised by street traders and pedestrians



Existing Murray Street pavement in need of refreshment



Precedent image of the 'furniture zone' delineated by granite setts at Point Cook town centre

dining and planting and is designated to ensure a clear flow of pedestrian traffic, particularly for those using scooters and prams.

Council should develop an Outdoor Dining Policy to determine how outdoor dining operates. In particular, it should provide guidelines for permanent structures around outdoor café seating.

PAVEMENT MATERIALS

Four pavement material options are illustrated and described **right**. Option 1 is comparatively the most expensive and option 4 is the least expensive.

CAR PARKING & ROADS

The recommended street treatments will not affect the general configuration of the on-street car parking, however a small number of parking spaces will be removed around key pedestrian crossings to provide space for improved pedestrian circulation and planting.

Options for contrast in paving colours and patterns to delineate crossing points and car parking spaces are provided. Cycle lanes will also be incorporated into the roadway in both directions.

The chain fence along the median strip between Corangamite and Hesse Streets is dangerous and should be removed.



Option 1: Stone pavers with asphalt
(Granite paving and setts shown above and Bluestone shown below)



Option 2: Concrete pavers with
brick edging



Option 3: Exposed aggregate
concrete pavers with tarmac



Option 4: Asphalt footpath and
brick edging

STREETSCAPE GUIDELINES

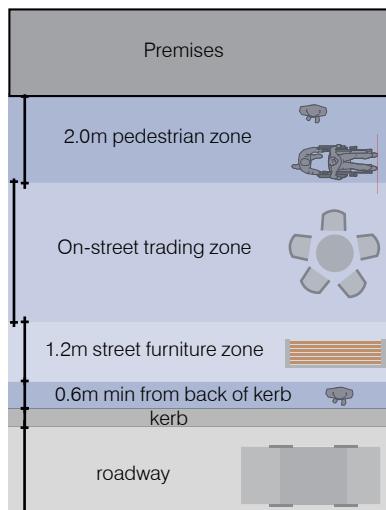


Diagram of typical streetscape arrangement

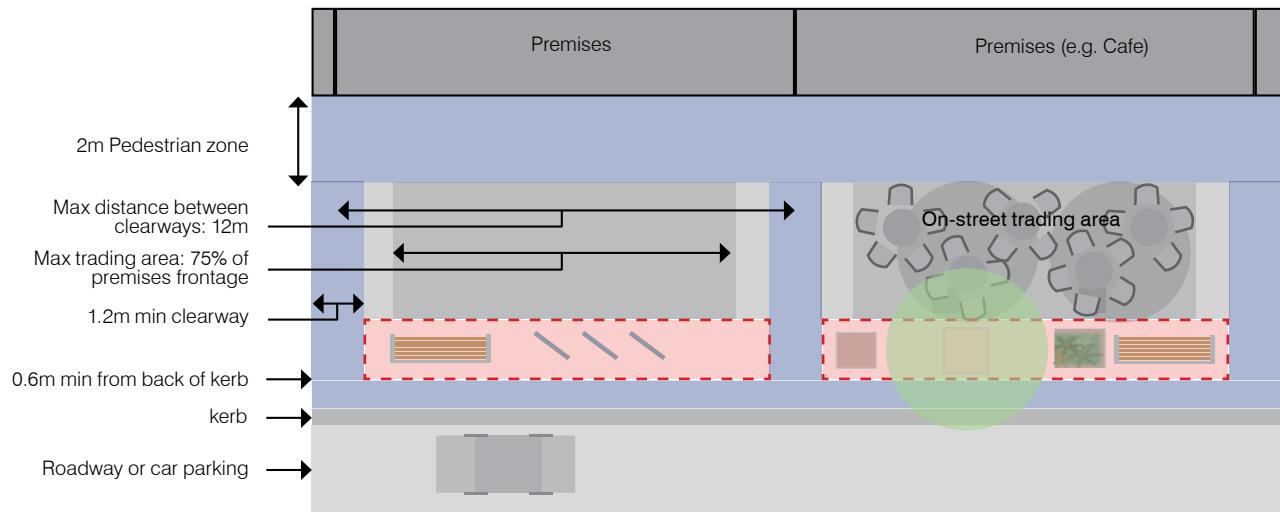
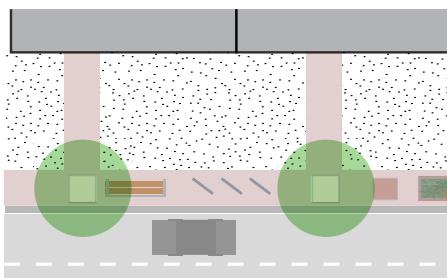
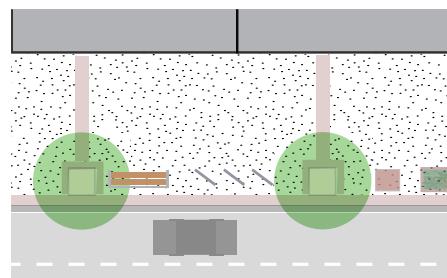


Diagram showing the Colac Otway On-Street Trading Guidelines with the proposed street furniture zone shown in pink with a red dashed line

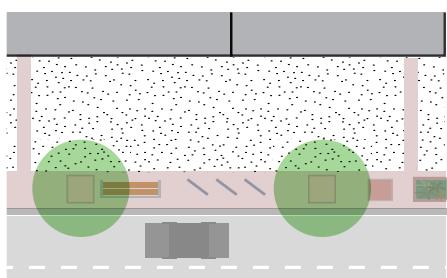
PAVING LAYOUT OPTIONS



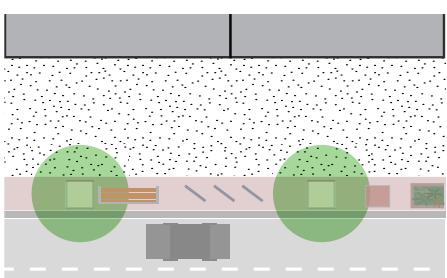
Suggested paving pattern - Option 1



Suggested paving pattern - Option 2



Suggested paving pattern - Option 3



Suggested paving pattern - Option 4

KEY:

