**Colac Civic, Rail and Health Precinct Plan**

**Activity #1 – Visioning Exercise**

# **Emerging Theme 1: Space to grow together and thrive**

## **Housing & Accommodation**

* Future accommodation to be diverse, safe, sustainable, affordable, close to services and multi-functional.
* Acknowledged that accommodation may need to site outside of the precinct area.
* Accommodation to be in the form of either a hotel or short stay to cater for a wide variety of people including students, older people, people with disability and professionals (i.e. medical/business workers).

## **Land Use & Employment**

* Advocate for Colac to become a vibrant cultural arts hub/destination
* Consider outdoor gathering spaces and community-oriented space for cultural activities, arts and recreation
* Colac Makers Space makes a big contribution to activation and visitation to COPACC with approximately 1,200 visitors per year (and continuing to grow). Currently there is insufficient space to undertake “messy” work.
* Opportunity for an open food market to showcase local produce
* Consider spaces for more creative industries and social enterprises
* Co-locate Government services/facilities
* Need to expand cinema/auditorium
* Development example (Port Fairy) - Professional accommodation is behind and above the shops in Main Street

## **Built Form**

* Mixed views relating to building heights however, there is desire for higher density for between 2-3 storeys, but setback at approx. 3-5 storey height
* Opportunity to include BBQ areas and/or outdoor spaces on building rooftops
* Ensure buildings take advantage of views towards Lake Colac
* Ensure built form integrates with the landscape and ensure sufficient sunlight along footpaths

# **Emerging Theme 2: Green Spine, boulevards and new destinations**

## Streetscapes

* Promote and increase tree coverage by removing power headlines along key streets
* Gellibrand Street to be a key green space street
* Laneways surrounding Woolworths to be activated i.e. shops to be accessed via backdoors
* Ensure sufficient space on streets to cater for larger footpaths and mobility scooters
* Consider improved wayfinding elements
* Include more opportunities for open spaces within the Precinct

## Place-making

* Opportunity for “food-based places” to showcase local and indigenous plants/foods. Examples include a food and wine trail and/or farmers market
* Opportunity for Colac to be an arts precinct and include spaces for interactive performance spaces (both indoor and outdoor i.e. light installations and live performances) and an art gallery to display local work
* Consider public art/murals/digital art on civic/council buildings and within laneways for activation (example include murals at Aireys Inlet and Warrnambool City Council artwork on Council buildings and laneways)
* Consider ways to celebrate the coastal and Otway landscape environment, volcanic plains and remnant grasslands
* Consider public art/mural along blank façade along Woolworths on Rae Street
* Create sense of arrival and identity into the precinct
* Promote indigenous heritage and culture via display of artwork and murals
* Explore a café precinct/experience in proximity to Colac Railway Station to enable people to spill out onto streets
* Consider closure of streets during events

# **Emerging Theme 3: Curated and active connections**

## Walking & Cycling

* Include infrastructure for cyclists i.e. more bike racks and end of trip facilities surrounding the Colac railway station
* Increase the safety for pedestrians i.e. prioritised pedestrian crossings, more seating, drinking taps and well-lit walking paths
* Consider cyclist and pedestrian trails,
* Opportunity to include public bike/scooter rental
* Consider lowering speed limits within the precinct
* Consider closure and/or narrowing of Railway St.
* Ensure strong link through to Hart Street (a priority north-south cycle route)
* Provide connection from current Railway Station to Old Beechy Rail Trail

## Public Transport & Vehicles

* Consider better infrastructure provision for scooters by increasing the width of verge areas and including recharge stations
* Provide better public transport connections within the precinct for rural and coastal communities
* Consider improved bus infrastructure i.e. sheltered bus stops
* Include more car parking spaces around Council offices and Colac Area Health and additional disable parking
* Consider multi-level car parking within the precinct

# **Emerging Theme 4: Culture and character flowing into the streets**

## Heritage + Culture

* Celebrate and respect Indigenous culture and heritage through design, art and place-making to promote reconciliation, truth telling, healing
* Acknowledge past uses of buildings
* Encourage ways to celebrate cultural diversity i.e. via food and arts trail
* Showcase art and cultural films at the cinema
* Preserve mosaic at COPACC with relocation a possibility
* Opportunity to integrate public art along Gellibrand Street and Corangamite Street that links up to Murray Street

## Landscape Character

* Landscaping to link in with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) native gardens
* Collaborate with Eastern Maar to establish landscape theme
* Incorporate landscape architecture that references the landscapes of the volcanic plains, Otways and the coast
* Use of crime prevention through environmental design approach to provide for safe day and night experience
* The Colac area is a Bandicoot country and consideration should be emphasised to incorporate Bandicoots into the landscape
* Landscaped areas to celebrate local biodiversity species
* Include indigenous species that are suitable to the climate

# Emerging Theme 5: Sufficient and sustainable infrastructure

## Services & Drainage

* Incorporate well-lit areas for safety
* Opportunity to include a natural water feature for stormwater detention

## Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity

* Investigate the extension of the sculpture park into the streets and into the cultural precinct
* Opportunities to include water sensitive urban design and thematic planting to connect spaces
* Consider the use of solar panels for new and existing buildings
* Opportunities to provide urban land care i.e. edible gardens
* Consider EV charging stations around the precinct
* Incorporate the greening of the precinct i.e. workplace to includes outdoor workspace environments (example - Ivanhoe Grammar School)
* Ensure new buildings meet sustainable building codes
* Gellibrand Street to be a green spine similar to Geelong’s Green Spine along Malop Street and ensure linkages to Memorial Gardens and Botanic Gardens

**Activity #2 – Issues and Opportunities Identification**

# Western Precinct & Colac Area Health

**Issue**

* Additional car parking is required for people requiring services and for staff. It is currently competitive between CAH and Bulla
* Barrier to new development are the existing buildings onsite i.e. tyre place and carpet court etc
* Colac Aboriginal Gathering Place is temporary (located on Miller St across from CAH)
* Lack of street connections - there is a need for additional crossings across the precinct
* Lack of wayfinding and entries/access from Miller St (CAH)

**Opportunity**

* Provide timed car parking, paid parking or a multi-storey car park
* Consider additional health services and social enterprises (north of Conner St)
* Ensure new development considers various interfaces and include more urban design opportunities (across from CAH on Miller St)
* Opportunity for Colac Area Health to increase in building height
* Promote active street frontages
* Consider sleeved car parking
* Provide short/medium term accommodation for health professionals
* Invest in the Youth Health Hub as it a primary place of engagement for the youth (located on Hart St left of Colac Area Health)
* Relocate sculpture and enhance the precinct to become a cultural hub and attract more people (southeast corner of precinct)

# Northern Precinct (Woolworths)

**Issue**

* Woolworths car park requires shade trees as the temperature of the car park is hot
* Blank walls of Woolworths building (facing Rae St) is not inviting
* Rear of buildings within the precinct are not inviting
* Lack of public toilets within precinct
* Government offices aren't sufficient to meet existing and future needs

**Opportunity**

* Potential relocation of Colac Aboriginal Gathering Place to permanent residence on Gellibrand St east of Woolworths ( i.e. the derelict building Co-owned, potential Butcher Shop). Funding is required for relocation.
* Increase landscaping and plant trees on tarmac of Woolworths car park
* Potential for a mural along the blank wall of Woolworths
* Improve laneway connectivity via art to connect to Murray St, Memorial Gardens and Botanic Garden

# Central Precinct (Colac Otway Shire Council & COPACC)

* **Colac Station**

**Issue**

* + Currently people park on grass verges and double park

**Opportunity**

* + Opportunity for park and ride
  + Create safe public spaces that is well lit
* **Gellibrand St**

**Issue**

* + Currently not safe for pedestrians

**Opportunity**

* + Increase safety via pedestrian crossing
  + Support green spine opportunity along Gellibrand Street
  + Include greening and artworks along this street to add continuity to the northern boundary of the precinct
* **Civic Centre**

**Issue**

* + Difficult to safely cross from Civic Centre to CAH
  + Council building is outdated and requires an upgrade – Council building doesn’t have a lift
  + Existing open space includes attractive trees however, fragmented by paths/driveways (northeast corner)
  + Lack of disable parks near COPACC entry
  + No privacy and the noise level are an issue (western side of Council office)
* **Opportunity** 
  + Provide for a dedicated visual arts space
  + Stand-alone cinema
  + Entertainment facilities for younger demographic and family
  + Potential outdoor space, future use in post pandemic world (north-west corner)
  + Cafe around COPACC
  + Include a public event space in the east side of COPACC
  + Consider emergency services (across the street south) when designing and planning for the precinct
* **Old Beechy Rail Trail**

**Issue**

* + Need aesthetic improvement as its currently ordinary
  + Old Beechy trail located incorrectly

**Opportunity**

* + Retain heritage footbridge
  + Emphasise pedestrian link to create more of an experience
* **Other areas**
  + Investigate closure of Rae St
  + Railway St just a ‘rat race’ – is it needed?
  + Potential multi-level carparking to free up green space on Rae street
  + Include mid-block ped crossing along Miller St
  + Include coffee vans along Miller St near Council offices
  + Opportunity to embrace the multicultural community through arts, signage, food and language
  + Develop ex-home hardware site into a museum, gallery or accommodation
  + Development could subsidise future arts/culture endeavours

# Eastern Precinct (East of Gellibrand St)

* **Colac Railway Station / Ambulance/CFA Station**

**Issue**

* + Underutilised site west of Bowling Club
  + Lack of public toilets - nearest public toilet to Colac station is the Bromfield block south of Memorial Square

**Opportunity**

* + Extend the corner building style in the facade as two storey accommodation for business visitors (northwest corner)
  + Re-purpose heritage turntable
  + Opportunity to amalgamate emergency services to free up space/land
  + Buildings along Rae St east of CFA Station are very old
* **Rae Street**

**Issue**

* + Currently a primary transport thoroughfare. Need to ensure safe movement of cyclists and pedestrians
  + Rae Street is particularly wide and has a poor visual experience
  + Laneway in Bunnings currently exists but poorly identified - Narrow concrete 'canyon'.
  + Blank wall of Bunnings building (facing Rae St) is not inviting
  + Queen Street/Rae Street intersection is unsafe and causes traffic at peak times
  + Remove overhead powerline – (southeastern corner of the precinct)

**Opportunity**

* + Redesign the bus depot