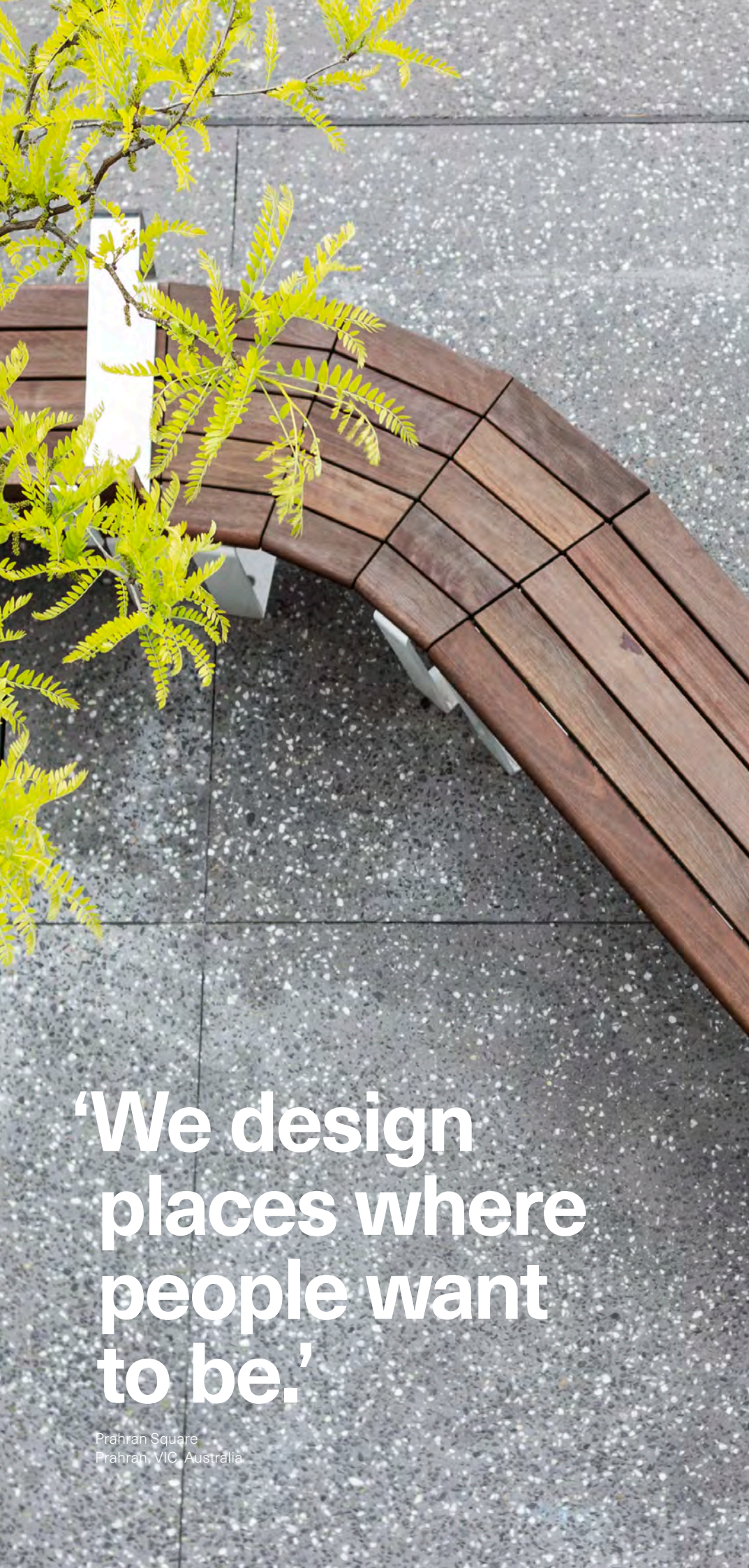


MERCER AND GHERINGHAP STREET STREETSCAPE MASTERPLAN

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG
NOVEMBER 2023

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ASPECT Studios



‘We design
places where
people want
to be.’

Prahran Square
Prahran, VIC, Australia

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Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Design Statement

The Mercer and Gheringhap Street Streetscape Masterplan is a visionary plan to transform two of Geelong’s primary streets into important and compelling arrival streets.

1.1.1 Design Introduction

The Masterplan stitches together existing civic landmarks, public open spaces, and emerging residential and commercial precincts to create a comprehensive vision for the public realm, which can be realised over time.

The masterplan proposes to transform key streets from expansive asphalt, car-dominated environments, to civilised green-spines that are safe for all users and are underpinned by Geelong’s rich history including strong indigenous and creative cultural influences.

A suggested focus on microclimate improvements includes increased tree canopy coverage and water sensitive urban design features to respond to future climate and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for growing urban population.



Figure 1.1 Project boundary and linkage to civic landmarks, public spaces and proposed green spines and civic space



1.2 Project Positioning

“The overarching goal of considering Streets as Places is to transform the design and construction of public streets into places that improve the quality of human life and the environment rather than simply move vehicles from place to place.”

Project for Public Spaces

1.2.1 Street as Place For All Users

Within the street, considerations need to be given to all users across all forms of street and public realm use. In addition to public transport and private transport modes of travel, these include: active transport users, 24/7 safety at all times, accessibility for all users, ages and abilities; and consideration of daily, weekly, seasonal, and annual use.

1.2.2 Elements of Street as Place

Good streets need the right combination of elements to encourage social occupation of the street. The design must encourage activity throughout different times of day, week and different seasons. The street must also function as a place of social and biological significance embracing a diversity of people, cultures, plants and animals.

Throughout the Masterplan process consideration has been given to:

Microclimate

- Rest,
- Shade,
- Topography,
- Water.

Social

- Individual,
- Group.