- [Asphalt paving] Asphalt paving
- [Brick or concrete pavers] Brick or concrete pavers
- [Street tree] Street tree
- [Street furniture] Street furniture
- [Car] Car

CONCEPT PLAN

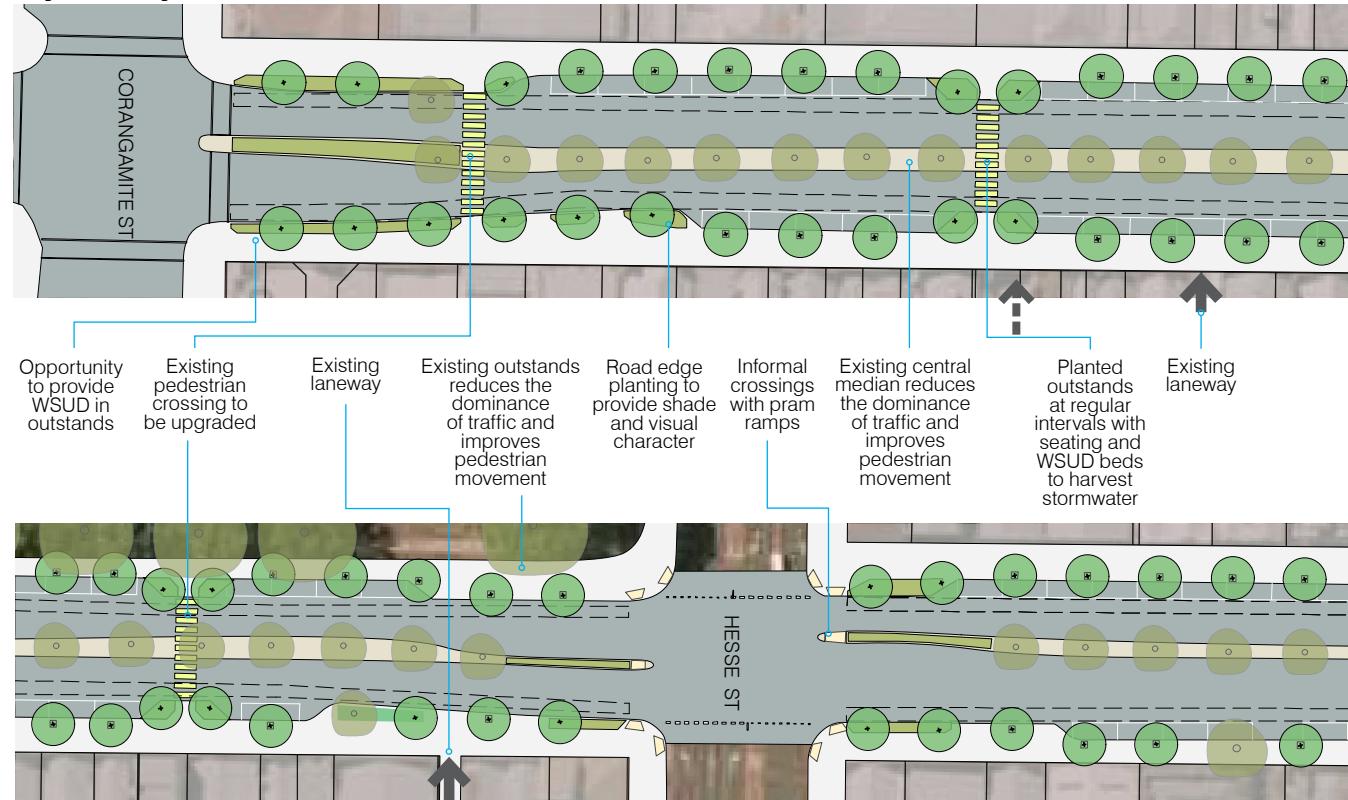
Recommendations for Murray Street East are illustrated on the following pages.

