



**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Moving Around Merri-bek

**November 2023**



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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

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Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

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## Executive Summary

The ways that people move through Merri-bek vary greatly, and no matter how people choose to travel, they should be able to do so easily and safely. But currently, not everyone has the same access or choices when it comes to transport in this municipality, and this is largely location based.

Subdivision of land since European settlement laid the foundational structure of Merri-bek's contemporary transport system. Tram and railway lines led property development when the southern parts of Merri-bek were developed, and the northern parts of the municipality were developed for housing when cars became more attainable and accessible for many Australians.

These development patterns in Merri-bek have resulted in a city with distinct characteristics—some areas where goods and services are more readily accessible via public transport, walking or other active transport, and others developed assuming near-universal car ownership, with very few travels options other than to drive.

In recent decades, the environmental, social, and economic costs of these development patterns have become apparent. Social isolation, road trauma, cost of living pressures, rising greenhouse gas emissions, and worsening public health have coalesced into a complex set of issues that we have to reckon with. Furthermore, the way we work and move around has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ultimately, all these factors mean the way we approach transport planning needs to adapt and change. In response, we have developed a new transport strategy, **Moving Around Merri-bek**. This strategy seeks to address the challenges highlighted above, and steer us towards a future transport system that is **safe, accessible, sustainable, healthy, liveable, and inclusive**. These values will guide the way we manage and make changes to our transport networks.

Many different movement layers make up our transport system, including the pedestrian, cycling, public transport, and driving networks. These networks integrate with the way we plan for and make changes to our places.

We will continue improving the existing pedestrian network, including our footpaths, crossings, and providing more pedestrian amenities such as seating and lighting. We will

look to expand our popular ride-and-walk-to-school programs to encourage more children and families to travel actively to school.

We will continue improving and expanding our cycling network. Improving safety at intersections will be a focus, and we will plan for the growing usage of 2 and 3-wheeled transport, including e-bikes, e-scooters, and other forms of micro-mobility.

We will advocate to the Victorian Government for improvements to our public transport networks. This includes making public transport infrastructure fully accessible, reforming our legacy bus routes to meet contemporary needs, and increasing service frequencies across our trains, trams, and buses. We also advocate for duplicating and connecting the Upfield line to the Craigieburn line and making sure level crossing removal projects deliver the best outcomes for our community.

We will work to make our driving network safer. We will advocate for the ability to rollout 30 km/h safer speeds where appropriate. We will continue to make sure those who need to drive are able to reach their destinations. We will protect residential amenity where non-local traffic clogs up local streets. We will implement a parking decision-making process, so issues are worked through fairly and transparently. We will also continue to ensure accessible parking and loading zones are sufficient and well-placed to meet the needs of people and businesses.

We will ensure our land use system enables our population to increase while keeping people moving. Increases in density in activity centres and around transport hubs is key. Likewise, we will work to deliver high-quality streets and public spaces for people to enjoy.

In order to apply our values to our transport system to create great streets and places, we will develop a Streets for People framework, a tool for holistically analysing and improving our streets. This will allow us to work through identifying suitable streets, assessing them at the network level, and at the street level, and working with our local communities to ensure changes to our streets work for everyone.

This strategy aims to achieve all this and more, ultimately keeping our community at the heart, and creating a people-centric transport system for now and into the future.

# Introduction

## Purpose of this document

Moving Around Merri-bek is a long-term strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek's transport system.

It also outlines our transport advocacy priorities to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments. This document will be reviewed and updated when required to ensure it reflects Council and the communities' priorities, and best-practice transport planning principles.

## Developing Moving Around Merri-bek

The development of Moving Around Merri-bek began with a Social Research Report. This was commissioned by Council to understand the challenges faced by our community when moving around, and the opportunities they saw to improve transport. This report is available via Council's Conversations Merri-bek website.

This research was crucial in understanding how Merri-bek has changed since the adoption of the previous Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 2019 (MITS 2019), particularly the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

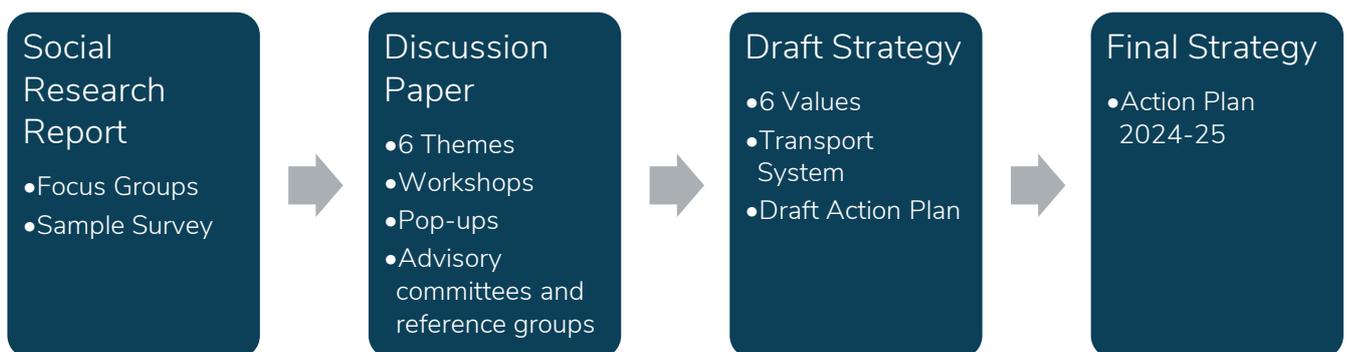
These results, along with the 2021 10-year Community Vision, the Council Plan 2021 to 2025, a heightened focus on the climate emergency, and new developments in transport technology, fed into the development of a Discussion Paper. This Paper was structured around six themes related to transport and outlined potential actions that we could undertake as part of a new Strategy.

A survey was developed and published on Council's Conversations Merri-bek page to gather community feedback on the Paper and learn more about their experiences of and ideas for Merri-bek's transport system. We also spoke with each of our Council advisory committees and reference groups, and spoke face-to-face to our community at a range of pop-ups and workshops. This engagement is summarised in a report, which is available alongside the Discussion Paper via Council's website, as well as summarised within this draft strategy.

Moving Around Merri-bek was developed using the results of the community consultation described above. The document is structured in 3 parts. The first, around 6 values, which have been adapted from the Discussion Paper, based on what we learned from our community. These values are the fundamental tenets that guide the way we manage and make changes to our transport system. The second part of this Draft Strategy applies these values and our findings to the transport networks that make up our transport system, in line with the structure outlined in Victoria's Transport Integration Act. In the final section, we introduce a new approach, Streets for People. This program outlines a holistic approach to street improvements that considers all modes of transport.

A Draft Action Plan accompanies this document. It outlines the actions that Council will undertake related to transport in 2024-25 and outlines actions planned for 2025-30.

Following a round of community engagement on this draft strategy, a final Moving Around Merri-bek and Action Plan will be presented to Council for adoption in early 2024.



## **Community at our heart – engagement summary**

Community engagement has been a critical component to the development of this Draft Transport Strategy. Engagement as part of the Discussion Paper stage ran for 6 weeks, over which there were a range of ways for people to get involved, be informed and provide feedback. This stage of engagement was supported by a Discussion Paper which encouraged conversation and explored transport challenges, opportunities and ideas in Merri-bek across six core themes: Safety; Accessibility; Sustainability; Health; Liveability and Collaboration.

During this period, other transport events took place including the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Road Safety hearing at Coburg Civic Centre and the Mayor's Walk focusing on improving safety along the Merri Creek.

The engagement program was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign, that resulted in over 1,000 people providing feedback including:

- 532 survey responses (58 surveys in other languages).
- 300 people participating in 6 pop-up events.
- 41 representatives from Council's Advisory Committees, Reference Groups and Youth; Ambassadors attending workshops and meetings.
- 4 representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people attending a meeting; and
- 5 written submissions.

Based on demographic information, overall, the consultation successfully engaged a broad cross-section of the community including people of all age groups, from a range of backgrounds, as well as over 100 people with disability, limited mobility or who are a carer of someone with disability.

The feedback collected as part of this process was independently analysed by Chatterbox Projects.

The full engagement report is available here: <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/moving-around-merri-bek>

A second round of public consultation will take place for this Draft Transport Strategy and the accompanying Draft Action Plan.

## **Discussion Paper Feedback**

The Discussion Paper restarted the conversation around transport with our community. It highlighted the transport challenges and opportunities based around the 6 themes.

The theme of safety featured strongly throughout the feedback and was the most prominent challenge in moving around Merri-bek and a major barrier to choosing more active or sustainable modes of transport. This was reflected in people selecting 'Safety - A safe transport system' as the highest priority theme for the new strategy (68.5%) in the survey, in which people were able to note their top 3 priority themes. Liveability was ranked the second highest priority overall (62.1%), closely followed by Accessibility (57.6%) and Sustainability (57%).

Reflecting the overall feedback, the majority of suburbs had the following key ideas/priorities in common:

- Safer, better, increased paths for cycling and walking
- Increased, improved, extended public transport services (with Brunswick West, Glenroy and Fawkner mentioning bus services)
- Advocating for accessible public transport stops/services
- Traffic calming and slowing cars down/ reducing speed limits

## **Policies guiding transport**

We are building on local and state government policies, programs, and legislation to inform our transport strategy. The relevant policies and legislation are listed below.