Urban

- Landmark,
- Identity,
- Character.

Cultural

- Events,
- Activities,
- Programmable,
- Temporary.

Physical & Temporal Change

- Day / Night,
- Weekend,
- Seasonal
- First Nations Peoples.

Biological

- Habitat,
- Ecosystems.

1.2.3 A City and a Street of Design

As one of UNESCO’s Cities of Design, the redevelopment of Mercer and Gheringhap Streets in Geelong provides an opportunity to demonstrate best practice across a range of design and artistic disciplines including but not limited to; landscape architecture, environmental design, wayfinding, integrated design and public art.

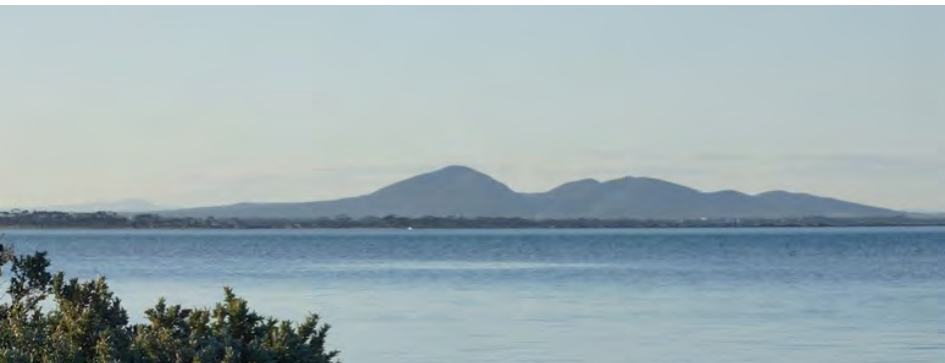
The intent is that this Masterplan generates opportunities for these creative professionals to be engaged in the subsequent phases of the project to realise the vision and ambition.

1.2.4 Street as Place For History & Future

Opportunities are to be explored throughout the masterplanning and subsequent phases of the design to interweave historical and future narratives throughout the site. These may be explored through a range of responses including integrated designs and temporary and permanent public art commissions.

1.2.5 Street as Place for Indigenous & Creative Culture

The Masterplan envisages a place that tells the stories of First Nations people. Therefore, genuine, and meaningful engagement with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners is important as the project progresses.



1.3 Masterplan Overview

The City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) appointed ASPECT Studios to undertake the design process to develop an integrated Masterplan for Gheringhap, Mercer, and Bayley Streets.

1.3.1 What is a Masterplan?

A Masterplan articulates a vision for the study area and provides a framework for the ongoing management and decision-making.

This coordinated response is then supported by carefully orchestrated delivery strategies.

1.3.2 Study Area

The scope of the Masterplan includes:

- Mercer Street, between York Street and Gheringhap Street.
- Gheringhap Street, between Western Beach Road and Kilgour Street.
- Bayley Street, between Mercer Street and Gheringhap Street.



Figure 1.2 Study Area

1.4 Key Strategic Documents

A range of strategic documents underpin the Mercer and Gheringhap Street Streetscape Masterplan.

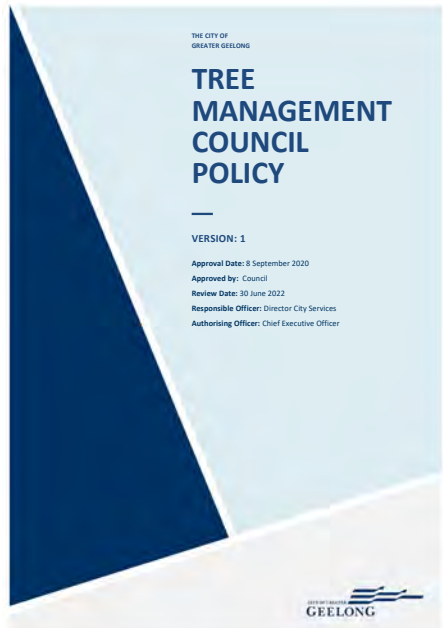
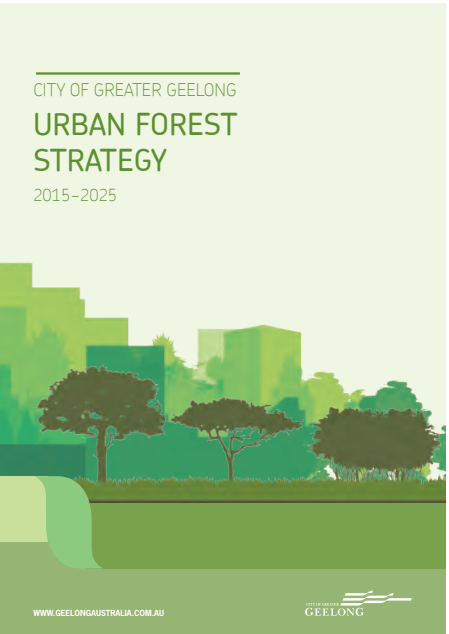
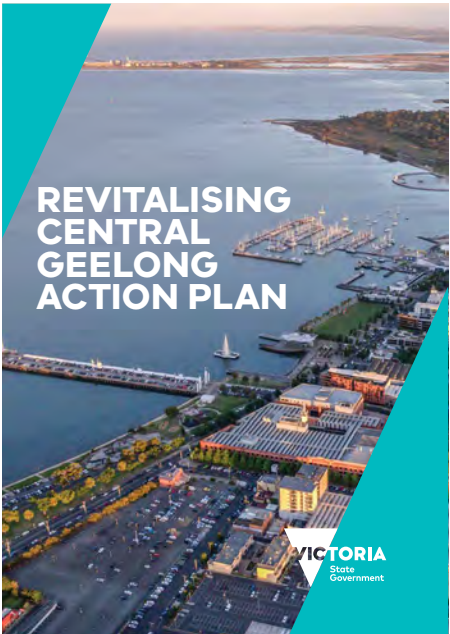
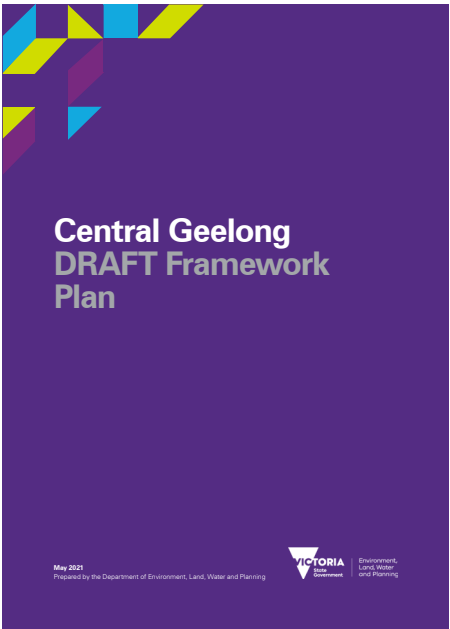
1.4.1 Documents