MURRAY STREET EAST CONCEPT MAP

Existing Conditions



Proposed Concept

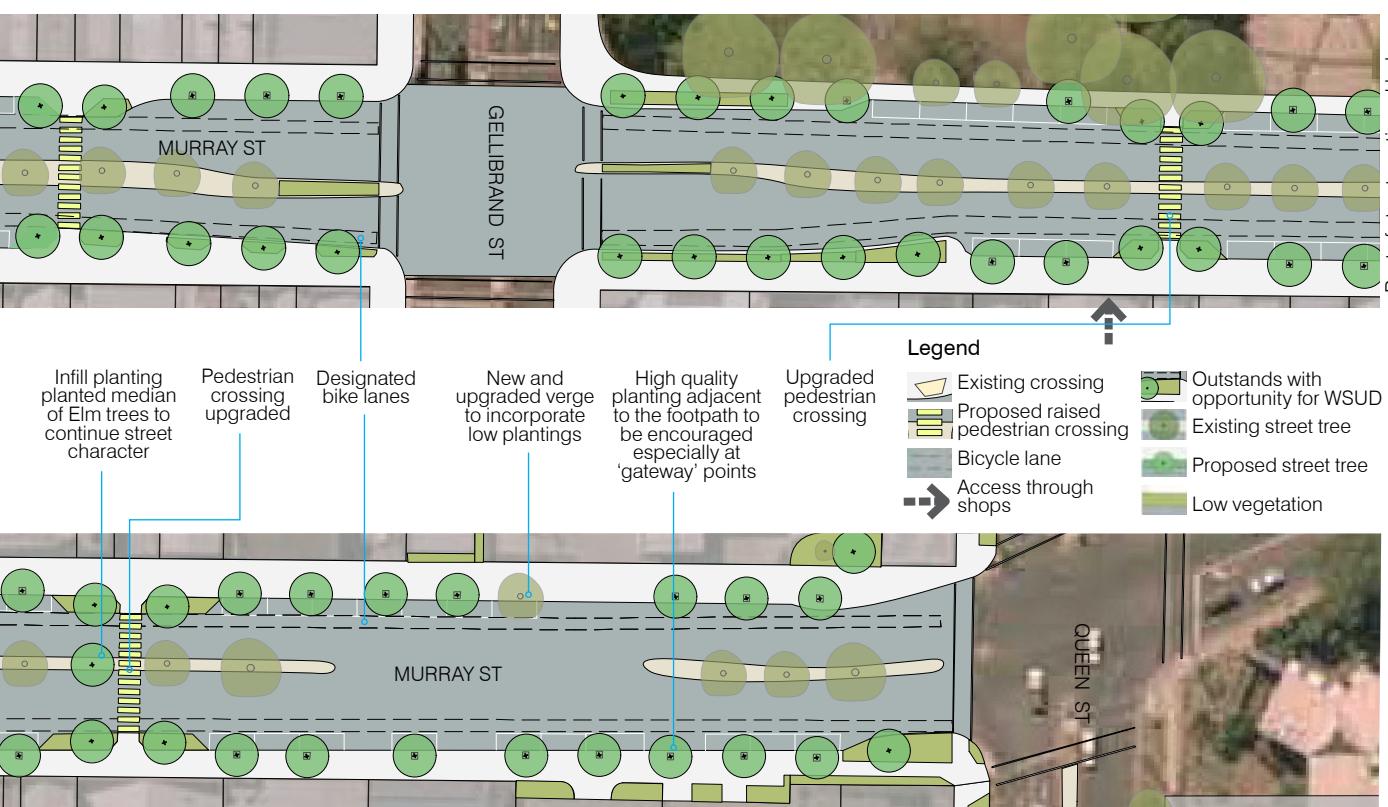


Note: These concept maps show an indicative layout and should not be used as construction drawings.



HESSE ST

QUEEN ST



Integration of planting and pedestrian crossing



Grasses and low shrubs adjacent to the roadway



Successful use of shade tree in central reservation



Opportunities for WSUD in kerb outstands



Successful use of street for outside trading

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

To enhance the amenity, character and activity of Murray Street East.

To enhance pedestrian safety and amenity.

To improve pedestrian connections into Memorial Square.

To encourage kerb side activity within footpaths while ensuring a clear passage for pedestrians.

buildings and encourage verandahs on new buildings.

3.4.5 Remove the centre median chain.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

Strategies & Actions

3.4.1 Develop and implement a detailed design concepts for streetscape and public realm upgrades to Murray Street East that includes:

- Improved planting along the road edges within kerb outstands and water sensitive urban design garden beds
- Improved pavement and pedestrian amenities such as seats, bins and bicycle hoops
- Reconfiguration of the roadspace to create bicycle lanes
- Construction of mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Improvement to street lighting.

3.4.2 Develop an Outdoor Dining Policy that examines the appropriateness of placing permanent screen structures around outdoor café seating.

3.4.3 Uplight significant trees and buildings.

3.4.4 Encourage the reinstatement of verandahs on older

3.5 Bromfield Street

Bromfield Street is emerging as Colac's large floorplate retail heart, with various large format retailers and two supermarkets providing anchors at either end of the street.

Currently, Bromfield Street is dominated by cars and parking, with limited consideration for pedestrians or landscaping, and suffers a poor urban amenity as a result (see photos **below** and **right**).



Existing Bromfield Streetscape



A new building in front of the bowling alley would help infill and reinforce the Bromfield St frontage

VEHICLE ACCESS

The need to provide vehicular access to the large supermarkets and their car parks means that Bromfield Street will continue to serve a function of accommodating circulating vehicles. Although it will not be able to accommodate the high levels of pedestrian amenity and streetscape activity of Murray and Gellibrand Streets, streetscape improvements are recommended to enhance the appearance and safety of the street.



Opportunities exist to improve private car parks fronting Bromfield St

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

The vehicle dominated appearance of Bromfield Street can be improved by introducing a substantial amount of new planting, bicycle lanes and pedestrian crossings.

Similar to Murray Street West, trees should be installed in a new central median (where no central parking currently exists) to develop avenue planting along Bromfield Street. The central parking bays between Gellibrand and Hesse Street will be retained with large trees planted at regular intervals between the bays.

Planting is also proposed within private car parking areas (see photos **top right** of existing car parks) which will require discussions and

negotiations with the owners. The new planting is intended to provide shade and improve the appearance of the area.

The footpaths should be widened, kerbs extended and small ‘pause places’ created with planting beds and street furniture. To improve pedestrian links, new mid-block crossings are also proposed. As streetscape improvements are progressively implemented, the opportunity should be taken to relocate powerlines underground.

The central median car parking could be extended to Queen Street if additional parking is required in the future. Design of this parking should provide for adequate landscaping, including regular planting of large scale canopy trees, as well as good pedestrian access and amenity.

