

## 02 MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

--/--

Proposed C269yara

### 02.01 Context

--/--

Proposed C269yara

#### Location

Yarra comprises of approximately 20 square kilometres and is bound by the Cities of Melbourne to the west, Boroondara to the east, Moreland and Darebin to the north and Stonnington to the south. Located between Melbourne's central business district and middle suburbs, it forms a transition between these areas. The Yarra River is the major environmental feature of the municipality, forming its southern and eastern boundaries.

#### Community and population growth

Yarra offers proximity to public transport, services, retail, entertainment, jobs and open space, making it an attractive place to live and work.

Around 96,000 people live in Yarra, and this will grow by almost 30,000 to 2031. It is projected that more than 13,000 new homes will be required to accommodate this growth.

The community is diverse in terms of ethnicity, language spoken, socio-economic background, age, household size, tenure and structure.

Household types in Yarra will continue to change, with a higher proportion of dwellings occupied by single occupants and families.

Council is committed to supporting a diverse community, including advancing equitable opportunities for people with disability and promoting the availability of diverse and affordable housing to support social inclusion and maintain Yarra's community into the future. However, managing population growth and change and supporting a diverse community is a challenge for Yarra. In planning for growth and change, Yarra is faced with managing the pressure on the valued heritage and the character of Yarra's buildings and streetscapes, its open space, community facilities, infrastructure, natural environment and transport.

#### Activity centres

Yarra's major and neighbourhood activity centres are predominantly along and around the main retail shopping streets. They feature highly intact heritage streetscapes and heritage places that are valued by the community.

Yarra's major, neighbourhood and local activity centres are shown on the Strategic Framework Plan in clause 02.04-1 and Activity Centre Plans in 11.03-1L.

With access to services, public transport and a walkable, fine grain street network, Yarra's activity centres will continue to be strengthened so that they remain vibrant and liveable places, capable of serving growing local economies and new and changing communities.

#### Natural environment

Yarra is an urbanised environment, with remnant native vegetation located within waterway corridors providing a home for indigenous flora and fauna. Yarra includes three significant water corridors - Yarra River and its tributaries, Darebin Creek and Merri Creek. These corridors are significant environmental assets that have a number of functions, including: providing for leisure and recreation, forming habitats to enhance biodiversity, acting as the city's 'green lungs', and managing water flow and stormwater. The low-lying land around the waterways however means that parts of Yarra are susceptible to flooding.

#### Climate change

Increased population in the inner city can bring sustainability benefits through more efficient use of existing infrastructure, more people being able to access existing services, local recreation and employment opportunities, increased use of sustainable transport modes and reduced sprawl on Melbourne's fringe.

Climate change is resulting in the urban environment getting hotter and drier, with more extreme weather events. Inner city areas, such as Yarra are susceptible to the urban heat island effect and localised flooding and as such Yarra needs to manage the impact from urban development.

Yarra will need to continue to mitigate greenhouse gas contributions and act locally. To mitigate its contribution to climate change, Council is proactively seeking to reduce its carbon emissions and is working towards zero net emissions from its operations by 2020. In doing so, Council will contribute to global climate change commitments -as well as national and state targets.

### **Built environment and heritage**

Yarra stands on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. It is a municipality steeped in history and one that contributes significantly to the story of Melbourne. Yarra includes some of Melbourne's oldest suburbs and shopping strips, with heritage that links its contemporary and progressive inner-city character to its origins.

Heritage is an important feature of Yarra's identity, which comprises historic buildings, landscapes, landmarks, streetscapes, subdivision pattern (made up of its streets, lanes and boulevards), and cultural heritage, including indigenous heritage. Groups of heritage buildings form important heritage places and include the municipality's renowned retail strips and neighbourhoods in some of Melbourne's first suburbs.

Yarra's heritage includes buildings and places of local, state, national and international significance, including part of the Royal Exhibition Buildings and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Environs Area, which provides a setting and context of significant historic character for the World Heritage property. Over 70% of Yarra's properties are covered by a heritage overlay.

The existing scale of development within the municipality is mostly characterised by low to mid-rise buildings, with some taller buildings (above 14 storeys) which are anomalies to the mid-rise character. The residential neighbourhoods that constitute much of the municipality mostly comprise single and double storey dwellings. This scale is also represented by many of the small heritage shopfronts within retail strips. In parts of Yarra there is a strong composition of mid-rise and some taller buildings, notably concentrated in pockets within activity centres, along main roads and in areas transitioning from industrial to commercial / mixed uses. These mid-rise and some taller buildings comprise modern apartments and offices.

Other taller elements in Yarra include towers, spires and signs, high rise social housing and health and education facilities.