The following key background documents provided by CoGG and sourced on-line have been reviewed (key document extracts and summary of their influence on the Masterplan follow):

- Draft Central Geelong Framework Plan 2021 (DEECA)
- Central Geelong Framework Plan: Transport Strategy 2021 (DEECA)
- Urban Forest Strategy 2015–2025 (CoGG)
- Environment Strategy 2020–2030 (CoGG)
- Clever and Creative Future 2017 (CoGG)
- Our Community Plan 2021–2025 (CoGG)
- Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan 2016 (DEECA)
- Movement and Place in Victoria 2019 (DoT)

Additional documents have been reviewed for a background understanding of the issues affecting this Masterplan (these have not been specifically referenced but provide strategic, design or technical insights that have informed the process):

- Stormwater Services Strategy - Central Geelong Catchment Management Unit 2020 (CoGG)
- Central Geelong Flood Study 2016 (CoGG)
- Sustainability Framework and Action Plan 2020 (CoGG)
- Draft Climate Change Response Plan 2021–2030 (CoGG)
- Building Better Bike Connections project 2020 (CoGG)
- Geelong Green Spine project 2017 (CoGG)
- Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) in planning (updated 2022) (CoGG)
- Sustainable Building Policy 2017 (updated 2020) (CoGG)
- Wadawurrung Country Plan 2020–2030 (WTOAC)
- Arts and Cultural Strategy 2021–2031 (CoGG)
- Public Art Strategy 2017 (CoGG)
- Arts and Culture Precinct Masterplan 2017 (RCG)
- Geelong Arts and Culture Precinct SD Report 2021 (RCG)
- UNESCO Guiding Principles 2022 (UNESCO)



Strategic Cycling Corridor Network Overview
December 2020



Geelong Central Drainage/Flood Study Report



February 2016



1.5 Key Strategic Document Extracts

1.5.1 Draft Central Geelong Framework Plan 2021 (DEECA)

Connected to Place

- Magnificent landscape setting – Barwon River to Corio Bay waterfront.
- Celebrating Wadawurrung living cultural heritage and values.

A Lifestyle City

- Cycling and walking future.
- Greening Geelong.

Station Precinct

- To enhance the safety, amenity and vibrancy of the public realm to support increased pedestrian activity along Latrobe Terrace (including a landscape setback), Mercer Street and at the entrances of the Station while improving access across the train line to/from Geelong West.

Retail Core

- To prioritise attracting people through businesses, entertainment, services and high pedestrian amenity streets that include wide and sunlit footpaths, landscaping, traffic calming, and accessible public transport.

West Village

- To provide an attractive gateway to Central Geelong.

Strategic Context - Transport and Movement

- Maintaining car dominance will have negative effects on the city as it grows.
- Address the lack of pedestrian navigability between precincts and across the Central Geelong area.
- Encourage people to walk around precincts by creating shortcuts through laneways, providing good tree canopy, and creating interesting places and streets to explore.

Strategic Context - Public Realm and Open Space

- Address the lack of pedestrian permeability and prioritise those seeking to reach the waterfront or Retail Core Precinct.

Built Form - street activation and interfaces

- Provide continuous canopies for weather protection in the Retail Core precinct. These should be designed to allow for street canopy trees.
- Provide canopies that offer continuous and functional weather protection where retail and hospitality uses are proposed. These should be designed to allow for street canopy trees.

Objective 15

- Protect the amenity of key existing and proposed public spaces, streets and laneways from overshadowing and wind impacts.

Objective 21

Action 21.2.1

- Upgrade streets to encourage people to walk around Central Geelong.

Action 21.2.2

- Manage the impacts of vehicles to maintain the amenity of streets in Central Geelong.

Objective 22

- Improve the available walking and bicycle facilities. A high quality pedestrian realm will stitch Central Geelong together helping people who arrive in one part of the city move to other precincts without getting stuck in traffic.

Strategy 22.4.1

- Designating and promoting preferred routes to walk to Central Geelong, when accompanied with upgrades to their amenity, safety, and convenience, will increase the catchment for walking to Central Geelong.

Action 22.5.1

- Update and deliver the Principal Bicycle Network informed by the Central Geelong DRAFT Framework Plan, including the key function of streets.

Action 22.5.2

- Deliver the Strategic Cycling Corridors by providing dedicated and separated cycle lanes.

Objective 23

Create a clear street hierarchy within Central Geelong that connects to key destinations and reduces through traffic.

Strategy 23.3

- Add a north-south Green Spine to complement the east-west Malop Street Green Spine.
- Ensure that Central Geelong has north-south and east-west Green Spines to facilitate connections between key local destinations.