### **Merri-bek City Council**

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Merri-bek 2021-2031 Community Vision
- Merri-bek Advocacy Priorities 2022
- Accessible & Inclusive Communications Policy
- Living and Ageing Well Framework
- Merri-bek Planning Scheme
- Active women and Girls in Merri-bek Strategy
- Children, young people and families
- Climate Risk Strategy and Foundational Action Plan
- Community Engagement Policy
- COVID-19 recovery plan
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Gender Equality statement of Commitment
- Fawkner Transport Study
- Human Rights Policy
- Integrated Water Management Strategy + Action Plan
- Later years Strategy
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Merri-bek Community Infrastructure Plan
- Industrial Land Use Strategy
- Open Space Strategy (draft)
- Parking Management Policy
- Road Management Plan 2021-2025
- Shopping Strip Renewal Policy
- Social Cohesion Plan
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan 2016 – 2026
- Upfield Corridor Action Plan 2018-2029
- Public Lighting Policy
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek Framework + Action Plan
- 10-year Financial Plan (2021 – 2031)

## **Inter-Council Strategies**

- Northern Region Transport Strategy
- North and West Melbourne City Deal Plan 2020-2040
- Northern Council Alliance EV Transition Plan

## **Victorian State Government**

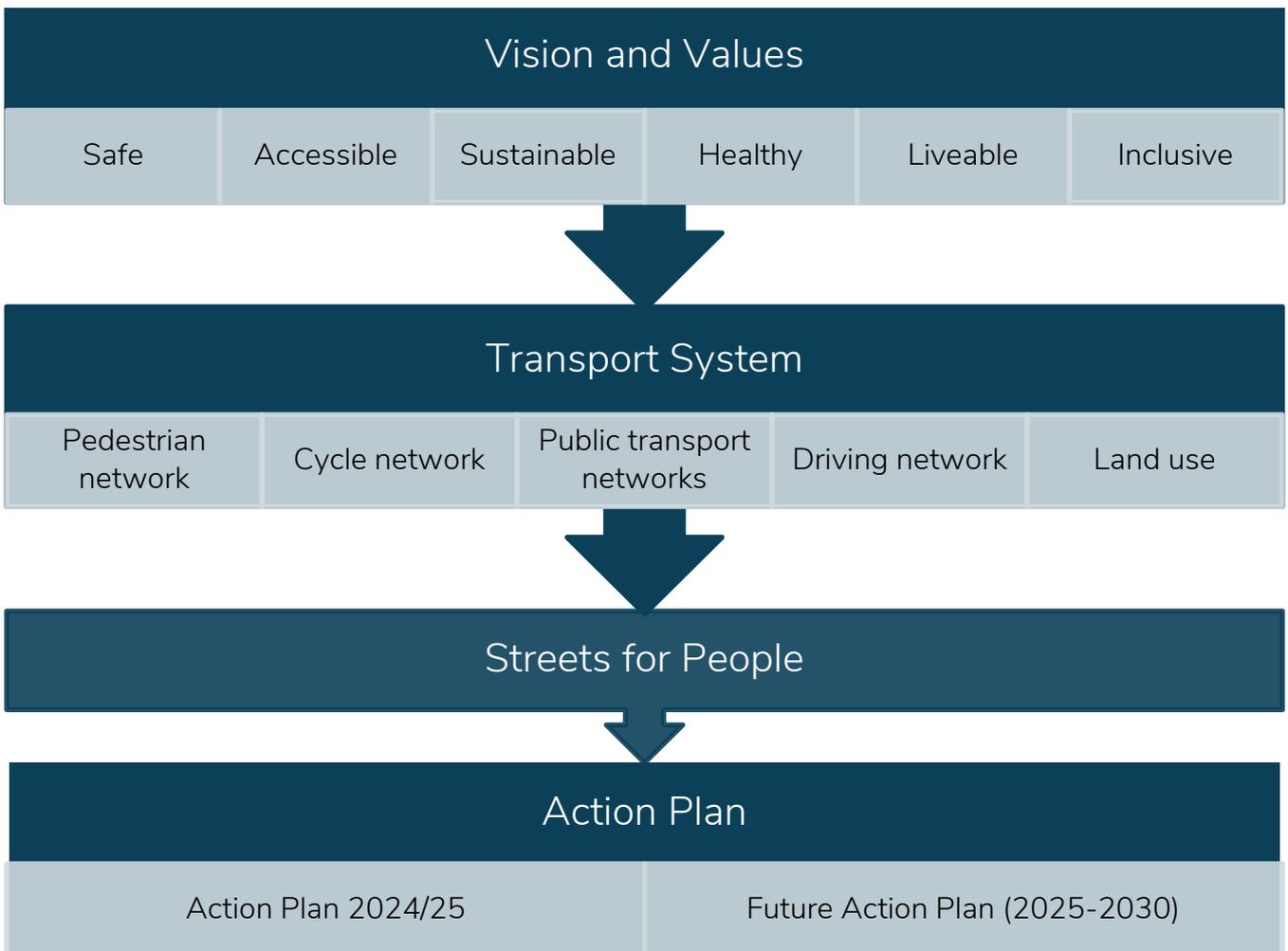
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050
- Road Management Act 2004
- Transport Integration Act 2010
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Climate Change Act 2017
- Local Government Act 2020
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018 – 2028
- Victoria's Bus Plan
- Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030
- Victoria's Climate Change Strategy
- Victoria's Zero Emissions Vehicle Roadmap
- Victoria's Bus Network Reform – Melbourne's Northern Suburbs
- Victorian Movement and Place Framework
- Victoria's Tram Plan
- Victoria's Draft Transport Accessibility Strategy
- Victoria's Bus Network Reform – Northern Suburbs

## How this document works

This strategy is set out in three parts. First are our Vision and Values. In this section, we outline and explain our six primary values that we will use to manage and shape how our transport system works.

The second part is the transport system. Here, we translate our Vision and Values onto the different networks that make up our transport system. This ensures that our values are used to guide the practical way our transport system is managed. It concludes with a new approach to delivering transport and streetscape improvements, Streets for People.

Finally, a separate, but linked, Action Plan outlines the specific work we will undertake and when we intend to complete the work. This strategy includes an Action Plan for 2024-25 and outlines actions committed for the years beyond 2025. A new Action Plan will be developed in 2024 that will cover the years 2025-2029 and outline actions to be considered beyond 2030.



## History

The way one can travel through Merri-bek varies greatly depending on a number of factors, including location. In the north, it is difficult to travel without a car, with shops and houses typically far from the few public transport stations. In the south, trams and trains are easy to come across. The foundation for this difference is not new; it was laid as early as the first European settlements. However, our transport network bears the influence of those who lived here far earlier than that.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung of the Kulin nation walked on the country we now call the City of Merri-bek for countless generations before the forceful cultural and physical dispossession of this land.

Though the walking routes of Merri-bek's original pedestrians were mostly destroyed by European colonisation, some paths are still able to be travelled. Pascoe Vale Road is one of the Woi-wurrung routes that is still visible on a contemporary road map, and just as many modern Australians walk along the Merri Creek trail every day looking to connect with nature, so did the Woi-wurrung. Chipped stone fragments found during the construction of the De Chene Bridge show what an important and well-used travel link this route was.

In 1837, two years after Melbourne's settlement on the banks of the Yarra, Robert Hoddle surveyed the surrounding land. The survey began with a line running north-south through John Batman's house and Flagstaff Hill. This would eventually become Sydney Road. From this line, he mapped land parcels, creating arbitrary property boundaries.

However, this mapping did not include any roads to access the properties. As such, the new landowners were forced to skim strips from the boundaries to create the first Merri-bek road network. Unsurprisingly, most purchasers gave up the smallest amount of land allowed. This resulted in narrow and sometimes steep roads, the effects of which are still seen in the narrowness of roads like Albion Street Brunswick and the steepness of O'Hea Street Pascoe Vale.

In 1851 gold was discovered near Clunes, and Pascoe Vale Road and Sydney Road became tollways as people rushed to find riches. The need for housing and other amenities along this route created demand for brick and bluestone, early industries for Brunswick and Coburg.

As Melbourne continued to grow, so did its transport network. The Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company (MTOBC) operated the largest network in the world, and in 1887 MTOBC expanded north along Sydney Road, as far as Moreland Road.

Property speculators began buying farms, planning trams and rail lines throughout, and then subdividing the land into residential housing lots. Sometimes these purchasers formed tramway companies – such as the Northern Tramway Company, which operated a horse-drawn tramway along Sydney Road from Moreland Road to Gaffney Street from 1889 to 1915. Other times, they left space in the subdivision plan, such as the curved intersections at Melville Road and Turner Street at Bell Street and Turner Derby Street at O'Hea Street Pascoe Vale, in the hope that a tramway might one day be built.

Most of these privately run transport companies were created to improve land values and did not earn much from ticket revenue. As the companies failed, first local governments, later the state government, stepped in to become operators of the tramways. Largely, these tram networks operated closer to the CBD, and in the south of Merri-bek, while the north remained farmland.