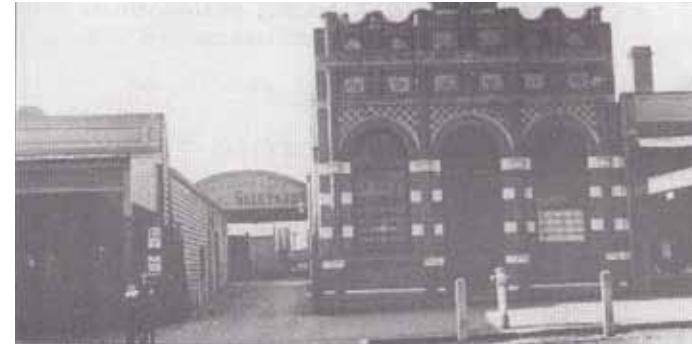
BUILT FORM & PEDESTRIAN LINKS

On the northern side of Bromfield Street, buildings should be designed to create a more pedestrian focussed streetscape. Vacant or underused sites should be improved and redeveloped, where possible, to create a more consistent and active frontage to the street. This includes the rear of sites fronting Murray Street, such as the bowling alley and Dimmeys.

Existing through-block pedestrian links to Murray Street should be improved or additional links created in new development opportunities. In a similar manner to Johnstones Lane, these links can significantly add to the amenity and character of the area.

CONCEPT PLAN

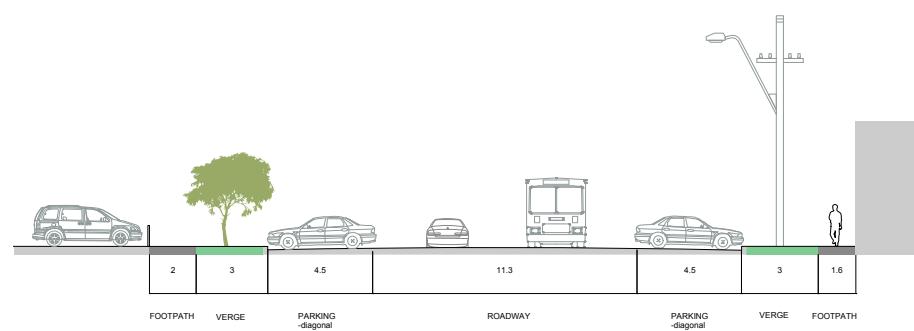
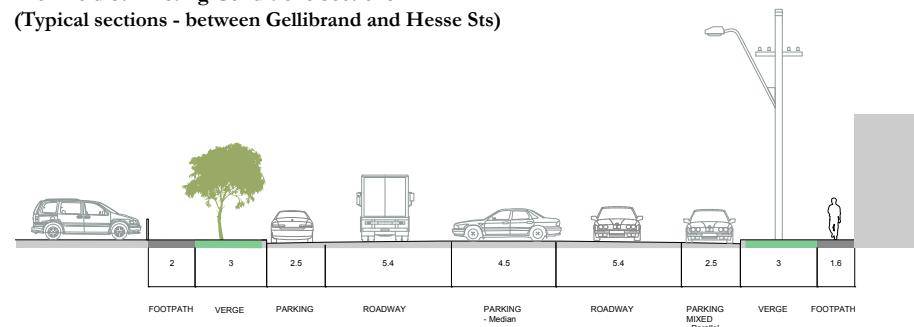
Recommendations for Bromfield are illustrated on the concept plan, sections and photos of similar treatments in other places on **pages 106 and 107**.



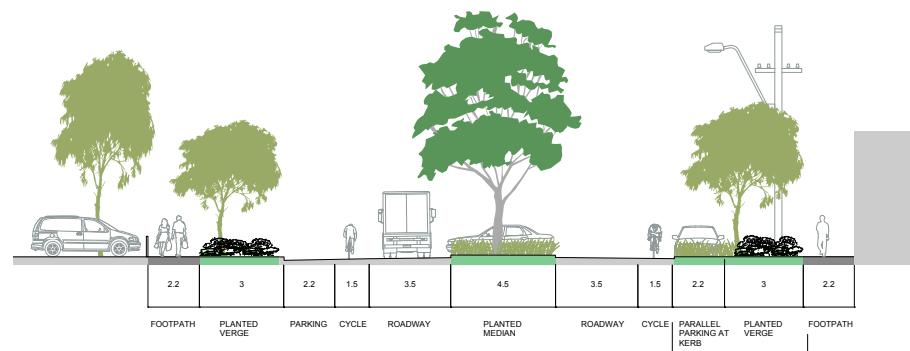
J G Jonestone's Office, Murray St, showing salesyards to rear

BROMFIELD STREET CONCEPT PLAN SECTION

Bromfield St Existing Conditions Sections
(Typical sections - between Gellibrand and Hesse Sts)



Bromfield St Proposed Concept Plan Section



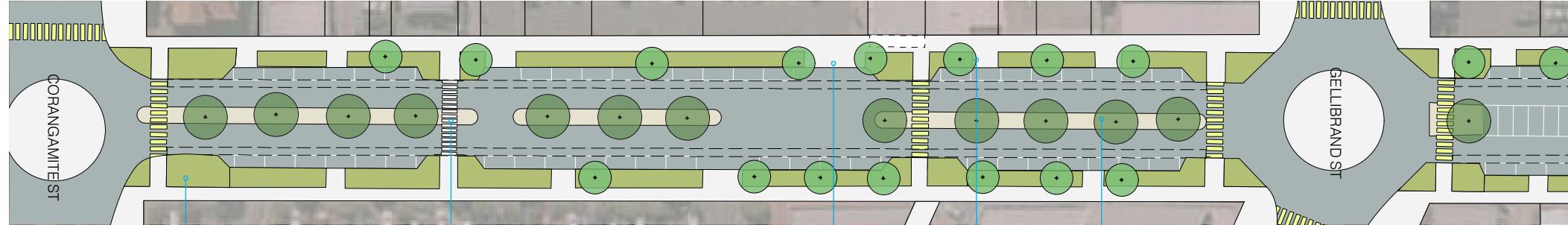
Note: Angle parking would be inappropriate in these locations as it involves vehicles backing into the bicycle lane and traffic lane which is undesirable for safety reasons