Action 23.3.1

Establish a Green Spine along Gheringhap Street to connect key destinations including:

- Geelong Waterfront.
- Deakin University.
- Geelong Railway Station.
- Johnstone Park.
- Central Geelong’s civic buildings.
- Kardinia Park.

Objective 24

- Improve the public realm and preference pedestrian amenity.

Strategy 24.1

- Improve pedestrian links within Central Geelong
Improving footpaths and pedestrian links will help people walk within Central Geelong, reducing congestion on the road while activating city streets.

Strategy 24.2

- Improve cycling connections within Central Geelong.
- Improving bicycle infrastructure and connecting routes will help people use bicycles for transport to and within Central Geelong.

Action 24.2.1

- Deliver the Strategic Cycling Corridors to and within Central Geelong and the Principal Bicycle Network.

Action 24.2.2

- Promote bicycle riding as a key mode of transport to access Central Geelong.

Action 24.2.5

- Encourage provision of bike lanes on all streets unless designated as a Strategic Bicycle Corridor (where separated lanes are to be provided), identified as a shared road or shared zone, or where traffic volumes or speed may reduce safety or practicality (e.g. arterial roads).

Strategy 24.7

- Ensure speed limits and intersections reflect the importance of pedestrian and cyclist amenity and safety in Central Geelong.

Action 24.7.3

- Provide more protected and priority pedestrian crossings at intersections and mid-block locations that link key destinations and laneways.

Action 24.7.5

- Reduce roadway widths to their minimum required to meet their role in the road network, including by widening kerbs and providing pedestrian refuges and road medians to protect pedestrians and make it easier to cross the road (one carriageway at a time).

Strategy 24.9

- Improve boulevard treatments.
- Extending tree canopies, median strips, pedestrian improvements and built form controls can all be applied to reinforce the boulevard treatment.
- Action 24.9.1 Investigate introducing a boulevard treatment along Mercer Street.
- Create better streetscapes and ‘arrival’ indicators on major roads.

Objective 27

Strategy 27.6

- Provide weather protection along primary and secondary pedestrian links, pedestrian priority streets and within public open space

Action 27.6.3

- Provide verandas and canopies, particularly along primary pedestrian links except where it is inconsistent with the preferred setbacks or inconsistent with the heritage of the building as described in the City of Greater Geelong Verandah Study.

Influence:

The Draft Central Geelong Framework Plan 2021 supports the creation of a place beyond simply moving vehicles, to one which accommodates cycling, walking and public transport and improves the pedestrian amenity, shade, shelter and environmental outcomes.

Key Strategic Document Extracts

1.5.2 Central Geelong Framework Plan: Transport Strategy 2021 (DEECA)

Central Geelong

- Increase people traveling to the city by bicycle, walking and public transport.
- Build on existing bicycle lanes to create greater priority and safer connections across Central Geelong.
- Reduce distance to cross roads and make it easier to navigate.
- Comfort - many of the internal roadways are much conveniently and safely cross.
- Encourage people to walk around the city by creating shortcuts through laneways, providing good tree canopy, and creating interesting places and streets to explore.

Station Precinct:

- Improve connections and reduce barriers through new/ upgraded links and crossing points, while improving road conditions that favour pedestrians and bicycle riders.

Knowledge and Enterprise

- Create highly attractive north-south pedestrian connections to the waterfront from Malop Street Green Spine through Gheringhap and Swanston Streets.

Health Precinct:

- Build on existing bicycle lanes to create greater priority and safer connections across the precinct.

West Village

- Build a north-south Green Spine in Gheringhap Street (to complement Malop Street’s east-west Green Spine), to connect the city to Kardinia Park, South Geelong Station and the Bellarine Peninsula Rail Trail.
- Facilitate easier access across Gheringhap Street to Johnstone Park that also benefits the Cultural Precinct.
- Improve streetscapes and tree cover along existing streets that enable precinct permeability.

Cultural Core

- Reduce distance to cross roads. Many of the internal roadways are too large precinct particularly at the front of key destinations.

Influence:

The Central Geelong Framework Plan Transport Strategy 2021 supports the prioritisation of active transport, which includes expansion of sidewalks, introduction of mid-block crossings and separated cycle paths.

1.5.3 Urban Forest Strategy 2015–2025 (CoGG)

The provision of, and prioritisation of, increased numbers and diversity of trees within the public realm is underpinned by this Strategy document. Includes the focus on greening gateways into Geelong, the prioritisation of tree planting along bike paths and areas of Central Geelong.

Objective 24

Geelong will be a cool green city for the future. “Geelong’s trees have played a key role in the identity and character of the City since 1851”.

- Developing tree lined entrances to our city.
- Urban Geelong has a tree canopy cover of 14%, with approximately 7% on private land and 7% on Council land. Council is aiming for a 25% canopy coverage in 30 years time. Peer reviewed literature recommends an optimum urban land use canopy cover of 40% because it delivers the maximum benefits to an urban environment.

Other areas to be prioritised for tree planting opportunities are:

- Creation of boulevards.
- Industrial areas.
- Bike paths.
- Gateways to Geelong.
- Linear open space corridors.
- Waterways.
- Commercial and Retail Zones.
- Central Geelong.
- The Greenway: Ted Wilson bike trail.
- Urban orchards.
- Open space and conservation reserves.
- All new capital works projects in existing open space.

Influence:

The Urban Forest Strategy 2015-2025 supports an increased number and diversity of trees within the public realm. The strategy highlights greening of gateways into the city and prioritisation of tree planting along bike paths.