In 1950 the petrol rationing introduced during World War Two was removed. With cars now affordable for many Australians, those northern housing lots beyond the Melbourne train and tram network became more easily accessible. By 1966, suburban streets of detached houses with on-site parking occupied most all the former farmland in Merri-bek's north. Though they were still poorly accessible via public transport, it was simply assumed that one would use a car.

These development patterns in Merri-bek have resulted in a city with two distinct characteristics – a south formed before car ownership became common-place, and a north developed assuming near-universal car ownership, with very few travel options other than to drive.

A strategy that integrates transport to place and seeks to create more travel options for all individuals, and one that respects the traditional owners of this land, is essential to deliver a future city with transport equity.

## Council's Responsibilities

All levels of government, and the private sector, contribute to managing and changing our transport system. The following table outlines where Merri-bek City Council is responsible for an element of the transport system, and where other entities may be involved.

**Note:** These examples are general in nature and exceptions are likely to exist under each section

	Local government	State Government	Private sector
Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merri-bek manages most local streets and footpaths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Victorian Government manages the declared road network, speed limits, and most signalised intersections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private companies manage some of the transport vehicles in Melbourne, such as car share and e-bike/e-scooter share schemes</li> </ul>
Street amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merri-bek seating, trees, bike parking, and other amenities</li> <li>Merri-bek monitors the performance of Jemena and Citipower supplied street lights</li> <li>Merri-bek supplies and maintains public lighting in parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Victorian Government provides public lighting on railway platforms and shares costs with local government on arterial roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Lighting attached to power poles are maintained by Electricity Distribution Companies Jemena and Citipower.</li> <li>Al fresco dining and parklets are managed by private businesses under Merri-bek's permit policy</li> </ul>
Off-road paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merri-bek constructs and maintains most off-road paths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Victorian Government constructs some new off-road paths it has identified as Strategic Cycling Corridors.</li> <li>Some of the land managed by the Victorian Government has off-road paths, including land near rivers (managed by State Government water corporations, such as Melbourne Water) and railways (managed by VicTrack) and freeways (managed by VicRoads)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some off-paths, such as the Ettaro Apartments walkway (part of the East Brunswick Shimmy) are privately owned and maintained but provide access to the public</li> </ul>
Public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merri-bek maintains a number of shelters it has installed at bus stops.</li> <li>Merri-bek is responsible for constructing and maintaining footpaths to bus stops, tram stops and railway stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State Government own and facilitate upgrades to each of the public transport networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street Advertising Companies JC Decaux and Media supply and maintain approximately 14 bus and tram shelters</li> <li>Private companies operate our public transport services, under contract with the State Government.</li> <li>Property developers who wish to move a bus stop pay the cost to reconstruct it meet universal access standards</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merri-bek provides Community Transport Services</li> </ul>		
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merri-bek manages on-street parking on all streets</li> <li>Merri-bek manages some off-street car parks, including in activity centres and at recreation reserves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car parking at railway stations is often owned and managed by the State Government</li> <li>Parking rates for new developments are set by the State Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some off-street car parks are managed by private companies</li> </ul>
Land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Merri-bek Planning Scheme is used by Council as the Planning Authority to help deliver State and local planning objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Victorian Government sets out the objectives for planning in Victoria for land use and development in the Planning and Environment Act 1987.</li> <li>Victorian Government entities (VicRoads, Melbourne Water, Melbourne Metropolitan Cemetery Trust, VicTrack) act as land manager for large parcels of crown land in the City of Merri-bek.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The private sector uses and develops land in line with the Merri-bek Planning Scheme. Contributions are also collected when land is subdivided to help pay for roads and sustainable transport projects.</li> </ul>

# Community Vision 2021-2031

This strategy is guided by the Community Vision and Theme 2: Moving and Living Safely in Merri-bek.

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**“Merri-bek is our home.**

**We respect and look after our land, air, waterways, and animals.**

**We care for our people and celebrate our diverse stories, cultures, and identities.**

**Merri-bek is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities, and social organisations.**

**We work together proactively and transparently to continue to create a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative, and regenerative community.**

**Many faces, one Merri-bek.”**

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## Theme 2: Moving and Living Safely in Merri-bek

*In 2031, Merri-bek is safe. Our streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists, day and night. Everyone in Merri-bek is able to live in their homes without fear from others, both known and unknown.*

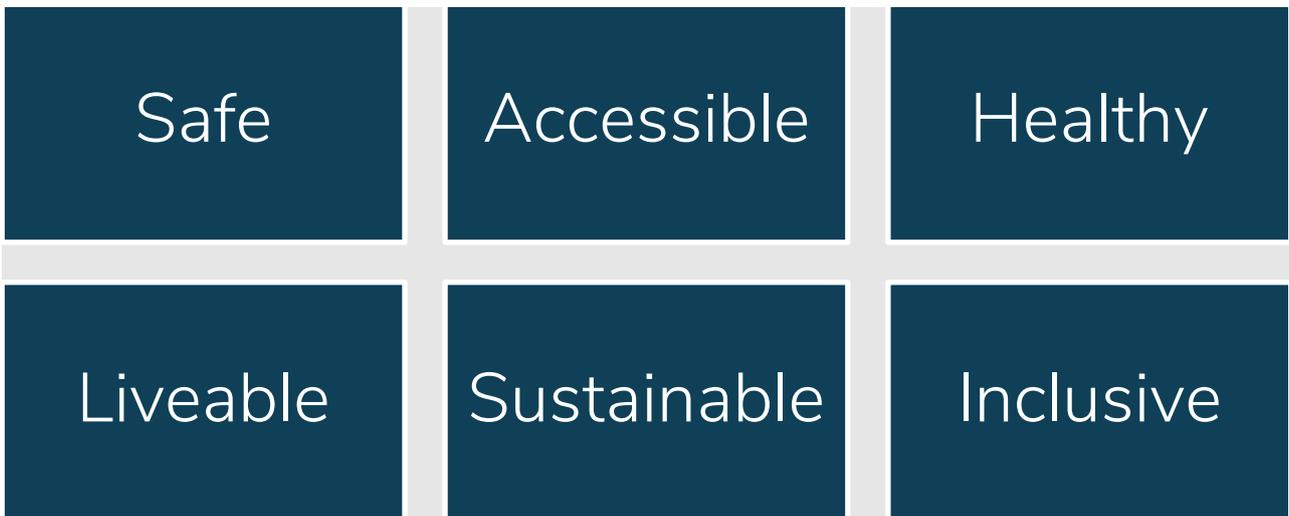
*In Merri-bek, we actively look out for each other and are well supported to do this by council.*

## Values

The content of Moving Around Merri-bek is built upon research, experience, established policy, and the diverse voices of our Merri-bek community. It pulls all these elements together to give a picture of not only how we get around Merri-bek, but the many different aspects of daily life which relate to transport, and how we can improve this into the future.

We have identified 6 core values that drive us and our community as we use and look at our transport system. These values are the overarching tenets that guide our work in transport at Merri-bek City Council. They ensure that all our work contributes to bettering our city and our transport system in the ways that are important to our community.

Our transport system needs to be:



# Safe

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## Our streets should be safe for everyone

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There are many ways to move around Merri-bek. Whether you're walking, cycling, driving, or using another kind of transport, safety is important, and will impact travel choices. This is particularly important for reducing gender, racial, and class inequality in our transport system.

Merri-bek continues to see high rates of casualty crashes (fatality or serious injury requiring hospitalisation) on our roads. The number of crashes is also high relative to neighbouring municipalities. Vulnerable road users are disproportionately affected by crashes on our road. Hotspots include Sydney Road, Bell Street, and other arterial roads with vulnerable road users more likely to be injured in a crash at a marked intersection.

There are many other ways that our streets can feel and be safe or unsafe for street users. The safety of pedestrians, cyclists and those using other micro mobility devices can be affected by factors such as uneven pavement, poor lighting at night, and motor vehicle noise and hostility. These safety impacts are particularly relevant when a person must walk or ride an extended period to reach a destination.

We're committed to improving how safe our streets feel and function for all road users. This includes the adoption of a safe system approach. This approach (Figure 1) is divided into 4 sections: Safe Roads, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles, and Safe People.

### Key objectives

1. Create streets where everyone feels safe
2. Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads
3. In line with Victoria's Towards Zero Strategy, adopt a Safe System approach to road safety.



Figure 1 A Safe System Approach

## Accessible

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### **Our transport system should support everyone to access places they need and want to go**

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A transport system that allows everyone to access their everyday needs is critical to enable everyone to participate fully in society.

People with disability make up approximately 20 per cent of the Victorian and Merri-bek population and must be actively included in decisions about creating an accessible transport system. However, accessibility goes beyond supporting those with disability. Elderly people, people with prams or personal shopping trolleys, and people with long or short-term mobility issues need similar levels of infrastructure to support their daily travel needs. We must also consider those with invisible illness and disability, and with disability that does not affect mobility, but still impacts the way a person can go about their daily tasks.

Inclusive design features, and the application of Universal Design, are critical throughout the transport network in order to make it possible for any street user to comfortably and conveniently reach their destination. These features include, but are not limited to, tactile, visual, and audible design elements, as well as even street surfaces, and colour contrast.