BROMFIELD STREET CONCEPT MAP

Existing Conditions



Proposed Concept



Outstands to lessen dominance of traffic and parking and provide more pedestrian crossing points. Incorporate WSUD beds to harvest stormwater

Reconfiguration of existing angle parking to parallel

Only existing
pedestrian
crossing with
flashing lights

Central plantings
of large trees at
regular intervals
between parking
bays

Widening of footpath
and planting areas
to allow greater
pedestrian use

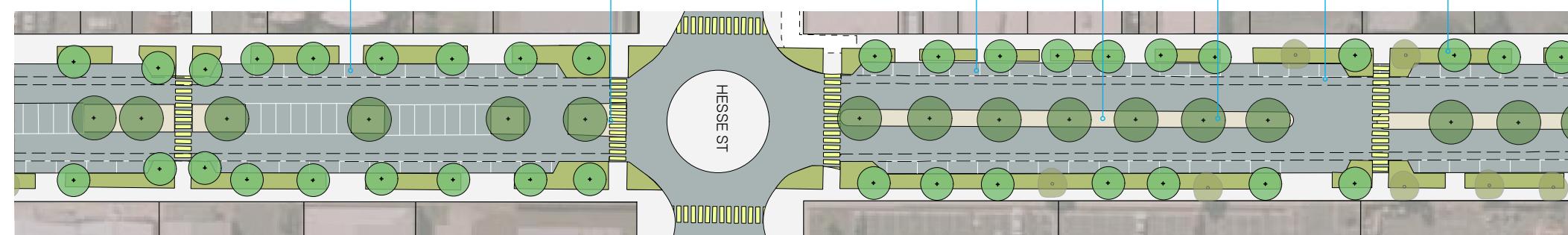
Underground the powerlines along Bromfield St at the same time as other streetscape works

Option to include central parking if required

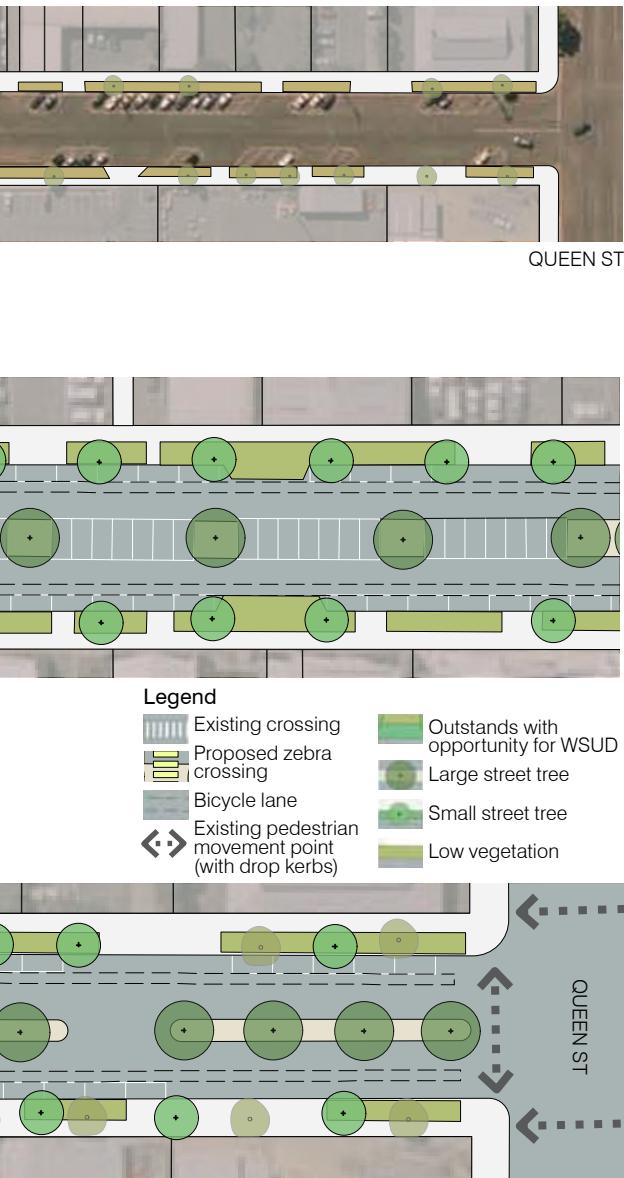
Avenue planting
to provide
shade and
visual character

Designated
bike lanes

New and upgraded
verge to improve
on existing low
plantings



Note: These concept maps shows an indicative layout and should not be used as construction drawings