1.5.4 Environment Strategy 2020–2030 (CoGG)

This Strategy document underpins the transformation of streets into places for people and nature. Includes the focus on the increased greening of and biodiversity within Geelong, the incorporation of water within the streets as a means of flood control, passive irrigation and treatment.

Goal 2: Create Greener Community Spaces

Establish more nature-based green-blue infrastructure solutions. Nature-based green-blue infrastructure refers to natural and constructed assets that are either:

- Land-based (green): trees, gardens, nature strips, parks and open spaces or;
- Water-based (blue): stormwater, drains, wetlands, ponds and waterways

Principle 2.2

Increase adoption of nature-based, green-blue infrastructure solutions.

- Encourage passive irrigation techniques for urban landscapes.
- Integrate green-blue infrastructure into active travel links to provide shaded and biodiverse transport connections.

Principle 2.3

Connect people to Nature:

- Increase the biodiversity levels and ecological health of our urban public spaces.
- Partner with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to incorporate cultural heritage elements into community spaces.
- Utilise climate resilient flora species that support biodiversity outcomes in community spaces.
- Provide opportunities for active transport, nature play, art and design, and passive and active learning about nature.
- Integrate requirements for greening of community spaces into infrastructure development projects.

Targets

- Increase tree canopy over in urban Greater Geelong to 25 per cent by 2045, with an interim target of 20 per cent by 2030.
- Develop an urban ecology plan by 2025.
- Develop an integrated water management strategy and waterway management plan by 2025.
- Plant one million new trees in Greater Geelong by 2030.

Goal 4: Protect, Enhance And Restore Our Region's Biodiversity

Principle 4.3

Restore biodiversity in modified urban landscapes:

- 1. Integrate biodiversity into urban landscapes through planning and design processes.
- 2. Restore biodiversity to our parks, roadsides, reserves, waterways, streetscapes, coastal and rural landscapes using Ecological Vegetation Classes, natural regeneration techniques and indigenous plants of local provenance.
- 3. Restore habitat into urban landscapes through the establishment of indigenous tree, shrub and understory plantings and other habitat elements.

Goal 5: Better Integrated Water Management Through Planning And Design

Principle 5.2

Sustainable management of drainage and stormwater asset networks:

- Use adaptation programs to reduce stormwater flooding impacts on people, infrastructure, places and the environment.
- Support urban greening by applying integrated water management practices.
- Integrate stormwater reuse into natural and built environments to create multi-functional community spaces.

Influence:

The Environment Strategy 2020-2030 supports the transformation of streets into places for people and nature within the streets through increased greening, biodiversity and the incorporation of water.

Key Strategic Document Extracts

1.5.5 Clever and Creative Future 2017 (CoGG)

Future View

- Makes travel between suburbs easier through a network of pedestrian and cycle paths.
- Excites locals and international visitors who are interested in events, festivals, landscapes and food.
- Is designed to create an active street culture and vibrant public space.

The Greater Geelong Community Values

- Sustainable, connected and networked walking, cycling and public transport services that allow all abilities access into and across the city-region.

The measures of success are:

- Being able to access all parts of Greater Geelong within 30 minutes through a variety of travel options.
- 50 per cent of journeys to work are made by public transport, walking or cycling.

Success Will Be Achieved By:

- A pedestrian and cycling network that covers the whole municipality.
- Diversion of road traffic around urban centres.
- Cycling becomes a credible and safe on-road commuter option.

1.5.6 Our Community Plan 2021–2025 (CoGG)

Strategic Direction 2

Sustainable Growth and environment includes the following indicators to monitor our progress towards this goal:

Municipal Indicator:

- Journeys to work made by public transport, walking or cycling.

City of Great Geelong Indicator:

- Community satisfaction with local streets and footpaths.
- Number of trees planted.
- Our role is to understand local health characteristics and challenges so we can plan preventative health strategies, such as building urban environments that support active transport and tailoring our services to better meet community needs.
- One of the identified wellbeing priorities is Increasing Active Living because Active living is an important factor in maintaining overall health and wellbeing and preventing chronic disease. Providing the community with equitable access to safe environments that promote active living is an ongoing priority.

1.5.7 Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan 2016 (DEECA)

Vision 2

Identified key projects, or catalysts, to transform central Geelong including:

City Arrival:

- Create city gateways for workers, residents, students and visitors.

Inhabiting The City:

- Enhance development to support more people living and working in the city.

Green Spine:

- Develop a civic street spine to create a new hub of jobs and activity that connects the city.

Laneways:

- Invest in street and laneway enhancements to improve city connections and open up new and interesting places for employment, living and services.

Catalyst Projects

Getting Around:

- Highlight city arrival points.

Inhabiting The City:

- Plan for community infrastructure.

Green Spine:

- Plan for improved linkages between the city and waterfront.

1.5.8 Movement and Place in Victoria 2019 (DoT)

Three Principles Underline the Department of Transport (DoT)'s Approach to Transport Planning

People first:

- We put transport users at the centre of everything we do. Transport enables people to get on with their lives and do business. We need to make sure that we understand what people and business need and respond effectively. We seek to understand how the system is performing from the perspective of different users and ensure that people have input into the design and decision-making process.

Outcomes focused:

- We focus on outcomes that deliver more choice, connections and confidence in our travel. By looking at the outcomes we need to achieve for Victorians, we're understanding the problems and the wider opportunities from every transport decision. However, there is natural tension between outcomes and trade-offs. That is why in designing the future transport system, we need to use and improve on all our tools.

One system:

- We think as one system, not individual projects or modes. This enables us to get the balance right in managing demand, make the most of existing assets, take up new technologies and plan for major infrastructure. It helps us consider future changes and identify options to adapt to changing needs. We consider all transport modes in our planning so that they work in harmony to move people and freight effectively and efficiently. Where modes share the same space, we must ensure they do so in a way that balances the needs of its different users.