## Key objectives

1. Create a transport system that enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
2. Actively identify and remove barriers to transport services and infrastructure that limit peoples access to everyday needs
3. Advocate to the Victorian Government to create a fully accessible public transport system, including accessible tram stops and tram vehicles.

## Sustainable

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### **We need to reduce our transport emissions, limit the impacts of climate risks, and enhance our natural environment**

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We are increasingly feeling and seeing the impacts of climate change on the environment, locally, across Australia and the globe. Transport plays a huge role in this, with transport generating a quarter of all greenhouse emissions in Merri-bek. Approximately 221,000 tonnes (equivalent) of carbon dioxide were generated by transport trips in Merri-bek in 2022, up 14 per cent from 2021.

We must work to minimise and the impacts of the climate emergency, both for the health of our planet and community members.

We must also consider the existing effects of climate change as we plan our future infrastructure. For example, work to reduce the Urban Heat Island Effect and increase the space available for nature.

We will look at the physical impacts of climate, such as heatwaves and stormwater flows, to our infrastructure and their useful life. We will seek ways to mitigate the contribution of transport infrastructure to the Urban Heat Island Effect by investigating the use of cool materials and by maximising opportunities for planting trees, especially along heat hotspots and active transport routes.

Council's adopted goal for Merri-bek is to achieve a 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 (against the baseline year of 2011 / 2012), net zero by 2035 and drawdown ('negative emissions') by 2040. It is important that we do all we can do support this goal as we develop transport projects.

## Key objectives

1. To support our community to reduce their transport emissions as rapidly as possible
2. Actively reduce Council's contribution to transport emissions
3. To use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.
4. To adapt our transport infrastructure and services to meet the demands of a hotter and more unpredictable climate.

## Healthy

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### **Our streets should support the physical, mental, and social health of our community**

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Our transport system directly and indirectly impacts our health and wellbeing in several significant ways. It enables us to access friends, family, shops, services, schools and workplaces, providing the foundation for people to live happy and healthy lives.

We are in the midst of a health crisis, caused, in part, by our transport system. Firstly, from emissions. Across Australia, 900 to 2,000 people prematurely die from air pollution from vehicles each year. Another 900 and 4,500 cases of bronchitis, cardiovascular and respiratory disease occur each year from motor vehicle pollution<sup>1</sup>.

Secondly, more than half of Australian adults do not get their daily exercise needs, nor do 70 per cent of children. Meanwhile, only an alarming 2 per cent of teenagers currently meet health guidelines for daily physical activity<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, one-third of Australians report feeling lonely in the in a given week<sup>3</sup>, with increased incidences of loneliness prevalent in older age groups.

We will create more opportunities for people to travel actively, and to socialise, on our transport system. We will use our existing programs, including Open Streets, Play Streets, and Streets for People to encourage physical activity and make changes to our streets to support active transport trips.

The way we move, our ability to do so, and a transition away from a fossil fuelled transport system towards one with physical activity and social encounters built-in is crucial in reducing these significant health impacts.

## Key objectives

1. Reduce air and noise pollution generated from vehicles
2. Use the transport system to improve the mental and physical health of everyone in Merri-bek
3. Create streets and public spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation amongst local communities

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<sup>1</sup> [Sustainable transport in healthcare](#)

<sup>2</sup> [About physical activity and exercise | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Social isolation and loneliness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

# Liveable

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## **Access to shops, services, Community Transport Services, and well-designed public spaces are essential for our liveability**

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We want Merri-bek to be a great place to live, work, visit, and more for residents and all visitors.

The way that our transport network is designed and makes use of space is crucial for increasing liveability.

Making Merri-bek liveable means creating vibrant and welcoming spaces for people to come together and go about their day-to-day lives. It also means building a transport network that enables all residents to reach these destinations easily and safely.

Research has found that better linking land use and transport planning is critical to increasing liveability. Increasing density around essential services and shops, improving public transport services, and providing safe walking and wheeling paths and infrastructure are all noted as key levers to improving the liveability of an area.

Finally, the cost of transport inevitably impacts liveability, with higher costs reducing standard of living and increasing financial stress. Having key destinations easily accessible by active and public transport reduces the need for people to own a car, or multiple cars, or pay for public transport, to reach their daily needs.

## **Key objectives**

1. Improve access to shops, services, and employment for our community
2. Create high-quality and well-designed streets and places that are vibrant and well-loved by all
3. Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community

## Inclusive

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### **We will work in collaboration with our community and stakeholders to foster an inclusive Merri-bek**

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An inclusive city is one where everyone has an equal opportunity to access shops, services, employment, social, and civic participation in our society. As part of this, we will use Gender Impact and Equality Assessments to ensure all our work improves peoples' rights and opportunities in line with our requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

At Merri-bek, we are committed to putting the community at the heart of everything we do.

Our Community Engagement Policy and Council Plan guide all our work, including transport projects, to make sure we consistently deliver genuine opportunities for our community to take part in our work. As part of that Policy, Council made a commitment to improve the way we engage with the community and local businesses on transport projects. This included the use of plain language in reports, access to evidence used to support decisions, and providing genuine opportunities for the community to provide input.

We will refine and expand our transport engagement plan ensuring our community engagement is best practice and meaningful.

We are committed to working in partnership with our Advisory Committees and Reference Groups, Connectors, service provider networks, interfaith networks, Neighbourhood Houses, and other community groups and organisations to ensure accessibility and inclusion are at the core of any transport response.

We also work collaboratively with our neighbouring councils, via groups such as M9, the Northern Council Alliance, Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, and transport specific forums including the Metropolitan Transport Forum.

Further, our Level Crossing Removal Project Position Paper, 'Reshaping Brunswick', outlines a collaborative approach to improving transport infrastructure and amenity along the Upfield Line and Sydney Road Corridor with the State Government, local trader associations, stakeholder groups, and community members<sup>4</sup>.

### **Key objectives**

1. Work collaboratively with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
2. Work to make our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities

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<sup>4</sup> [Reshaping Brunswick | Conversations Merri-bek](#)

## The Merri-bek Transport System

The Merri-bek Transport System is the totality of physical space and infrastructure that allows us to take transport trips. This includes our footpaths, bike lanes, roads, railway lines, and parking. We also include land uses, as the way our city is built guides the ways in which we move around.

This follows the Transport System framework outlined in the Transport Integration Act, which changes to the local context where appropriate. For instance, as Merri-bek does not have a shipping port or an airport, we have excluded this from our framework.

Figure 2 shows the distinct transport network layers that comprise the Merri-bek Transport System.

### Work collaboratively

We will continue to work with our neighbouring councils, state government agencies, and our broader community to improve transport for everyone. We work collaboratively with other government agencies already via the Metropolitan Transport Forum, M9 Council group, among others.