Large shade giving tree in a central reservation



Successful integration of planting and raised pedestrian crossing in Bayswater



Planting within the central median strip and the roadside areas



Trees within parking areas provide shade and interest



Grasses and low shrubs within the road reservation

TYPICAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING CONCEPT

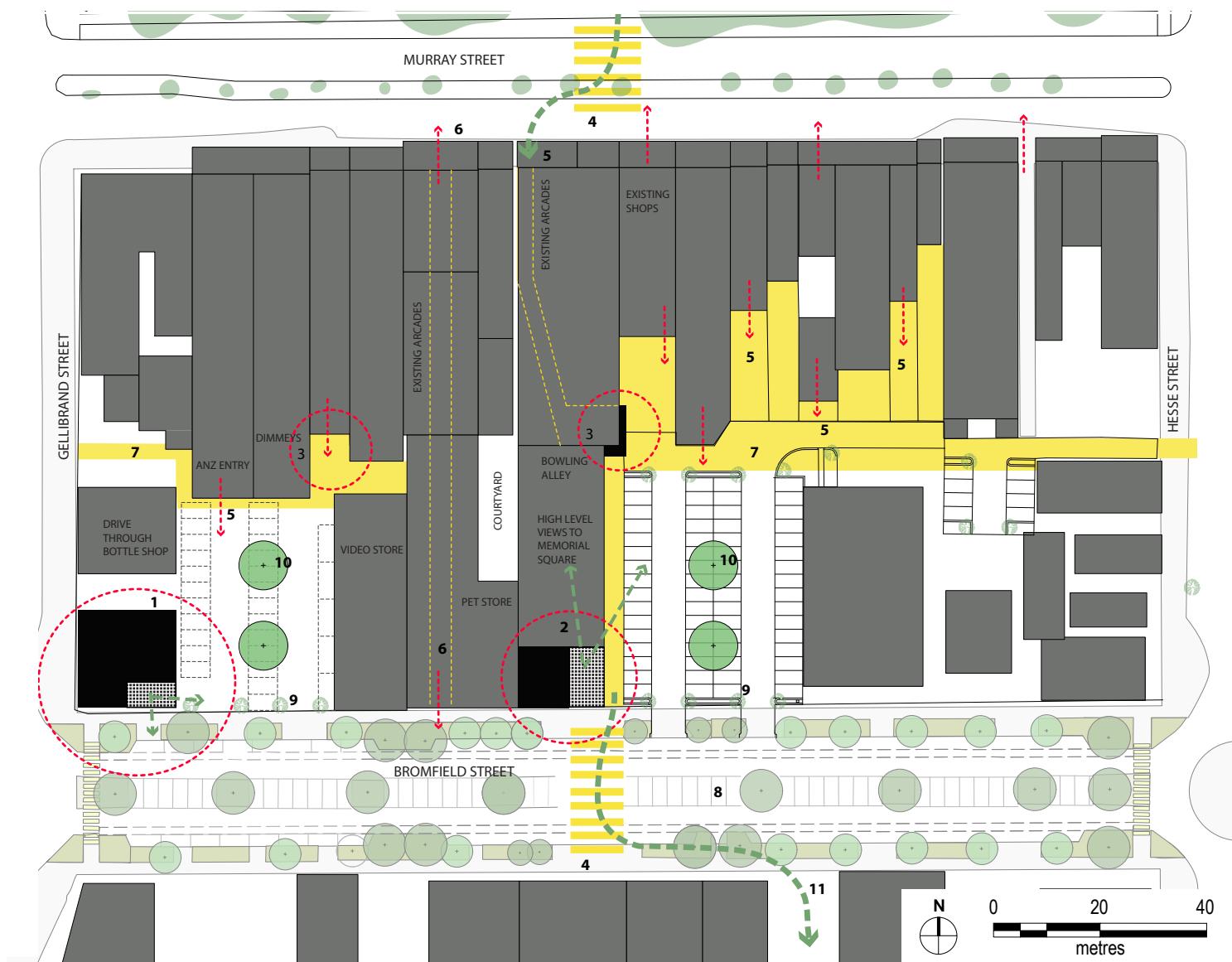


Typical detail of proposed pedestrian crossing, plantings and road layout

BROMFIELD ST TO MURRAY ST BLOCK CONCEPT MAP

Legend

1. Potential new buildings to key corner sites. Build to street edges with ground floor active use.
2. Potential new buildings to infill street frontage along Bromfield Street. Potential for 2 or 3 storey buildings with "green" terraces to engage with views to Memorial Square and surrounding landscape.
3. Encouraging improvement and redevelopment of back entries such as the Bowling Alley and Dimmeys.
4. New mid-block crossing to encourage pedestrian movement through the block.
5. Encourage existing businesses to improve back entrances and carpark frontages.
6. Encourage use and development of existing arcades and through routes.
7. Demarcation of carpark edges to create a back entry "address" and a pedestrian priority zone.
8. New planting and road allocations as per streetscape details.
9. New planting along carparks to infill street frontage and create pedestrian amenity.
10. New planting in carparks to improve visual character and pedestrian amenity.
11. Promote access through blocks to large scale commercial and retail attractors such as Aldi.



BROMFIELD STREET PHOTOMONTAGE



Before



After



Looking west along Bromfield St: Potential buildings to infill prominent corner frontages activating street and car park, encourage pedestrian filtering from Murray St, upper level views interact with Memorial Square trees

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

To improve the visual character and pedestrian amenity of Bromfield Street.

To introduce a strong planting theme to the streetscape.

To improve the appearance and amenity of car parks.

Strategies & Actions

3.5.1 Develop and implement detailed design concepts for streetscape and public realm upgrades to Bromfield Street that includes:

- Creation of a new central median with street tree planting
- Improved planting along the road edges with kerb outstands and water sensitive urban design garden beds
- Improved pavement and pedestrian amenities such as seats, bins and bicycle hoops
- Reconfiguration of the roadspace to introduce parallel parking and create bicycle lanes
- Construction of mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Improvement to existing roundabouts
- Improvement to street lighting
- Undergrounding of powerlines.

3.5.2 Improve planting within the Council-owned car park.

3.5.3 Encourage building owners to create or improve pedestrian thoroughfares between Murray and Bromfield Streets.

3.5.4 Encourage buildings to provide an active frontage to the streetscape and car parks. Buildings fronting Murray Street should also provide an active frontage to Bromfield Street.

3.5.5 Encourage new development on vacant or underused sites to contribute to the appearance, amenity and activity of Bromfield Street.

3.5.6 Consider central median car parking extended to Queen Street, if additional parking required in the future, and ensure that design of this parking includes regular planting of large scale canopy trees.

Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.

3.6 COPACC & Station Precinct

The COPACC and Railway Station Precinct serves an important role within the CBD as a civic, cultural, entertainment and transport node. There is significant potential for all of these roles to be expanded in the future.

CIVIC, CULTURAL & COMMUNITY ROLE

Community feedback shows strong support for a range of community facilities that could be developed in the precinct.

The civic and cultural role of the precinct could be enhanced by extending the existing COPACC facilities. This could include additional or larger performance spaces, conference facilities or an art gallery. Urban plaza spaces could be developed for informal gatherings or civic events. The precinct also provides an opportunity to display new public art within the CBD.

Other possibilities include activities specifically designed for children and youth such as play areas. There is also potential for additional retail and cafes in the precinct.

An expanded role for the area should be accompanied by upgraded facilities including toilets, improved public spaces and seating, secure bicycle parking and improved lighting.

TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

Potential exists to reactivate the station precinct as a key transport interchange. As the population and roles of Geelong, Colac and Warrnambool continue to evolve, rail and coach services will increase into the future and upgraded facilities will be required.

Rail and coach commuter patronage could be supported with a formalised park and ride facility, drop off and drive through lanes at the station entry and an expanded bus terminal.

Passenger services such as cafes, small retail outlets and improved waiting areas are also required.

The heritage features of the station building should be enhanced and improved. As a part of the station's setting, a redesigned forecourt area would provide improved passenger and visitor amenity and greatly enhance the appearance of the area. This also includes the historic turntable which could become a feature.

Vacant and unused VicTrack land along both sides of the railway could be better used. Notably, the appearance of the rail storage shed opposite the platform could be improved and landscaping provided to buffer views of the railway line.

STREETSCAPE & BUILDINGS

The streetscape amenity of the precinct could be enhanced through redevelopment of underused or vacant sites, landscaping and other public realm upgrades.

As part of access improvements, different pavement treatments could be used to slow traffic movement around key pedestrian routes. This is already proposed as part of the proposed shared zones in **Section 2.3** along Gellibrand Street to the station on the north side.

There are a number of other ways that buildings could be improved or established to benefit the precinct. Development could be encouraged on the site to the north of the turntable to overlook the station plaza. The former library frontage could be redesigned to offer more activity to the street. Along the north side of Produce Lane, adjacent to the railway line and station, there is potential for either new freight functions or future medium density housing.

RAILWAY STREET

Council has recently purchased the former hardware and timber site on the southern side of Railway Street adjacent to the railway line. Potential exists to close the adjacent section of Railway Street, which directly abuts the Council car park of COPACC.

Together this forms a strategically important site that could be redeveloped for a range of functions. This could include residential, community or commercial uses, expanded civic and cultural facilities, or additional long term car parking adjacent to the railway station.

If the former hardware store building is retained, its south-facing facade should be improved through painting or graphic treatment to enhance the southern entrance to Colac.

ACCESS, MOVEMENT & CAR PARKING

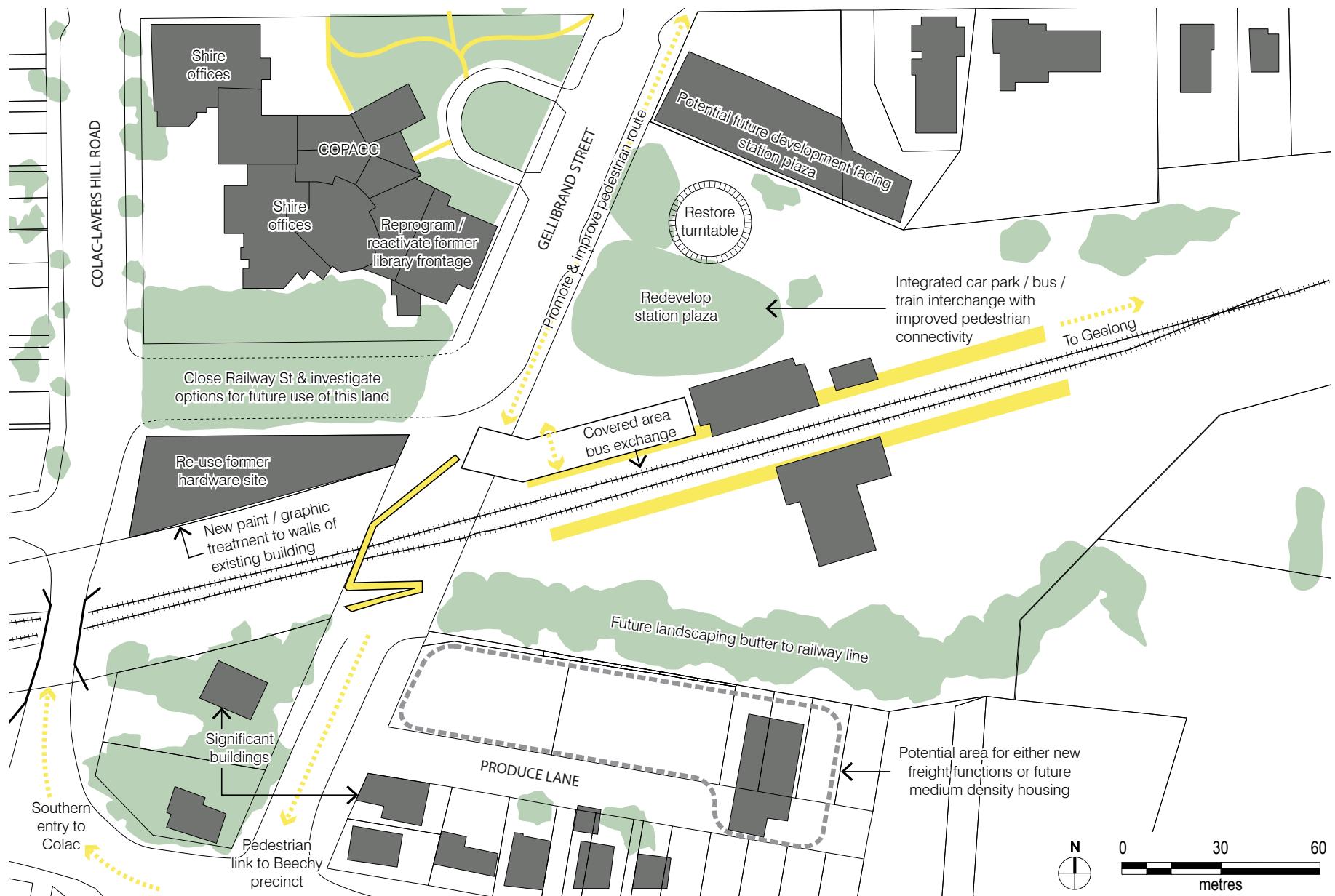
A review of traffic management and car parking in the precinct should be undertaken. This will determine current requirements for access or parking and assess the impacts of the closure of Railway Street, should this option be under consideration.