The Movement and Place in Victoria Framework takes a future-focused, multi-modal approach to network planning. It takes into consideration the diverse role places play in planning the types of transport modes appropriate to a local road or street. In this new language, roads and streets are defined by the context of a local place and assigned various 'movement' and 'place' classifications.

Influence:

A Clever and Creative Future 2017 supports increased active transportation as a means to facilitate physical, societal and cultural improvements and encourage better use of the streets as a place for people, not just cars.

Influence:

Strategic Direction 2 from Our Community Plan 2021-2025 is used to assess progress of the project against the goals set in the transformation of streets into places for people.

Influence:

The Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan 2012 supports the transformation of Gheringhap Street to become a green spine linking the city to the waterfront and Mercer Street as a key city arrival street which supports more people living and working in the city.

Influence:

This document provides the technical underpinning of people and active transport within these key streets as part of the Movement and Place in Victoria assessment. Gheringhap Street is a designated Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC). Mercer Street is on the Principal Bicycle Network (PBN). Physical offsets from traffic and parking for safety are determined through this categorisation.

1.6 Community Engagement Summary

The community were consulted in December 2021, early in the master plan process. The purpose of this engagement was to determine what elements of existing streets should change to make the streets more welcoming, attractive, accessible, safe, and vibrant.

The material provided outlined that the Mercer and Gheringhap Street Streetscape Masterplan process considered bike lane installation / completion as a concept along with other factors such as footpath improvements, potential improvements to intersections, landscaping and microclimate improvements, outdoor dining, public art, and improved safety and accessibility.

More than 330 people engaged with the City on the Masterplan through the on-line engagement opportunities.

The engagement also attracted 278 comments on Facebook.

The key take-aways that have informed the design approach to both Mercer and Gheringhap Streets were:

More trees and landscaping

Mercer Street has more limited opportunities to implement this, with more significant opportunities identified along Gheringhap Street.

Wider footpaths with more seating and outdoor dining opportunities.

There are some areas along Mercer Street where this will be possible, with more opportunities identified along Gheringhap Street.

1.6.1 Community Engagement Summary

Important Footpath Improvements

- More trees and landscaping (64%).
- Better street lighting (61%).
- More rubbish and recycling (51%).
- More outdoor dining (45%).
- More public seating (41%).
- More historical information and history promotion (indigenous and colonial) (39%).
- More public art (36%).

Important Street Improvements

- More even footpaths (72%).
- More pedestrian friendly crossings (48%).
- Wider footpaths (36%).
- Safer bike lanes (34%).
- Quieter streets (29%).
- Slower vehicular movement (27%).

ONE Idea to Make Streets More User-friendly, Welcoming and Attractive

- More trees (14%).
- More parking (9%).
- Improved pedestrian amenity through footpath improvements and lighting (7%).
- Improved bike safety and amenity (5%) .

ONE Idea to Make Streets Safer and More Accessible

- Improved bike safety (12%).
- Improved pedestrian amenity (10%).
- More car parking (7.5%).
- Improved lighting (6%).

Imagine How Streets Within the Study Area May Look In the Future

- Gheringhap St could look like Malop St.
- Mercer St could become more like Malop St.
- Bayley St could become more like Little Malop St.

Landscape Analysis, Opportunities and Constraints

Barangaroo South
Sydney, NSW, Australia



2.1 Transport

Mercer and Gheringhap Streets form two of the main movement corridors within central Geelong, catering to public transport, private vehicle and active transport users.

With additional pressures from increasing population and associated vehicle use, a balance is required between achieving additional opportunities to create place within the streetscape while catering to existing vehicle movement and parking. Achieving a balance between these competing factors will be fundamental to any proposed change to the status quo.

Of key importance are the following objectives:

- Consideration of the Department of Transport (DoT) movement hierarchy of people, then cyclists, public transport and private vehicles in urban areas contained within their Movement and Place strategy.
- Achieving a balance between the competing spatial needs of footpaths, existing parking and additional cycling infrastructure when seeking opportunities to increase the public realm of the street.
- Minimising any perceptions of loss of parking or amenity until the appropriate supporting studies are in place, and infrastructure identified.

2.1.1 Parking

Analysis

There is extensive on-street parking within and immediately surrounding the study areas. There are numerous private and public off-street parking facilities, located mainly at-grade.

The Building Better Bike Connections project supported the retention of on-street parking capacity.

Further studies should determine the future numbers and locations of parking to meet anticipated demand for Central Geelong - a draft parking strategy for the City of Greater Geelong is soon to be released to guide this.

Opportunities

Some of the surrounding streets may allow the redistribution of existing parking numbers within the study area.

Further studies will provide more guidance in regards to maintaining parking numbers, especially along Gheringhap Street.

2.1.2 Public Transport

Analysis

Mercer and Gheringhap Streets both play a part in the overall public transport network, particularly around public transport access to Geelong Station.

The Masterplan will need to incorporate the DoT operational requirements of buses on Mercer Street, and if required on Gheringhap Street.

Opportunities

Future bus requirements need to be considered.

Constraints

The city-wide focus on Gheringhap Street being a key active transport corridor reduces its role and capacity to cater to public transport.

Spatial limitations along Mercer Street will require lane sharing to be maintained for buses.

2.1.3 Cycling

Analysis

Gheringhap Street is designated as a DoT Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC) - C2 category. Separated bike lanes are already implemented for Gheringhap Street as part of the Building Better Bike Connections project but could be improved.

Mercer Street is on the Principal Bike Network (PBN) but bike lanes have incomplete connections, nor physical separation.

Opportunities

Widen existing bike lanes and implement physical separation for bikes on Gheringhap Street to address SCC requirements.

Mercer Street to integrate safer, separated bike lanes.