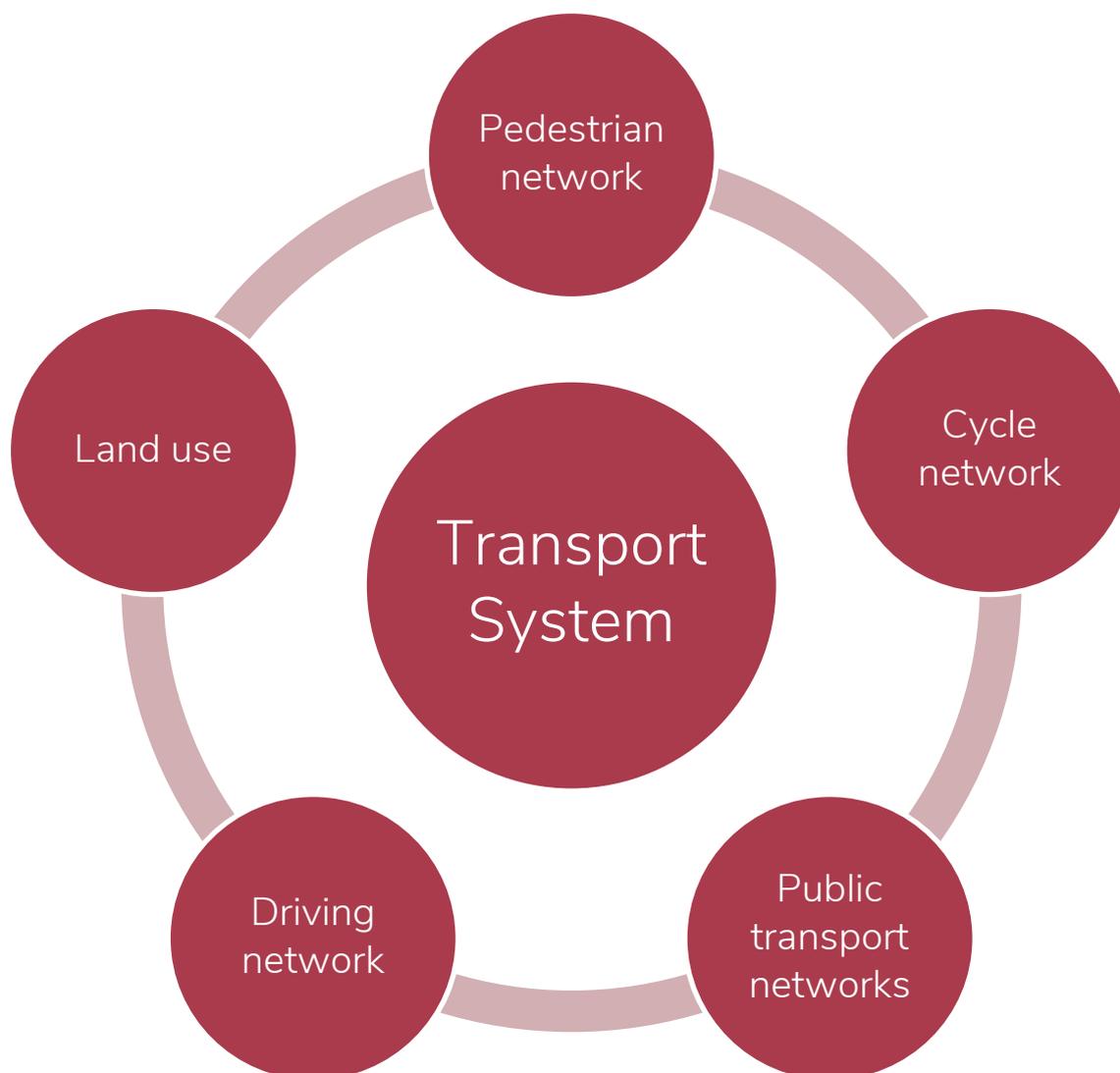


Figure 2 Merri-bek Transport System

# Pedestrian Network

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**Every trip in Merri-bek starts or finishes on the pedestrian network. Our footpaths and street crossings should be designed to allow everyone to access the shops and services they need comfortably and safely, and to participate fully in society.**

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## What we will do

### Support active travel to school

Making it easier for children to walk, skate, scoot, or ride to school is one of the most important things we can do for our pedestrian network. It helps reduce local traffic and parking congestion, reduces our transport emissions, improve the mental and physical health of young people (and their parents) and helps build good habits from a young age.

Ride & Stride, and the accompanying Open Streets program, is an initiative that sees streets closed to vehicle traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times at local schools. The program is hugely successful, with 97 per cent of the families surveyed from participating schools reporting the street felt safer than normal. The program, and its consequent increased feeling of safety, program has contributed to a 19 per cent increase in active travel at those schools and has demonstrates the enormous impact that working with the school community can have on changing travel behaviour for the better.

We will look to expand our active transport and safer streets school programs to more schools across Merri-bek. We will also look to make further infrastructure improvements around schools to improve safety and access to schools.

### Increase amenity in activity centres

There are many elements beyond the footpath that are important for supporting and enabling people to get around on the pedestrian network. Seating, lighting, wayfinding signage, and trees and other greenery can all help us when walking or wheeling on the pedestrian network.

We will look to enhance our pedestrian amenity in activity centres and along the Principal Pedestrian Network (part of the Victorian Government's transport hierarchy).

## Review and improve our network

Uneven footpaths, missing links, steep ramps, and other barriers reduce the safety, accessibility, and comfort of people using the pedestrian network.

We will increase our review and maintenance of our footpaths, with a focus on the Principal Pedestrian Network. We will also look to declutter our footpaths in activity centres and along streets with narrow footpaths, removing redundant signage and other infrastructure that limits access and mobility along our pedestrian network.

### Safe and convenient crossings

A lack of safe and convenient crossings decreases safety on our streets. It also reduces peoples' ability to undertake transport trips using the pedestrian network, particularly for children, the elderly, and people with disability.

We will look to decrease the wait time for pedestrians at signalised crossings, increase the green time for pedestrians, provide new crossings where needed, and advocate for missing crossing legs to be installed. Increasing the number of safe crossing points, and improving existing crossings (including at roundabouts), will improve safety and our communities' ability to move around Merri-bek.

## What we will advocate for

### Improve access to public transport

The Level Crossing Removal Projects and other railway upgrades present opportunities to improve pedestrian access to railway stations and to public transport stops. Pedestrian access should extend beyond the station itself.

We will advocate to the State Government to improve accessibility and create more direct access points into railway stations, tram and bus stops, and along public transport corridors.

### Infrastructure and behaviour change programs for all schools

Active travel to school has decreased by almost 30 per cent in the last 15 years<sup>5</sup>. Significant investment is required to reverse this trend.

We will advocate to the State and Commonwealth Governments for dedicated funding to deliver infrastructure upgrades and behaviour change programs to all schools in Merri-bek.

## What does success look like?

- More people using the pedestrian network for their everyday trips
- More young people travelling actively and independently to school
- A reduction in causality crashes involving pedestrians

## How will we measure success?

Success for our pedestrian network will be based on analysis of existing transport datasets, such as VISTA and the ABS Census where increases in walking trips can be tracked. We will also look at new data sources, such as camera and sensor data, as well as insights from aggregated phone data. Success will also depend on our ability to implement new infrastructure, and upgrade existing infrastructure, to make walking safer and easier for everyone.

We will continue to use community feedback on all our projects to ensure that our work meets the needs of everyone in Merri-bek.

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<sup>5</sup> [Push for teens to find their feet as daily active travel rates take a step back | Cancer Council](#)

# Cycle Network

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Riding a bike is a fun, healthy, sustainable, and affordable way to move around Merri-bek. By improving and expanding upon our existing network, we can increase the range of transport choices for people and allow more people to try biking. This will help reduce our transport emissions, ease local vehicle traffic and parking congestion, and improve health outcomes.

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## What we will do

### Expanding the network

In order to increase the number of trips by bike, and encourage new people to take up biking, we will expand Merri-bek's cycle network. This means leveraging off our existing network so new links are not isolated from the broader system.

New connections will be built to enable people of all ages and abilities to travel safely, based on the three types of cycle infrastructure outlined below.

### Improving our existing network

Merri-bek is fortunate to have an existing, relatively high-quality, cycle network compared to most councils in Australia. The Merri Creek Trail, Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, Upfield Shared Path, Capital City Trail, O'Hea Street corridor, Dawson Street corridor, and M80 Trail are the backbone to our existing cycle network. We also have a network of shimmies providing connections through traffic-calmed local streets. While parts of this network are high quality and meet contemporary transport needs, other parts of the network need improvements to make them safer and more comfortable for users of all skills and abilities.

We will work to make these improvements, keeping best practice and suitability of certain infrastructure in mind, with a particular focus will be improving safety and comfort at intersections.

### Rolling out more bike parking

Parking for wheeled transport of all kinds is important for enabling people to take local cycle trips. As with car parking, this will allow people to securely store their mode of transport while shopping, socialising, or working.

We will continue to roll-out bike parking where needed, including for new larger e-bikes and cargo bikes. We will also investigate local demand for bike hanger parking, so people in older style townhouses or apartments are able to securely store a bicycle.

### Support other forms of wheeled transport

Our cycle network needs to support a growing diversity of 2 and 3-wheeled transportation. This includes electric bikes, cargo bikes, tricycles, e-scooters, and more. These micro-mobility vehicles have different dimensions, and riding conditions that should be reflected in the design of our cycle infrastructure. Shared mobility is also growing, with shared e-scooters and e-bikes in inner-Melbourne recording some of the highest use rates in the world.

We will undertake a feasibility study to determine whether shared mobility is suitable for Merri-bek, and what policies may be needed to reduce footpath parking and riding by users.

### Behaviour change programs

Behaviour change programs are critical to helping people learn and apply new skills and knowledge. We have a range of existing programs that are designed to help people learn how to travel more sustainably.

This includes our popular Ride & Stride program, including Open Streets. This program helps parents, students, and school communities to travel actively to school.

We will continue to support bike education programs for adults and children, and partner with local organisations that are providing this service already.

We will also support communities to rediscover the potential of their local street via our Play Streets toolkit. This toolkit helps communities to plan and run a small event on a local street, opening it up for play and community-building activities. We will further look at opportunities to integrate Play Streets as part of our infrastructure planning and streetscape improvement projects.

## **What we will advocate for**

### **Boosting funding for active transport**

Our ability to improving and building upon the cycle network relies largely on an increase in funding.

We will advocate to the State Government to partner with Merri-bek to deliver upgrades to the cycle network above our budgeted cycle infrastructure program.

### **Safer intersections and crossing points**

We will seek outcomes for improving cycling safety at intersections requires approval from the State Government, particularly where the cycle network intersects with the arterial road network. Items that improve cycling safety include increased protection, advance green bike lanterns, install new crossing points across arterial roads, and installing missing crossing legs to increase cycling access.

## **What does success look like?**

- More cycling infrastructure is installed
- More people riding bikes and other forms of micro-mobility
- Those riding bikes reflect the diversity of our community
- Reduced collisions involving cyclists

## **How will we measure success?**

We will use existing transport data sources to help us monitor and evaluate cycling in Merri-bek. These include VISTA and the ABS Census. We will also look at new data sources, such as camera and sensor data, as well as insights from aggregated phone data.

We will investigate the transport data that is available to inform how we measure and evaluate our travel patterns. Finally, we will continue to use community feedback to inform and guide our infrastructure decisions.

## The Merri-bek Cycling Network

Our Merri-bek Cycling Network will provide a level of cycling infrastructure that is safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities, and designed to encourage new people who currently feel unsafe riding in Merri-bek.

Primarily, this network will consist of the following 3 cycle infrastructure typologies, intersection, and crossing point guidelines.