Pedestrian links from the station to the CBD and adjoining residential areas should also be strengthened. The extension of the shared traffic space south along Gellibrand Street from Memorial Square will also assist connection to the CBD.

With the station located on Colac's bicycle trail network, improved facilities for cyclists should be provided, such as secure bike storage or drinking fountains. Additional information and directional signage to assist pedestrians or cyclists is required, e.g. to the CBD, COPACC or the Old Beechy Rail Trail.

CONCEPT PLAN

Recommendations for the COPACC and station precinct are illustrated on the **following page**.

COPACC & STATION PRECINCT RECOMMENDATIONS MAP

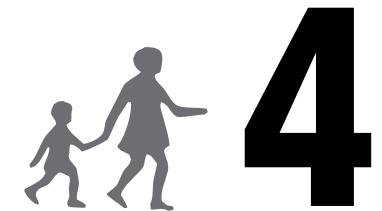
RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives

- To expand the precinct as a focus for civic and cultural activity.
- To increase activity toward the southern edge of the CBD.
- To improve the setting of the historic railway buildings and infrastructure.
- To enhance the role of the precinct as a public transport and freight interchange.
- To upgrade the forecourt of the railway station.
- To improve pedestrian linkages to the north along Gellibrand Street.

Strategies & Actions

- The former hardware site at the corner of Railway Street and Colac-Lavers Hill Road, which could be used for housing, community or commercial use or as a car park.
 - The site at the corner of Gellibrand and Rae Streets, which could include a future development facing onto the station plaza.
 - The site south of the station for either new freight functions or future medium density housing near the rail link.
- 3.6.4 Investigate the potential to close railway street and reallocate land for other future uses such as public open space, extension of COPACC or long term car parking.
- 3.6.5 Establish a landscaping buffer on the south of the railway line with new canopy trees, shrubs and low planting.
- 3.6.6 Promote and improve the pedestrian links to the CBD and the Beechy precinct.
- 3.6.7 Apply new paint / graphic treatment to the walls of the existing building at the corner of Railway Street and Colac-Lavers Hill Road.
- Refer to the Implementation Plan for further details.
- 3.6.1 Develop and implement detailed design concepts to upgrade the station's forecourt. This should include:
- New paving and planting in the forecourt
 - Improved pedestrian connectivity
 - Improved car parking layout
 - Improved bus interchange.
- 3.6.2 Restore the historic turntable as a feature of the station forecourt.
- 3.6.3 Investigate options for future development or upgrading of existing buildings that could help to activate the precinct and better integrate these buildings with the streetscape:
- The former library on Gellibrand Street.



4

Next Steps

Adoption of the report

The Final Plan was adopted by Council in May, 2012 and will be used to guide future decisions. It will be used to:

- Support applications for State and Commonwealth Government grants.
- Amend the *Colac Otway Planning Scheme* to implement the vision and guide future development of public and private land.
- Prepare detailed designs for priority capital works budgets.
- Guide the development of the Council Plan, Capital Works Plan and departmental business plans.
- Facilitate discussions with landowners about initiatives that affect private land.
- Guide decisions about streetscape improvements and tree planting.
- Encourage new businesses to invest in Colac and make a positive contribution to the life and vitality of the CBD.
- Work with the Colac community, service clubs and businesses, to identify projects that support the vision of Colac as the 'Botanic Garden City'.
- Pursue initiatives that are the responsibility of other levels of Government or utility providers, e.g. improvements within road reserves controlled by VicRoads.

The projects outlined in this report represent a significant investment in the heart of Colac. Implementation will be dependent on the identification of appropriate funding sources and further consultation with any affected property owners.

Part 2 of the Project

The final stage of the Project will involve the development of detailed engineering drawings suitable for tendering for construction of infrastructure works which will be followed by the capital works themselves. It will also involve a Planning Scheme Amendment.

Acknowledgements

This project is being undertaken by a study team lead by Planisphere with contributions from Colac Otway Shire Council officers. The sub-consultant team is Aspect Studios, UrbanTrans and NMBW Architects, with additional input from Parsons Brinkerhoff, Aquenta and Surf Coast Surveying and Drafting.

The assistance provided by Council, community and members of the Project Steering Committee and Reference Group is gratefully acknowledged; as are the many contributions of the sub-consultants who have actively participated in each stage of the project.

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HISTORICAL MATERIAL

Historical photos were used from the following sources:

State Library of Victoria

‘Colac & District Historical Society photo files

Colac: A Short History from 1837, Colac & District Historical Society (1995)

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