Yarra has a range of residential built form types. There are residential areas that present uninterrupted terraced frontages to the street, often with little or no front setback. Other inner areas, while still predominantly small in lot size, present a more suburban appearance with modest front setbacks, often with small front gardens and small gaps between buildings. In Fairfield and Alphington, there is a more spacious, garden character, with generous front and side setbacks and large back yards.

Apartment living is becoming more common in Yarra, to a range of households - singles, couples, families and share households. It will become the predominant form of housing over the next 15 years.

The large public housing estates provide a contrasting built form character of apartment buildings set in landscaped grounds.

### **Housing**

Managing the impact of housing growth on the city's character and urban form is a key challenge for Yarra as parts of the municipality have experienced rapid rates of development.

New housing predominantly in the form of apartments is concentrated in parts of East Richmond, Richmond, Collingwood, Abbotsford, North Clifton Hill and Fitzroy / North Fitzroy. This has occurred largely through redevelopment in activity centres and former industrial areas. Three major former industrial precincts will also transition to residential and mixed use neighbourhoods – the Alphington Paper Mill, the former Gasworks site in North Fitzroy and south-west Cremorne (south of Gough Street).

New development is bringing change to the scale and density of those areas. Yet despite this, residential areas in Yarra largely continue to consist of separate, semi-detached row and terrace housing.

There has been a rapid increase in house prices and land values in recent years, consistent with other parts of inner Melbourne. As a result, many households cannot afford to rent or purchase a home in the municipality. The past decade has also seen a dramatic increase in the number of private dwellings, while the amount of social housing has remained relatively static. Consequently, the proportion of households living in public and community housing (social housing) in Yarra has declined from 15.5% in 1991 to 12% in 2017.

Facilitating accessible, adaptable, affordable housing options to cater for Yarra's diverse community, now and into the future, is a focus for Yarra.

### **Economic development**

Yarra has a strong and mixed economy, and is well positioned to attract and retain businesses and workers. Contributing to this is Yarra's industrial heritage building stock, transport connectivity, inner-city lifestyle, access to open space and the Yarra River. The high level of transport connectivity allows businesses to access the large metropolitan workforce. Building on these elements will support Yarra's competitive advantage and will help to maintain its vibrant economy.

The municipality has undergone substantial change in recent decades, transitioning from a location for manufacturing to a more diverse economy. The legacy of industrial uses means that areas of Yarra may be potentially contaminated, which requires consideration when redeveloping for dwellings and other sensitive uses.

Yarra's **employment areas** are:

- **Activity centres:** largely on its retail strips which host a range of retail, commercial, entertainment and residential uses. Activity centres are shown on the Strategic Framework Plan in clause 02.04-1 and plans in clause 11.03-1L;
- **Major employment precincts:** Cremorne Precinct and Gipps Street Precinct, Collingwood. These precincts are shown on the Strategic Framework Plan in clause 02.04-1. These areas include a diverse mix of offices, creative industries and specialised manufacturing businesses. Their proximity to the central business district, other parts of inner Melbourne and good access to Melbourne's transport network makes them attractive for businesses seeking a location close to a large number of workers, customers, clients and other firms.
  - Cremorne is an enterprise precinct, emerging as Melbourne's premier destination for creative design, particularly in the tech and digital space. It is home to global companies which sit side by side with small to medium sized firms, start-ups and co-working spaces.
  - The Gipps Street Precinct is an emerging precinct attracting creative services such as architecture and design, software and interface design and visual arts.
- **Employment land:** Commercial and industrial land outside of activity centres and major employment precincts, such as CUB, Abbotsford and Botanicca Corporate Park, Richmond (as shown on the Strategic Framework Plan in clause 02.04-1). These areas support employment uses on individual sites or within broader precincts, where employment uses have been maintained through commercial or industrial zoning.
- **Health and education precincts:** Health services based around major hospitals and their allied medical services are now a major source of employment. The education sector is also growing. These two precincts are shown on the Strategic Framework Plan in clause 02.04-1 and plans in clause 11.03-1L , being:
  - St. Vincent's public and private hospitals and Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy (health and education).

- Epworth Hospital, Richmond (health).

### **Transport**

Yarra benefits from an extensive transport system that includes public transport (train, tram and bus services); a network of arterial roads and local streets; and a compact urban form and mix of land uses that facilitates walking and cycling. Within the city, local shops and amenities, activity centres and employment areas are accessible by sustainable travel modes. There are also good connections to Melbourne's Central Business District and other parts of the metropolitan area.

Cycling volumes on Yarra's streets and off-road paths have continued to steadily rise over the last ten years and this trend is forecast to continue.

The availability of car parking is important for residents and businesses in Yarra; however unrestricted car use and parking creates pressure in Yarra's streets.