### Greenways

- Riding mixed with general traffic
- Suitable where streets are too narrow or where it isn't feasible to provide separate infrastructure
- Focus on reducing traffic speeds and volumes to enable safe mixing of transport modes
- Examples include Napier Street Fitzroy and Canning Street Carlton North

### On-road protected bike lanes

- Bike riders separated from traffic by physical barriers
- Suitable on wider streets with higher levels of traffic
- Examples include Dawson Street Brunswick and Wellington Street Collingwood

### Off-road paths

- Includes shared paths, trails, and other connections not part of the road network
- Separate pedestrians and riders where feasible
- Examples include the Merri Creek Trail and Upfield Shared Path

### Intersections

- Priority should be provided to the cycling network where a route intersects with a local street
- Signalised crossings should be provided where the bicycle network crosses an arterial road
- Where possible, bicycle infrastructure should continue all the way to the intersection
- Priority lanterns should be provided where possible at signalised intersections

### Other crossing points

- Protected medians and refuge islands may be provided where sufficient space exists on sub-arterial roads
- Improve rider convenience where off-set signalised crossings exist near a bike route
- Provide toucan crossings where an off-road path crosses an arterial road
- Provide pram ramps and access points to off-road paths and protected bike lanes

The decision of which infrastructure is best suited for a given street depends on a range of factors, including:

- The role that street has for moving other modes of traffic
- The speed and volumes of motor vehicles
- The width of the street
- The type of land uses along the street
- The existence and number of driveway crossovers

The matrix in Figure 3 provides a guideline for determining which cycling typology may be appropriate based on vehicle volumes and travel speeds. Changes to vehicle speed and reducing vehicle volumes may also be considered to improve a street, depending on the context of that street.

While parts of our existing network include painted on-road bike lanes along relatively high speed and traffic volume corridors, new and upgraded infrastructure will be considered within the below matrix.

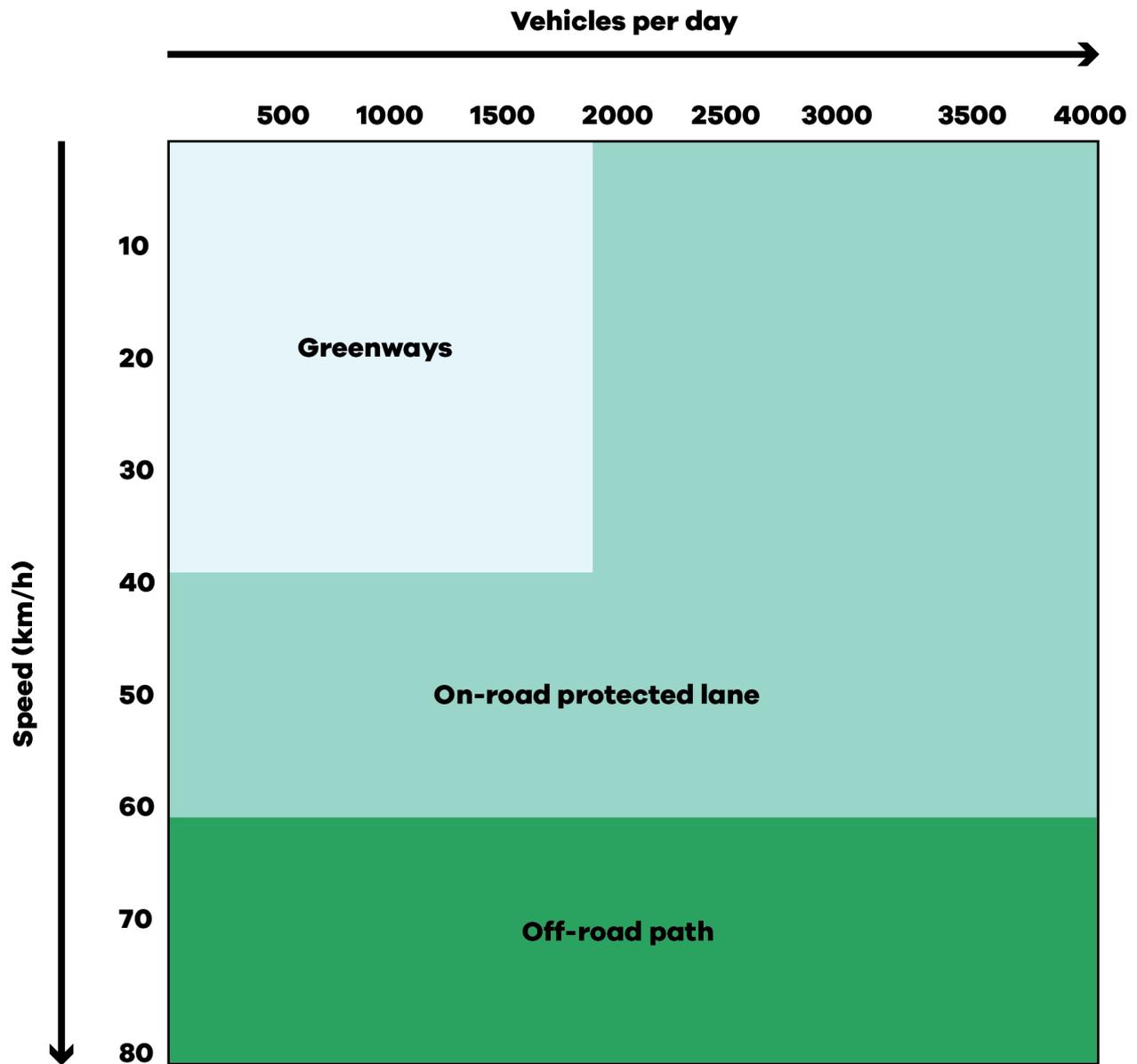


Figure 3 Cycling infrastructure matrix

# Public Transport Networks

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**Our public transport networks enable people to access jobs and services across and beyond Merri-bek. Having an integrated public transport network is essential to reducing our carbon footprint.**

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Much of Merri-bek's public transport system has failed to keep pace with our city's growth, has failed to respond to changes in travel patterns resulting from that growth, and has failed to provide a usable service for all the people who live and visit of the city of Merri-bek. Our bus network is convoluted and slow, with irregular frequencies and limited service coverage. Much of our tram network is inaccessible, and trams are frequently stuck in traffic. The Upfield line remains single-track from Gowrie and has relatively low service frequencies compared to the rest of the railway network. Connecting the Upfield line to the Craigieburn line remains a high priority for our community to improve social and economic connections through the north of metro Melbourne and to the CBD.

Council is also a provider of transport services via our community transport service. It is a key local door to door transport service that support people who are unable to drive or use public transport. It comprises of a number of small buses that are also equipped with hoists and safety features that can assist people who use walking aids and wheelchairs. Council receives funding from the Commonwealth to provide this service.

The following outlines our core advocacy items to the Victorian Government to improve public transport for those who work, visit, or live in Merri-bek.

## Overall

- Improve service reliability across the public transport network
- Improve the integration of public transport services, including time tabling to allow for multi-modal journeys
- Ensure bus services meet terminating trams to extend tram connections
- Prioritise improvements to public transport in the north of Merri-bek where there has been historical under-investment in public transport
- Ensure all stops, stations, and rolling stock are fully accessible
- Advocate for a PTV behaviour change strategy to promote respectful behaviour so everyone feels safe while using public transport

## Trains

- Connect the Upfield Line to the Craigieburn Line via Somerton
- Duplicate track from Gowrie Railway Station to the end of the line
- Increase frequencies on the Upfield Line
- Transition Seymour Regional Rail Services to the Upfield corridor to free up capacity on the Craigieburn Line
- Ensure all railway stations are fully accessible

Deliver the Level Crossing Removal Project in Brunswick in-line with our **Reshaping Brunswick Advocacy document**

## Trams

- Ensure all tram stops are fully accessible in line with our Reshaping Brunswick Advocacy document
- Upgrade the rolling stock so that all trams are low-floor and accessible
- Increase service frequencies

## Buses

- Reform the bus network in Merri-bek in line with the principles in Victoria's Bus Plan
- Deliver on the current Bus Reform project for the North-West region
- Focus on improving east-west bus services
- Improve bus services in Fawkner
- Increase service frequencies and timetable duration
- Increase bus priority on arterial roads and at intersections

## Community Transport

We will continue providing community transport services to meet the needs of our community.

# Driving network

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Accessing shops, services, and employment by car is important for many people who work, live, or play in Merri-bek. We need to make sure our driving network is safe for all road users and ensure that those who need to use a car, for personal use or freight delivery, are able to.

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## What we will do

### Become a Safe System organisation

We will adopt a Safe System Approach to road safety, in line with the Victorian Government and many jurisdictions around the world. A Safe System Approach takes a holistic approach to road safety, looking equally at safer roads, safer speed limits, safer vehicles, and safer people driving. Some governments also consider after crash care as part of the approach. For Merri-bek, our ability to take action to improve road safety focuses on safer roads, safer speed limits on the local road network, safer people with learner driver programs and safety around school, and ensuring our council vehicle fleet is safe. We will advocate to the State Government for road safety improvements on the arterial road network, as well as advocating to the State and Commonwealth Governments for safer vehicles, driver education and licencing.