Constraints

Existing trees, especially along Mercer Street are a constraint to a revised street layout.

Existing angled parking and street trees on Gheringhap Street limits opportunity to establish separated bike lanes.



Figure 2.1 Current parking locations and types surrounding the study area



Figure 2.2 Current public transport within the study area



Figure 2.3 Current cycling provisions within the study area

2.2 Sustainability

Sustainability and environmental performance within the urban environment underpin all new development within central Geelong.

The Mercer and Gheringhap Street Streetscape Masterplan offers many opportunities to increase tree canopy, to improve habitat, to provide shade and reduce Urban Heat Island impacts. New tree planting will increase species diversity and improve resilience and biodiversity. The Masterplan will also provide recommendations on improving the movement and treatment of stormwater through the streets.

The Masterplan outlines particular selection of species that can improve resilience, place character and urban amenity.

Of key importance are the following Council objectives:

- Urban tree canopy coverage target of 25%, and where possible higher.
- Increased diversity of the planting palette to increase resilience in the changing climate.
- Transforming streets into catchments that can actively detain and treat stormwater run-off.

2.2.1 Tree Canopy Coverage

Analysis

Street trees are sporadically located along these two main roads. Some sections along Mercer Street have the best coverage (up to 30%), but coverage is largely inconsistent. Significant parts of Gheringhap Street have little canopy cover (less than 10%). Few sections currently meet Urban Forest targets of 25% tree canopy coverage.

Opportunities

A refresh of the street cross sections increasing available space for trees and increasing canopy coverage.

Constraints

Existing overhead and underground services, competing demands for available space within cross section, and maintaining parking lane sight lines, limit opportunities.



Figure 2.4 Extent of tree canopy coverage.

2.2.2 Ecology / Diversity of Planting

Analysis

Currently there is a limited range of tree species being used along both Mercer and Gheringhap Streets. There is very little other planting, generally limited to functional monoculture planting in WSUD beds.

Opportunities

Continue the approach developed through the Geelong Green Spine project and apply to areas of landscape treatment along both roads. Use a range of species of trees and shrubs to increase diversity of both streets.

Constraints

Sufficient range of suitable species to not overly dominate species proportions, incorporation into maintenance and management regimes and irrigation requirements.



Figure 2.5 Diversity of planting types / species.

2.2.3 Water

Analysis

Considerable parts of the Masterplan study area are impacted by overland flow, especially in periods of prolonged rainfall. Limited measures are in place to use Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) to control and treat stormwater run-off

Opportunities

The proposed streetscape solutions can take water detention and treatment into consideration in order to reduce the impacts of flooding, and improve water quality before it reaches the coast through implementation of WSUD.

Constraints

Road profiles will have limited ability to be modified to redirect stormwater run-off. Capacity of detention will be restricted by the surface area and underlying volume. Underground services will further limit areas of detention and treatment.

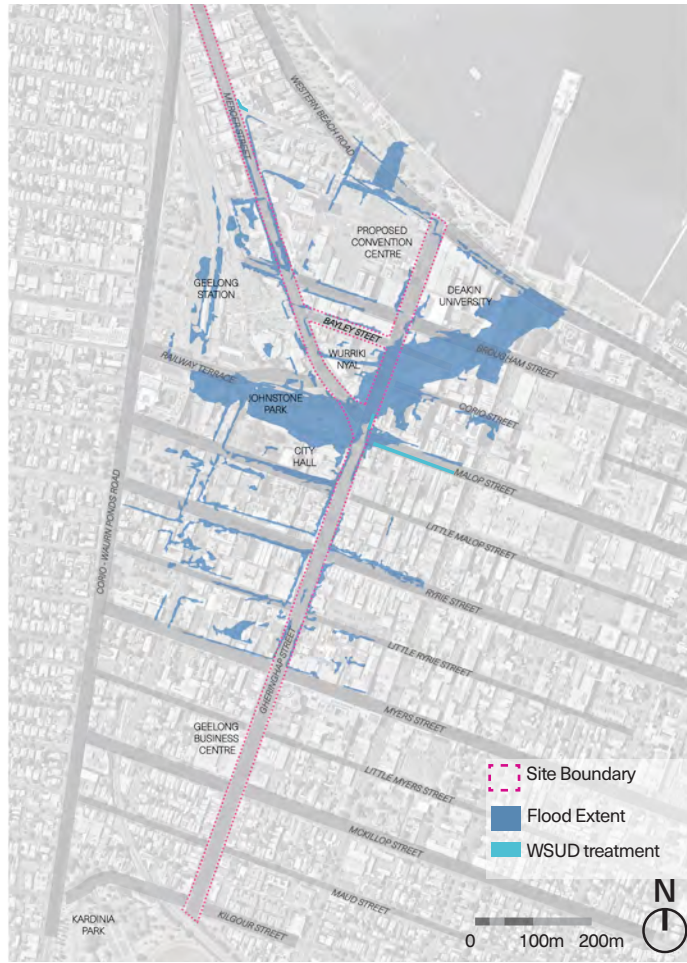


Figure 2.6 Extent of flood zone.

2.3 Cultural Heritage

There is an increasing understanding around, and celebration of, the many layers of culture that have contributed to Geelong's history.

From the first steps of the traditional owners of the land, to the early settlers, the industrial pioneers and the civic and cultural institutions that have contributed to Geelong becoming UNESCO City of Design. There is a rich history that requires recognition, integration and celebration.

Of key importance are the following objectives:

- The respectful incorporation of First Nations thinking and identity into the use and character of the streets.
- The representation of and potential fusion of the many layers of history to further enrich the culture of Geelong.
- The provision of places to engage with history through art, interpretation, design and narrative.

2.3.1 First Nations People

Analysis

Gheringhap Street provides a visual and spatial connection between Geelong and surrounding landscape features of importance to the Wadawurrung community.

A number of identified sites of indigenous significance occur within the study area.

Opportunities

Integration of the First Nations People's history through education, representation, and showcasing the indigenous landscape planting and materials.

Constraints

Cultural limitations on stories able to be revealed.

2.3.2 Civic

Analysis

The area near the intersection of Gheringhap and Mercer Streets houses a significant number of civic and cultural institutions within Geelong. This consolidation provides a strong precinct character to create the civic heart of Geelong.

Opportunities

Consolidate the physical connection between key existing and future civic destinations, particularly along the Gheringhap Street spine.

Constraints

Loss of the General Post Office from core has resulted in dilution of pedestrian activity. This may result in increased vehicular movements between dispersed civic sites.

2.3.3 Social / Cultural

Analysis

Complementing civic institutions is the prevalence of social and cultural facilities, forming a cultural heart that supports creative, educational and hospitality sectors.

Opportunities

Increasing streetscape opportunities for formalised and informal social gathering and outdoor dining will strengthen this precinct.

Constraints

Available space for expansion will be at 'expense' of road carriageway and parking capacity.



Figure 2.7 Existing First Nations' cultural sensitive sites.



Figure 2.8 Existing and proposed civic spaces.



Figure 2.9 Existing and proposed social and cultural locations.

2.4 Shading and Amenity

Streets should create special places to support life in the city. The adjacent public and private realm can also influence the quality of the place and provide comfort to its users.

The scale of the adjacent buildings, and how they impact the public realm determine how attractive, safe and sheltered streets feel. Good quality urban and architectural outcomes have a great influence on the overall success of the street.

Of key importance are the following objectives:

- Increase and where possible connect overhead canopy coverage to provide shade and shelter for pedestrians.
- Use the increased tree canopy and ground cover planting to help connect fragmented open space to create urban habitat and comfortable microclimates.
- Recommend that built form guidelines be adopted to increase street canopy and ground floor activation. Ensure positive contribution to the street through activation, materials, canopies and areas of public gathering.

2.4.1 Shading / Built Form Canopy

Analysis

Intermittent shade and shelter from built canopy is provided along Mercer Street footpaths as amenity for pedestrians. Dispersed shade and shelter occurs along Gheringhap Street.

Opportunities

Ratify the Framework plan so that the draft guidelines can be incorporated into the Planning Scheme. Implement canopy coverage requirements in built form guidelines to provide a more consistent and climatically comfortable experience for pedestrians.

Constraints

Hard to retrofit canopy to existing / heritage buildings. Any buildings yet to be approved in planning will require planning mechanism to enforce incorporation of canopies. New built canopies may impact on existing tree canopy.



Figure 2.10 Current streetscape shading.

2.4.2 Open Space

Analysis

Limited public open space exists within proximity to the streets, with Johnston Park being the largest central open space, with the waterfront parks and Kardinia Park anchoring the northern and southern ends. Other open space is scattered along both streets, as are areas of improved streetscape.

Opportunities

Increase linkages between areas of open space. Key opportunity for linear street park along Gheringhap Street.

Constraints

Existing built form and infrastructure limits opportunities new open space to be provided.



Figure 2.11 Types of open space present.

2.4.3 Proposed Urban Transformation

Analysis

Mercer Street is undergoing considerable transformation, especially in the northern and central sections.

Opportunities

New development provides opportunities for improved public realm outcomes.

Constraints

Some developments already approved may not accommodate desired changes to streetscapes.

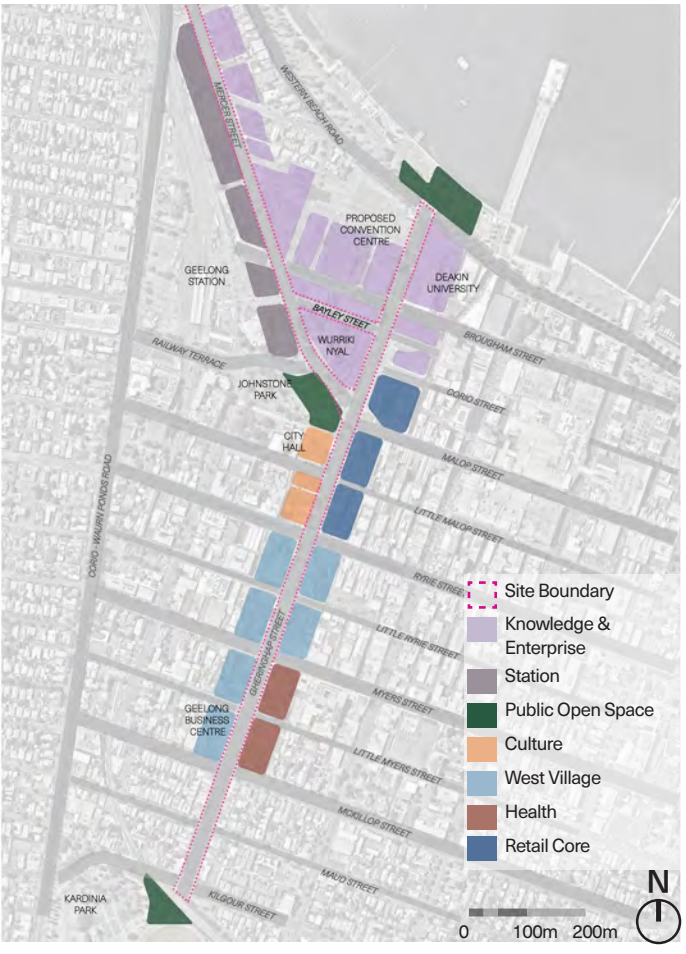


Figure 2.12 Proposed urban transformation and current / projected building use.