### Roll out safer speed limits

Reducing speed limits decreases the likelihood and severity of a collision on our road network. In particular, the chance for survival for a pedestrian increases dramatically when speed limits are lowered. We are rolling out 40km/h on all local streets in Merri-bek and will develop a trial proposal for 30km/h in a suitable location. We will advocate to the State Government to include 30km/h in the Victorian Speed Design Guideline to make it easier for all local governments in Victoria, including Merri-bek, to provide 30km/h in suitable areas. We will also work to ensure that streets are designed to match the desired speed limit, using traffic management devices and design treatments to match the posted speed limit.

### Support electric vehicles by providing charging infrastructure

Transitioning our cars to electric will be an important part of our efforts to reduce our transport emissions and improve local air

quality. As part of supporting people using electric vehicles, we will need to facilitate increased provision of publicly available charging infrastructure. Doing so will support both those who need to make a trip to a local destination and those who live in older style town houses or apartments where it is difficult or not possible to install charging infrastructure on their private property. As part of our support, we will enact the recommendations from the Northern Council Alliance community electric vehicle transition plan.

### Develop a clear road hierarchy

Using the Movement and Place Framework, we will classify our road network so that the role of each street both for their movement function and their place function, and our future aspirations for them, are clear. This will help us make informed decisions about our road network and how it relates to our other transport networks.

### Protect local amenity

Since the advent of GPS route planning, such as Google Maps, non-local traffic has increased on our local road network. This reduces the amenity of our local communities; increasing noise and air pollution and making our local streets less safe for children to travel actively and independently. We will look to reduce non-local traffic on local streets where it affects local amenity using traffic management interventions to guide drivers towards the arterial road network. We will advocate to GPS route planning companies, such as Google, to reduce unnecessary traffic on local streets.

### Support car share

Car share has become an important tool to help people reduce their transport costs and to increase their access to shops and services. We will continue supporting car share to serve Merri-bek residents and businesses. We will also look for opportunities to reduce the administration burden to Council and to car

share operators in managing car share agreements.

### **Supporting freight and deliveries**

Our local freight network and delivery services provide critical access for our local businesses to efficiently send and receive goods. It also allows businesses to connect to the Victorian Freight Network, connecting people, goods, and services across the state. For local businesses, this means having access to loading zones, and ensuring that heavy vehicles can safely navigate our local road network.

Delivery services have changed significantly in recent years. Much more of our local deliveries, especially food services, are now delivered by e-bike couriers. We will work to ensure all couriers, whether on an e-bike, in a van, or driving a heavy vehicle can safely and conveniently access local businesses and deliver their goods.

We will support businesses transition to smaller and more sustainable delivery vehicles and services, including electric courier / freight vehicles, e-cargo bikes, and other forms of zero emission vehicles.

### **Balance the use of kerbside space**

Kerbside space, like the rest of our transport system, is the management of public space for a specific use. Historically, streets have served multiple purposes as sites of exchange, trade, social interaction, as well as the movement and storage of the means of transportation. The last 100 years saw kerbside space transformed solely for the use of private vehicle storage. However, as our city has grown, and as social values for how we live and move around have changed, competing demands for kerbside space have grown.

Parking is an important component of the transport system. It provides access to shops and services, allows businesses to send and receive goods, and allows friends and family to visit our homes. Ensuring adequate access to parking is important, especially when there are limited alternatives for some people.

As a consumer of space in the public realm, there is increased pressure on parking in high-demand areas. To improve other forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, space sometimes needs to be reallocated from its existing use, including space currently used for

car parking. In high demand areas, and areas with narrow footpaths, it may be preferable to provide bicycle parking on-street to maintain adequate footpath space for pedestrians. Increasing space for footpath trading, increasing tree canopy, and al fresco dining is also important for supporting our local businesses and creating vibrant activity centres.

Accessible parking is critical for people with disability to access shops and services. Loading zones allow businesses to serve their local communities. Both uses will be prioritised over general parking where additional spaces are required.

Managing the competing demands for finite kerbside space tension needs to be worked through carefully and considerately with our community. We will involve local residents and businesses when proposing changes to kerbside use.

### **Principles for parking decisions**

We will parking spaces in Merri-bek using clear principles and processes. This includes gathering data, analysing it within the context of the street or area the parking issue is, and keeping the community informed and involved at the decision-making points.

Where parking restrictions need to be modified or adapted, the following principles will be considered:

- Understanding whether compliance with existing parking restrictions would address the issue

- Ability to reduce demand for parking, e.g. through mode split changes

- Type of land use within approximately 100m of the location – including whether properties have off-street parking and how much

- Availability of other suitable parking nearby
- Which users are advantaged by the proposed easing and their views

- Which users are disadvantaged by the proposed easing and their views

- The community benefits overall of proceeding / not proceeding

- The community disbenefits overall of proceeding / not proceeding

- Reduction in congestion

Should a parking issue be found to exist, we will work through a hierarchy of actions. First, identify options to reduce demand. This may be through encouraging walking and cycling for shorter trips or working with traders to find all day parking spots for employees. Second, we will review potential for increased parking enforcement to ensure parking users are following existing parking controls. If the first 2 options do not work, we will consider changes to parking controls to better match the areas parking needs. This could be changing time restrictions or identifying more loading zones. Finally, if the parking issue persists following all previous steps, we will consider further modifications to parking arrangements in the area. At each stage, we will evaluate our actions and communicate them to the community.

## **What we will advocate for**

### **Update the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines**

The Victorian Speed Design Guideline is the document that tells us what speed limits are able to be set and the streets they can be set on. At present, 30km/h is not listed as an option, meaning that any speed limit applications including 30km/h can only be approved by the State Government as part of a waiver. Updating the Guideline to include 30km/h will allow all Victorian councils, including Merri-bek, to select 30km/h on streets where they are deemed appropriate.

### **What does success look like?**

- Reduced road crash trauma on the road network
- Improved amenity for residents on local streets
- Reduced emissions from passenger vehicles
- People who need to use their car are supported

### **How will we measure success?**

- Crash statistics
- Speed and volume profiles
- Transport emission statistics
- Community feedback

## **Electric vehicles and new transport technology**

There have been technological innovations in transport in recent years, with electric vehicles, and other smaller forms of electric mobility. We will continue to monitor such innovations and support those which demonstrate clear benefit to the Merri-bek community and our strategic transport objectives.

Electric Vehicle (EV) ownership has increased dramatically in recent years, in Merri-bek and across Australia. While there were approximately 250 registered EVs in Merri-bek in 2021, it is forecast to increase to almost 11,000 EVs by 2030 (NCA 2022). EV charging infrastructure will need to increase in the coming years to support this growth.

EV charging will require a mixture of private charging at home, at work, at businesses, and charging in the public domain. Public charging will also be important for those in older housing stock that do not have access to off-street parking or are in older apartment complexes that are difficult to retrofit for EV charging infrastructure.

The recent NCA Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan estimated as many as 136 fast chargers will be required in Merri-bek activity centres by 2030 to meet charging demand.

## **What we will do**

- Expand the public EV charging network using existing Council off-street car parks
- Support residents and businesses with information on EVs and EV charging infrastructure
- Transition Council's vehicle fleet to zero emissions
- Continue to monitor innovations in transport technology and support those which demonstrate clear benefit to Merri-bek

## **What we will advocate for**

- A streamlined approach for connecting and upgraded the electricity network to support EV chargers
- A trial of using light poles and power poles to provide EV chargers on-street
- Increased funding to support Council's transition their vehicle fleet including heavy vehicles.

## Land use

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Our transport system allows us to access places; shops, services, schools, employment, and everything we need to participate fully in society. The Merri-bek Planning scheme guides the pattern of development and influences the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses to manage a growing population. This influences the ways we move and design places to make them safe and inclusive.

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### **What we will do**

#### **Support people to live, work, buy, and play locally**

We will improve local transport networks to enable people to meet their everyday needs close to home. Whether that means installing a missing footpath to make walking to school viable, or a new pedestrian crossing to access local shops. Small interventions such as these can make a big difference to the way we move around. We will work to identify infrastructure gaps near schools and activity centres, and work to make it easier for our community to live locally.

#### **Support density around activity centres and transport hubs**

Merri-bek has a statutory obligation to ensure at least 15 years of development is available to provide housing for a growing population. It's important that those new apartments, houses and workplaces are located close to existing shops, services, and transport hubs. This ensures that we can grow as a community while minimising impacts to our transport system and existing community. We will work to support people to get to and move around our activity centres, and have sufficient transport infrastructure that prioritises active and public transport trips.

### **Support the creation of great places**

We will work with other key stakeholders (e.g. State Government, public transport operators) and the community to further strengthen our activity centres and key destinations that are socially and economically enriching and vibrant. As part of this, we will look at opportunities to make trips to these destinations as safe and enjoyable as possible.

# Streets for People

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**Streets for people is a framework for making changes to our streets. It takes a holistic approach to understanding how our streets function in the wider transport system, how we make changes to streets to benefit all users, and ensure we align project outcomes with our values and strategic objectives.**

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This approach combines our values and the transport system to help us identify corridors where improvements to the transport system are required or desired, with a clear process for selecting streets and working with the community to determine the final designs.

## How it works

Our Streets for People framework starts with analysis of the Merri-bek Transport System to understand how it currently functions, where issues exist, and where opportunities might be to make improvements.

We will select streets to apply the Streets for People Framework using a transparent and objective decision-making process.

Using Movement and Place, we will classify the street based on the role each street plays in the wider network, for both its movement function and its place function. We do this because the approach we will take and the design options available depend on the role the street plays. For example, a street in an activity centre will have different needs compared to a local residential street.

We will then undertake a Healthy Streets Assessment, which applies a people-centred approach to how a street functions. This assessment takes a holistic view of the different elements that make a street 'healthy' for the people who use it.

The Movement and Place classification and the Healthy Streets Assessment result will be used to develop design options to improve the street.

We will then work with the local community to refine our designs.

Following approval of the preferred design option or options, we will proceed to community consultation where appropriate, and then implementation. This may be done as one project, or delivered over a number of stages, depending on the budget and resourcing required for implementation.

The remainder of this section describes each of the Streets for People stages in more detail.

## Merri-bek Transport System

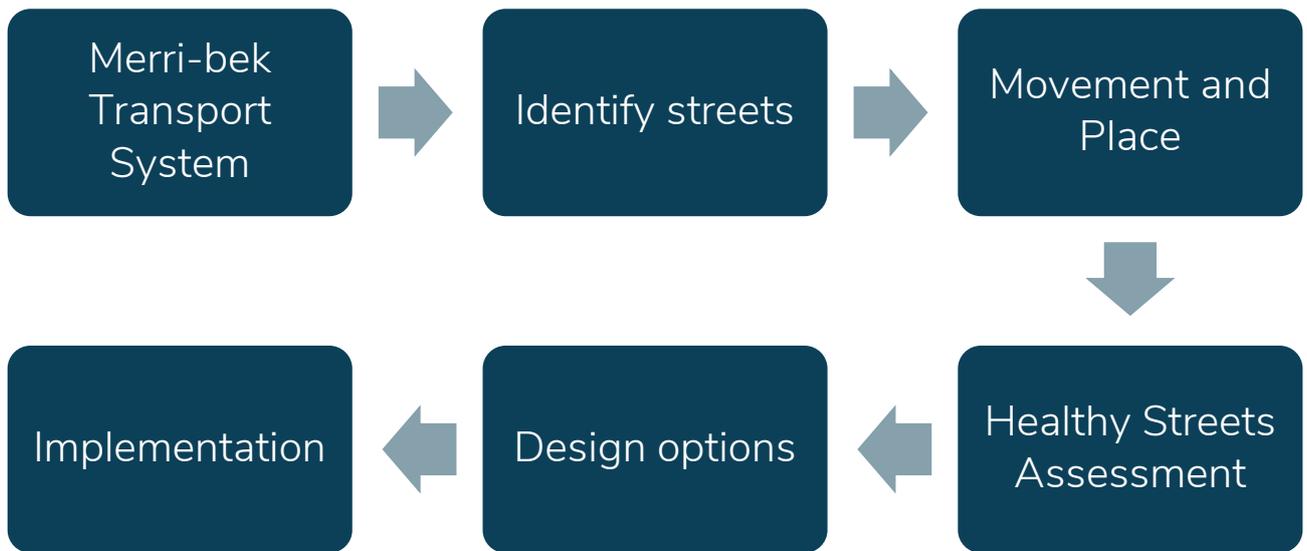
Using available transport and demographic data, we will identify corridors of movement in, out, and within Merri-bek. These corridors are the flows of people making everyday transport trips for a variety of purposes; trips to work, school, shops, deliveries, services, and social or recreational.

We will develop a framework for identifying and analysing corridors of movement that will inform a decision-making process for selecting streets for upgrades. This will include identifying streets by the way they currently function, how people use them, their allocation of space, and adjoining land uses.

## Street selection process

We will develop a transparent process for selecting which streets will form part of the Streets for People framework. This will include, but is not limited to, the following factors:

- Level of community support
- Existing levels of walking/cycling
- Potential for increasing walking/cycling
- Heat vulnerability
- Connection to existing walking and cycling networks
- Connection to schools
- Connection to activity centres
- Crash risk
- Movement and Place classification



## Movement and Place

Streets do a lot more than just allow people to move around. When planning our transport network, it's important to recognise and respect the different characteristics of our streets as public spaces. The quality of our streets as places can often be negatively impacted if we simply seek to move people around as efficiently as possible.

Movement and Place is a conceptual framework for understanding and managing our streets in order to respect the important role they play in our city. It was developed by the Victorian Government.

Movement and Place outlines a way of thinking about, and classifying, our streets by both their functions and as a place within their own right. It looks at the entirety of a street, from property boundary to property boundary, including the footpath, the carriageway, and the interfacing land uses.

Using the Movement and Place Framework helps us to understand how our streets currently perform and how we might want to make changes to our streets. It helps us classify how a street functions overall, and how it functions for each of the transport network modes that make up our transport system. We can also use the Framework to identify streets where a given transport mode should have higher priority. For instance, improving efficiency on the Principal Freight Network or prioritising bike riders on the Principal Bicycle Network.

When conducting a Movement and Place assessment in Merri-bek, each section of street will be given a Movement and a Place classification between 1 and 5. This classification represents the relative level of significance a street has, from State significance to Local significance.

Score	Level of significance
1	State significance
2	Regional significance
3	Municipal significance
4	Neighbourhood significance
5	Local significance

The classifications communicate the State Government's and Council's aspirational function for each of the movement networks.

Streets can also be clustered together by their type. This allows us to consider the similarities different streets can have based on their Movement and Place rating. For example, Sydney Road may have a higher Movement and Place function relative to Melville Road, but both operate as activity streets.



More information about the Movement and Place Framework can be found [here](#).

### How we will use the Movement and Place Framework

We will apply the Movement and Place function to the Merri-bek Transport System.

We will classify the Merri-bek Transport System with the Framework at an overall level, and then for each of the movement layers.

This will allow us to identify priority corridors for each mode and to make informed decisions where multiples modes are identified for a given street. Where multiple modes are identified as being important for a given corridor, priority will be given based on the transport hierarchy pyramid. This pyramid places pedestrians at the top, followed by cycling, public transport, and then driving.

## Review existing conditions

We will review and make changes to our streets holistically, considering opportunities to improve the movement of the street for all modes and the place function of the street.

We will work with the local community around that street to understand how the street works for them and their aspirations for how the street should work in the future.

We will apply the Healthy Streets Design Framework to analyse and recommend changes to the street. This Framework allows us to review the performance of a street, based on the different elements shown below. This will involve an audit of the existing street, identifying challenges and opportunities under each of the elements. This differs from Movement and Place, which considers how a given street fits into the overall performance of the transport system.

More information about the Healthy Streets framework can be found [here](#).

## Healthy Streets Assessment

Using the Healthy Streets assessment, we will identify opportunities to improve the street. In addition to the elements outlined in the Healthy Streets Framework, we will also consider:

- Pedestrian improvements
- Cycling improvements
- Driving access
- Public transport stops
- Trees and greening
- Streetscape enhancements
- Parking (including accessible parking, loading zones, EV charging, etc)

## Design Options

We will then use the Movement and Place classification, the Healthy Streets Assessment, and community insights to develop design options that seek to improve the street in-line with our aspirations and in consideration of existing constraints.

Community consultation on these design options will then guide Council's decision on a preferred option to be developed into detailed designs for implementation.



Figure 4 Healthy Streets Design Framework

## Implementation

Following Council and community support for the preferred design, we will then proceed to detailed design and implementation.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Post-construction, we will monitor and evaluate the performance of the street relative to how it operated before the interventions.

We will use the Healthy Streets Framework, and other transport data. This evaluation will be provided back to the community.

## **Action Plan**

An action plan will facilitate the implementation of Moving Around Merri-bek. The first action plan, included as part of this Strategy, details actions to be completed across the 2024/25 financial year. As part of the 2024 calendar year, we will further develop a five-year action plan covering 2025-2029, with the intention of renewing future action plans on a 4-year cycle. This will also include a review of the implementation of the previous action plan and recommended amendments to Moving Around Merri-bek to reflect contemporary transport challenges and opportunities.

The current Action Plan can be found here:

<https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/moving-around-merri-bek>

## Glossary

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Active transport – A mode of transport that relies on physical movement, which may be assisted with an electric motor. Includes walking, cycling, e-bikes, scooters, e-scooters.

Behaviour change program – an intervention that encourages people to change their behaviour

DTP – The Victorian Department of Transport and Planning

EV – Electric Vehicle

M9 – A group of local governments in inner-Melbourne including the Cities of: Melbourne, Port Philip, Stonnington, Yarra, Darebin, Merri-bek, Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, and Hobsons Bay.

Micro mobility – Small, personal vehicles, under 250kg, such as bicycles, e-scooters, e-bikes and cargo bikes.

Mode share – the proportion of trips done by a particular mode of transport.

Net Zero – A target to negating all greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activity.

Open Street – A term used to describe the act of closing a street to through traffic and opening it up for other modes of transport, especially walking and cycling.

PTV – Public Transport Victoria.

Public transport – Includes trains, trams, and buses.

Safe Systems – A theoretical framework for creating a safer road environment for people and vehicles. It recognises the need to design streets to safely accommodate human error.

VISTA – Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity.