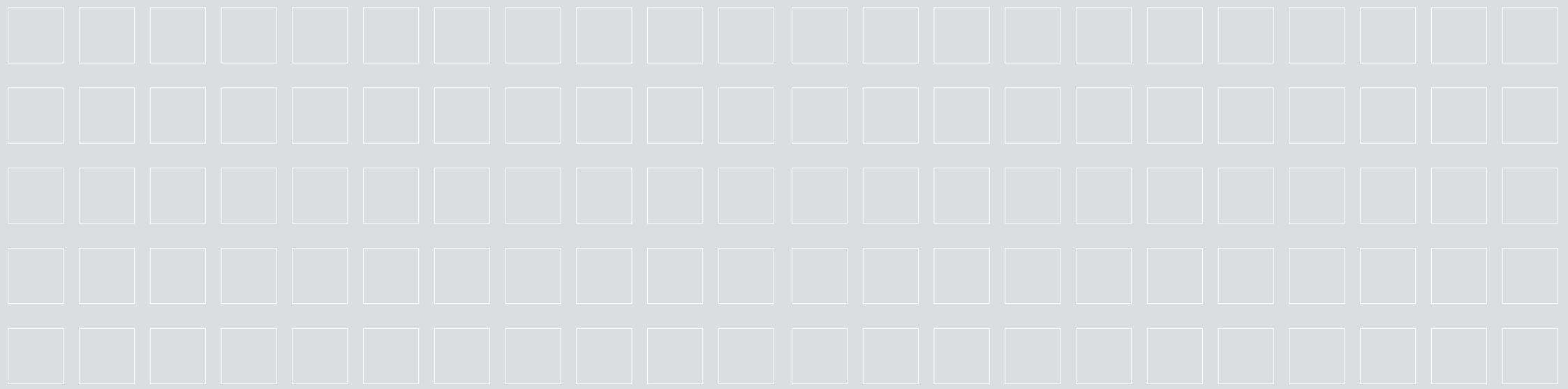


# Iara town centre

Urban design framework

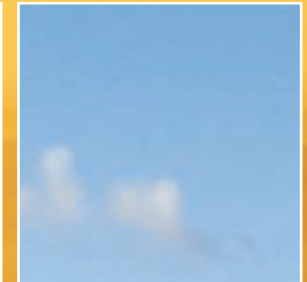
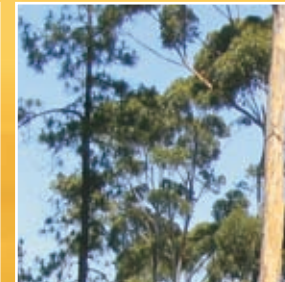


MARCH 2006

DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES

vol 1

urban design framework

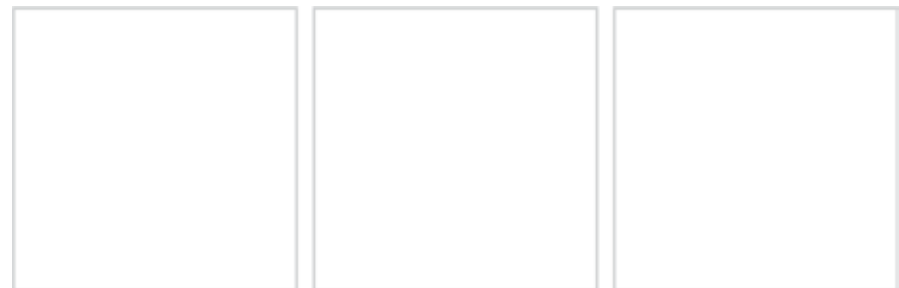


# **preface**

## PREFACE

This document is Volume 1 of an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the town centre of Lara. It has been prepared by a team lead by David Lock Associates in association with Essential Economics, Urban Edge Landscape Architecture and TTM Consulting on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong. Volume 1 outlines a comprehensive strategy to improve the area for its local residents, businesses and visitors. Volume 2 illustrates a series of specific physical proposals designed to implement the UDF.

The proposals contained in this document have been developed through extensive formal and informal consultation with the community and their representatives, traders, property owners, transport providers and other key stakeholders.



# introduction

## 1.1 | WHAT IS AN URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK?

UDF's are strategic planning tools that set out an integrated design vision for the desired future development of places by translating broad aims into practical urban design actions. UDF recommendations are translated into a series of actions that include public improvements works, design and development guidelines and new land use zones.

The value of UDF's is recognised by Councils as an essential step towards achieving the best long term outcomes that reflect community aspirations while providing a catalyst for private investment. In general, benefits include improved amenity, vitality and attractiveness along with measurable outcomes such as increased property values, greater visitation levels, new private investment, reduced crime and improved safety.

### 1.1.1 | PRIDE OF PLACE

This project was funded by the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Pride of Place program, which *"uses urban design initiatives to develop towns and cities as preferred places to live and work, supporting healthy communities and attracting investment."*<sup>1</sup>

Pride of Place seeks to support urban design interventions that create environments in which their communities can take pride in.

A primary aim of the UDF is to determine how the project area, including The Centreway, the station and the bowling club, should be developed to meet the changing needs of the Lara community in the future.

**"The aim of developing an Urban Design Framework for the activity centre is to strengthen its role by allowing it to expand and diversify."**

City of Greater Geelong, Consultant Services  
– Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework,  
2004

<sup>1</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Pride of Place  
– An Urban Design Program for Victoria Application Form and Guidelines, Department of Infrastructure, 2000

## 1.2 | WHY DOES THE LARA TOWN CENTRE NEED A UDF?

Lara is a satellite township of Geelong, located to the north east of Geelong's Central Activities District. It has many highly valued attributes, identified in greater detail within the body of this report. These include its strong semi-rural qualities and its location in proximity to both Geelong and Melbourne. The UDF is critical to the successful improvement of the town centre, ensuring that the inherent qualities that draw people to live in Lara are enhanced and not in any way diminished.

The Lara Structure Plan (2005) highlights a strong need for the development of a UDF for the Lara Town Centre. The main catalyst identified in this and other council documents is the pressure on Lara to grow to accommodate the increasing number of people who wish to enjoy a semi rural lifestyle while still being able to commute to work. This trend has resulted in an increase in Lara's population. This has resulted in an inability to satisfactorily meet the needs of residents due to a shortfall in facilities and services and residential land.

A high level of escape expenditure is being experienced due to inability to service the existing community. Compounding this problem is a perceived lack of developable land in the town centre to allow for its growth to cope with this increasing retail demand.

Therefore the central issue to be resolved by the UDF is how to grow the town centre appropriately, taking into account the changing needs and aspirations of the Lara Community, traders and stakeholders.

This document aims to facilitate appropriate growth in response to these changing needs and aspirations.

**“It is a long held planning principle that townships should have a strong and vibrant town centre as the basis for their shopping and community needs. In this regard, the Structure Plan confirms the primacy of The Centreway as the town centre and major retail precinct of Lara”**

City of Greater Geelong, Lara Structure Plan Public Discussion Document, 2004

### 1.2.1 | THE PROJECT GOALS

The goals that are to be achieved are specified in the study brief. These are to:

- Strengthen the role of The Centreway as the primary activity centre for Lara
- Provide for a multifunctional, vibrant centre that is a focus for goods, services and social interaction
- Provide for an efficient and functional expansion of the centre
- Consider the parking needs of an expanded centre and the need for a council car park as the focus for a parking precinct plan
- Provide opportunities for the creation of positive pedestrian spaces

### 1.3 | WHAT DOES THE UDF DO?

The Lara Town Centre UDF provides strategic direction for the future growth of the Lara Town Centre. In particular the UDF presents strategies and implementation plans that coordinate change in such a way that the following is assured:-

- Lara Town Centre will meet the needs of existing and future residents more effectively
- Growth will occur in an appropriate manner according to the needs and aspirations of the Lara community

**“The Centreway is in a location surrounded by areas of public open space, undeveloped St Laurence Park land, unused road reserves and in proximity to the Lara Railway Station. Unlike many other township town centres this set of circumstances presents a unique opportunity to explore for the betterment of the town.”**

City of Greater Geelong, Lara Structure Plan Public Discussion Document, 2004

## 1.4 | HOW WAS THE UDF PREPARED

The Lara Town Centre UDF was commissioned in April 2004 by the City of Greater Geelong. It was prepared by a consultant team comprising of urban designers, traffic engineers, retail and economic analysts and landscape architects.

### 1.4.1 | THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation program was developed to maximize community and stakeholder input into the project and to prevent a long winded process that lost momentum and community interest. The following is a summary of the consultation process which occurred in two stages-

**Stage 1** provided the consultants with invaluable input from residents and stakeholders, including resident's perceived strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats in Lara.

With an abundance of feedback from the Lara community and key stakeholders, the design team developed concepts for the town centre based on the feedback gathered during Stage 1 and coupled with site audit and analysis work.

**Stage 2** was the presentation of the proposed plan for Lara. This plan was presented in a newspaper lift out and left on public display for residents to see at Safeway, in the centre of town, for approximately 4 weeks from 31st July to 25th August 2004.

During that time the consultants held a street stall on 31st July between 10am and 1pm so people had an opportunity to ask questions about the plan. The street stall was advertised in the Geelong Advertiser on 24th July.

Following the Public Display period a public information session was held for residents and stakeholders in Lara on 25 August 2004 at Lara Lake Primary School starting at 7pm. Approximately 83 residents and stakeholders attended this meeting.

At this meeting the consultant project manager presented the project detailing why design decisions were made. Question time at the end provided people with an opportunity to receive further explanation on issues they were unclear. Residents and stakeholders were encouraged to put any concerns they had in writing before the end of the public comment period which was finalised on the 2nd September 2004.

A number of key stakeholders were given the opportunity to view and comment on the plans during 1 on 1 meetings. Stakeholders who were consulted included representatives from DSE - Crown Land Management, Regional Representatives, DOI - Public Transport Division, St Lawrence Park, VicTrack, VicRoads and representatives of significant land holdings in the project area.

Comments received during this period were then incorporated into draft UDF before it was finalised.

The City of Greater Geelong released the final draft UDF for a further 4 week public comment period in November 2005. Eight submissions were received including in principle support from Vic Track and the Minister for Planning (as the Minister responsible for Crown land and planning issues). The Final UDF was adopted by Council at its meeting on 14 March 2006.

**“For too long Urban Design was something done to communities rather than with communities”**

Jon Rouse, Improving Urban Design Skills, Urban Design Quarterly, Autumn 2001, Issue 80, p.16

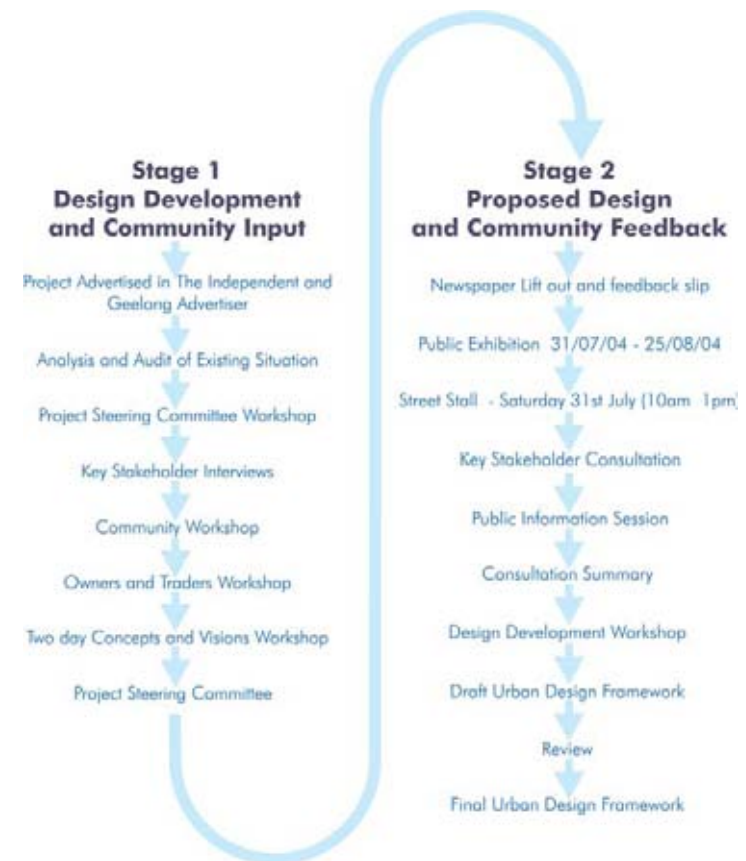


Figure 1.4.1 a The Consultation Process

## 1.5 | THE ISSUES

### 1.5.1 | STUDY BRIEF ISSUES

The issues that the study must address are clearly identified by the study brief:

- The need to strengthen the role of The Centreway activity centre rather than allow another supermarket-based centre to establish in Lara to service the requirements of the local population
- Providing for a new library and community centre in Lara
- Traffic management through and around the centre & road and pedestrian connections to the station
- Maintaining good visual and physical connections to Austin Park which is a defining element of the activity centre
- Car parking requirements for an expanded centre

### 1.5.2 | ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH AUDIT AND ANALYSIS

The following issues relating to the town centre were identified through a number of different sources, including the audit and analysis stage as part of this project, stakeholder consultation, and the Lara Draft Structure Plan. They are highlighted here as requiring the greatest attention in the UDF:

- The need for the centre to physically grow and expand the retail offer to cater for current and future needs in its current position. The Draft Structure Plan identifies that the need for additional retail floorspace should be catered for as part of the existing town centre. "As there is currently no room, the options for expanding and improving the town centre need to be investigated. The alternative is a centre established elsewhere in the town, which would have the effect of fracturing the services provided in the town and possibly leading to a run-down Centreway. This is not a desirable outcome so the focus is on how to manage bringing about a larger Centreway."<sup>1</sup>
- The expected population increase for Lara. Part 5.2 of the Draft Structure Plan estimates the permanent population as at June 2003 as 9,958, and 5.3 Expected Population states "if all of the recommended locations for residential rezoning develop to their potential, the overall Lara Population will reach approximately 13,500 persons. According to the Lara Commercial Issues Paper, the town centre currently serves a large area estimated at 13,790 people, which consists of people from the surrounding areas possibly including Anakie, Little River and Avalon. The trade area population and visitors is growing constantly, and is expected to grow by 15% to 15,890 by 2011<sup>2</sup>.
- The very high escape expenditure of 75% is due to the limited goods and services that the town centre can provide, consequently residents have to travel outside Lara for many basic retail needs such as clothing and many food and grocery items as the current town centre simply serves basic convenience retail needs.
- A need for better car parking within the centre
- The lack of a permanent library – Lara has a mobile library service which although highly patronised, is limited in the range and frequency of visits. The Draft Structure Plan states as an action, to "include the search for a site (for a permanent library in Lara) as part of the urban design framework for the expanded Centreway."<sup>3</sup>
- Lara doesn't have a major focus or 'heart' like a town square.
- Truck traffic through the centre, which was raised as a major concern by residents and businesses in the area. The 'management' of truck traffic is beyond the scope of this UDF. Other council studies including the Lara Transport Management Plan are considering strategic truck traffic issues in the locality.

<sup>1</sup> Draft Lara Structure Plan, City of Greater Geelong, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Lara Commercial Issues Paper, Essential Economics, June 2004

<sup>3</sup> Draft Lara Structure Plan, City of Greater Geelong, 2003

## 1.6 | CREDITS

The Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework has been produced by David Lock Associates in conjunction with:

- TTM Consulting
- Urban Edge Landscape Architects
- Essential Economics
- The Project Steering Committee comprised of the following representatives:
  - City of Greater Geelong – Councillor Tony Ansett
  - Lara Bowling Club – Ralph Shanahan
  - Lara Community Centre – Vivian Fry, Rodney Jackson
  - Lara Police – Finlay Beams
  - Lara Traders – Jo Runner, Dianne Saiiba
  - St Laurence Community Services – Michelle Plane
  - Lara Residents – Carol Allen, Lesley Archer, Sera Auciello, Lyn Myers, Ken Simons

The UDF was funded by the Victorian Government's Pride of Place Program and was prepared under the guidance of the City of Greater Geelong's Strategic Planning unit.

## 1.7 | REPORT STRUCTURE

The report is designed to be detached into the following self-contained chapters. The chapters are contained within two volumes. Volume One comprises:

### 2 The Place – A Profile

What Lara Town Centre is like now

This chapter introduces the key factors that will influence the future of the area: its location; geographical, economic and demographic context; key industry sector profiles and positions; municipal vision; and its perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### 3 The Vision

What Lara Town Centre could be like in the future

This chapter is intended to raise aspirations by establishing a positive, yet achievable, goal for the area and for all those who will influence its future.

### 4 Aims and Strategies

How the vision for Lara Town Centre can be achieved

This chapter outlines a series of strategies to facilitate the realisation of the vision, incorporating analysis of the key influences and forming a rationale for the more detailed proposals that follow.

### 5 The Proposal

What specific actions can be taken to accomplish the strategies

This chapter summarises the specific public works and other Council actions designed to accomplish the strategies.

Note: The detailed proposals forms a separate volume of the report – Volume 2

### 6 The Implementation Strategy

How the proposals can be implemented

This chapter outlines a program of Council actions, incorporating a project management approach and funding mechanisms.

# the place - a profile

## 2.0 | THE PLACE - A PROFILE

### 2.1 | INTRODUCTION

This chapter constitutes the first stage in the development of the UDF. It provides a clear understanding of what kind of town Lara is and where it is currently positioned. It aims to:

- Describe the existing urban context and qualities within the town centre of Lara
- Highlight the key urban design influences which are found in the existing town centre
- Gain an understanding of where, how, and to what extent development should be proposed
- Equip the consultants with the knowledge/tools required to design possible solutions to the issue of expanding the town centre
- Identify existing and potential issues and constraints within the town centre and environs

The development of this profile of Lara has involved an audit and analysis, stakeholder consultation and a review of statistical and other factual information - such as the CoGG Municipal Strategic Statement, Geelong Regional Strategic Plan (G21), Lara Structure Plan, COGG Study of Open Space Networks and the Biodiversity Strategy.

The profile provides a picture of the city as it is and how it is changing. It is structured under the following headings:

- Where is the study area?
- What does the study area look like?
- Urban Form
- The Planning Context
- The Land Use Context
- The Economic Context
- Movement
- Landscape and Streetscape Character
- Issues and Constraints
- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the town centre?



## 2.2 | WHERE IS THE STUDY AREA? - GEOGRAPICAL CONTEXT

Lara is located between Geelong and Melbourne. It is a commuter township, with road and rail access to both Geelong (~15km or 20 mins) and Melbourne (~75 km or 40 mins). Lara is a destination in itself, rather than a town which is passed through, as it is located off the highway. Figure 2.2a overleaf illustrates Lara's context and its proximity to Geelong and Melbourne.

Some key destinations in and around Lara include the You Yangs Regional Park, Serendip Wildlife Sanctuary, Elcho Park golf course and recreation reserve, Hovells Creek, and Avalon Airport which is the new destination for cut price domestic air travel. Avalon's recent and upcoming rapid expansion indicate that Avalon will be highly patronised.

The town centre is located just to the west of the Princes Freeway. It is comprised of one main shopping street, The Centreway; comprising a range of commercial land uses.

<sup>1</sup> Draft Lara Structure Plan 2003

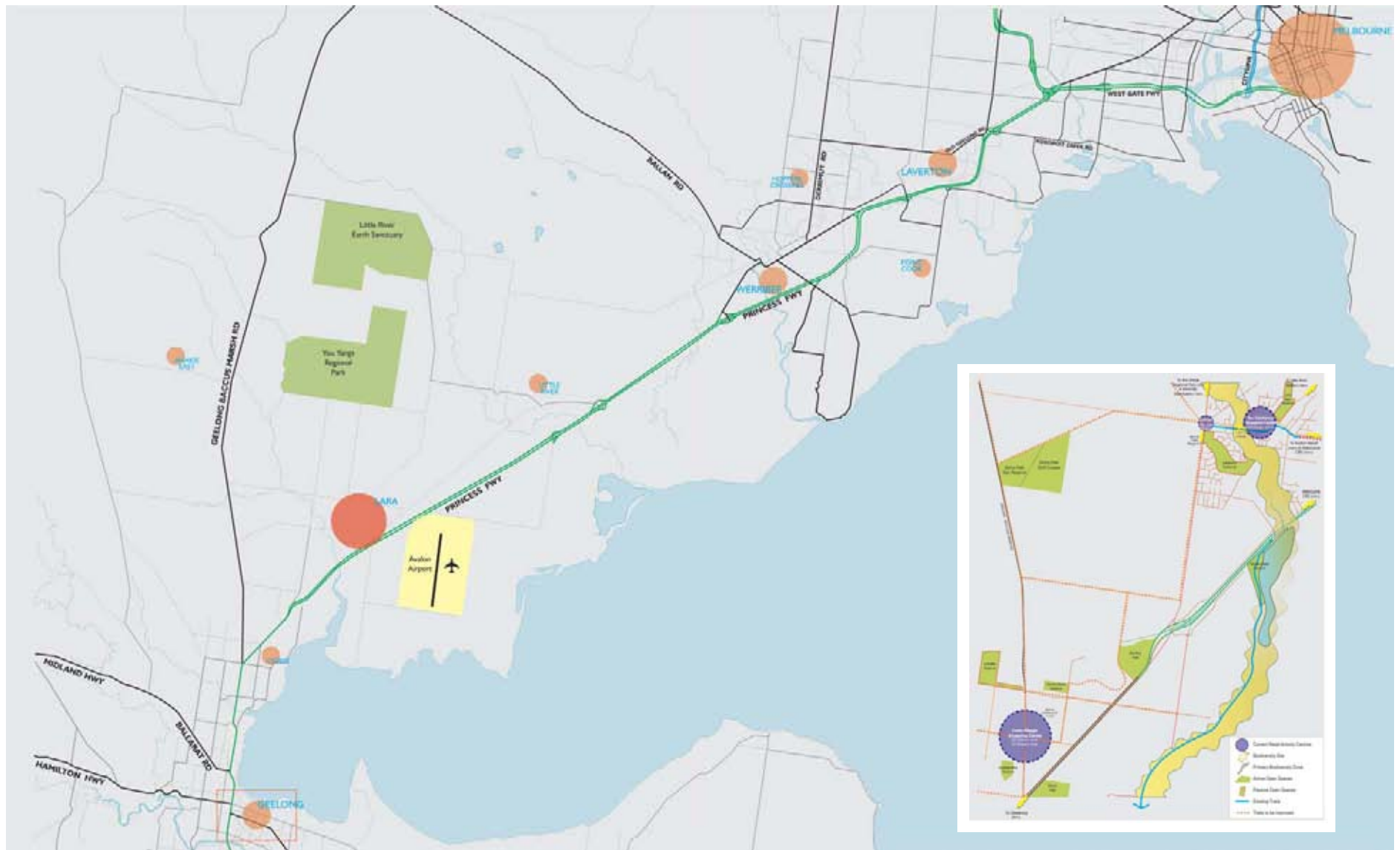


Figure 2.2a Lara Regional Context Plan

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## **2.3** | **WHAT DOES THE STUDY AREA LOOK LIKE**

The following Figures (2.3a Locality Photographic Analysis and 2.3b Town Centre Photographic Analysis) illustrate what the study area looks like and identifies – in some circumstances – the potential for change and opportunities that are presented.

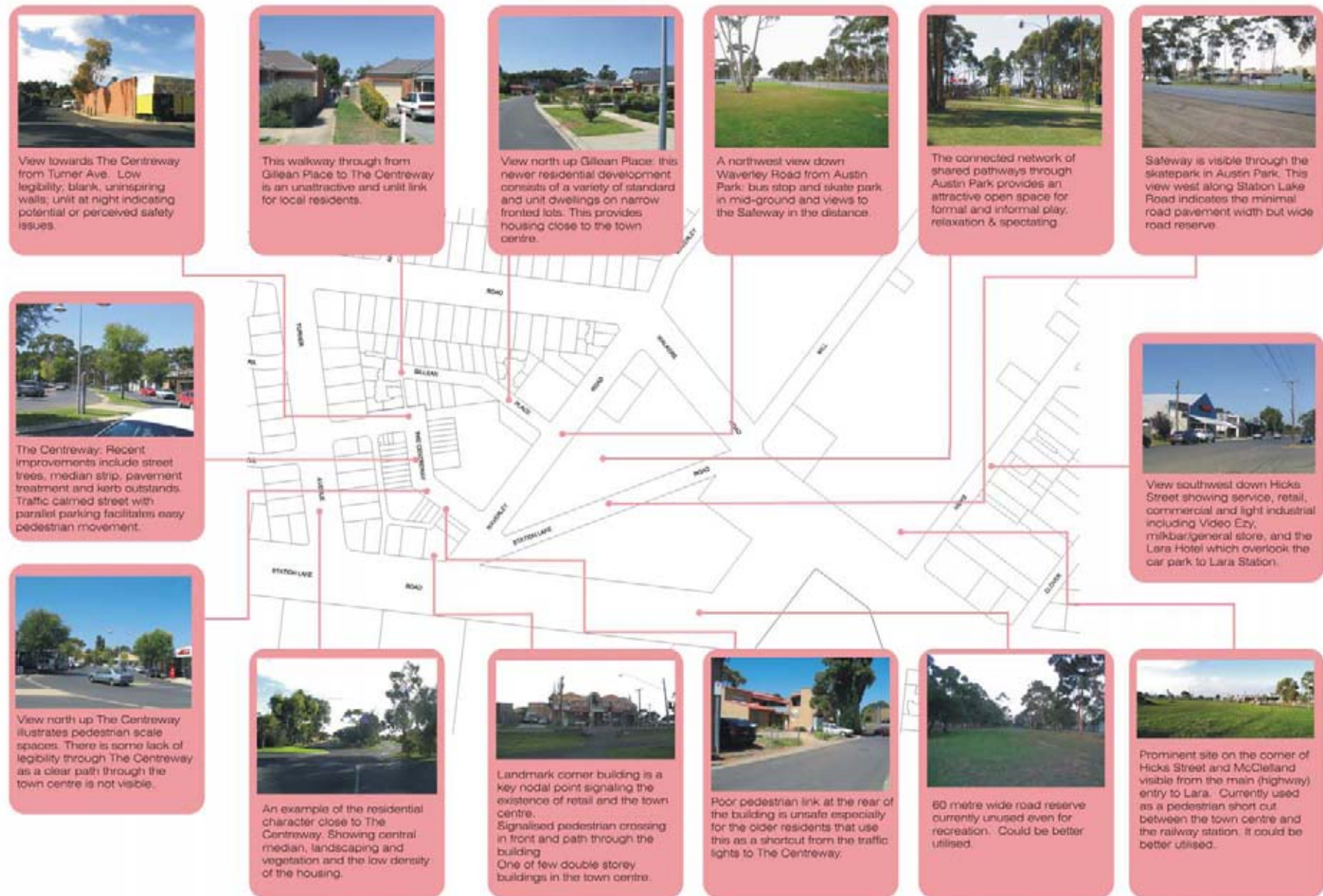


Figure 2.3a Locality Photographic Analysis

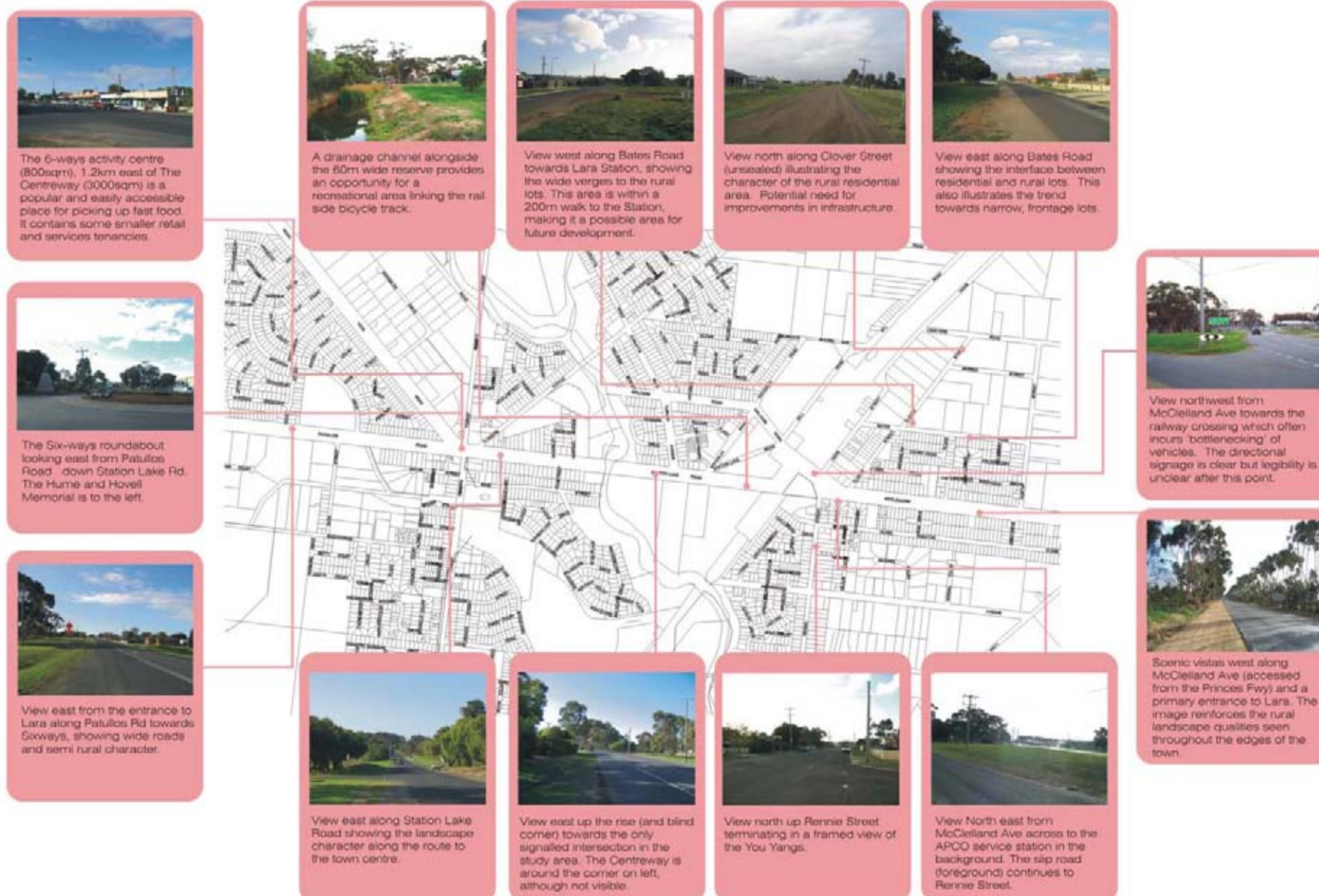


Figure 2.3b Town Centre Photographic Analysis

### 2.3.1 | THE TOWN CENTRE ENTRANCES

There are three main entry points to Lara, the first is via the Freeway, the second via Patullos Road and the third is from Forest Road South. From the freeway, Lara is entered via McClelland Avenue which is lined with tall gums. The speed limits change from 80kph down to 60 where it enters the residential area. Signage to the town centre is limited. Driving into the town centre along McClelland Avenue a threshold is reached at the railway line. At this point, the town centre is still not clearly visible. There are some views through to The Centreway through Austin Park but this is heavily treed and quite a distance. Entry into The Centreway itself is via a slip lane off Station Lake Road or via Walkers Road into Waverley Road.



Iconic corner building at 1-3 Waverley Road viewed from Station Lake Road before the Centreway



Entry to Lara off the Princes Freeway, viewed from McClelland Avenue

The other entry is from Patullos Road, past The Sixways strip shopping area. This area is predominantly residential with larger blocks and a speed limit of 80kmh until just before the 6 ways where it becomes 60kph. Past the shopping area, Station Lake Road has very wide verges and is landscaped with grass and peppercorn trees. This narrows at the bridge over Hovells Creek. The first vision of the centre is at the corner where a double storey building provides somewhat of an iconic marker (1-3 Waverley Road).

There is a signalled pedestrian crossing at the double storey building where the road veers to the left.

## 2.4 | URBAN FORM

Figure 2.4a below illustrates the built form pattern and scale of buildings in Lara. The built form is typical of many country towns with the majority of buildings being single storey with only four double storey buildings around the centre. Visual landmarks indicated include the iconic corner building at 1-3 Waverley Road, the Safeway building with large verandahed canopy, the APCO service station, the RSL and the Lara Hotel. The APCO is directly visible from The Centreway and blocks visual access to the railway station.

Analysis of the plan highlights the split nature of the town centre with the railway line and open spaces creating two distinct parts to the town.



Figure 2.4a Urban Form Diagram

## **2.5 | THE PLANNING CONTEXT**

To ensure that the proposals generated can be successfully implemented within the planning scheme, it is necessary to understand the current planning context, including relevant zoning and overlays.

### **2.5.1 | MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT (MSS)**

The MSS identifies Lara as an urban growth location for the City of Geelong. Lara's location between Geelong and Melbourne, and its accessibility by road and rail underpin the growing demand for residential opportunities in Lara. The MSS identifies the opportunities and constraints on residential development in Lara:-

“ To cater for high levels of demand in Lara, existing rural living zonings closest to the township centre are to be investigated for reconsolidation for convention residential development. Lara is however subject to a range of physical constraints, both natural and man-made, which limit the opportunities and directions for growth. With its proximity to both Melbourne and Geelong, Lara has a key role in Council's overall strategy. “

### **2.5.2 | LARA STRUCTURE PLAN**

Lara has been adopted by Council as a growth centre in its Urban Growth Strategy. A Structure Plan for Lara was prepared by the City of Greater Geelong during 2003 / 2004 and was adopted by council at its meeting on 28th June 2005. A key objective in the Structure Plan which supports this growth is as follows;

“ To reinforce the Centreway Shopping Centre as the primary commercial and shopping centre in Lara by identifying the areas for expansion to accommodate additional retail floorspace to meet the needs of a growing population whilst optimizing community accessibility and convenience. “

### 2.5.3 | ZONING

Figure 2.5.3a illustrates the zones of Lara as they are at present. Lara is surrounded by an extensive rural hinterland of Rural zoned land. Closer to the town centre are areas defined as Rural Living Zone and Low Density Residential. The centre of Lara is mainly comprised of residential zoned land. In and around the centre there is significant amounts of open space zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone. The Centreway shopping area is zoned Business 1, with the area between Hicks and Clover Streets zoned Business 4. This area fronts on to the car park of the Lara Railway Station and therefore is serviced by passing trade. The area is characterised as mixed use with a pub, general store, car servicing, karate, and some smaller offices and businesses. There is also a Video Ezy which is housed in a large warehouse structure. It has been found that a number of these businesses are located in this area due to the high levels of tenancy in The Centreway meaning no opportunity to locate in the main retail area. This is also shown in and around Lara where particularly medical facilities have been forced to locate out of the centre in converted houses.

There is only one area within the centre of Lara which has a heritage overlay. This is the former Corio Shire Hall (now RSL building) located at 2 Rennie Street. The main restriction to this building is external paint controls. There are no outbuildings or tree controls which apply.



2.7 | THE LAND USES

Figure 2.7a identifies the major land uses in and around the town centre. These form a number of distinct precincts within the locality of the Lara town centre. They are described as follows:



Figure 2.7a Land Uses

### **Industrial Precinct**

Within the locality of the Lara town centre there are a number of industrial sites. This land is located such that it allows good access to transport infrastructure and employment for those living in the town. The industrial land plays a significant role in the regional employment and development opportunities. Those industries in very close proximity to the town centre may not represent the most efficient use of town centre land.

The Industrial Precinct closest to the town centre is located on Mill Road, opposite the Lara Recreation Reserve. The zoning of this area is PPRZ, Public Park and Recreation Zone and an area of IN1Z Industrial 1 which is occupied by Costa's Grain.

### **Industrial/ Service Precinct**

Within Lara, there is one area zoned B4Z, Business 4 Zone, which comprises of a mix of industrial, retail or office floor space and some residential. This is located in the Hicks Street area, where there is a mix of industrial/service type businesses such as car repairers; retailing, such as the General Store and Video Ezy; and office space located in converted houses. There are also some residential properties intermixed with the businesses, particularly on Clover Street.

### **Aged Care - St Laurence Precinct**

This precinct is a large area located to the south of the town centre, comprising of 42 acres of privately owned semi parkland amongst which is a retirement

village, nursing home, hostel, day centre and day therapy. This area is zoned R1Z, Residential 1 Zone.

### **Residential Edges**

Residential land defines the north, west and southern parts of the town centre, with detached dwellings being the dominant building form. St Laurence Community Services to the south of the town centre consists of a number of independent living units in a campus style development. Residential land to the east of The Centreway is separated from the town centre by recreational land in the form of Austin Park, Lara Recreation Reserve and the railway reserve. The residential land to the east of the town centre is adjacent to a number of businesses in the services/ industry precinct. To the north and north east of the town centre on its outskirts is rural residential land, zoned LDRZ Low Density Residential Zone and comprising large dwellings on large rural lots. To the south east of the R1Z and LDRZ is an area adjoining the Princes Highway zoned RLZ, Rural Living Zone. To the north west and north east, adjoining the R1Z and LDRZ is another larger area zoned RLZ.

Over the recent years a strong demand for continued growth in the residential land market has been experienced. This can be seen in the increased prices of serviced lots on the urban fringe over recent years in the order of 55%. (Urban Development Program Report 2003).

Lara is the only growth area to the north of Geelong and it's current growth figures coupled with available

supply of land suggests that future residential development needs to be planned to ensure demand is met. Forward planning for residential development is provided in the new Lara Structure Plan adopted by council in June 2005.

### **Retail/ Commercial Precinct**

The main retail/ commercial centre of Lara is located in and around The Centreway. The existing Lara Town Centre contains around 3,800m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, including a Safeway supermarket of approximately 1,400m<sup>2</sup>. Other non-retail commercial functions in the Town Centre comprise around 1,400m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, including Australia Post, medical services, three banks and other professional services. This precinct is zoned B1Z, Business 1 Zone.

### **Community/Health**

Within Lara, there are a number of community and health facilities. The Community Centre is located on Waverley Road opposite Austin Park and the kindergarten. There is a maternal and health care facility located within Austin Park on the corner of Waverley and Walker Roads. The Community Centre site is zoned R1Z residential one, whilst the facilities located on Austin Park are zoned PPRZ, public park and recreation zone.

### **Open Space/Recreation Precinct**

There is a significant area of recreational and open space in close proximity to the town centre. This includes Austin Park, the site of the Lara Bowling Club and Lara Recreation Reserve. Austin Park includes a skate park, children's playground, and public toilets. Austin Park is a triangular shaped parcel of land. Significant parts of the land are underutilised because of the shape of the parcels (acute areas of land bounded by busy roads) and the extent and quality of the landscape (significant stands of sugargums with scrubby understorey). The Lara Bowling Club is located on the south side of Station Lake Road and includes two greens, large clubrooms and a car park. The Lara Recreation Reserve is located on Mill Road, has facilities for cricket, netball, football, softball, little league football and also includes the Lara Sporting Club. Austin Park, the Bowling Club and the Lara Recreation Reserve are zoned PPRZ, Public Park and Recreation Zone.

### **Railway Station Precinct**

The railway station precinct is defined by the commuter car park and the station. The station precinct is a small interchange serving both rail and bus movements. It is located on Hicks Street and is comprised of an open-air car park which has a bus shelter and bike parking facilities, and the station proper. The station has two platforms and is accessed via an at grade pedestrian crossing, which is accessed through the car park. This area is zoned PUZ4, Public Use Zone 4.

## 2.8 | THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT

### 2.8.1 | THE ROLE OF LARA'S TOWN CENTRE

The existing town centre contains around 3,800m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, including a Safeway supermarket of approximately 1,400m<sup>2</sup>. Other non-retail commercial functions in the town centre comprise around 1,400m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, including Australia Post, medical services, three banks and other professional services.

The existing role of the Lara Town Centre is simply to serve the basic convenience retail needs of the local population. There is a limited non-food offer and residents in Lara have to travel outside the town for many basic retail needs, such as clothing and many food and grocery items.

The Safeway supermarket is significantly smaller than traditional Safeway stores and is 'limited range' in that it does not stock the full range of items available in other traditional large or 'full line' supermarkets. This limits the ability of the Town Centre to serve the basic weekly grocery requirements of Lara residents.

There are no long term vacancies in the Lara Town Centre. There is ongoing demand for additional commercial space in the town centre, according to discussions with local real estate agents.

Located just outside the town centre is Six Ways, a small strip shopping centre comprising 800m<sup>2</sup> floor space, the main components of which is take away food, but there is also a newsagent, milk bar and some medical facilities (physiotherapy). The centre is almost fully tenanted, with some businesses using two or more shops. Car parking is provided on street, with 35° angle parking.

The major competitor to these two centres is Corio Village Shopping Centre. This is comprised of two full line supermarkets, and a number of anchor tenants including Kmart and Best and Less. There are approximately 70 specialty shops which include bakers, butchers, and a variety of smaller shops amounting to 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-retail and 25,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail which is set to expand to 29,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail. Corio Village has extensive parking, and excellent bus facilities between the Village and Geelong.

Corio Village is approximately 15 minutes drive from the centre of Lara and is well patronised by residents of Lara, Geelong and the surrounding areas.



## 2.8.2 | TRADE AREA

The Lara Town Centre serves an extensive trade area that includes the township and an extensive rural hinterland. The trade area is shown in Figure 2.5 – Lara Trade Area.

The trade area has an estimated 2004 resident population of 13,790 people. This is expected to grow to 15,890 people by 2011. However this does not include factors which may limit development and growth. Beyond 2011 further population growth is expected.

LARA TOWN CENTRE TRADE AREA POPULATION FORECAST 1996 - 2021							
Trade Area Sector	1996	2001	2002	2004	2011	2021	
<b>Population Level</b>							
Primary	0,460	12,700	13,090	13,790	15,890	8,890	
<b>Change Per Annum (No.)</b>							
Primary		450	390	350	300	300	
<b>Average Annual Growth (% pa)</b>							
Primary		4.0%	3.1%	2.6%	2.0%	1.7%	

Figure 2.8.2a ABS Regional Population Growth  
Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment

The Lara Town Centre is relatively small given the trade area catchment it is serving. Given the lack of retail floorspace in the Lara Town Centre and the balance of the township (Six Ways and Station), there is substantial 'escape' spending from the trade area. This means that residents have to travel outside Lara for many basic retail needs such as clothing and many food and grocery items as the current town centre simply serves basic convenience retail needs. The Table below shows that escape spending from the Lara trade area is currently estimated at around 75% of spending by trade area residents on retail.

Although there will always be escape spending from an area such as Lara, this is an extremely high level relative to other similar small towns.

ITEM	2004
Trade Retail Spending (\$m)	126.6
Retail Floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> )	4,760
Retail Sales at Trade Area Shops (\$m)	33.3
Sales to Trade Area Residents (95% of sales)	31.6
Escape Spending	95.0
Escape Spending as a % of Available Spending	75%

**Figure 2.8.2b**  
 Source: MarketInfo; Essential Economics



**Figure 2.8.2c Lara Trade Area**

## 2.9 | MOVEMENT

### 2.9.1 | MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

The Lara Movement Analysis plan illustrates the significant movement characteristics of the town centre.

Figure 2.9.1a Lara Movement Analysis plan below illustrates the lack of good pedestrian links between The Centreway and the railway station with pedestrians having to cross a large expanse of open land unprotected from the elements or walk along inadequately covered and surfaced footpaths. The main barrier to movement is the railway line and crossing. This crossing is boomgated with two lanes of traffic in either direction. There has been upgrading to the pedestrian crossings. This is gated with an island separating the passenger and freight lines. The railway gates are closed for extended periods because The signalised pedestrian crossing on Station Lake Road between St Laurence Park and The Centreway is located on a sharp corner and could possibly lead to pedestrian/vehicular conflict. The round-a-bouts close to the railway crossing often leads to traffic issues as people mistakenly drive into the space that should be kept free for traffic passing through from the side streets and blocking vehicular passage. This is potentially serious with respect of emergency services accessibility.

**Figure 2.9.1 a Movement Analysis**



Figure 2.9.1a Movement Analysis

### **2.9.1.1 | ACCESS TO AVALON AIRPORT**

There is no direct connection between Avalon Airport and the Lara Railway Station, passengers travelling to and from Avalon Airport do so primarily by car, or use a shuttle bus service which is available from Geelong via Corio Village or from the Melbourne CBD via Werribee. There is scope in the future to improve these connections. It should be noted that this could open up possibilities for accommodation services in Lara, such as a motel.

### **2.9.1.2 | BUS ROUTES**

Bus services to and from Lara are quite limited. The route is run by Benders Bus Service. It takes approximately 55 minutes to travel by bus from Lara to the Central Activities Area (CAA) of Geelong. There are twenty-four stops located within Lara and the bus travels via Plantation Road, Bacchus Marsh Road, and Corio Village to Geelong's CAA. There are approximately 10 services to and from Lara during weekdays and two to three on the weekends. The length of time of the journey has been raised as an issue by residents. There is scope in the future to improve these connections.



**Figure 2.9.1.4a Bus Routes**

## 2.9.2 | CURRENT TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The key volumes at present are :-

- Station Lake Road at Hovell Creek : 8,200 vehicles per day
- McClelland Avenue east of Rennie Street : 4,800 vehicles per day

Volumes of other streets are all less than those listed, and are well within the capacity of a single carriageway two lane roadway.

It is estimated that the railway crossing at Walkers Road carries around 7,000 vehicles per day.

## 2.9.3 | KEY NETWORK ISSUES

### 2.9.3.1 | OVERVIEW

- The lack of railway crossings concentrates traffic movement to the Walkers Road crossing.
- The roundabout at the Walkers Road/Mill Road/Station Lake Road (McClelland Avenue intersection is a major focal point for traffic, as is the roundabout on the east side of the rail crossing).
- The service station entrance in combination with the higher traffic volumes on the western side of the railway line make the western roundabout the worst location for traffic queuing and delays in the Lara Town Centre area.
- The Centreway shopping strip has less than convenient access because it is effectively two steps away from Station Lake Road.
- Pedestrian accessibility and amenity around the town centre area are reduced because of poor or absent footpaths and the absence of active street frontages to most of the town centre area other than The Centreway.
- The railway line, Lakeland Wetlands and Hovell Creek all block the movement network and thus reduce pedestrian safety, amenity and connectivity. Consequently most people appear to be attending the town centre in cars.
- The Lara railway station is surrounded by open parking and low activity land uses, creating a poor pedestrian environment.

These factors result in a range of symptoms, many of which have been raised in the public consultation phases of the preparation of the UDF, including :-

- Major traffic delays at the west side roundabout when crossing is closed.
- Concern about emergency services access through the roundabout when the rail crossing is closed.
- Many people are calling for a rail bridge or another crossing.
- Heavy trucks use the town centre area of Station Lake Road.
- Bus stops relate poorly to town centre.
- The Centreway is invisible.
- The right turn out of The Centreway onto Station Lake Road is dangerous and delays can be excessive.
- Residents and contributions to the consultation process also mentioned poor or absent footpaths, lack of parking in the town centre, and lack of the potential of the town centre to grow to provide an additional supermarket and associated carparking.

During the community consultation stages of the UDF project, the following key topics were discussed:

### **Rail Crossing**

The rail crossing has been seen as a major dislocating feature of Lara. Gates are closed for extended periods because of large and frequent trains, and it is evident that this situation will become worse as train frequencies increase.

As well as the delays caused by the gates, the queue on the western or town centre side often extends through the roundabout at the intersection of Mill Road and Walkers Road. In turn, this effectively blocks vehicular passage along Mill Road and Station Lake Road. This is potentially serious in respect of emergency services accessibility.

### **Pedestrian Accessibility**

Crossing Station Lake Road at Waverley Road has been raised as an issue by St Laurence Park management.

There is a reasonably convenient signal controlled pedestrian crossing to service this movement, and Station Lake Road can be always expected to be reasonably busy with traffic. It is our opinion that additional measures to control traffic speed would enhance pedestrian safety and amenity all about the town centre, as would additional signal controlled intersections).

Walk distances across Waverley Road and Station Lake Road are generally longer than desirable, and footpaths are absent or poor in many parts of the town centre area.

### **Parking**

Community opinion is generally that there is insufficient parking in the town centre area. Existing parking appears adequate for most foreseeable peak demands, although it is not likely that shoppers can find a parking space at the front door of the shops they wish to attend.

That is always the case in a reasonably healthy centre, and because expansion allowance is a key focus of the UDF, future conditions for parking are more relevant than current.

### **Loading and Service**

Generally facilities are seen as reasonable, although some open dock areas are present, and there is some interaction between customer vehicles and service vehicles.

### **Trucks**

The speed and volume of truck traffic has been raised as an issue, and is addressed in the Lara Transport Management Plan of July 2002.

Volumes of truck traffic can only be altered by wider road network solutions, outside the scope of the Lara Town Centre UDF. However speed issues can be addressed locally, through appropriate street design and traffic management.

### **Right Turn Movements at APCO**

Community members have raised this as a problem with potential safety ramifications.

We concur about this and suggest referral to the road authority. Possible solutions include banning the right turn into APCO from the east on Walkers Road.

### **Right Turn at The Centreway onto Station Lake Road**

This has also been raised as potentially hazardous. That may be true to some extent, but eliminating the movement is simply going to relocate a similar problem.

## 2.9.4 | CURRENT CAR PARKING PROVISION AND USE

Currently the Lara Town Centre area contains around 5,200 square metres of retail and commercial floor space. There are approximately 243 parking spaces in and around the centre, including private off-street spaces. This is a provision rate of 4.6 spaces per 100 square metres of floor area. Whilst some of the spaces are less than convenient for shoppers the overall provision rate is higher than expected demands for an economically viable town centre. Our observations indicate high utilisation of the parking, which often indicates the need for retail expansion.

## 2.10 | LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape CHARACTER

### 2.10.1 | VEGETATION

There is a strong sense of place created by mature plantings of *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* (Sugar Gum), particularly in McClelland Ave and Austin Park. Note: *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* are not indigenous to the Lara area and are not classed in the *Lara Structure Plan* as significant roadside vegetation (NOTE: await arborist report on the trees health and condition prior to determining long term use. *E. cladocalyx* have been pruned significantly. This can result in the formation of brittle branches, a potential problem)

There are mature plantings of *Cupressus sp* (Cypress) in the Avenue of Honour in Walkers Road and scattered plantings of *Schinus molle* (Peppercorn Trees) create a strong statement & sense of place. In addition, indigenous flora located in the Railway Reserve has been identified as a biodiversity conservation zone.

There is an opportunity to enhance these areas.

### 2.10.2 | OPEN SPACE

There are large areas of open space in the centre of town including Austin Park, sports grounds, railway reserves and the area south of Station Lake Road, reinforce a semi – rural character but also represent an opportunity for alternative uses. Opportunity to further enhance the amenity of Lara’s open space areas through improved landscape treatments.

### 2.10.3 | STREETScape

Recent improvements to the streetscape in The Centreway are limited in their application. There exists the potential to create a more cohesive identity & sense of place in the Lara Township by expanding the application to include the Station, Austin Park, Safeway Carpark and sports precinct through the establishment of a consistent and unified streetscape treatment for Lara, including furniture, lighting, bollards, paving and planting themes.



## 2.10.4 | AUSTIN PARK

"Austin Park is a 12 acre public park located in the town centre of Lara and is comprised of numerous native gum trees, open, semi-grassed playground areas and public conveniences. It was reserved as a public park in 1885 and named Austin Park in 1890, in honour of James Austin, a pioneer of the area, who had returned to the district on a visit in the previous year."<sup>1</sup>

Austin Park is comprised of two sections, split by Station Lake Road. The northern section comprises what is commonly referred to as Austin Park and within which is a significant amount of formal landscaping, paths, public conveniences, a playground and the skate park. The southern section, where the Lara Bowling Club is currently situated, it has no formal landscaping outside of the Bowling Club, but is significantly treed with native gums.

Austin Park is currently zoned PPRZ, Public Park and Recreation Zone and at present, does not have any overlays. However, the following indicates a desire to have Austin Park listed under a Heritage Overlay.

The following are extracts of the Statement of Cultural Significance from the Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study, Stage 2:

- It is aesthetically significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates important visual qualities, and is particularly characterised by the numerous native gum trees situated throughout the site.
- It is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the development of the Lara township in the latter nineteenth century, and with James Austin, from whom the park has been named.
- It is socially significant at a LOCAL level. It is highly valued and recognised by the community as a place for public recreation.
- Overall, Austin Park is of LOCAL significance.

A master plan for the northern section of Austin Park was undertaken in October 2000 by Mark Reilly and involved a significant amount of community consultation. However, since the completion of the works recommended in the master plan, other broader planning processes including the Lara Structure Plan have changed the context of planning within the township.

Austin Park has been recommended for Heritage Overlay Listing by the City of Greater Geelong.

According to Crown Land Management, Austin Park, consisting of the area known as Austin Park and the Bowling Club site in this study, are Crown land temporarily reserved for **Public Recreation** by OIC dated 23 January 1990 as published in the Government Gazette 1990 page 215. Some parts of the land known as Austin Park are not Crown Land reserved for Public Recreation but land reserved for roads and road easements.



<sup>1</sup> Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study: Stage 2

### 2.10.5 | CIRCULATION

There are several pedestrian / vehicular conflict points including the railway crossing, the 'entrance' to The Centreway (intersection of Waverley Road, Station Lake Road and The Centreway) and parking areas. General access to the shopping centre is difficult and undefined and there is poor signage to the town itself. (indirect route from Freeway to 'town centre').

Pedestrian paths are poorly defined and have poor links. There are poor pedestrian and vehicular links between shops / carparks / transport (rail) / sports precinct / bowls club etc.

There are opportunities to create improved links to the St Laurence Park and associated open space and creek frontage, open space areas as well as between the train station and The Centreway.

It is necessary to enhance long range links and maintain view corridors to the You Yangs and Hovells Creek (providing a link between the You Yangs and Corio Bay) and other open space areas including Serendip Sanctuary, and draw on the character of these important regional features.

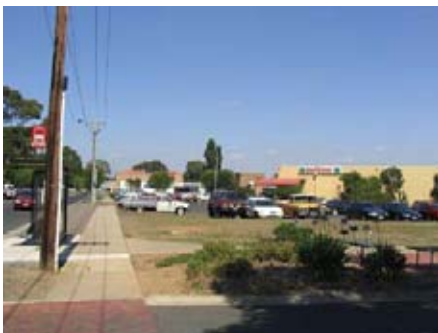
Lara is well positioned to build on the towns proximity to Jet Star/Avalon & Princes Fwy through signage and landscape treatment.

### 2.10.6 | DRAINAGE

There is an opportunity to rationalise stormwater treatment in Lara by the formalising of kerbs and channels, the establishment of swale drains for stormwater treatment, the collection of runoff for irrigation purposes, and the incorporation of water sensitive urban design principles.

### 2.10.7 | CAR PARKS

The car parks in the locality are characterised as being poorly maintained with low amenity value (poor landscaping, lack of shade trees etc). Other areas of parking are undefined, with poor amenity.



## **2.11 | INFRASTRUCTURE**

The following issues and constraints have been identified through the Audit and Analysis stage of the project but require here some detailed or further discussion.

### **2.11.1 | WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

The Draft Lara Structure Plan identifies a desired target for the population of Lara and also identifies certain issues which will constrain this figure. One of these relates to the capacity of the sewerage system and its correlation to the number of residents.

Sections 6 and 7 of the Draft Structure Plan outline the current residential lot supply and the recommended locations for residential development within Lara. If all of the recommended locations for residential rezoning develop to their potential, the overall Lara population will reach approximately 13,500 persons.

At present, the sewerage system has the capacity for 12,000 persons. An increase in this figure will necessitate additional capacity, through substantial works.

The following is an extract from the Lara Draft Structure Plan, which identifies this issue:

“Lara was originally seweraged in 1983 with provision to connect up to 8,000 people from the town into the Geelong sewerage system. Following the Urban Growth Strategy in 1996 which identified Lara as one of the City’s future urban growth locations, Barwon Water allocated sufficient capacity in the Geelong trunk sewer system to accommodate the development of Lara in accordance with the existing residentially zoned land of the township. The limitation of the sewerage system capacity through Geelong affects the total quantity of sewage that can be accepted from Lara and this equates to a population of 12,000. Population growth beyond this limit is constrained as Barwon Water’s sizing of the 6ML wet weather storage tank in North Geelong took account of the 12,000 population limit.

Rural residential properties surrounding the residential zones are serviced by on-site septic disposal systems.

An increase in Lara’s population beyond 12,000 people will necessitate additional sewerage capacity being provided by Barwon Water. This Structure Plan has determined the amount and direction of growth at Lara and this will enable Barwon Water to plan ahead to provide the additional reticulated sewerage services required.

Barwon Water is reviewing its forward plan for the management of northern Geelong sewerage system, and options are being considered to provide for future development of the region, including at Lara. The options include works to augment the existing trunk sewer system, to manage peak flows and/or divert sewerage flows to treatment with local beneficial use of the recycled water.”

## 2.11.2 | FLOODING

The Draft Lara Structure Plan and residents of Lara identified the issues pertaining to flooding in Lara. The following is an extract from the Draft Structure Plan, which identifies these issues.

“Lara has a long history of significant flood events, recorded in 1933, 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1988. Flooding in Lara occurs as Hovell’s Creek waterway type flooding events and flooding of sub-catchments within Lara from drainage-related flooding. The 1988 flood of Hovell’s Creek was the largest on record and resulted in the internal flooding of about 60 dwellings in the township. This flood event of Hovell’s Creek is considered equivalent to the 100 year average recurrence interval (ARI) flood event.

The following pages are the Eastern Lara Flood Mapping and depict the 1% probability of the extent of floods. The plans should be read in conjunction with the latest revisions of Relevant Municipality reports relating to the Lara Flood Study – Stage 1, NE Lara Flood Study and Hovell’s Creek Flood Mapping Extension Study and is subject to the assumptions and qualifications contained therein.

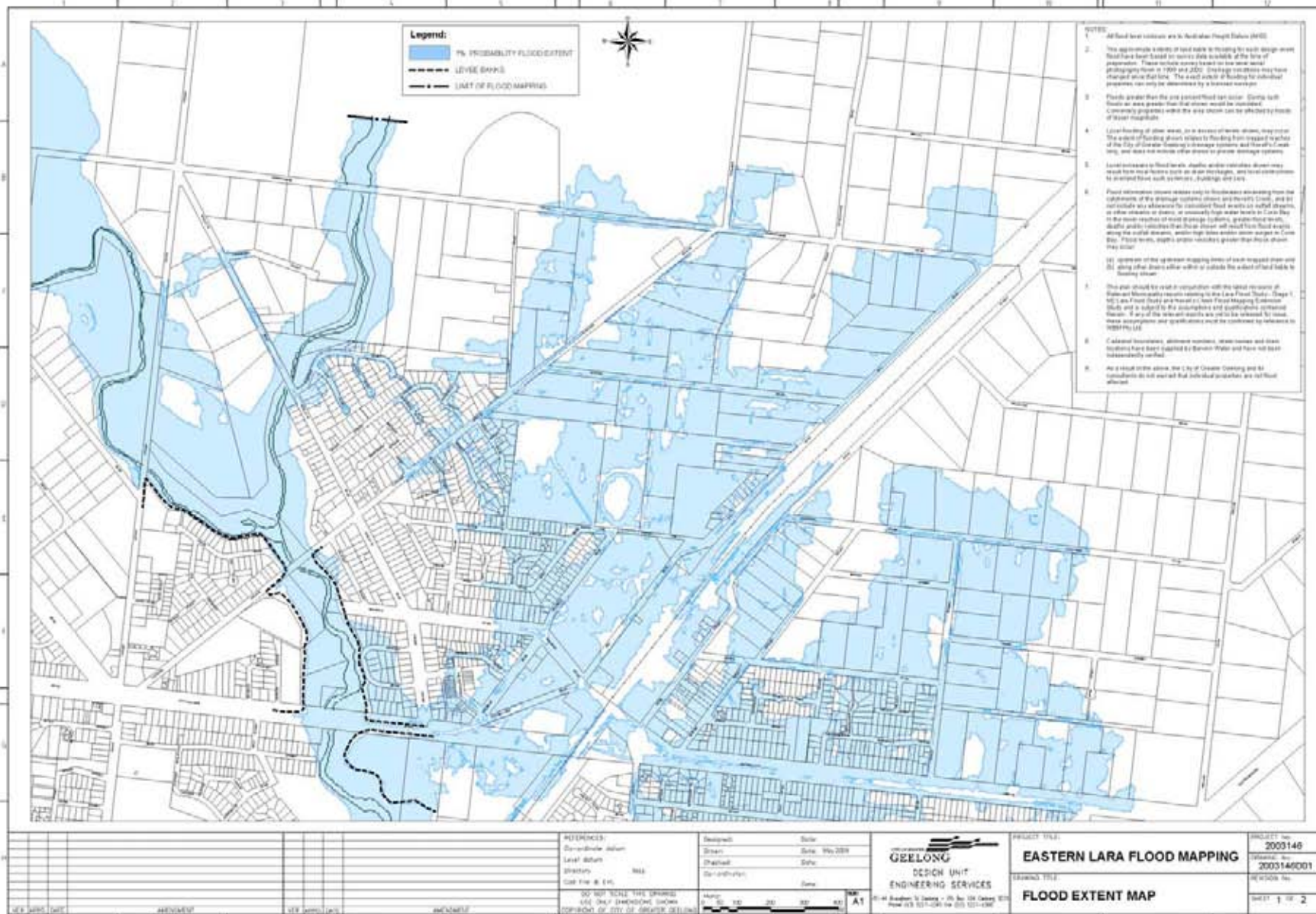


Figure 2.11.2a Eastern Lara Flood Mapping, Flood Extent Map

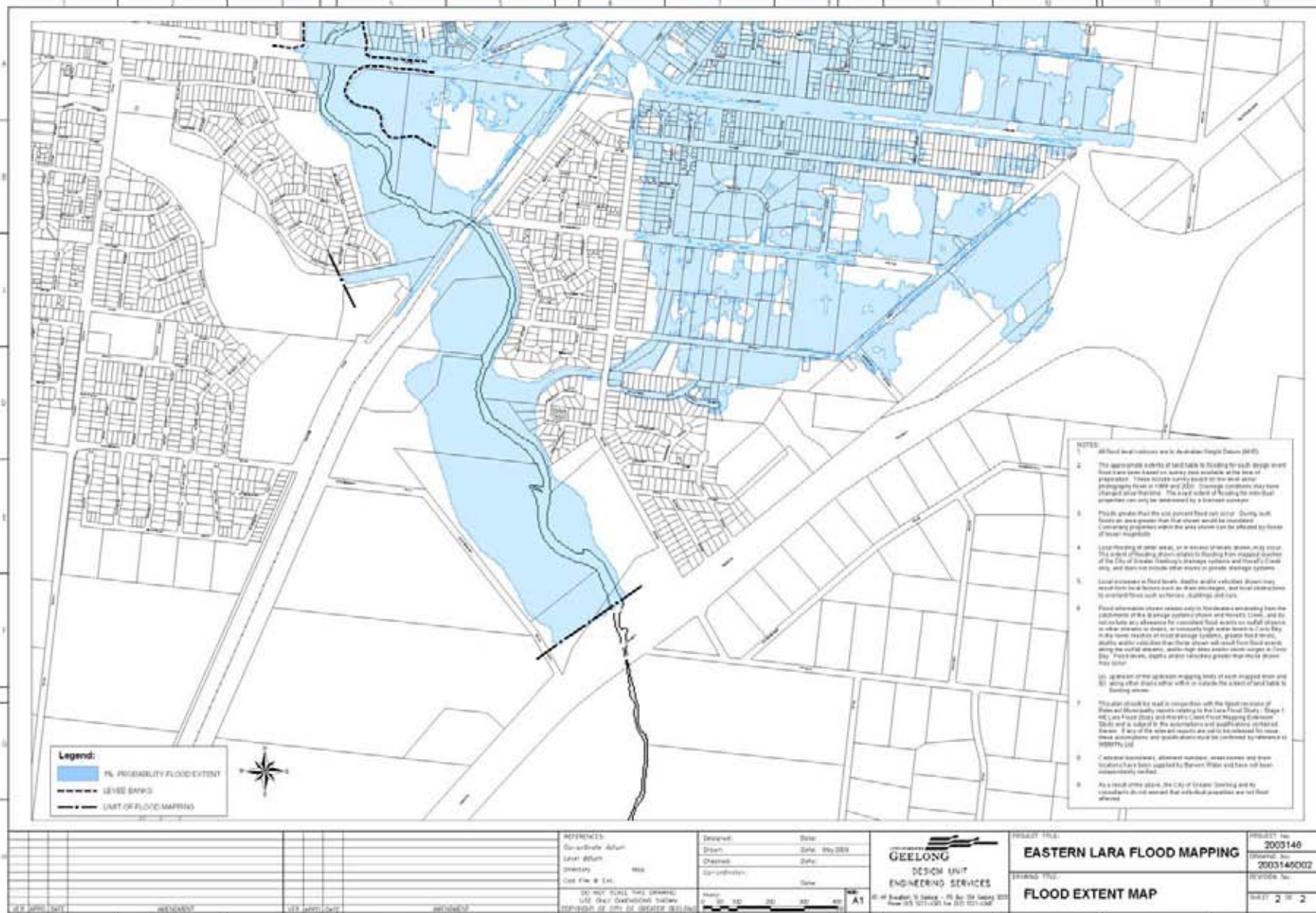


Figure 2.11.2b Eastern Lara Flood Mapping, Flood Extent Map

## 2.12 | WHAT ARE THE MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE TOWN CENTRE

The following tables identify the significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of or to the city centre. These key characteristics form the basis of the vision outlined in the next chapter, which seeks to capitalise on the strengths and opportunities in the study area, and overcome the weaknesses and threats.

### 2.12.1 | ATTRACTIONS

Attractions refer to what draws in the customers and are the foundation of healthy town centres. The range or diversity of shops / services is a principal factor for town centre health. The diversity of attractions relates to the nature and composition of retailing in the centre measured for example by the number of multiples, specialist shops or markets in the centre. Other attractions include arts, cultural or entertainment facilities, health and other services, and even the availability of space for people living or working in the centre, all of which help to keep a centre feeling alive.

ATTRACTIONS			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lara Town Centre has a country atmosphere with a strong community spirit.</li> <li>■ The town centre offers a range of activities, including retail, education, community and service clubs.</li> <li>■ There are a variety of shops with wonderful shop keepers.</li> <li>■ A compact town centre.</li> <li>■ Availability of vacant and underutilised space.</li> <li>■ Sporting Club and facilities in close proximity to the centre.</li> <li>■ Austin Park.</li> <li>■ A sense of safety, especially for children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Character of some precincts is not clearly defined.</li> <li>■ Lack of variety of shops.</li> <li>■ Lack of space in front of supermarket.</li> <li>■ Lack of medical facilities and community health services.</li> <li>■ Lack of tourist retail land uses.</li> <li>■ Poor availability of activities for youth within the centre.</li> <li>■ Youth unemployment.</li> <li>■ No accommodation.</li> <li>■ Poor visibility of The Centreway.</li> <li>■ Shopping in the locality is dispersed with retail activities in both The Centre Way and Six Ways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop the town centre's role as the principal multi-purpose centre which can offer diverse range of experiences.</li> <li>■ Redevelopment of retail precinct.</li> <li>■ Provide larger format stores.</li> <li>■ Expand town centre.</li> <li>■ Strengthen tourism by providing visitor's information centre, accommodation and better tourist retail.</li> <li>■ Increase employment land uses.</li> <li>■ Increase community facilities such as libraries.</li> <li>■ Promote a sense of identity, celebrate the arrival and create focal points of the activity.</li> <li>■ Austin Park to make a much larger usable space.</li> <li>■ Increase local spending.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Monopoly from anchor tenant.</li> <li>■ Division of the shopping centre.</li> <li>■ Environmental degradation.</li> <li>■ Loss of rural character.</li> <li>■ Lack of diversity in retail offer.</li> </ul>

## 2.12.2 | ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility refers to how easy it is to reach the centre. In particular it is important to promote public transport and ease of access for those arriving on foot or by bike. However there is no escaping that the majority of people spending money in major stores increasingly arrive by car. Striking a balance between the needs for car-borne travellers and a high standard of pedestrian amenity is extremely difficult and depends on the individual situation. In some country towns, short stay parking may be needed to compete with out-of-town centres. Parking, bus and rail stations need to be easily found and well integrated with the core of the town centre.

ACCESSIBILITY			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The town centre is well connected to Melbourne due to close proximity to railway station and Princes Highway.</li> <li>■ Bike and walking tracks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cars bottleneck at railway crossing and delays occur when the gates are closed.</li> <li>■ Heavy traffic flow in and out of supermarket.</li> <li>■ Station Lake Road creates a visual and physical barrier to the centre.</li> <li>■ Lack of footpaths connecting the schools &amp; sports fields.</li> <li>■ Inappropriate placement of car parks and perceived lack of car parking at peak hours.</li> <li>■ Safety issues and traffic congestion around railway crossing especially for emergency vehicles.</li> <li>■ Variable speed limits.</li> <li>■ Infrequent timetable for public transport.</li> <li>■ Some poor quality roads leading into the town centre.</li> <li>■ Some poor quality footpaths.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improve accessibility of the centre for pedestrians and vehicles including parking for cars, buses, bicycles and taxis.</li> <li>■ Remove and realign Station Lake Road.</li> <li>■ Possible construction of over pass.</li> <li>■ Safe and comfortable pedestrian routes, particularly linking the business frontages with car parking areas and the railway station with retail precinct.</li> <li>■ Increase car parking to service current as well as future needs.</li> <li>■ Improve safety, appearance, legibility and signage to car parks.</li> <li>■ Improve interpretative and directional signage for pedestrians.</li> <li>■ Improve access for large trucks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inappropriate infrastructure to support development.</li> <li>■ Station Lake Road in its present location could split an expanded centre.</li> <li>■ Possible increase in the number of rail lines to cater for increased demand will require the construction of vehicle overpass.</li> </ul>

## 2.12.3 | AMENITY

Amenity refers to how pleasant a centre is. A centre that is perceived as dirty or dangerous acts as a deterrent, even if it scores well in other features. How pleasant a place is can be determined by a number of criteria and interventions in the public realm. These include safety, quality of public open space, personal comfort, climate, toilets, seats etc. For example the total exclusion of cars, particularly at night, can sometimes makes places seem more threatening.

AMENITY			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Well landscaped environment providing rural character.</li> <li>■ Presence of St Laurence Park, Austin Park and Hoffman Walk.</li> <li>■ Strong sense of place created by mature plantings of Sugar Gums, Cypress and Peppercorn trees.</li> <li>■ Large areas of open space in the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Perceived lack of personal safety in the centre particularly at night.</li> <li>■ Perceived lack of street cleanliness.</li> <li>■ Lack of toilet facilities.</li> <li>■ Lack of signage.</li> <li>■ Poor conditioned &amp; underutilised parks (Skate Park and Austin Park – Bowling Club side).</li> <li>■ Some heavy vehicle traffic.</li> <li>■ Bus stops relate poorly to the town centre</li> <li>■ Recent improvements to The Centreway are limited in their application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improve safety elements such as pavement width and surface quality, seating, signage, lighting, landscaping, and toilets.</li> <li>■ Enhance visual quality of the streetscape including landscaping, buildings and utilities with consideration of local character.</li> <li>■ Appropriate physical and/or visual integration of The Centreway with main roads, adjacent residential precincts, and primary entrances and corridors.</li> <li>■ Promote visual links utilising landscape treatments into and through The Centreway.</li> <li>■ Guide the design of new shopfronts.</li> <li>■ Enhance the appearance and function of the civic green spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Piecemeal development of buildings and streetscapes in a form that will not accommodate, encourage and promote activities on the street and interest in the city.</li> </ul>

## 2.12.4 | ACTION

This component is concerned with the procedures for making positive change happen. Fundamentally, success in improving a town centre depends on an integrated approach to its physical and business environment. This is best achieved through a management system that enables all initiatives to be pursued in a coordinated fashion and for skills and resources to be used in the most effective way. Such a system enables partnerships to be established between the Council and all the other 'actors', such as property owners, major retailers, small businesses and voluntary associations, all working together to enhance the economic, social and physical aspects of the centre.

ACTION			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Existing business group.</li> <li>■ Previous experience with marketing strategy.</li> <li>■ Support of Council.</li> <li>■ An existing viable and active town character.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Absence of an overall business association for the town centre.</li> <li>■ Absence of ongoing funding scheme to support marketing and management initiatives.</li> <li>■ Lack of information on business activities.</li> <li>■ Lack of mechanisms to enable businesses to coordinate marketing promotion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Retain and increase the level of retail spending within the town.</li> <li>■ Joint promotions with tourism, community and cultural events.</li> <li>■ Promotion and marketing of town attractions.</li> <li>■ Establish Town Centre Management System.</li> <li>■ Establish equitable funding mechanism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Division of township</li> <li>■ Other centres providing better customer service.</li> <li>■ Loss of business to other centres.</li> </ul>



# the vision

### 3.0 | THE VISION

Chapter 2 describes the town centre of Lara as it is now. This chapter outlines a vision for how it can be in the future.

The vision will articulate the desires and aspirations of the community as a whole as well as those who directly control the centre or have another vested interest in the centre. This vision provides a shared goal, developed by the community, stakeholders and the City of Greater Geelong to work towards. It helps to establish the objectives of the UDF, by clearly identifying the gap between what exists now and what could happen in the future. The vision also provides a benchmark against which specific proposals should be assessed. Only proposals that conform with and help realise the vision should be supported.

The vision recognises the length of time and incremental nature that significant urban design takes to occur. It is visionary by nature, but realistic: an infeasible or implausible vision will not gain the support it needs to become reality.

The following sections identify current government policy that contributes to the formulation of a vision for Lara.

**“Having a vision makes every part of Council’s job so much easier. By utilising and building on what the local community has to offer, Council can gain community involvement in, and agreement on, a broad vision for the area”**

Creating Better Towns, Cities and Places  
Designing Competitive Places, Australian Local  
Government Association, Canberra, 1997,  
p.21.

### 3.1 | THE CITY OF GREATER GEELONG'S MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The vision seeks to recognise and build upon the vision for the whole municipality set out in the current corporate plan. The Strategic Direction on Urban Growth (Clause 21.08) from the Geelong Planning Scheme identifies:-

'Lara as an urban growth location for the city (of Greater Geelong). Its location between Geelong and Melbourne, and good accessibility to road and rail transport infrastructure, underlie the high demand for residential opportunities in Lara'.

The key objectives of the MSS that relate to Lara include:-

- Ensure future residential development is directed to the most suitable land
- To encourage future commercial facilities to locate centrally
- To promote industrial development in the Heales Road Industrial Estate and the McClelland/ Princes Highway industrial area and to encourage service business development closer to the town centre

The City of Greater Geelong MSS highlights Lara as a major township in the north east of Geelong which is in a good growth location.

## 3.2 | GEELONG REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN (G21)

### The Vision

'In 2020 the Geelong Region is Australia's most desirable destination for living, visiting investing: it is renowned for its vibrant, cohesive community, exceptional physical environment and vigorous economy.'

According to the Geelong Regional Strategic Plan:

'In 2003 the Geelong Region provided 241,000 residents and 60,000 annual visitors with a vibrant environment to live work and play. In 2020 the Region will be expected to meet the economic social environmental needs on an estimated 300,000 residents and a growing number of residents.'

G21 will address strategies to enhance networks coping with growth and gauge performance and work to market the region.

The desired outcome is a region where people aspire to live, visit and invest.

A number of foundation projects have been developed to achieve the G21 vision, these include:

### Regional Community Strategy

This strategy aims to identify the regions strengths and barriers to further development.

It includes providing pathways that watch the needs of individuals businesses and the community sectors.

### Regional Growth Strategy

The Regional Growth Strategy will provide a 30 year outlook for the region. This strategy will be developed to support the regional vision, outcomes and challenges to and provide a framework for G21 Councils' Municipal Strategic Statements

Major components of the strategy will include identification of areas of regional environmental significance, transport networks, permanent non-urban areas as well as areas for future growth.

### Regional Marketing Strategy

The main objective of this strategy is to raise the awareness of the target segments of the region in order to support sustainable population growth, raise income per capita, facilitate the strategies of G21 and help make the region the most liveable in Australia.

### Regional Indications Framework

This framework aims to deliver a meaningful set of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) indicators that support:-

- Planning
- Monitoring
- Reporting

### 3.3 | LARA STRUCTURE PLAN

The Lara Structure Plan (2005) identifies a significant number of constraints that exist to impede future development in the Lara Township. The following objectives have been developed as a part of Lara Structure Plan to overcome those constraints. They are as follows:-

#### Objectives

1. To identify and designate future urban growth (conventional residential) opportunities within Lara on land that is not affected by long term constraints such as flooding, drainage, aircraft noise and within established buffer zones.
2. To reinforce the Centreway Shopping Centre as the primary commercial and shopping centre in Lara by identifying the areas for expansion to accommodate additional retail floor space to meet the needs of a growing population whilst optimising community accessibility and convenience
3. To restrict southerly urban development encroaching into the buffer around the Heales Road Industrial Estate
4. To ensure that further residential development is consistent with the need to maintain high visual standards in the township
5. To protect and enhance areas of environmental significance in and around Lara such as the Serendip Sanctuary, Hovells Creek and significant roadside vegetation

6. To identify community development needs (education, recreation, and community facilities) and ensures that future facilities are located to optimise community accessibility and convenience.
7. To ensure a safe and efficient road network within the township.

In section 8 Commercial Development, 8.2 Town Centre Redevelopment, justification for the development of the UDF reads as follows:-

The Centreway is in a location surrounded by areas of public open space, unused road reserves and in proximity to the Lara Railway Station. Unlike many other township town centres this set of circumstances presents a unique opportunity to explore for the betterment of the town.

To this end Council has successfully applied to the Department of Sustainability (DSE) and \$45,000 funding under the Pride of Place program to undertake a detailed Urban Design Framework for this area. This is required to address in detail the planning and structural issues at the town centre and develop a framework or outline development plan for how an expanded centre can be configured and achieve a better linkage between the town centre and the Lara Railway station, and achieve some of the benefits of the Government's transit cities program.

The Lara Structure Plan continues to identify a number of issues it to be addressed by the UDF. The issues are as follows:-

- How much retail floor space and accompanying car parking is required
- An assessment of how to manage the through traffic route of Station Lake Road which bisects the area
- Consultations with any affected land managers and land owners
- Incorporation of additional community facilities into the area
- Connection of an expanded centre with the Lara Railway Station
- Resolution of any flooding/ drainage constraints
- Conservation of Austin Park within the town centre
- Interfaces with the surrounding environment, in particular with Austin Park
- Alternate provision of open space

- The site for the location of a new library

The Lara Structure Plan has identified the most suitable locations for future residential development. The structure plan identifies locations according to several different housing types including:-

- Future Conventional Residential Development in Lara
- Design of New Residential Area
- Future Rural Living/ Rural Residential Development in Lara
- Areas not recommended for rezoning to residential.

Each of the areas identified in the Structure Plan are outside of the UDF project area, however, the pressure of increased development and density would have on the centre would be significant and require consideration to ensure associated community needs are met.

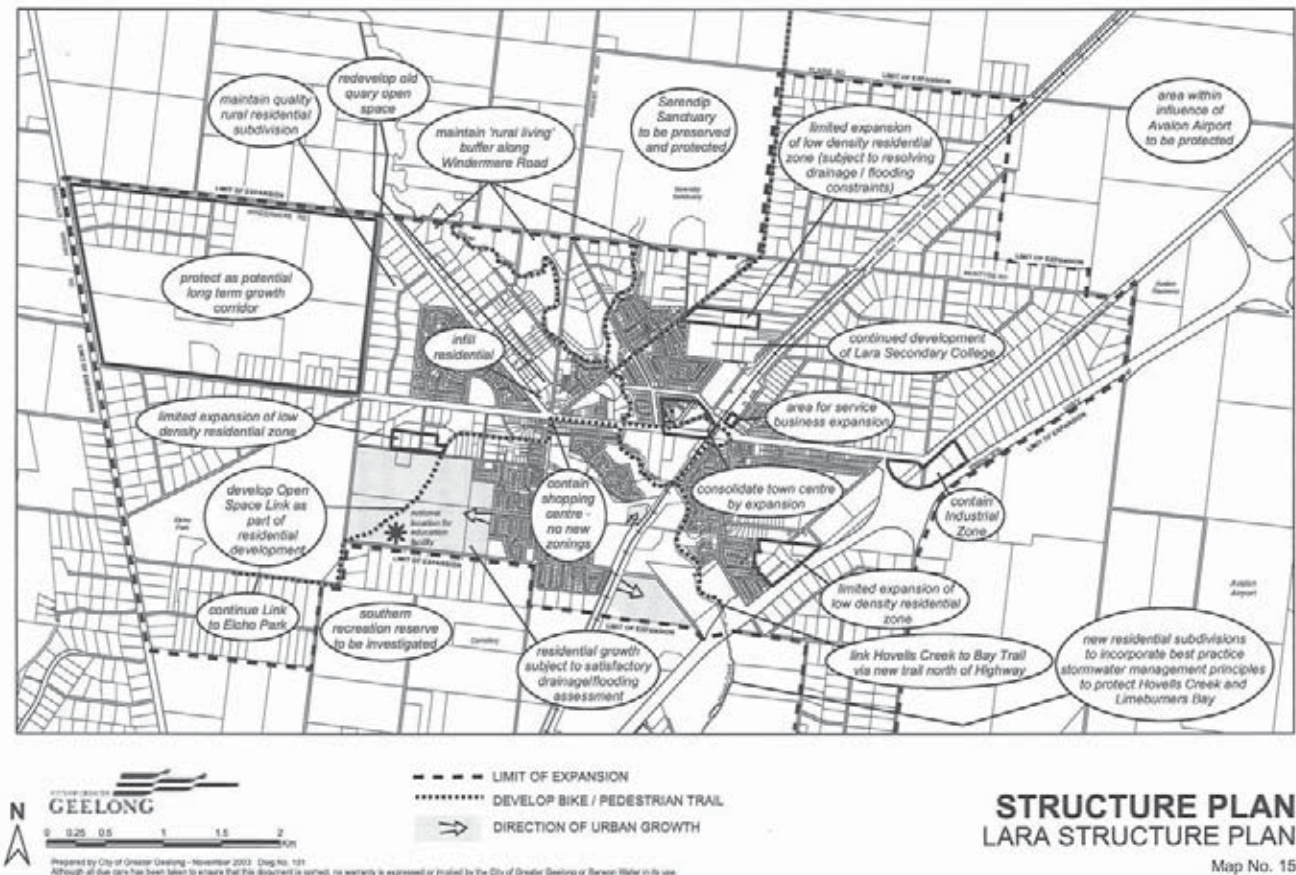


Figure 3.3a Lara Structure Plan

### 3.4 | LARA TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The 2002 Draft Transport Strategy provides a detailed overview of current traffic issues in Lara and the actions needed to be employed to reduce or negate these issues both now and in the future. Due to the predicted population growth in Lara the traffic management plan plays an important role addressing issues associated with development.

The purpose of the study is to:-

- Determine existing issues relating to the transportation of people and product
- Determine the impacts of future residential and industrial development on the transport system, and
- Identify improvement options and preferred solutions for the subject study area to enable Council to cost effectively manage the safe and orderly movement of people and product and reduce adverse impacts of travel on the community.

The Lara Transport Management Plan recommends a more detailed investigation to be undertaken to investigate the following:-

- Resolve heavy vehicle movement issues
- Address road improvement issues
- Address amenity concerns
- Cater for increased travel demand.

### 3.5 | CITY OF GREATER GEELONG RETAIL STRATEGY 1998 - 2001

The ongoing evolution and growth of the Geelong Region has required policy renewal to guide planning and development of the city in a sustainable and appropriate manner. The City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 1998 – 2001 moves on from the existing interim Retail Strategy which was adopted from the Geelong Region Retail Centre Strategy 1991.

The purpose of the strategy:-

‘ To plan for the evolution of the network of retail centres in Geelong over the next decade and to provide a policy basis for the assessment of proposals for retail development’.

Several objectives were developed to guide the study and they can be summarised as follows:-

- Promote a viable and accessible retail sector network
- To recognise the role of the established hierarchy of centre
- To ensure the central activities area retains its role as the region's pre-eminent shopping centre
- To provide the consumer with the opportunity for choice in shopping
- To embody the concept of net community benefit in assessing all new retailing proposals

This strategy sets a strategic direction in retailing for the municipality by broadening awareness of the important role retailing plays in the City of Greater Geelong, and how the hierarchy of retail centres within the municipality are adequately considered and planned for now and in the future.

### **3.6 | TRANSIT CITIES**

The Transit Cities initiative places a strong emphasis on public transport planning and a commitment to help improve the State's social, environmental and economic success through balanced and practical transport strategies. Transit Cities is a program for creating safe, vibrant and accessible communities, centred on public transport.

### **3.7 | GROWING VICTORIA TOGETHER**

In November 2001, Victorian Labour Government launched the Growing Victoria Together policy framework (Government of Victoria 2001). Growing Victoria Together expresses the vision, policy priorities and key progress measures of the Victorian Government. It has been developed to guide medium term policy choices, communicate directions to citizens and engage stakeholders to think collaboratively about the future.

The policy reiterates the target for the growth of public transport to 20 percent of motorised trips in Melbourne by 2020. In 2002, that figure was approximately 9 percent.

The policy identifies the need to invest in infrastructure to achieve this goal.

### **3.8 | VICTORIAN GREENHOUSE STRATEGY**

The Victorian Greenhouse Strategy (VGS) (State of Victoria 2001) contains 59 actions across ten key areas where action can be taken, including: improving the environmental performance and energy efficiency of its own operations; and the programs and partnerships that will be pursued to reduce emissions from industry and commerce, local government and households.

The strategy notes that transport contributes 16 percent to Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions.

### **3.9 | TRAVELSMART**

TravelSMART is a Victorian Government initiative that aims to reduce car use (vehicle kilometres travelled) and encourage the use of alternatives including walking, cycling and public transport. The TravelSMART program comprises community, workplace and school streams. This plan provides an opportunity for Council to commit to TravelSMART.

The TravelSMART initiative looks to encourage people to use their cars less and walk, cycle and take public transport more. While the main focus of the program is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, there are many other benefits to people's quality of life, including increased exercise, less congestion and a better use of existing resources.

### 3.10 | THE LARA VISION

The vision for Lara has been developed based on an understanding of its existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This vision has been created through close consultation with the residents of Lara, City of Greater Geelong and other relevant stakeholders as well as an understanding of existing policies. All of the input received from the various stakeholders has been compiled and analysed and a Vision has been formed. This vision has set the scene for the strategies in Chapter 4 of this report.

The vision is for the town centre to be the primary activity centre for the Lara region, a multifunctional, vibrant and strong centre with positive pedestrian spaces that are the focus for trade of goods, provisions of services and positive social interaction.

This will be facilitated through mechanisms which:

1. Improves the town centre to attract residents and visitors
2. Supports a retail heart that maximises peoples choices
3. Provides sustainable transport choices
4. Enhances the quality of the public realm

The following section explores each part of the vision in more detail and considers how they will be achieved:-

1. Improve the Lara town centre to attract residents and visitors
  - Improve and increase community and retail services and facilities
  - Provide better connections throughout the centre
  - Increase the commercial/office floor space available
  - Promote new attractions
2. Support a retail heart that maximises peoples choice
  - Increase the retail offer
  - Increase car parking
  - Employ town centre management to capitalise of existing and future opportunities
  - Engage an effective marketing and promotion campaigns
  - Produce an effective transport network to and from the Lara Town Centre

- 
3. Provides sustainable transport choices
    - Enhance links and access to the station
    - Improve facilities and services associated with all transport requirements
    - Improve pedestrian links to the Lara Town Centre from surrounding residential areas
    - Ensure appropriate planning and management of traffic and transport including traffic flow, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.
  
  4. Enhances the quality of the public realm
    - Enhance and improve the quality of public open space in Lara
    - Create more social spaces within Lara
    - Improve the streetscapes within Lara



# aims & strategies

## 4.0 | AIMS AND STRATEGIES

"However initiated, the most successful strategies and visions are those that are realistic, that is matched to available opportunities and resources, positive in the sense of providing a lead, and shared in the sense that people and organisations with different interests are willing to support them."<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 2 profiles the Lara Town Centre as it is now; Chapter 3 describes the vision for its future. This chapter establishes the aims and strategies necessary to take the town centre from its current state towards the vision.

The problems to be tackled and opportunities to be realised in order to fulfil the vision can be organised under four strategic aims.

01  
Aim

### Facilitate future growth in Lara

To provide a wider range of goods and services within the town centre to accommodate the projected population growth of Lara.

02  
Aim

### Reduce Escape Expenditure

To ensure that the spending power of Lara remains in Lara, that the goods and services on offer are more than just basic retailing, and that there is easy and comfortable access to a wide range of facilities within the town centre.

03  
Aim

### Promote Sustainable Transport, Access and Movement

To create an integrated transport and movement network that encourages sustainable transport and movement.

04  
Aim

### Enhance and strengthen the public realm

To improve the public realm, respecting and building upon its distinctive identity and appearance.

<sup>1</sup> URBED, Vital and viable town centres: meeting the challenge, HMSO, London, 1004, p.72

**Aim 1** Facilitate future growth in Lara

The population of Lara is growing rapidly. At the August 2001 ABS Census, Lara's population was counted as 9,206 people. This is an increase of 1,868 people since 1996, representing a 4.64% p.a. growth rate. It is estimated that the population since the Census in August 2001 has increased to 9,958 (June 30, 2003)<sup>1</sup>.

The estimated population of Lara based on the recommended total area for rezoning in the Draft Lara Structure Plan 2003 is 13,428 however there are factors associated with the current infrastructure which limit this development to 12,000 until substantial works are undertaken to the trunk sewer.

It is essential that the new residents are serviced by a vibrant and multifunctional town centre.

The population growth should be supported through town centre improvements which will provide a wider range of goods and services. Further, the town centre needs to support a range of social, transport and housing improvements that ensure residents can live, work and play comfortably in Lara.

Therefore the following strategies are proposed to facilitate future growth in Lara:

- Strategy 1.1: Upgrade the train station precinct
- Strategy 1.2: Improve services in the town centre
- Strategy 1.3: Increase lifestyle choice
- Strategy 1.4: Provide additional office or non-retail space
- Strategy 1.5: Promote the development of new retail facilities

<sup>1</sup> Lara Draft Structure Plan, City of Greater Geelong, 2003, sourced from 5.2 Population Estimate



## STRATEGY 1.1 | UPGRADE THE TRAIN STATION PRECINCT

“Railway and transit way station precincts are important gateways to the public transport systems and to local communities. They offer significant opportunities for pedestrian – and public transport – friendly development, which can help local economic vitality and reduce car trips.”

“Major nodes, such as railway stations, will usually be located in centres and the focus for the intensification of land uses to take advantage of their high accessibility”<sup>1</sup>

The Lara station is a small interchange serving both rail and bus movements and is well patronised. It gives residents direct access to the Melbourne CBD (50 mins) and Geelong Central Activities Area (15 mins) by regular trains.

However, the station and surrounding area does not function as well as could be expected. Despite being within easy walking distance to the town centre it suffers from a lack of positive connections to the town centre and the adjoining streets. The existing paths to and from the station are convoluted. The station is not visible from the town centre and there is a lack of good, clear directional signage to and from it.

The Lara Station is not directly visible from the town centre due to the APCO service station on the corner of Mill Road and Station Lake Road being in the line of sight from the station to the town centre. There is no signage in the town centre that identifies that the station exists, or where it is. There are no continuous footpaths to the station from the town centre, and the only access to the platforms is through the commuter car park located on Hicks Street.

There is no entry from Mill Road, but the station is visible through the chain link fence.

The existing pedestrian connection between the town centre and the train station is currently not a pleasant experience. It requires crossing through Austin Park – the only pleasant part of the journey – to an at-grade rail crossing. The rail crossing is in three stages. There is a central island between the train lines. There is no formal crossing to allow safe and easy access across McClelland Avenue. Once across McClelland Avenue access to station land is either through the empty site on the corner of Hicks Street and McClelland Avenue or along the north west side of Hicks Street, where there is no footpath. It is then necessary to cross through the station car park – which does not have any clear and distinct pedestrian areas – to another at-grade pedestrian crossing to the station platforms.

There is another pedestrian connection between McClelland Avenue and the station. This is via a pathway running parallel with the train tracks on the south eastern side, however this pathway appears infrequently used as it is unsurveilled, unlit and offers poor pedestrian amenity.

The convoluted nature of this journey coupled with the lack of adequate footpaths may discourage its use and promote travel by car as an alternative.

Lara train station is not adequately serviced. It does not have sufficient facilities – capacity and amenity – for car parking and safe and comfortable access to different modes of transport.

The station surrounds are mainly comprised of an open air commuter car park, empty and underutilised blocks of land and some industrial uses such as grain storage and car repairs. This combination of uses and condition results in the area appearing sparse and unwelcoming. The land is owned by VicTrack with leases to various parties for anything up to 30 years over the land.

The station is not located close to the road and therefore lacks visual prominence due to its small size.



<sup>1</sup> Transport NSW, Road Transport Authority, NSW, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Improving public transport – guidelines for planning and development, NSW department of Urban Affairs and Planning 2001, p.38, 40

### **Future Strategies:**

As the population of Lara increases, it is envisaged that the levels of patronage for the public transport facilities will also grow. Upgrading the current facilities and transforming the Lara station into a state of the art transit interchange will help to encourage further patronage.

There is little value creating a strong, legible and distinct link between the town centre and the new transit interchange for pedestrians, cyclists and private vehicles if the surrounds themselves are not upgraded and visually enhanced.

Therefore it is necessary to provide a pleasant, direct, clearly defined and safe pedestrian path from the town centre to the railway station which allows train passengers to directly access the town centre and vice versa. It is important to complement this new connection with a distinctive, holistic signage strategy to ensure this link to the transport interchange is legible throughout the centre for pedestrians. The station is to provide a sense of arrival, order and orientation within the precinct.

### **Proposals:**

- Implement a distinctive, holistic signage strategy to ensure that the transport interchange is legible throughout the town centre for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- Comprehensively landscape the station car park.
- Create a clear, direct and legible pedestrian connection from the town centre to the railway station via a pedestrian overpass directly to the station platform. This would be accessed via Mill Road being connected to pedestrian crossings and footpaths that lead to the upgraded Austin Park.
- Redevelop the station and immediate environs as a transport interchange, which comprehensively caters for trains, buses, bikes, pedestrians, taxis and private cars.
- Provide a safe and secure environment within the precinct.
- Provide an attractive and well-maintained precinct.
- Increase the amount of car parking to cater for the expected demand.

## STRATEGY 1.2 | IMPROVE SERVICES IN THE TOWN CENTRE

The existing facilities within the town centre do not adequately cater for the current needs.

### The Library:

Lara currently only has a limited, fortnightly mobile library service. This is very well patronised. A high proportion of younger and older residents use this service. In relation to reviewing the establishment of a permanent library in Lara, the Draft Structure Plan 2003 states “include the search for a site as part of the urban design framework for the expanded Centreway.”

It is the view of the Geelong Regional Library Corporation that the success of a library in Lara is dependent on its location within the town centre. They consider that it must be in a location that is well connected to the surrounding areas.

### The Emergency Services:

Lara has a Police Station and rural branch of the Country Fire Authority, but no Ambulance station.

The current Police Station is located in Rennie Street, away from The Centreway in a predominantly residential street. The current station building does not adequately accommodate staff or parking requirements due to the size and age of the building.

Lara has a rural branch of the CFA, located on Forrest Road South, which is in need of upgrading to ensure that the expected population will be adequately serviced.

There is a plan which is being formulated to amalgamate these three services in one central facility, close to the town centre.

### The Community Hub:

There are a number of community facilities in Lara which form a hub. These include the community centre, the kindergarten and the maternal and child healthcare centre. These are all located on Waverley Road, in close proximity to each other and there exists a natural synergy between the community hub and Austin Park.

The community centre and associated spaces are a major asset. The centre is a non profit organisation whose aim is “to facilitate community development and provide opportunities for mutual support and sharing of skills and resources to build a better quality of life for the residents of Lara and the surrounding district.”<sup>1</sup> The centre also functions as a Neighbourhood House, which is a local organisation that provides social, educational and recreational activities for the communities in a welcoming supportive environment.<sup>2</sup>

This is a highly valuable asset within the Lara community which amongst other roles provides a support network. The current community centre itself will require upgrading and refurbishment to cater for the expected population



<sup>1</sup> Lara Community Centre Website - <http://www.laracommunitycentre.org.au/organisation.html>

<sup>2</sup> Association of Neighborhood Houses and Learning Centres - <http://anhc.asn.au/>

increase and in order to provide a greater level of services.

### **The Bowling Club:**

Lara has a well patronised bowling club located in close proximity to the town centre, and is one of the key assets of the town. However there are few pedestrian connections to the club, and those that are there are across rough and uneven terrain. There are a number of users from St Laurence Park which is adjacent to the club. It is important that any future works include better pedestrian connections which cater for mobile and semi mobile users from both St Laurence and the town centre.

The bowling club has two non-synthetic greens and large clubrooms including a well serviced bar. The clubrooms are often used for large functions. The clubrooms themselves are not large enough for current demand and require extensive renovation.

In order to increase patronage and facilitate year round use of the facility, the club requires better facilities that include expanded clubrooms, synthetic greens and lighting. car parking is to be improved to cater for increased patronage.

### **Future Strategies:**

To cater for the existing demand as well as that of future residents it is necessary to create new and improve existing community services. The facilities that are in particular need of improvement or creation are:

- The Lara Library
- The Lara Bowling Club
- The Lara Community Centre
- The emergencies services – Police and Fire - through the creation of a new emergency services facility

### **Proposals:**

- Create a new library within the Lara town centre.
- Create a 'community hub' with its heart around the Community Centre.
- Combine the three emergency services of Police, Fire and Ambulance in a new Emergency Services hub, located in close proximity to the town centre.
- Improve the physical relationship between the bowling club and the town centre. Allow for better and more convenient access to it whilst providing better facilities. The new bowling club would offer extended clubrooms and bar for varied uses including a function room capable of being hired separate to the main club rooms, and improved kitchen and toilet facilities. The venue would be fully DDA compliant with associated ramps and provision of disabled facilities. In order to provide greater use, the new bowling greens would be synthetic and be floodlit for night tournaments.

## **STRATEGY 1.3** | **INCREASE LIFESTYLE CHOICE**

Lara has a diverse range of housing needs with retirees through to large families all potentially requiring different housing types. At present, however, Lara only offers a limited range of housing types, with the majority being conventional detached housing. The town centre offers an ideal opportunity to increase lifestyle choice by providing different forms of housing, such as townhouses and apartments close to facilities.

There are significant opportunities for residential intensification around the town centre.

There already exists a high demand within Lara for residential properties close to the town centre. There is a slowing on the release of land outside of the town for residential subdivision. Lara is also known as a 'commuter suburb' and in a recent, one day survey of public transport users in Lara, 67% were using the train to commute to work.

Residential accommodation can have benefits for the town centre both economically and socially. The incorporation of housing in or near town centres can increase activity and therefore safety, while ensuring that otherwise unoccupied buildings are kept in good repair. Its residents stimulate shopping, restaurants and cafes, and other businesses to serve them, and so in turn add to vitality.

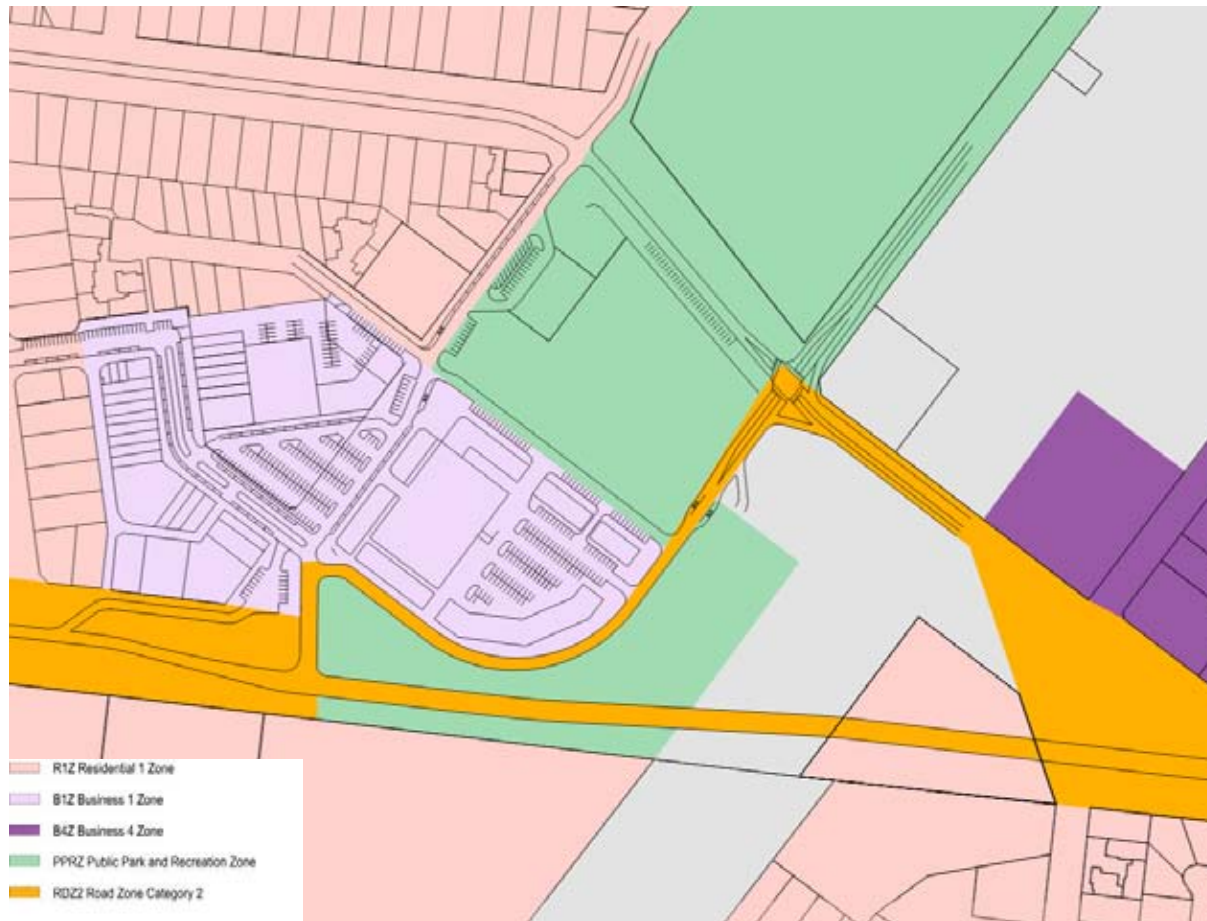
Whilst Lara is not directly part of the State Government's Transit Cities scheme, it has the opportunity to take on board some of the valuable principals and benefit from being on the line to one of the four regional transit cities. Transit Cities aims to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development, particularly housing which is connected to other important centres by rail, aiming to create environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, and commercially successful centres.

Lara, as a stop on the regional fast rail link, should seize the opportunity to intensify the area around the station and town centre to create a 'safe, vibrant and accessible community' which is centred on the public transport facilities.

**Future Strategies:**

In order to enhance the safety of the town centre, provide support for town centre businesses, and provide for a wider range of lifestyles, it is proposed that residential development be promoted within easy walking distance of the station and the Lara town centre. However, care must be taken to retain as much flexibility as possible for accommodating future retail development. Therefore housing should only be promoted in certain, appropriate locations.

The walkable catchment of an activity centre such as the Lara Town Centre is generally stated as 400 metres, which is approximately five minutes walking distance. This is defined as the distance that people will comfortably walk to get from one place to another, rather than using any other modes of transport ie private car.



**Proposed Town Centre Zoning**

The walkable catchment of a transit node such as the Lara Transit Interchange, is generally stated as 800 metres, as people will generally walk a little further to public transport facilities, provided they are of a high quality and are well serviced. This is approximately ten minutes walking distance.

The area of the walkable catchment should be increased through the creation of shorter and more attractive routes to the town centre and station increasing pedestrian and cycle permeability allowing more people to be included in the catchment thereby encouraging the walk to the town centre or the transit interchange.

### **Proposals**

- Promote the development of new medium density housing in and around the town centre.
- Promote the development of medium density housing close to the new transit interchange.
- Consider the opportunities for residential intensification in and around the town centre as part of a long term plan.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle permeability, movement and access through increasing the number of and improving routes to the town centre and station.

## **STRATEGY 1.4** | **PROVIDE ADDITIONAL OFFICE OR NON RETAIL SPACE**

At present, Lara has a limited supply of office or non-retail space. A small percentage of this is located within the town centre, but the majority is located outside of this area, often in isolated pockets. Hicks Street is comprised of some non-retail uses, some of which are located in converted houses due to the lack of office or non retail space on offer.

Some facilities, such as dental surgeries, accountants, and real estate agents which are required, have been forced to locate away from the town centre due to a lack of space within the centre.

### **Future Strategy:**

Introduce more office or non retail space within the town centre, appropriately serviced by parking.

### **Proposal:**

- Increase the amount of office and non retail floor space in the town centre from 1,400m<sup>2</sup> to 2,200m<sup>2</sup>.

## STRATEGY 1.5 | PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW RETAIL FACILITIES

In order to maintain and increase its retail competitiveness and ensure a reduction in escape expenditure, the town centre must offer more retail facilities and services. In particular, it must contain the key attractions which tend to entice people to shopping areas. These typically include supermarkets, larger stores, banks and a diverse range of shops.

In the hierarchy of retail centres, the Lara town centre performs the role of a small community centre. It is at a disadvantage, in that it has significant competition in close proximity. Corio Village, 8km south of Lara's town centre has 25,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail, and 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-retail floor space, making it one of the largest shopping centres in the region. It includes a wide and diverse range of retail facilities, including two full line supermarkets, department stores, and many specialty stores. It also has large areas of parking. In addition, Geelong Central Activities Area also offers major retail facilities and two major shopping centres.

Given the size of the trade area catchment it is servicing, the Lara town centre is relatively small with around 3,800m<sup>2</sup> of floor space. Due to the lack of retail floor space in the town, there is substantial escape spending from the trade area which is estimated at 75%. This means that 75% of retail spending by the Lara trade area residents is being spent elsewhere. Although there will always be escape spending from a town such as Lara, this is an extremely high level relative to other similar small towns. In order to reduce this escape expenditure, it is necessary to ensure the Lara town centre's catchment is adequately serviced.

### Future Strategy:

Identify and promote opportunities to expand floor space in the town centre

### Proposal:

Develop sites that have been identified which have the capacity to increase the retail floor space.

(see also Strategy 2.1)

The table below illustrates the potential for the various retail floor space types. This table does not indicate the appropriate mix of floor space, rather identifies the potential for growth of retail floor space in the town centre.

Use	Current town centre floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Proposed town centre floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Floor space area increase (m <sup>2</sup> )
Specialty Shops	2,400	3,800	1,400
Supermarket	1,400	3,500	2,100
Non-retail	1,400	2,200	800
Showroom	0	2,500	2,500
Mini Major	0	1,400	1,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200 m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>13,400 m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>8,200 m<sup>2</sup></b>



**Aim 2** Reduce escape expenditure

A role of a town centre is to adequately serve the needs of the local population. This means that it is to provide a wide range of retail, commercial, professional, business, community and civic facilities and services to support the local population. If these do not exist, or there is limited choice, residents will go elsewhere.

Unfortunately, Lara currently suffers greatly from escape expenditure. This is estimated at 75%. This means that 75% of the retail spending by trade area residents is being spent elsewhere. Escape spending represents foregone employment and income for residents of Lara. This is as a direct result of the town centre being limited in the goods and services it can provide, and therefore only serves the basic convenience retail needs of the residents.

It would be beneficial to the economy of Lara if this level of escape spending was reduced. To achieve this aim the retail, goods and services that is offered needs to be expanded and diversified, thereby reducing and possibly eliminating a strong reliance on out of town centres such as Corio Village.

The town centre must have a clear and legible movement network to facilitate access to the goods and services available in the town centre which will assist in reducing escape expenditure. There is little point in having the retail offer to support Lara if access is impeded or difficult.

Increased mobility has increased the choices of places for people to shop and do business. This has led to increased competition between activity centres. Whilst the shops and services on offer remain the most important factor in determining which centre people will go to, convenient access is a close second. This includes:

- Ease of access to the centre by car, foot, public transport or bicycle;
- Ease of parking; and
- Ease of circulation within the centre by car, foot, public transport or bicycle.

In order to invite visitors into a centre, a clearly understandable network of streets, paths and public spaces must be promoted and maintained.

A successful movement network allows access to all of the major facilities of a town centre by a number of different modes of transport, ensuring all places are easily accessible.

Once the escape expenditure is reduced through town centre redevelopment, it is important that Lara has a coordinated approach to the management of the centre. The redeveloped town centre will no doubt attract potential customers, however if the right business activities are not available, in the right place, open at the right time or advertised and promoted in the right fashion such customers may not return a second time. The coordinated management, marketing and operation of the centre is therefore just as important as its physical appearance. Management of the centre should also look to publicising Lara and the town centre through various means and mediums, one usually successful method is by attracting and promoting events in and around Lara.

Therefore, the following strategies are proposed to reduce escape expenditure:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Strategy 2.1 | Increase retail offer and choice in the town centre |
| Strategy 2.2 | Increase car park efficiency                        |
| Strategy 2.3 | Increase the number of car parking spaces           |
| Strategy 2.4 | Create a successful movement network                |
| Strategy 2.5 | Facilitate town centre management                   |
| Strategy 2.6 | Promote events                                      |

## STRATEGY 2.1 | INCREASE RETAIL OFFER AND CHOICE IN THE TOWN CENTRE

The existing Lara town centre contains around 3,800m<sup>2</sup> of retail floor space including a Safeway supermarket of approximately 1,400m<sup>2</sup>. The existing role of the town centre is simply to serve the basic convenience retail needs of the local population. The current supermarket only serves the basic convenience retail needs. There is limited non-food offer and residents have to travel outside the town for many basic retail needs, such as clothing and many food and grocery items.

The Safeway supermarket is significantly smaller than present day Safeway stores and is 'limited in range' in that it does not stock the full range of items available in other traditional or 'full line' supermarkets. This reduces the ability of the town centre to serve the basic weekly grocery requirements. If shoppers are looking for choice in goods, they are forced to shop elsewhere. This does not just have an effect on retail, but other services as it is likely that if the residents shop elsewhere such as Corio Village, they would use other facilities there, resulting in further escape spending.

There are a number of existing specialty shops in the town centre, all are fully tenanted, but there is great demand for further space.

The Lara Town Centre is relatively small given the trade area catchment it is serving. Due to the lack of retail floor space in the Lara Town Centre, there is substantial 'escape' spending from the trade area.

Escape spending represents spending by trade area residents that is undertaken at facilities located outside the trade area (e.g. Corio Village, Geelong CBD, Melbourne). This represents a lost opportunity to retain spending and employment in Lara.

Although there will always be escape spending from a town such as Lara, it has an extremely high level relative to other similar small towns. It is necessary to capture this escape spending by increasing the retail offer and choice in the town centre.

As well as capturing the current escape spending, it is necessary to design for the projected population growth in Lara.

### Future Strategy:

To increase the retail offer and choice within the town centre to reduce the escape spending in Lara by providing:

- A full line supermarket
- Specialty shops
- Showrooms
- Mini majors

### Proposal:

Develop a consolidated town centre with a 3,500m<sup>2</sup> full line supermarket as the anchor. Increase the number of specialty shops, and provide additional office or non-retail space within the town centre. The table on the right offers a breakdown of the proposed increase in floor space and type of retail and non-retail offer proposed for the town centre.

Use	Current town centre floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Proposed town centre floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Floor space area increase (m <sup>2</sup> )
Specialty Shops	2,400	3,800	1,400
Supermarket	1,400	3,500	2,100
Non-retail	1,400	2,200	800
Showroom	0	2,500	2,500
Mini Major	0	1,400	1,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200 m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>13,400 m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>8,200 m<sup>2</sup></b>

## Strategy 2.2 | INCREASE CAR PARK EFFICIENCY

There is little value in having a unique range of attractions and managing them well, unless potential customers can gain access to them easily. The town centre currently offers good access for customers by car, however it must also ensure easy access to car parking.

Shoppers value the ability to be able to park in relatively close proximity to the shop or service that they wish to visit. They also value free car parking highly. Parking is important to the success of the centre.

The town centre currently has a significant amount of car parking spaces close to the retail core, both on street and off street.

Large areas of land within the centre are used for parking however for a number of reasons they are not used in the most effective way to support retail vitality. In particular staff of businesses in the centre are believed to regularly park all day in the retail core, taking up spaces that would otherwise be available for potential customers. Ongoing observation of the off-street car parks behind the Safeway has shown that they are usually less than half full, drivers prefer closer parking. In some instances the car park spaces are well used. The Safeway car park and those in The Centreway are well used as are those adjacent to the railway.

The increased parking requirements of a more vibrant and active centre will ultimately put pressure on long term parking supply in peripheral areas. Other car parking issues include:

- Car parks being perceived to be too far away from the centre resulting from poor quality and uncomfortable access. There is little shade and a requirement to cross busy roads.
- The car parks are uncomfortable spaces with few trees providing little cover from the elements.
- Some on street parking areas are under-utilised as they are perceived to be unsafe and uncomfortable. They have unmonitored access.
- Car parks are not well signed and the number of spaces is not apparent. The potential impact of this lack of legibility is significant when considering the projected increase in customer numbers. There is a need for customers to have easy and clear access to car park spaces in the centre.

#### **Future Strategy:**

- Develop more car parking within the town centre of Lara. The provision of more car parking spaces within the town centre enables safe and easy access for staff and visitors alike, while enhancing the vitality of the town centre
- Establish a parking management scheme to encourage employees to use designated staff parking spaces or less central car parks, thus freeing up those in the retail core for use by customers.
- Maximise on-street car parking within existing kerblines.

#### **Proposals:**

- Implement a regime of parking restrictions based on the parking management scheme.
- Improve both pedestrian and vehicular signage to major car parks.
- Improve the safety, appearance & legibility of major car parks.
- Increase the number of car parking spaces in the main car park currently adjacent to Safeway.
- Retain the current parallel parking in The Centreway.

## Strategy 2.3 | INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CAR PARKING SPACES

Currently the Lara Town Centre area contains around 5,200 square metres of retail and commercial floor space. There are approximately 243 parking spaces in and around the centre, including private off-street spaces. This is a provision rate of 4.6 spaces per 100 square metres of floor area. Whilst some of the spaces are less convenient for shoppers the overall provision rate is higher than expected demands for an economically viable town centre. Our observations indicate high utilisation of the parking, which often indicates a need for retail expansion.

Community opinion is generally that there is insufficient parking in the town centre area. Existing parking appears adequate for most foreseeable peak demands, although it is not likely that shoppers can find a parking space at the front door of the shops they wish to attend.

That is always the case in a reasonably healthy centre, and because expansion allowance is a key focus of the UDF, future conditions for parking are more relevant than current. However, there is still a need to increase the number of car parking spaces to accommodate the increase in retail floor space in the town centre. There is expected demand for an additional 8,200m<sup>2</sup> of floor space in the town centre, which will necessitate the increase in spaces.

Estimated peak parking demands generated at the expanded Lara Town Centre are:

Specialty shops	3,800m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	133
Supermarket	3,500m <sup>2</sup> @ 4.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	158
Commercial and Community Space	2,200m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	77
Showroom	2,500m <sup>2</sup> @ 2.0 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	50
Mini-Major	1,400m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	49
<b>TOTAL PEAK DEMAND</b>		<b>467</b>

Staff requirements are likely to comprise around 160 of these spaces, and customer demands around 310 spaces.

### Future Strategy:

- To increase the number of car parking spaces in the town centre to adequately cater for the parking requirements of the expanded centre and new developments within it.
- To provide enlarged central car parking facilities within the town centre.
- Establish a parking management scheme to encourage employees to use designated staff parking spaces or less central car parks, thus freeing up those in the retail core for use by customers.
- To allow adequate parking for the new developments.

The following parking allowances are made

Staff Spaces		Customer Spaces	
Private off-street	79	The Centreway	36
Waverley Road east side, north of Gillean Place	9	The Centreway north	41
Safeway northern car park and Gillean Place	53	Expanded Safeway car park and Waverley Road	154
Parking at the rear of showrooms	110	Southern service road and 'island'	22
Parking along building frontage facing Austin Park	20	Triangular pod	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>324</b>

\* these spaces can be partly customer spaces should the need arise

**Proposals:**

- Retain on street parking in the Centreway
- Upgrade, enlarge and increase the number of car parking spaces in the central car park (currently adjacent to Safeway) to increase the capacity from 72 to 145 spaces. The new car park will be well landscaped and be laid out in a clear manner for easy access.
- Provide on street parking throughout the town centre, specifically in front of the new developments, in a combination of 90° and parallel configurations.
- Provide car parks to the rear of buildings.
- Increase the number of car parking spaces at the bowling club to around 90 to adequately cater for the demand imposed by the new Bowling Club and associated facilities.

The table below illustrates the 'core' area parking for staff (271) spaces and customers (324) totals 605 spaces or 4.5 spaces per 100m<sup>2</sup> of floor space.

In addition to this, the master plan illustrates the Bowling Club contains around 90 parking spaces, the preschool has 24 spaces on Waverley Road, there are 30 spaces along the northern side of the reconfigured Austin Park, and around 15 spaces along the western side of Waverley Road south of Walkers Road.

Additional parking along the frontage street to the showroom in the south-eastern corner of the new town centre will add around 9 spaces at the shop front.

## Strategy 2.4 | CREATE A SUCCESSFUL MOVEMENT NETWORK

Increased mobility has increased the choices of places people can shop and do business. This increases competition between activity centres. Whilst the shops and services on offer remain the most important factor in determining which centre people will go to, convenient access is a close second. This includes:

- Ease of access **to the centre** by car, foot, public transport or bicycle;
- Ease of parking; and
- Ease of circulation **within the centre** by car, foot, public transport or bicycle.

In order to invite visitors into a centre, a clearly understandable network of streets, paths and public spaces must be promoted and maintained.

A successful movement network allows access to all of the major facilities of a town centre by a number of different modes of transport, ensuring all places are easily accessible.

At present, The Centreway does not have good exposure from main roads which lead to and through Lara. Travelling east along Station Lake Road, the centre is not visible until one is almost past it, and from the west, the centre is partly concealed by Austin Park.

In general access to The Centreway is convoluted and not legible. There is poor signage to and through the town centre.

Pedestrian routes are poorly defined and there are poor links into a greater movement network. There are poor pedestrian and vehicular links between shops / carparks / transport (rail) / sports precinct / bowls club etc. [see also Strategy 1.1]

It is necessary to ensure that the town centre is well connected to the surrounding residential areas by both roads and footpaths to ensure residents can easily walk or cycle to the town centre.

It is also necessary to ensure that vehicular traffic circulation through and around the town centre is efficient and easy. At present, there are delays and issues relating to the at-grade vehicular and pedestrian crossings at McClelland Avenue. In the next 10 to 20 years, it is anticipated that a fourth track through Lara will be installed, primarily for standard gauge traffic. This will necessitate the consideration of the option of grade separation given the width of a four track level crossing being unacceptable from a safety perspective. Also, given the escalating safety concerns associated with at-grade crossings, the Government now expects that redevelopments should plan for grade separation as a matter of course. The UDF makes allowance for the possible railway overpass, however it is recognised that funding is not currently available and that consequently the movement network must be designed with the existing level crossing.

## Welcoming Signs

With more competition and towns, there is a need for towns to improve their signage as part of their wider promotional efforts. Some have commissioned artists and craftsmen to create distinctive 'gateways', and calm traffic at the same time, while others have relied on floral arrangements to give a sense of welcoming.

Signs can also indicate what facilities the town has to offer and how to reach them. An outline map of the town, indicating the main shopping areas and attractions, along with clear directions, can show the town cares. At the same time as new signs are installed, it is also vital to reduce the proliferation of unnecessary posts and a cull is often the answer.

[URBED, New life for smaller towns, London, 1999]

### **Future Strategy:**

In order for the town centre to adequately compete with Corio Village and other out of town centres, the movement network must be clear and legible, and provide access to car parking facilities. The legibility can be achieved through good directional signage, and a visible hierarchy of roads.

A successful movement network is one that caters for all modes of transport, has an understandable network of roads, clear and legible directional signage, high quality buildings that contribute to the public domain and placemaking such as the supermarket and library and high quality spaces and public domain treatments such as the town square.

To ensure efficient vehicular movement and circulation to and through the town centre, it will be necessary to provide a grade-separated alternative to the current at-grade crossing, prior to the installation of the fourth rail track.

### **Proposals:**

Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections in and around the town centre (see also Strategy 3.4) to promote and facilitate sustainable transport modes.

Identify the road network through signage, pavement treatments, traffic calming methods and reduced speed limits particularly along the realigned Waverley Road.

Develop a consistent and clear suite of directional signage to and from and in and around the town centre.

Enhance links and access to the Transit Interchange (see Strategy 3.3).

Ensure the town centre movement network is designed to allow the creation of a rail overpass in the future but that it also allows a successful network in the interim.

Prior to the instating of the rail overpass, the following interim configuration is proposed:

- Realign Station Lake Road to Mill Road/Walkers Road intersection (currently a roundabout) to ensure that the town centre is not split by a major road. This alignment is needed to create the site for the supermarket and shops east of Waverley Road, on the southern end of Austin Park.
- Create a street along the southern end of the reconfigured Austin Park between Waverley Road and the realigned Station Lake Road if the community facilities (and possibly a new motel) are to be established.

The ultimate configuration of the movement network is proposed as thus:

- Realignment of Station Lake Road to McClelland Avenue with a bridge over the railway line.
- Create a new intersection between Waverley Road and Station Lake Road.
- Create a street along the southern end of the reconfigured Austin Park between Waverley Road and the realigned Station Lake Road.
- Retain the level crossing and pedestrian-gate facilities at the railway lines.
- Create a one-way service road for the south-eastern corner of the town centre.

## **Strategy 2.5** | FACILITATE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

In order for Lara to achieve a successful town centre, developments must be encouraged to occur in the right place in an effective fashion. This can only be achieved through a positive, proactive and strategic approach to planning and development.

An attractive, safe and easy to access town centre will no doubt attract potential customers. If the right business activities are not available, in the right place, open at the right time or advertised and promoted in the right fashion it is unlikely that such customers will return a second time. The coordinated management, marketing and operation of the centre is therefore just as important as its physical appearance.

At present, Lara does not have a co-ordinated approach to successful town centre management. Therefore the following strategies are proposed:

### **Future Strategy:**

- That the City of Greater Geelong form a community reference or consultation group to act as a conduit for the wider community.
- That the City of Greater Geelong manage the implementation of the individual projects through its various departments including strategic/statutory planning and major projects.

### **Proposal:**

- Implement a town centre management policy as outlined in Chapter 6 – The Implementation Strategy, 6.1 Management.

## Strategy 2.6 | PROMOTE EVENTS

Lara is partially at a disadvantage in regards to events and events hosting as Geelong has a diverse base of activities and events which already have to be marketed and advertised heavily to compete with metropolitan Melbourne. There are many diverse activities competing for the local media in Geelong, and Lara will have similar issues, but on a more micro level. However, it is likely that many events hosted in Lara will be mainly directed at Lara residents and businesses.

There are a number of events which are held in and around Lara including:

- The Lara Heritage Festival
- Stage 4 UCI Women's Road Cycling World Cup
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lara Scout Group Drive-In Night
- Footscray Cycling Club Road Races
- Geelong Mountain Bike Club
- Geelong Cross Country Club

Austin Park is a key asset within the town centre. It provides a significant 'green space' within the city centre. It is an important recreational asset providing a place for events and 'breathing space' for locals and visitors alike. It is highly visible from many areas within and outside of the town centre. It is an introduction to and entry statement for Lara. Its location is ideal to act as an events space.

Unfortunately the present configuration of the park does not allow for significant interaction between the retail core and the park. Austin Park is fronted by the large expanse of the Safeway car park. Due to this configuration and the poor relationship of the retail core to facilities within the park relationships between activities in the town centre and the open space of the park are not being realised.

Event infrastructure, including accommodation, is critical to hosting events. At present, Lara has little specialist events infrastructure.

Marketing and promotion for events should be part of the overall town centre management. This is explained in further detail in Chapter 6 – Implementation, specifically in section 6.1 – Management. Sponsorship is a becoming increasingly important in terms of the viability of events. The town centre management scheme should aim to strike up meaningful relationships with local industry/business whose style is often more philanthropic and look to giving back to the local community. Community ownership/support is critical to the success of an event in a small community like Lara, and some of the most successful local events held in small communities, arose from the community, are owned by the community and as a result, the entire community has ownership and embraces the event.

## Attractions

Attractions refer to what draws in the customers and are the foundations of healthy town centres. The range or diversity of shops/ services is a principal factor for town centre health. The diversity of attractions relates to the nature and composition of retailing in the centre measured, for example, by the multiples, specialist shops or markets in the centre. Other attractions include arts, cultural or entertainment facilities, health and other services, and even the availability of space for people living or working in the centre, all of which help to keep a centre feeling alive.

[URBED, New life for smaller towns, London, 1999]



## Future Strategy:

One of the main form of events in Lara is cycling. This type of an event is not necessarily centred on the town nor celebrates it. The town has significant potential to support more events that celebrate Lara. Through better configuration of Austin Park and an improvement of the physical relationship between the retail core and the park and promotion of other events spaces the civic life of Lara can be improved. Therefore a strategy to promote events should be initiated that includes:

- Recognise Austin Park as the town park within the town centre, and consequently the primary venue for cultural and civic activities.
- Reconfigure Austin Park to create a more useable space so that it addresses community needs in a flexible way, enhances event functionality and is memorable.
- Promote events throughout the year and provide locations for them offering appropriate infrastructure through town centre management.
- Highlight the distinctiveness of Lara through the design of streetscape elements such as distinctive furniture and banners.
- Locate outdoor dining facilities in close proximity to larger public spaces to ensure that events can be well serviced by food service.
- Locate amenities including public car parking and public toilets in close proximity to events spaces.
- Ensure there are well maintained, direct and legible links between the events spaces and public transport.
- Allow for the flexible use of large open spaces such as car parks which lend themselves to public events.

It is important to respect and promote those qualities that make Lara an attractive place to be. There are a number of attractions which make Lara a distinctive place to be. One way to celebrate these attractions and foster community pride and spirit as well as increasing the number of visitors to Lara is through events. There are a number of key factors which enable events to happen, one is appropriate public spaces to hold events, another is the management of events.

### Proposals:

- Create an events and performance space in Austin Park.
- Create a town square fronted by active uses that is intrinsically linked with Austin Park through feature paving and landscape treatment to create a civic focus. The town square also offers opportunities for sculpture, seating and outdoor eating/cafés. This will contribute to the overall welcoming image of the locality.
- Locate a new bus stop on the town square as part of the new movement network to facilitate easy access to the events spaces by public transport.
- Create direct and legible links from the new transit interchange to events spaces including Austin Park and the town square.
- Allow the potential for cafés or restaurants to spill out into the town square.
- Design in flexibility for the central car park space to allow it to be closed off with temporary bollards to create an events space, and promote the creation of a regular weekend market.

**Aim 3** Promote sustainable transport, access and movement

Lara is well positioned to apply a number of government sustainable transport and movement policies and initiatives which provide guidance to ensure more sustainable transport use. These include:

- Melbourne 2030
- Linking Victoria
- Transit Cities
- Growing Victoria Together
- Victorian Greenhouse Strategy
- TravelSMART

Whilst some of these apply specifically to areas within the metropolitan growth boundary of Melbourne, it is worth noting that there are many principles which can be adapted and applied to Lara.

### **Melbourne 2030**

Melbourne 2030 sets out clear aims and objectives that support sustainable transport movement through:

- the development of high quality walking networks,
- raising awareness of sustainable means of travel and motivating people to use them
- Land use policies that put more people nearby essential and valued activities.

### **Linking Victoria**

Linking Victoria aims to ensure that public transport is integrated with other modes of transport including cycling and walking.

Linking Victoria aims to increase public transport's share of all motorised trips to 20% by 2020.

### **Transit Cities**

The Transit Cities initiative places a strong emphasis on public transport planning and a commitment to help improve the State's social, environmental and economic success through balanced and practical transport strategies. Transit Cities is a program for creating safe, vibrant and accessible communities, centred on public transport.

### **Growing Victoria Together**

Growing Victoria Together expresses the vision, policy priorities and key progress measures of the Victorian Government.

The policy reiterates the target for the growth of public transport to 20 percent of motorised trips in Melbourne by 2020. In 2002, that figure was approximately 9 percent. The policy identifies the need to invest in infrastructure to achieve this goal.

### **Victorian Greenhouse Strategy**

The Victorian Greenhouse Strategy contains 59 actions across ten key areas where action can be taken to reduce emissions from industry and commerce, local government and households.

The strategy notes that transport contributes 16 percent to Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions

### **TravelSMART**

The TravelSmart initiative looks to encourage people to use their cars less and walk, cycle and take public transport more. While the main focus of the program is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, there are many other benefits to peoples quality of life, including increased exercise, less congestion and a better use of existing resources.

In order to create an integrated transport network comprising and supporting sustainable transport modes, the following strategies are proposed:

- Strategy 3.1 Create a new Transit Interchange at the Lara station
- Strategy 3.2 Expand the number of commuter car parks at the transport interchange
- Strategy 3.3 Enhance links and access to the Transit Interchange
- Strategy 3.4 Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections in and around the town centre

### Strategy 3.1 | CREATE A NEW TRANSIT INTERCHANGE AT THE LARA STATION

Redevelop the station and immediate environs as a high quality transport interchange, which integrates trains, buses, bikes, pedestrians, taxis and private cars.

The Lara train station is marooned on an island between the train tracks, and access to the platform is currently limited to a single at-grade pedestrian crossing from the car park. The creation of a transit interchange in Lara as outlined in Strategy 1.1 encourages a station upgrade.

The train station currently suffers from poor pedestrian and vehicular access, is not visible from the town centre, has a lack of signage and a lack of facilities.

To ensure that the high level of patronage for the station is increased, and that the principals of Transit Cities as well as supporting other sustainable transport initiatives are considered, it is necessary to transform the station area into a vibrant inter-modal hub of public transport and functions.

#### Future Strategy:

To transform the Lara Station into a state-of-the-art Transit Interchange, which is well connected with an efficient and easy to use movement structure.

#### Proposals:

Create a new transit interchange building and interchange on the Mill Road side of the station. Connect the new building and interchange to the station platform and the east side of the station via a high quality DDA compliant pedestrian overpass. The new transit interchange building, interchange and overpass and improved car park and bus interchange will comprise:

- Kiss and ride stop, taxi ranks, bus stops and shelter.
- Retail and commercial floor space that is supported by public transport users and the residents. An example of this type of use may be convenience food stores and sports/gym facilities.
- New kiosks on the overpass, with shelter, shops and seating.
- Stairs and elevators to provide DDA compliant access to the existing (upgraded) station platforms from both Mill Road and Hicks Street.
- New parking area with 300 spaces and upgraded existing car parking on Hicks Street .
- Excellent pedestrian links to the town centre and schools.
- Consistent, clear and legible signage to direct people to the train station and town centre for all transport modes including cycling, walking and driving.
- A landmark building or tower that clearly identifies the location of the station when viewed from the town centre and is of a form that reflects the transit interchange use.

## **Strategy 3.2 | EXPAND THE NUMBER OF COMMUTER CAR PARKS AT THE TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE**

With the provision of more sustainable forms of transport than the private car, it is necessary to ensure these facilities can be easily accessed. Lara has a town centre and an extensive rural hinterland, which means that not all users of the train station would find it possible to walk or cycle there. It is therefore important to ensure that there are adequate parking facilities for those who arrive at the station by car.

Currently the station car park only just caters for the number of rail commuters. With a large increase in population it is expected that rail patronage will increase.

### **Future Strategy:**

To increase rail and public transport patronage and encourage residents to use more sustainable forms of transport, the station car park will need to be expanded and upgraded to increase the number of spaces relative to the peak parking demand.

### **Proposals:**

- Extend the commuter car park to the south in line with the numbers projected for the peak demand of the new transport interchange.
- Reconfigure, resurface and extend the existing car park.
- Clearly delineate pedestrian paths linking into the greater movement network.
- Fully landscape the car park with some screen planting and trees throughout as part of a future landscaping scheme.
- Light the car parks to increase perceptions of safety and security.

### Strategy 3.3 | ENHANCE LINKS AND ACCESS TO THE TRANSIT INTERCHANGE

At present the link between the station and the town centre is poor. One of the key attractions of Lara is that it is located in close proximity to both Geelong and Melbourne meaning that residents can live in Lara and commute to these major centres for both work and play. In order to promote the use of more sustainable modes, links to the station are to be visible, easy to use, easy to access, comfortable, clean and convenient.

It is necessary to promote both the station, and the links to the station to ensure that levels of patronage increase.

#### Future Strategy:

Promote the use of the new transit interchange and upgraded surrounds by enhancing the links to the station from the town centre.

Use signage along McClelland Avenue as well as from the town centre and Station Lake Road.

#### Proposals:

- Create a safe, direct and legible pedestrian link through Austin Park from the town centre to Mill Road, connecting with a pedestrian overpass from Mill Road leading directly to the station platform.
- Increase the amenity and visual prominence of the links to the station.
- Develop a comprehensive signage strategy that identifies the location of the station in particular on major routes such as McClelland Avenue and Station Lake Road.

### Strategy 3.4 | PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS IN AND AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE

Currently pedestrian accessibility and amenity around the town centre area is reduced because of poor or absent footpaths and the absence of active street frontages to most of the town centre area other than the Centreway. There are very few good pedestrian connections which link the town centre and the surrounding residential areas. This is, in part, due to the rural nature of Lara which unlike 'tighter', urban areas, does not have a comprehensive footpath network. The railway line, Lakeland Wetlands and Hovell's Creek all act as blockages in the movement network and thus reduce connectivity, amenity and pedestrian safety.

The residents of St Laurence Park, a large retirement and aged care facility located on Station Lake Road, have specific requirements for the movement network as they have differing mobility levels.

The mobile and semi-mobile residents are dependant on Lara's town centre for their shopping and other requirements. There is a high proportion of St Laurence residents who use motorised scooters as their mode of transport and therefore it is integral that the town centre is fully DDA compliant.

At present, there is a pedestrian pathway between St Laurence Park and the corner of Waverley Road and Station Lake Road, with a signalled pedestrian crossing at this corner.

Crossing Station Lake Road at Waverley Road has been raised as an issue by St Laurence Park Management. There is a reasonably convenient signal controlled pedestrian crossing to service this movement, and Station Lake Road can always be expected to be reasonably busy with traffic. Additional measures to control traffic speed in and around the town centre would enhance pedestrian safety and amenity all around the town centre, as would signal controlled intersections.

Pedestrian facilities for this important linkage need to be re-established with the realignment of Station Lake Road, and to include the controlled pedestrian crossing. Later change to these facilities is potentially quite expensive and disruptive.

Residents in Lara should be encouraged to access the town centre by sustainable alternatives such as walking and cycling. These should be facilitated and encouraged through the provision of appropriate pedestrian and cycle paths.

#### Future Strategy:

To ensure the town centre has understandable, comfortable and safe connections (DDA compliant) between places within the town centre and between the town centre and the adjoining residential areas such that walking and cycling are promoted and adopted as preferred modes of transport.



### **Proposal:**

- To upgrade pedestrian connections along the north side of Waverley Road, and continue the connection along Walkers Road
- Enhance the pedestrian connection between The Centreway and Turner Avenue
- Ensure that the centre is fully DDA compliant and accommodates the use of motorised scooters and frailer pedestrians
- Realign and possibly widen the existing connection between St Laurence Park and The Centreway
- Create new links from the town centre through Austin Park to the new Bowling Club
- Relocate the existing signalised pedestrian crossing on Station Lake Road in line with the reconfiguration of Station Lake Road.
- Create new footpath surfaces along the reconfigured Waverley and Station Lake Roads
- As per the Draft Lara Transport Management Plan June 2004, a program of footpath construction on all non cul-de-sac roads should be implemented as an ongoing long term program. All collector and higher order roads should have footpaths constructed on both sides as a matter of priority.
- In line with the rezoning to encourage medium density residential development, enhance the pedestrian connection between The Centreway and the residential area to the north of Waverley Road and undertake a study to investigate the possibility of the following pedestrian connections
  - corner of Walkers and Waverley Road through to Rigel Road
  - from the north end of Brownlow Crt to Bates Road
  - from Galileo Close direct to McClelland Avenue
- Improve accessibility to the Lara Railway Station/pedestrian overpass for school students and residents from the north west of the town centre by:
  - providing a safe crossing of Mill Road for pedestrians and cyclists
  - defining a route through the Recreation Reserve.

**Aim 4** Enhance and strengthen the public realm

The attractiveness of the town centre is dependant on the identity and appearance of the public domain, which are primary influences on how inviting the town centre is.

The identity and appearance of the public domain is a primary influence on how inviting the place is to potential visitors, residents and businesses. Apart from influencing its attractiveness, the appearance of an environment can create a distinctive character or local identity for the place, increasing its memorableness.

Attractiveness and identity are a product of the design, quality and maintenance of the physical components of an environment – buildings and elements within the public space such as street furniture, trees, public art, lighting and signage. The following strategies address the enhancement of the streetscape:

- 4.4.1 Enhance Austin Park
- 4.4.2 Create social spaces
- 4.4.3 Introduce new coordinated street furniture
- 4.4.4 Extend the shelter
- 4.4.5 Improve footpath surfaces
- 4.4.6 Improve lighting
- 4.4.7 Balance the needs of pedestrians and cars
- 4.4.8 Enhance interpretation and directional pedestrian signage

# Safe Environments

The environment influences the perception of safety in two primary ways: visibility and activity.

The visibility of an environment - or the degree to which people can see into the space around them clearly - influences whether people feel comfortable in that space. It allows them to assure themselves that there are no undesirable people or activities in that environment that might be perceived to place them in danger. Visibility is enhanced by the design of the environment to avoid ill-defined or hidden areas, and the lighting of it to avoid shadowed areas at night. This is particularly relevant in streets; if it is not possible to see from one intersection to the next, whether through the shape of the space or poor lighting, many people will not feel comfortable.

The level of activity in a street or public space also influences the perception of safety. This includes not only the amount of activity in the space itself, but also the activeness of the edges to the space - the degree to which the buildings alongside interact with the space whether through shop or cafe fronts, or simply doors and windows. Most people feel more comfortable in a public space if there are other people in it, or overlooking it from adjacent buildings, unless those people are perceived to be dangerous.

#### 4.4.1 | ENHANCE AUSTIN PARK

Lara has a distinct advantage over many town centres in that it has a large amount of open space, in the form of Austin Park, within the town centre. However, the current configuration results in sections of the park that are not useable.

In particular, the present road configuration creates narrow and angular parcels of land, which are difficult and dangerous to use for any recreational and leisure activities.

There are a number of characteristics of the park and its relationship to the remainder of the centre which do not fulfil its potential.

These are:

- There is not a strong physical relationship between the town centre and the park – the visual and physical connections are poor.
- It does not help create legible, comfortable and safe links between various town centre components such as the retail and commercial precinct, the bowling club and sports precincts and transport hub.
- It does not contribute to the understanding of a clear and legible town centre structure
- There is a lack of parking and servicing opportunities along the edges of the park.

#### Future Strategy

To retain Austin Park as one of the key focal points of the town centre and improve it by reconfiguring the Park to:

- Contribute to the creation of a legible town centre structure;
- Reduce the amount of unusable space;
- Create a strong visual and physical link between the retail/commercial precinct and the park;
- Improve links to the park and throughout the town;
- Improve parking and servicing opportunities within the town centre.

#### Proposal

- Reconfigure the park to 'normalise' its shape thereby decreasing the amount of **unusable** open space.
- Relocate and upgrade the existing features of the park including the Bowling Club, skate park, public toilets and playground.
- Incorporate new features that will entice people to stay and play, such as a performance space.
- Increase the interaction with the town by ensuring buildings front the park that include new civic functions such as the Town Square and library.
- Increase availability and improve location of car parks adjacent to the park
- Develop clearly defined pedestrian movement paths to and through the park.

### Mixed Use

Activity in the public domain contributes to the perception of safety in the environment.

Generating activity in the public domain throughout the day and week requires a mix of land uses. Most business uses are active during weekdays, with retail outlets also active during the day on Saturday and sometimes Sunday, while residential and entertainment uses tend to be active during the evenings and at weekends.

[URBED, New life for smaller towns, London, 1999]

## 4.4.2 | CREATE SOCIAL SPACES

“Life takes place on foot”

“A summary of the observations and investigations shows that people and human activity are the greatest object of attention and interest. Even the modest form of contact of merely seeing and hearing or being near to others is apparently more rewarding and more in demand than the majority of other attractions offered in the public spaces of cities and residential areas.”<sup>1</sup>

Lara is a social place, however there are no high quality, well designed social spaces. Austin Park is relatively disconnected from the town centre by the large Safeway car park, and there is no specific central point such as a town square to act as a focus of social interaction within the town centre.

Lara’s spaces and places need to be better designed to ensure that they are useable, interesting, lively and social.

### **Future Strategy:**

Create a focus activity area, a public space that has nodes of activity complemented by quiet zones for rest and people watching. Spaces should be created that stimulate all of the senses:

- touch: how does it feel – texture and microclimate
- sound: what sounds can help create character
- smell: what scents can be added – its aromas can heighten the experience of a place

Create a stage set for a lively and interesting environment; introduce or allow for activity sources alongside or in the interior of spaces. Spaces can be created to accommodate street performers, evening films or theatrical performances, markets, carnivals or parades.

Build in versatility such that people from different cultural or age groups including children, the disabled and the elderly can use the spaces in different ways.

### **Proposal:**

Create of a new civic precinct including a town square so that it becomes a focus for social interaction working in unison with Austin Park and its associated play areas and the skate park.

<sup>1</sup> Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, Arkitektens Forlag, 2001, p.73, 31

### 4.4.3 | INTRODUCE NEW COORDINATED STREET FURNITURE

“Public space is occupied by a host of components, whether seats, fences, shelters, boxes, poles, lights, bollards or signs. All these need careful attention.”<sup>1</sup>

The Centreway has had recent improvements to the streetscape through the application of planted kerb outstands and a central median strip. However these improvements are limited in their application.

#### Future Strategy:

To create more cohesive identity and sense of place in the Lara by expanding the application of street furniture to include the Station, Austin Park, Safeway car park and sports precinct through the establishment of a consistent and unified streetscape treatment, including furniture, lighting, bollards, paving and planting themes.

#### Proposal:

The following are a set of guidelines for the introduction of consistent streetscape treatments:

- Provide a consistent suite of furniture throughout the town centre. Wherever possible tie different furniture items together with consistent element such as colour and material.
- Street furniture items should match each other, be robust and easily maintained, and meet the City of Greater Geelong standards.
- Design spaces so that the functions of its parts are clear and the need for signs, barriers and the like are minimised.
- Either hide or flaunt visually unattractive elements such as service inspection boxes. They can be hidden in the landscape or building edges. If it is essential that it be positioned in the open then its design, height and level of illumination should be selected carefully for the particular space.
- Where appropriate, treat street furniture as art.
- Produce a comprehensive and coordinated strategy of elements for each space; carefully selecting them according to the context of the space – the landscape, buildings and floorscape.
- Utilise custom made as well as “off the shelf” designs.
- Ensure coordination of the relevant government departments and service authorities such as VicTrack and council with the development of the transport interchange.



<sup>1</sup> Llewelyn – Davies, Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships, August 2000, p.102

#### 4.4.4 | EXTEND THE SHELTER

Lack of shelter is a significant reason why people choose not to walk in a centre. People want to be dry, shaded and comfortable wherever possible.

Historically, large verandas covering the footpath were an integral part of any town or city centre in Australia. There is the opportunity to provide verandas on some shop fronts and new buildings in the town centre.

Verandahs provide:

- Visual character;
- Extension of indoor/outdoor activity areas;
- Protection from the rain; and
- Historic reference.

The majority of buildings within the town centre at present provide shelter in the form of verandas.

#### Future Strategy:

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer due to sun exposure. Protection from the sun by verandas and other structures is therefore paramount to ensuring a healthy town.

#### Proposal:

All new buildings should provide shelter in the form of verandas or other structures, where appropriate. Such structures should not be developed where they detract from the significance of the building or the place. The existing awnings and verandas covering footpath areas should be retained. The following strategies should be put in place:

- Property owners should be encouraged to provide shelters and verandahs where they do not already exist, through the provision of design advice.
- Shelter areas along paths and high traffic areas that are not bounded by buildings should be developed
- New buildings should be developed with verandahs directly fronting existing and proposed routes where they can provide cover over presently uncovered or undesirable places to walk or to be.



#### 4.4.5 | IMPROVE FOOTPATH SURFACES

The majority of the footpaths in the town centre have a relatively consistent treatment of concrete paving, except for a section of brick pavers to the north of the town centre, in front of the pet supplies and hairdresser's.

The pavement areas in front of the kerb outstands have a special pavement treatment, and the kerb outstands are timber decked with a clean-stemmed tree in the centre.

##### Future Strategy:

In order to provide a comfortable walking environment for pedestrians, the following strategies are proposed:

- Use a common pavement treatment consistently throughout the town centre that is simple, safe, cost effective and flexible. Bitumen has been used successfully in many cities, such as Paris
- Use different pavement treatments to add character and localised identity in key locations

##### Proposals:

- Highlight the footpath at intersections
- Create feature treatments to highlight crossing points within the town centre
- Establish a strong pedestrian link between the town square and Austin Park through feature paving and landscape treatments
- Create feature paving threshold treatments to provide pedestrian links across the central car park to the retail
- With the reconfiguration of Austin Park, create a network of pedestrian/bike link between the town centre and the station



## 4.4.6 | IMPROVE LIGHTING

"By designing areas that are well lit for pedestrians, with particular care given to vehicle/pedestrian conflict points, places are made safer and unthreatening.."<sup>1</sup>

In The Centreway itself, the centre-of-road lighting is generally sufficient and to a standard palette. Outside of The Centreway, the lighting is normal street lighting, mounted on electricity poles. It is necessary to promote a standard palette throughout the new town centre.

There is currently insufficient lighting between the station and the town centre.

### Future Strategy:

The town centre should be well lit at night to encourage traders and the users to encourage the night economy, that is, the town centre functioning beyond normal 9-5. This can be achieved by installing new lighting in poorly lit areas. The lighting can be in a number of forms, such as bud lighting in the trees or highlighting of key or feature buildings.

### Proposals:

- New lighting should be installed where it is currently insufficient and throughout the new town centre. It is necessary to light the central car park and critical to ensure the pedestrian links from the town centre to the train station through Austin Park are well lit.
- Encourage traders to light their shop windows at night (with the benefit to them of encouraging window shopping).
- Ensure areas of outdoor eating and the town centre are well lit, possibly through bud lighting, to encourage their use at night.
- Light the underside of verandas to create a well lit path at night.



<sup>1</sup> Llewelyn - Davies Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships, p.104

#### 4.4.7 | BALANCE THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS AND CARS

At present, there is little difficulty for pedestrians crossing The Centreway as car speeds are generally low and there are good kerb outstands which ensure pedestrian visibility. There are difficulties for pedestrians attempting to cross Station Lake Road at places other than the signalised pedestrian crossing as traffic is often high and at a higher speed of 50-60 km/h. There may be difficulties for pedestrians crossing Waverley Road as on the south side, there are no footpaths, and there are no specific crossing points.

##### **Future Strategy:**

The streets in the town centre still have important traffic functions to serve, but a careful approach to detailed traffic design and management can improve the flow of pedestrians with minimal disruption to traffic.

- Create a better balance between cars and pedestrians can be achieved by reducing the crossing distance for pedestrians, by slowing traffic, and creating gaps in traffic.

##### **Proposals:**

- Design the realigned Waverley Road in front of the new supermarket and retail as a low car speed, pedestrian favoured street
- Retain slow traffic speeds in The Centreway

#### 4.4.8 | ENHANCE INTERPRETATION AND DIRECTIONAL PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

There is currently little signage to assist pedestrians in understanding the unique places, history, culture and environment of Lara and what it has to offer.

Improved directional signage is required to ensure that pedestrians know how to get to Lara's attractions.

##### **Future Strategy:**

Enhanced interpretive signage is required to ensure that pedestrians are aware of Lara's attractions and the unique character and attributes of the various precincts within the centre.

##### **Proposal:**

- To install signage to direct pedestrians to the key attractions of Lara such as the town centre, the library, the transport interchange and cafés.





# the proposal

## 5.0 | THE PROPOSALS

This chapter provides a brief outline of the projects or implementable actions that follow from the application of the strategies outlined in Chapter 4. The projects are described in more detail in Volume 2, under the same numbering.

The projects fall into three categories, as detailed below:

### Civic Improvements

Substantial, long term improvements to the streets and landscape, including strategies that provide fair and safe access for all who use the town centre.

- Town Centre public realm
- Transit Interchange and Pedestrian Overpass
- Car Park Management

### Public Domain Projects

Relatively contained, intense treatments in the public domain.

- Austin Park
- Town Square

### Development Opportunities

Developments on currently or potentially private and public sites

- Bowling Club
- Emergency Services Hub
- Residential Growth & Intensification

**Civic Improvements**

- ① Town Centre Public Realm
- ② Transit Interchange and Pedestrian Overpass
- ③ Car Park Management

**Public Domain Projects**

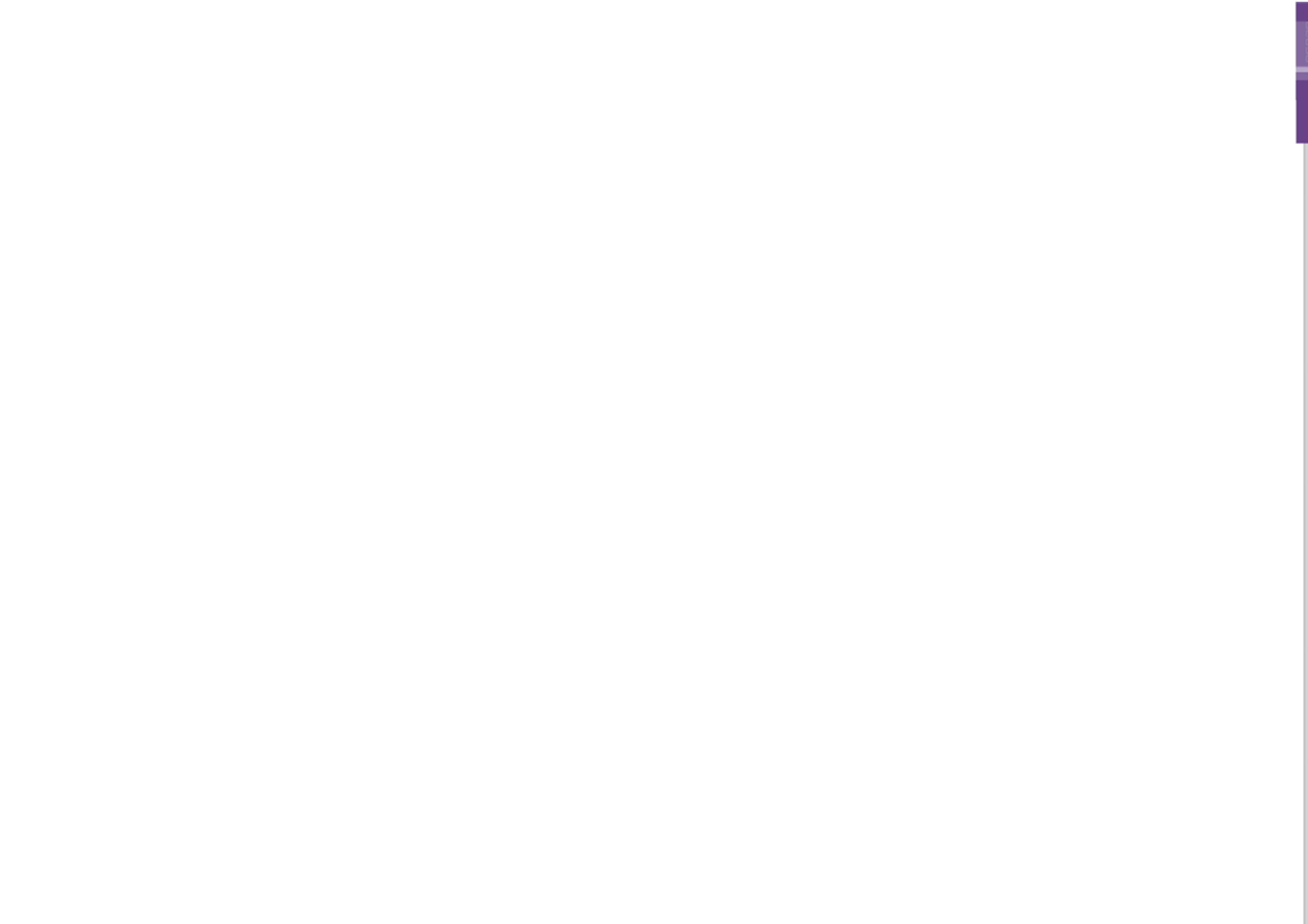
- ④ Austin Park
- ⑤ Town Square

**Development Opportunities**

- ⑥ Bowling Club
- ⑦ Emergency Services Hub







# implementation strategy

## 6.0 | THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This chapter provides an outline of how the recommendations of the UDF are to be implemented. The proper implementation of the strategy will ensure the town centre's success, and a vital, and attractive place for residents and visitors. The implementation strategy is organised under the following headings:

- Management;
- Statutory Planning;
- Funding;
- Staging, including identification of signature and key projects;
- Capital Works Program; and
- Monitoring.

## 6.1 | MANAGEMENT

### 6.1.1 | COUNCIL'S ROLE IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN CENTRE

For Lara to achieve its potential appropriate land uses, activities and developments must be encouraged to occur in the right place in an effective fashion. This can only be achieved through a positive, proactive and strategic approach to planning and development. As the planning authority and the agency responsible for facilitating the community's vision for Lara, the City of Greater Geelong has a pivotal role in the future development of the centre. Waiting for and responding to development applications is not an adequate response for a Council that sees itself as a key player in the economic, social and cultural advancement of Lara.

#### Council's roles:

- To ensure that all Council services directed towards the town centre are delivered in a consistent, coordinated and integrated fashion.
- To ensure that the future plans for the town centre are understood and appreciated by the business people and property owners in the centre.
- To provide a rolling capital works budget dedicated to the town centre to enable the physical infrastructure works to be implemented.
- To seek alternative sources of funding for public realm improvements, as appropriate.
- To ensure that Council fees and charges relevant to the town centre reflect the objectives of the UDF.
- To establish a partnership with the businesses and property owners in the city centre with each group taking appropriate responsibility for the funding, management and pursuit of various aspects of the strategy.
- To identify preferred land use activities for all properties in the centre and overcome the problem of being able to advise prospective developers, businesses or investors of what they can do with a particular site or building rather than what they cannot do.
- To refine development schemes for key sites demonstrating how the Council's objectives can be achieved.
- To establish a clear application approvals process identifying what information is required and what turn around times.
- To identify business activity gaps in the centre and actively seek out businesses to fill such gaps.
- To communicate regularly with those who have any interest in the centre, including businesses, transport operators, government agencies, property owners, investors and developers.
- To provide a one stop shop for all approvals required by business in the centre, footpath trading, car parking, planning and development etc.
- To support the role and function of the town centre as the primary retail, business, and community centre for Lara.

### 6.1.2 | FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE

Whilst an Urban Design Framework concentrates on the physical aspects of the centre, it is necessary (to enable the centre to operate effectively), to consider the activity make up, management and coordination of the centre.

An attractive, safe and easy to access centre will no doubt attract potential customers. If the right business activities are not available, in the right place, open at the right time or advertised and promoted in the right fashion it is unlikely that such customers will return a second time. The coordinated management, marketing and operation of the centre is therefore just as important as its physical appearance.

The City of Greater Geelong will manage the implementation of the individual projects through its various departments some of which include Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Major Projects and City Services.

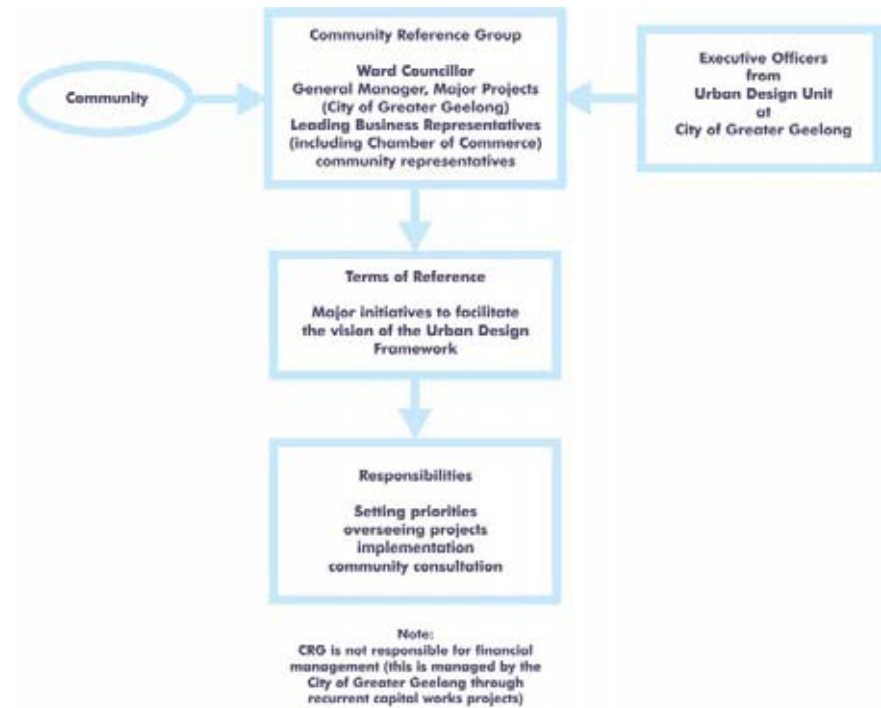
It is suggested that council to set up a Community Reference Group (CRG) which will act as the conduit to the wider community. This group would typically comprise the Ward Councillor, the General Manager of Major Projects from council, and leading business and community representatives including the Lara Chamber of Commerce. This group would be served by executive officers from the urban design unit at the City of Greater Geelong.

The group would also be served at appropriate times by officers from strategic and statutory planning. Council would advertise for positions on the group and have a terms of reference which would be limited to major initiatives to facilitate the UDF vision. The group would be responsible for setting priorities and overseeing the project and its implementation as well as community consultation. The group would not be responsible for the financial management as this would be managed by council through recurrent or capital works programs.

Council will be responsible for tapping into the funding streams and sources available from State and Federal government as well as from other sources, as identified in Part 6.3 Funding.

The structure of the Community Reference Group will be smaller than the one currently in place in Geelong for the CAA.

The City of Greater Geelong City Services will be responsible for the maintenance of the assets and infrastructure.



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To enable the UDF to be effective it is recommended that the Council pursue an overall 'Town Centre Management' system for the city centre.

Typically Town Centre Management draws together:

- Marketing and Promotion;
- Activity attraction and retention;
- Business Development and training;
- Physical design and development; and
- Management of "public" assets and infrastructure in the centre.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this project to prepare a detailed management proposal for Lara the following issues are provided to stimulate discussion of the issue.

There are approximately 80 examples of "Town Centre Management" schemes in place in Victoria at the present time with a wide variety of complexities and scale. Town Centre Management allows a traditional multi ownership activity centre to adopt a coordinated approach to the overall management of a centre more commonly associated with a 'purpose built' or 'managed' freestanding shopping centre.

Town Centre Management relies on:

- The existence of a succinct business plan for the centre that establishes:
  - the preferred role and function of the centre.
  - the relationship of the centre to its environs and other centres.
  - its catchment areas and target markets.
  - the activities that will be required to fulfil the vision.
  - a process through which the management, marketing and promotion of the centre can be pursued.
  - the human and financial resources required.
  - roles and responsibilities to all parties.
  - a marketing and promotional scheme.
  - a management structure for the centre.
- An equitable partnership between the Council, property owners and businesses.
- A strong and representative business association.
- An equitable funding mechanism, (most commonly through a special rate)
- An integrated approach to the design and development of the centre.
- A long term perspective and shorter term objectives.
- Effective communications system.
- Performance measurement criteria.

The introduction of a town centre management system needs to be carefully considered and pursued through an inclusive process that demonstrates the benefits and advantages of a coordinated approach. It cannot be rushed and should not be imposed.

## **6.2 | PLANNING – THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE UDF FOR THE PLANNING SCHEME**

The Planning Scheme can contribute to the Urban Design Framework’s objectives in the following four ways:

- Planning principles and objectives contained in the Municipal Strategic Statement.
- Local planning policies for the Lara area, retailing, business development.
- Planning zones.
- Planning application approvals and permit conditions.

### **6.2.1 | PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES CONTAINED IN THE MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT**

When the MSS is next reviewed the overall importance of the town centre should be clearly established in the major objectives and principles for Lara.

### **6.2.2 | LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES – LARA**

Local Provisions of the Planning Scheme will need to be amended to reflect and support the UDF through a review of clause 21.31.

A statement is required outlining the role and function of the town centre, emphasising its status as the main focus of retailing and services for Lara and as the preferred location for specific land use activities.

The ‘implementation policies’ listed in this section will need to be reviewed to ensure consistency with the UDF. Additionally the UDF should be listed as a reference document in the planning scheme and the existing map replaced by an appropriate overall plan of the city centre drawn from the UDF which identifies:

- land use activity foci and precincts.
- pedestrian and vehicular access routes.
- major off street car parking areas.
- significant sites.
- transport interchanges.
- public gathering spaces.
- views and vistas.

### **6.2.3 | PLANNING ZONES**

The existing zoning of the town centre is Business 1. This zone is considered appropriate and has the capacity to accommodate all the land use activities envisaged by the UDF, however it requires extension to accommodate the proposed new supermarket and associated retail/commercial uses.

The recommended planning control changes are as follows:

- The Business 1 Zone (B1Z) should be extended to include the town centre redevelopment and allow the desired uses to occur.
- A Development Plan Overlay (DPO) is recommended for the new shopping centre site to ensure development occurs in accordance with the UDF and to require a range of detailed planning issues to be resolved prior to commencement of development of the area.
- The Road Zone (RDZ2) and Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) will require amendments to fit the new uses proposed by the UDF Master Plan.

### **6.2.4 | PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS.**

The objectives of the UDF will need to be taken into account by the Council when it considers planning and development applications. Council discretion in this process includes its ability to ultimately approve or reject planning applications and to give dispensations in regard to specific elements of a proposal, for example car parking where ratios applied to specific activities in specific locations can be used to effectively encourage or discourage specific development and activity.

The planning approvals process must also be used to protect the amenity of the residential areas surrounding the city centre. The Business 1 Zone provides for a broad and diverse range and scale of land use activities. Whilst high scale and intensity activities may well be appropriate in the 'core' of the Business 1 Zone, such activities may not be appropriate at the edge of the zone, especially where it adjoins a residential area. Noise, emissions, overlooking, overshadowing, car parking, traffic generation and loading issues for example will need to be taken into account.

## 6.3 | FUNDING

According to the Urban Design Framework brief, the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework should be seen as a medium-term project that will be implemented over the next ten years by the City of Greater Geelong.

However, due to the current development pressure on the town centre combined with the willingness of a number of developers to be involved in this process, we envisage that the implementation of the UDF will take place over a much shorter timeframe.

Funding for the strategy can be anticipated from four sources:

- Council;
- Private Business;
- State Government; and
- Federal Government.

Council will need to commit capital works funds on an ongoing basis to enable physical works to occur and to attract matching funding from other tiers of Government. At the current time, the State Government has a number of funding streams that could be used to implement the UDF including Pride of Place (from which this UDF was funded), and Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD). Funding could also be available from the Federal Government's Regional Partnerships program which may provide funding for physical works. It should be possible for Council to double or treble its contribution in this fashion.

Discussions with senior Council officers have indicated that Council's capacity to fund the UDF may be restricted in 2005 due to existing commitments. However, depending on the outcome of bids for 2006 due in December 2005, there may be funding available for the implementation in 2006. The funds could be further supplemented through special rate schemes and developer contributions where appropriate.

It is envisaged that the developer contribution will play a significant part in the implementation of the Lara Town Centre UDF. It is likely that the developer contribution will fund projects including the reconfiguration of Austin Park, the creation of a new Bowling Club, and various other town centre redevelopment works.

The creation of a new transit interchange, emergency services hub and vehicle overpass would not be funded by Council. To implement the UDF based on the use of developer contributions, the City of Greater Geelong would be responsible for funding the town square and public realm improvements.

## 6.4 | STAGING

The criteria for staging works in the Lara Town Centre are:

- their effectiveness in meeting the strategic goals of the Framework;
- their profile, or effectiveness in creating a positive climate for private investment;
- their cost effectiveness;
- their capability of implementation;
- funding availability; and
- the timing of associated development or infrastructure works.

The proposals identified in Chapter 5, The Proposals, aim to build on the town's strengths, address its weaknesses and capitalise upon the variety of opportunities that it offers. These works include, *Civic Improvements, Public Domain Projects and Development Opportunities*. Each of these have been developed as a means to achieve the strategic goals identified in the Framework.

Civic Improvements include town centre public realm improvements, the redevelopment of the Lara train station and car park management. The town centre public realm improvements include a variety of elements such as new street furniture, landscaping,

new paving, footpath treatments, signage and lighting.

The redevelopment of the Lara train station includes the creation of a more efficient and effective transit interchange and new pedestrian overpass.

Car park management includes strategies to improve the efficiency of parking in the town centre.

Public Domain Projects are relatively contained, intense treatments in the public domain and include Austin Park, the town square, and the town centre car park.

Development Opportunities are development on public and private sites and include the Bowling Club and Emergency Services Hub.

The projects have been prioritised according to the degree to which they enhance the centre and improve perceptions of it. This is reflected in the staging, which aims to complete those areas of the town centre that will provide the greatest benefit first. Generally, this relates to those areas with the greatest amount of use where the profile is highest.

A notional staging of the proposals is as follows:

- Realign Station Lake Road and Waverley Roads
- Reconfigure Austin Park and create new road on its southern border
- Create the retail and commercial floor space
- Construct the new Bowling Club
- Implement town centre improvement works including footpaths, lighting and landscaping
- Create a new transit interchange and pedestrian overpass
- Create a new emergency services hub

## 6.5 | MONITORING

It is recommended that Council implement an ongoing monitoring process of the health of the city centre, to assess changes over time. This could be simply achieved by a regular survey of two key indicators:

- Pedestrian footfall, which indicates vitality and can provide an assessment of the impact of new development or other structural changes in a centre
- Yield (the ratio of rental income to capital value), which indicates the confidence that investors have in income growth and security (the lower the yield, the greater the confidence) and thus its viability

These indicators should be assessed in several key locations to obtain a picture of the relative health of different parts of the city centre, and footfall should be counted at different times of the day and evening. The footfall survey should be undertaken twice-yearly, in summer and winter, and the yield survey undertaken annually.

# Appendix A

## General Development Principles

### Public space

- Edges are to be well defined by building fronts.
- Provide active frontages to all public space.
- Develop consistent streetscape theme to enhance quality key pedestrian streets & spaces and provide shade, visual interest and seasonal change.
- Develop robust, attractive pedestrian spaces that are relatively uncluttered and can accommodate a wide range of appropriate pedestrian activities.
- Give pedestrians as much priority as possible, particularly at crossings.
- Minimise crossovers in the footpath.
- Cyclists given improved access to the town centre by a continuous network of enhanced cycle paths (utilising manoeuvring lanes) that are focused around the city centre.

### Uses

- Extend the active part of the day in the centre through mix of uses within blocks and individual lots.
- Remove incompatibilities between land uses.
- Promote wider variety of housing types.
- Promote robust building forms that can accommodate different uses over time.

### Development form

- Development at high profile locations, such as corners and gateways, to emphasise the importance of that location with distinctive architectural treatment of those points.
- Reinforce the character and improve the amenity of the town centre by retaining and promoting continuous awnings and verandahs over footpaths. Awnings and verandahs should relate to the style of the building they are attached to and achieve a degree of consistency from extending the entire width of the footpath.
- Promote 'flexible' building forms that can accommodate changes of use over time.
- Create gateway features at key locations.
- Promote consistency within development in terms of shopfronts, verandahs and signage.

### Parking

Apply the following principles:

- provide better lighting;
- design buildings to ensure that doors and windows physically and visually link the buildings fronting the car parks to the car park spaces; and
- provide landscape treatments.
- Landscape car parks to minimise negative visual impact and provide adequate shade.

- Design street parking to maximise provision of shop front parking and accommodate shade trees in street.

### Ecology

- Utilise natural energies where possible to minimise dependence on mechanical methods of heating, cooling, lighting and ventilation.
- Open car parks should consider providing day shade and night lighting by solar panels and lighting.

### Servicing

- Servicing from rear lanes, where possible.

# Appendix B

## Traffic Engineering Issues & Considerations

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

David Lock Associates Pty. Ltd. with several sub-consultants including TTM Consulting Pty. Ltd. was engaged by the City of Greater Geelong to prepare an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for Lara.

The main focus of the UDF is the Lara Town Centre area, although surrounding areas, movement system and influencing land uses must also be considered.

This report has been prepared to inform the reparation and documentation of the UDF by the consultant team, and is restricted in scope to issues associated with the movement network, carparking, public transport and pedestrian access.

### 2. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### 2.1 Movement Network

Lara town centre is situated on Station Lake Road on the western side of the Geelong-Melbourne railway line.

#### 2.2 Current Traffic Volumes

The key volumes at present are :-

- Station Lake Road at Hovells Creek : 8,200 vehicles per day
- McClelland Avenue east of Rennie Street : 4,800 vehicles per day

Volumes of other streets are all less than those listed, well within the capacity of a single carriageway two lane roadway.

We estimate that the railway crossing at Walkers Road carries around 7,000 vehicles per day.

#### 2.3 Key Network Issues

Consultant Overview

- The lack of railway crossings concentrates traffic movement to the Walkers Road crossing.
- The roundabout at the Walkers Road/Mill Road/ Station Lake Road (McClelland Avenue intersection is a major focal point for traffic, as is the roundabout on the east side of the rail crossing).
- The service station entrance in combination with the higher traffic volumes on the western side of the railway line make the western roundabout the worst location for traffic queuing and delays in the Lara Town Centre area.

- The Centreway shopping strip less than convenient access because it is effectively two steps away from Station Lake Road.
- Pedestrian accessibility and amenity around the town centre area are reduced because of poor or absent footpaths and the absence of active street frontages to most of the town centre area other than Centreway.
- St. Laurence Park, the railway line, Lakeland Wetlands and Hovells Creek all block the movement network and thus reduce pedestrian safety, amenity and connectivity.

Consequently most people appear to be attending the town centre in cars.

- The Lara railway station is surrounded by open parking and low activity land uses, creating a poor pedestrian environment.

These factors result in a range of symptoms, many of which have been raised in the public consultation phases of the preparation of the UDF, including :-

- Major traffic delays at the west side roundabout when crossing is closed.
- Concern about emergency services access through the roundabout when the rail crossing is closed.

- Many people are calling for a rail bridge or another crossing.
- Heavy trucks use the town centre area of Station Lake Road.
- Bus stops relate poorly to town centre.
- Centreway is “invisible”.
- The right turn out of Centreway onto Station Lake Road is dangerous and delays can be excessive.

Residents and contributions to the consultation process also mentioned poor or absent footpaths, lack of parking in the town centre, and lack of the potential of the town centre to grow to provide an additional supermarket and associated carparking.

### 3.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND CONSULTANT COMMENTS

#### Rail Crossing

The rail crossing has been seen as a major dislocating feature of Lara. Gates are closed for extended periods because of large and frequent trains, and it is evident that this situation will become worse as train frequencies increase.

As well as the delays caused by the gates, the queue on the western or town centre side often extends through the roundabout at the intersection of Mill Road and Walkers Road.

In turn, this effectively blocks vehicular passage along

Mill Road and Station Lake Road. This is potentially serious in respect of emergency services accessibility.

#### Pedestrian Accessibility

Crossing Station Lake Road at Waverley Road has been raised as an issue by St.Laurence Park management.

There is a reasonably convenient signal controlled pedestrian crossing to service this movement, and Station Lake Road can be always expected to be reasonably busy with traffic. It is our opinion that additional measures to control traffic speed would enhance pedestrian safety and amenity all about the town centre, as would additional signal controlled intersections.

Walk distances across Waverley Road and Station Lake Road are generally longer than desirable, and footpaths are absent or poor in many parts of the town centre area.

#### Parking

Community opinion is generally that there is insufficient parking in the town centre area. Existing parking appears adequate for most foreseeable peak demands, although it is not likely that shoppers can find a parking space at the front door of the shops they wish to attend.

That is always the case in a reasonably healthy centre, and because expansion allowance is a key focus of the UDF, future conditions for parking are more relevant than current.

#### Loading and Service

Generally facilities are seen as reasonable, although some open dock areas are present, and there is some interaction between customer vehicles and service vehicles.

#### Trucks

The speed and volume of truck traffic has been raised as an issue, and is addressed in the Lara Transport Management Plan of July 2002.

Volumes of truck traffic can only be altered by wider road network solutions, outside the scope of the Lara Town Centre UDF. However speed issues can be addressed locally, through appropriate street design and traffic management.

#### Right Turn Movements at APCO

Community members have raised this as a problem with potential safety ramifications.

We concur about this and suggest referral to the road authority. Possible solutions include banning the right turn into APCO from the east on Walkers Road.

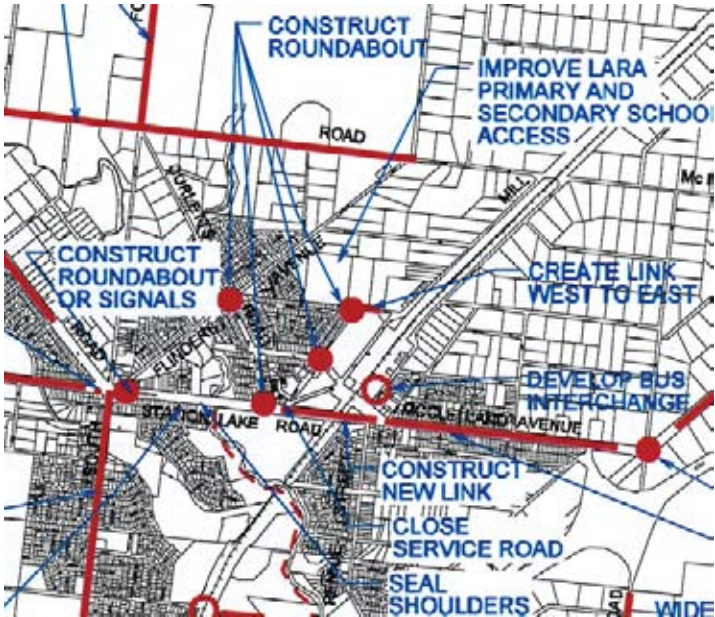
#### Right Turn at Centreway onto Station Lake Road

This has also been raised as potentially hazardous. That may be true to some extent, but eliminating the movement is simply going to relocate a similar

problem.

### 3. LARA TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PLAN

John Piper Traffic prepared the July 2002 "Lara Transport Management Plan". The Lara Transport Management Plan document records some of the same problems as listed in section 2 of this report, including the perceived high volume of trucks on Station Lake Road.



The following diagram is a copy of the Lara Town Centre area of the Lara Transport Management Plan (Figure 35).

This shows the transport related works projects intended within the area encompassed by the UDF. The subject projects are :-

- Bus interchange at railway station.
- Widening and turning lanes on McClelland Avenue.
- Construct "new link" over railway line on McClelland Avenue alignment.
- Construct roundabout at Station Lake Road intersection with Turner Avenue.
- Close service road east and near Centreway.
- Construct roundabout at Walkers Road intersection with Waverley Road.

The UDF proposed alternatives to some of these actions. Each is discussed in the Section 5 relating to the UDF proposals.

#### **4. CURRENT CARPARKING PROVISION AND USE**

Currently the Lara Town Centre area contains around 5,200 square metres of retail and commercial floor space. There are approximately 243 parking spaces in and around the centre, including private off-street spaces. This is a provision rate of 4.6 spaces per 100 square metres of floor area. Whilst some of the spaces are less than convenient for shoppers the

overall provision rate is higher than expected demands for an economically viable town centre. Our observations indicate high utilisation of the parking, which often indicates a warrant for retail expansion.

### **5. MOVEMENT NETWORK IN THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

#### **5.1 Overview**

The UDF makes allowance for the possible railway overpass at McClelland Avenue in the "Ultimate" plan. It is recognised that funding is not currently available for the overpass, and that consequently there must be a form of movement network that relies only upon the existing level crossing for access over the railway line.

The interim UDF movement network will need to be modified (as described below) to allow for introduction of the overpass.

#### **5.2 Ultimate Street Network (Post Rail Overpass)**

"Ultimate" configuration of street will include :-

- Re-alignment of Station Lake Road to McClelland Avenue with bridge over railway line.
- New Waverley Road intersection with Station Lake Road.
- Austin Park Street link between Waverley Road and the realigned Station Lake Road.

- Retained level crossing and ped-gate facilities at railway lines.
- One-way service road for the south-eastern corner of the town centre.

#### **5.3 Interim Street Network**

"Interim" configuration (pre rail overpass) will include :-

- Re-alignment of Station Lake Road to Mill Road/Walkers Road intersection, currently the roundabout

This alignment is needed to create the site for the supermarket and shops east of Waverley Road, on the southern end of Austin Park.

Implications of this re-alignment include the need to re-create the bowling club facilities.

- Austin Park Street is needed if the community facilities (and possibly motel) along the south side of the new park are to be established.

The intersection of Waverley Road and re-aligned Station Lake Road should be per the "Ultimate" configuration for several reasons including :-

- Doing works at their critical location should ideally occur only once, so that disruption is minimised.
- Pedestrian facilities for the important St. Lawrence Park linkage need to be established, and to include the controlled pedestrian crossing. Later change to these facilities is

potentially quite expensive and disruptive.

Transition from “Interim” to “Ultimate” network configuration for Station Lake Road will involve the interim section between Waverley Road and Park Street becoming a frontage street for the residential development, with on-street parking, footpaths and street trees.

#### 5.4 Roundabout at Mill Road/Walkers Road/Station Lake Road

The roundabout at Mill Road/Walkers Road/Station Lake Road would ideally be replaced with a signal controlled intersection if there is no foreseeable chance of the railway overpass being constructed. A new “Joint Emergency Services” facility on Mill Road north of APCO would increase the desirability of signal control at this intersection, to ensure that blockages through the intersection do not occur.

### 6. CARPARKING IN THE UDF

#### 6.1 Floor Space by Use in the UDF Concept

The overall UDF concept for Lara Town Centre comprises the following approximate inventory of floor space :-

- Specialty shops 3,800 square metres
- Supermarket 3,500 square metres
- Commercial and community space 2,200 square metres
- Showroom 2,500 square metres

- Office 2,200 square metres
- Mini-Major 1,400 square metres

Total 13,400 square metres

#### 6.2 Parking Provisions in the UDF Concept

The following parking allowances are made :-

##### (a) Staff Spaces

- Private off-street 79
- Waverley Road East side, north of Gillean Place 9
- Safeway northern carpark and Gillean Place 53
- Parking at rear of showrooms\* 110
- Parking along motel frontage 20

Total 172

\* These spaces can be partly customer spaces should the need arise.

##### (b) Customer Parking

- Centreway 36
- Centreway north 41
- Expanded Safeway carpark and Waverley Road 154
- Southern service road and “island” 22
- Triangular pod 71

**Total 324**

In addition to the above listed parking the new plan for the Bowling Club contains around 90 parking spaces, the preschool has 24 spaces on Waverley Road, there are 30 spaces along the northern side of the reconfigured Austin Park, and around 15 spaces along the western side of Waverley Road south of Walkers Road.

The “core” area parking for staff (281) spaces and customers (324 spaces) totals 605 spaces or 4.5 spaces per 100 square metres.

Additional parking along the frontage street to the showroom in the south-eastern corner of the new town centre will add around 15 spaces at the shop front, most likely only when the railway overpass is constructed.

Estimated peak parking demands generated at the expanded Lara Town Centre are :-

- o Specialty shops 3,800 sqm @ 3.5/100 sqm 133
- o Supermarket 3,500 sqm @ 4.5/100 sqm 158
- o Commercial and Community Space 2,200 sqm @ 3.5/100 sqm 77
- o Showroom 2,500 sqm @ 2.0/100 sqm 50
- o Mini-Major 1,400 sqm @ 3.5/100 sqm 49

Total Peak Demand 467

Staff requirements are likely to comprise around 160 of these spaces, and customer demands around 310 spaces.

Consequently the UDF concept plan provides adequately for both staff and customer parking for the expanded Lara Town Centre.

# Appendix C

## The Tasks and Process

An outline of the tasks and processes that facilitated the development of the UDF is as follows:

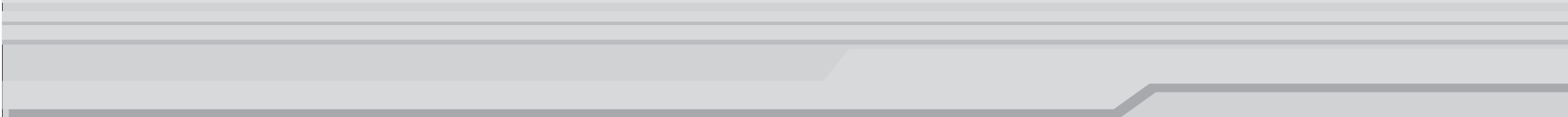
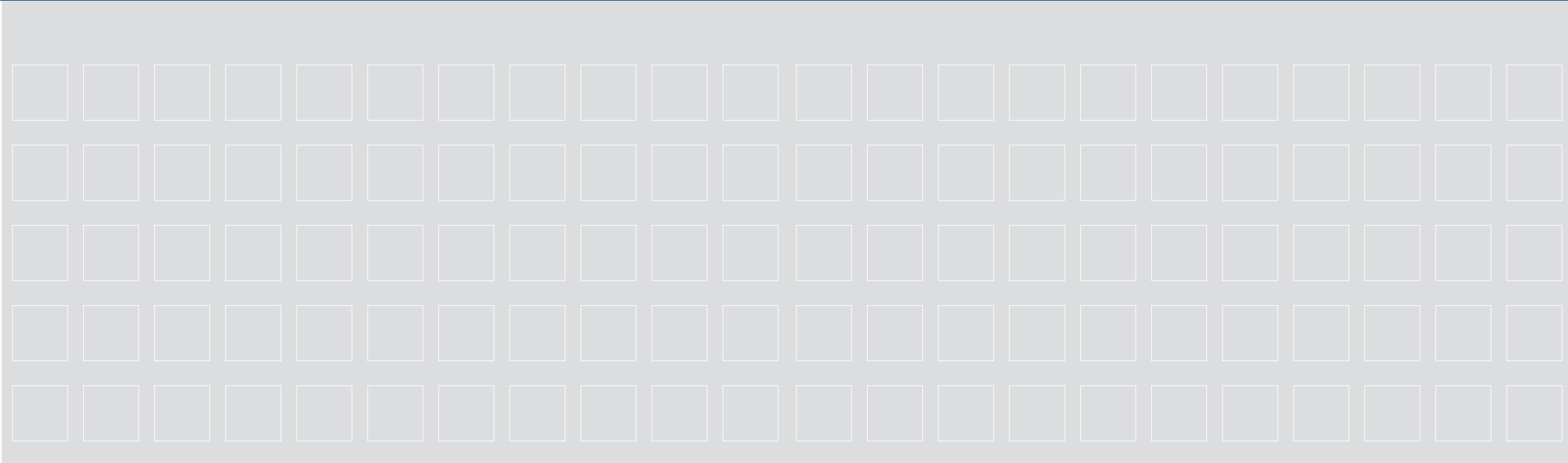
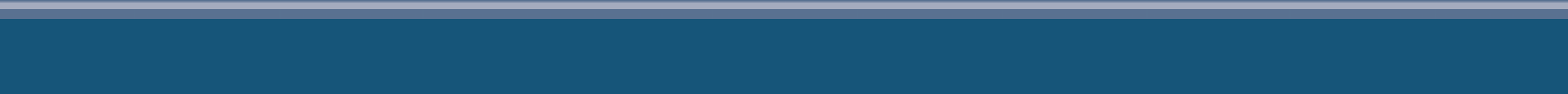
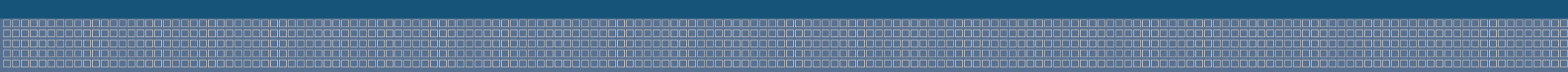
### **Stage One – Design Development and Community Input**

- Project advertised in The Independent and the Geelong Advertiser
- Analysis and audit of the existing situation
- Project Steering Committee Workshop
- Key Stakeholder interviews
- Community Workshop
- Owners and Traders Workshop
- Two day Concepts and Visions Workshop
- Project Steering Committee review

### **Stage Two – Proposed Design and Community Feedback**

- Newspaper lift-out and feedback slips
- Public Exhibition
- Street Stall
- Key Stakeholder Consultation
- Public Information Session
- Consultation Summary
- Design Development Workshop

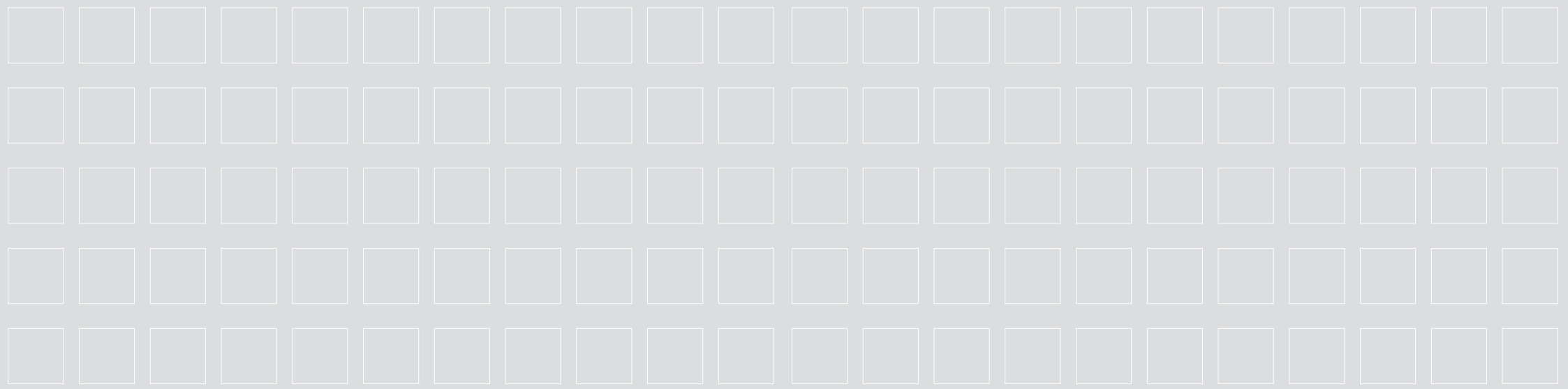
- Draft Urban Design Framework
- Review
- Final Urban Design Framework



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# Iara town centre

Urban design framework



MARCH 2006

DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES

vol 2 - projects

urban design framework



# introduction



## | INTRODUCTION

This document is Volume 2 of an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the town centre of Lara. It has been prepared by a team led by David Lock Associates in association with Essential Economics, Urban Edge Landscape Architecture and TTM Consulting on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong. Volume 1 outlines a comprehensive strategy to improve the area for its local residents, businesses and visitors. This volume illustrates a series of specific physical proposals designed to implement the UDF.

The framework is intended to guide the development of the public and private realm of the Lara Town Centre within the foreseeable future. The Framework is part of the Victorian Government's Pride of Place program, which *"uses urban design initiatives to develop towns and cities as preferred places to live and work, supporting healthy communities and attracting investment."* (Department of Infrastructure, 2000)

To achieve the strategic goals outlined in Volume One, Chapter 4 – The Aims and Strategies, there are a number of projects to be undertaken. These projects fall into three categories:

The Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework was adopted by the City of Greater Geelong at its Council meeting on 14 March 2006.

### **Civic Improvements**

Substantial, long term improvements to the streets and landscape, including strategies that provide fair and safe access for all who use the town centre.

### **Public Domain Projects**

Relatively contained, intense treatments in the public domain.

### **Development Opportunities**

Development on private and public sites.

### **Master Plan**

### **Civic Improvements**

- 1 Town Centre Public Realm
- 2 Transit Interchange and Pedestrian Overpass
- 3 Car Park Management

### **Public Domain Projects**

- 4 Austin Park
- 5 Town Square

### **Development Opportunities**

- 6 Bowling Club
- 7 Emergency Services Hub

## CONTENTS



# the master plan

## | THE MASTER PLAN

In order to achieve the proposals outlined in this document, there are changes required to the physical infrastructure in Lara. These changes include changes to the road network.

It is recognised that this may take place incrementally over time, to allow the town centre to develop in an orderly fashion.

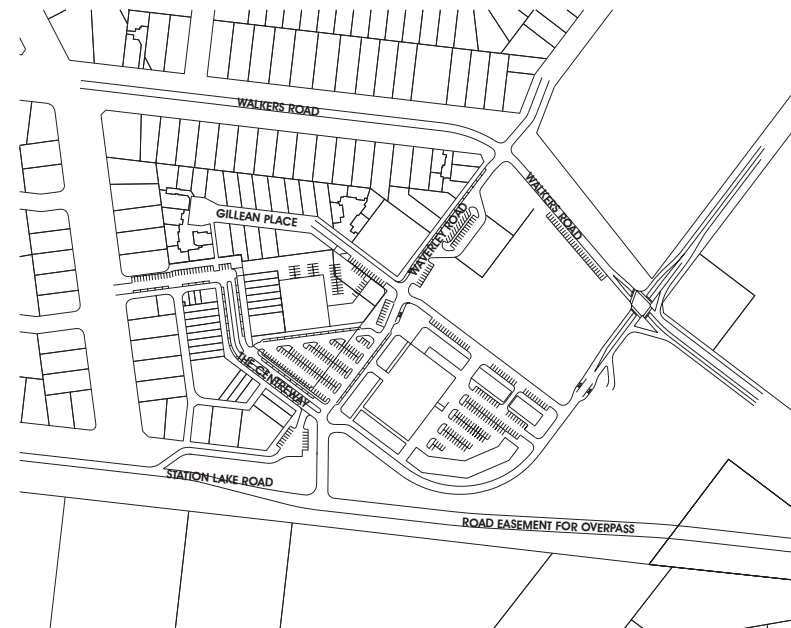
The images below illustrate the transition between the existing situation and the proposal.

These changes will need further investigation and costing, and will need to take into account the possible impacts on existing infrastructure and servicing (including drainage, electricity, water, sewerage etc) which are located along or under roads.

The two plans below clearly illustrate the changes to the road network. The Master Plan opposite illustrates the overall proposal for the town centre.



Existing Town Centre



Proposed Town Centre

## THE LARA TOWN CENTRE UDF MASTER PLAN

### Civic Improvements

- 1 Town Centre Public Realm
- 2 Transit Interchange and Pedestrian Overpass
- 3 Car Park Management

### Public Domain Projects

- 4 Austin Park
- 5 Town Square

### Development Opportunities

- 6 Bowling Club
- 7 Emergency Services Hub



- ① Large format retail stores of around 500m<sup>2</sup> or a larger format retailer (such as a Country Target) in the existing Safeway building.
- ② Office or non-retail space within the centre
- ③ Enlarged central car park with double the current capacity (145 spaces).
- ④ New Emergency Services Hub - site may be required to be larger than identified or in a different location. Commuter car park space could be utilised for this purpose
- ⑤ New library (600m<sup>2</sup>)
- ⑥ 1,100m<sup>2</sup> new specialty shops
- ⑦ Larger format retail stores/showrooms
- ⑧ 3,500m<sup>2</sup> full line supermarket
- ⑨ Motel
- ⑩ Town Square
- ⑪ Reshaped and reconfigured Austin Park creating a more usable, functional space.



- ⑫ New Bowling Club
- ⑬ New Transit Interchange includes retail floor space, overpass, lifts, public open space, feature towers and landscape
- ⑭ Larger format retail store, showroom or other commercial
- ⑮ New commuter parking with significant landscaping
- ⑯ Office/Retail
- ⑰ Existing APCO service station - should be relocated to a more appropriate location in the future

Lara Town Centre - West

- ① New medium density residential
- ② New Transit Interchange including overpass and lifts
- ③ Existing station platforms
- ④ Expanded commuter car park
- ⑤ Pedestrian link to station - improved lighting and landscape
- ⑥ New retail/showroom premises - provides an active edge, surveillance and shelter to the street



# I town centre public realm



---

## 1 | TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM

There is a need to create a consistent, robust and unified streetscape that reflects and promotes the rural character of Lara.

Public spaces are to be attractive, multifunctional, and pleasant to spend time in. New and improved spaces include the Town Square, Austin Park, and the new events space (as part of the central car park).

The following plan identifies key features of the town centre public realm.

**Key Features:**

- ① Unified streetscape tree planting (indigenous, evergreen species with low water requirement) to all carparking areas and streets around the Centreway to provide a sense of place for the Lara township
- ② The use of deciduous feature trees to contrast with the evergreen species and to provide seasonal color and interest
- ③ Feature paving to identify pedestrian crossing points, focal areas and to highlight linkages, especially through the carpark and to Austin Park
  - The use of timber elements in the street furniture (bollards, fences, signage etc) to reinforce the rural character of Lara
  - Unified street lighting to extend from the Centreway through Austin Park to Lara Station
  - Possible use of Street Banners to highlight entry points to the Centreway
  - Unified streetscape elements including:
    - Recycled Ironbark Timber Bollards (200mm x 200mm) with chamfered edges, dressed and oiled
    - Recycled Ironbark Timber Post and Rail Fencing (190mm x 145mm posts and 140mm x 45mm rails, with corner posts 200mm x 200mm), with chamfered edges to all posts
    - 'Street & Park Furniture' Bin Enclosure for a standard 120 / 240 litre mobile garbage bin. Zinc plated mild steel in powdercoated grey
    - 'Street & Park Furniture' Parade Seat, galvanised mild steel slatted seat with cast iron frame in powdercoated grey



Austin Park

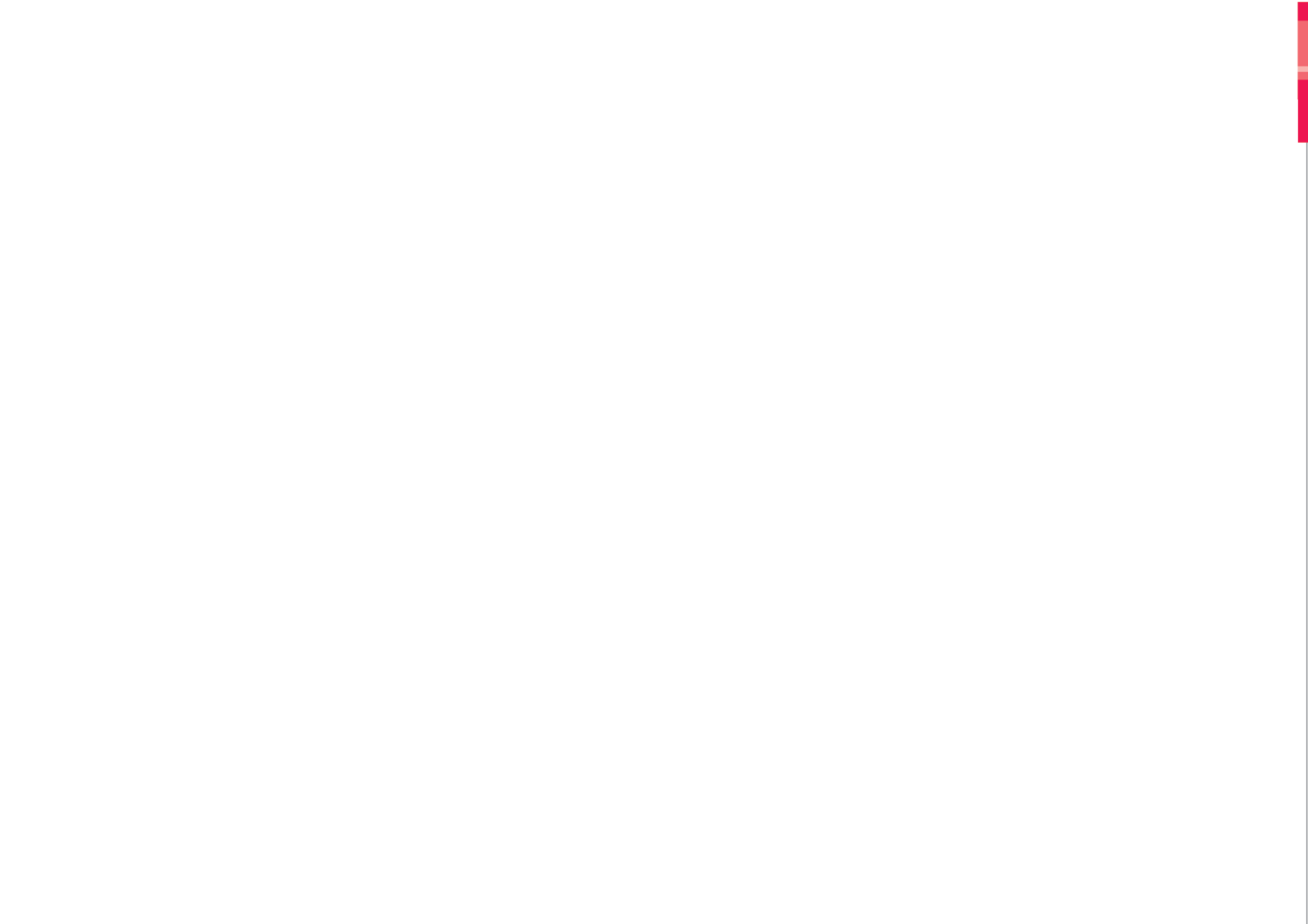
③

Town Square

Potential events space  
and 'market square'

① & ②

Town Centre public realm



## 2 transit interchange & ped overpass



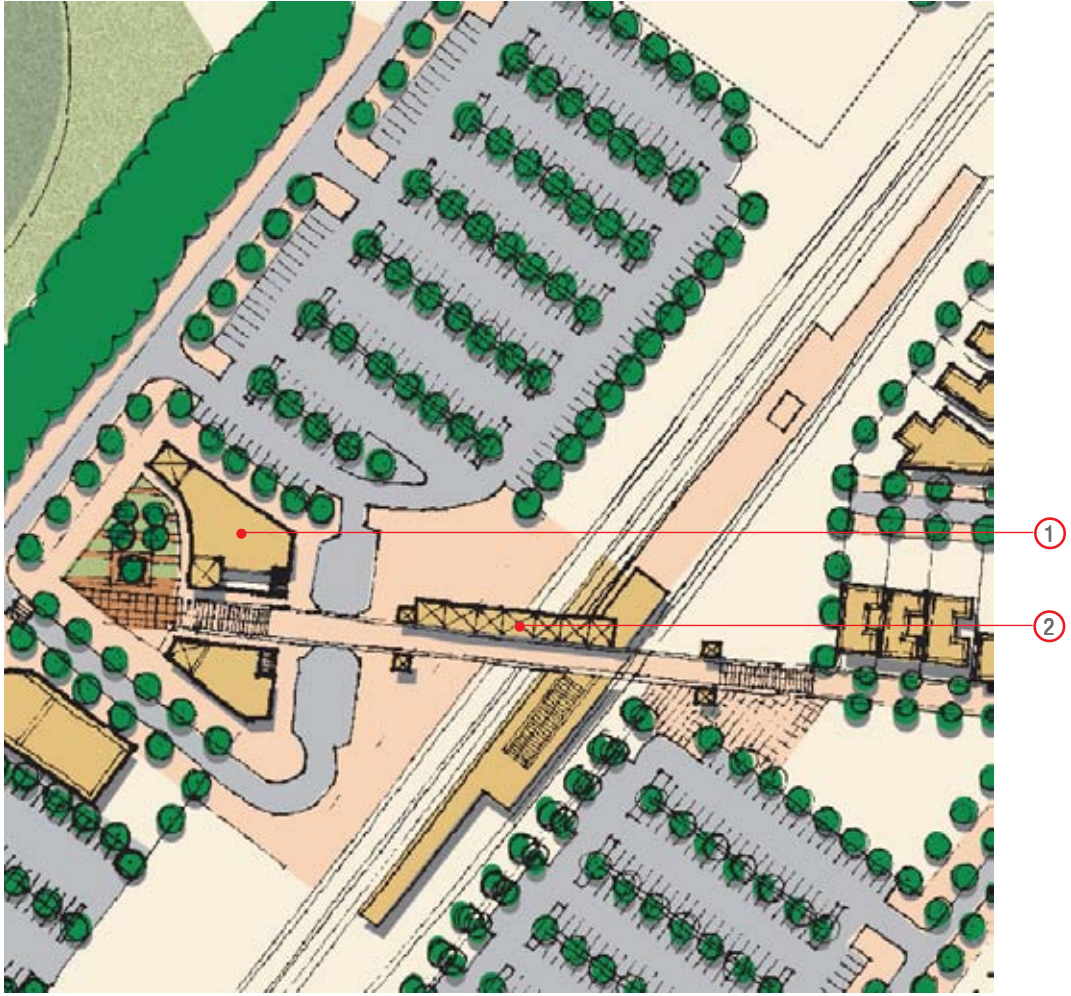
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## 2 | TRANSIT INTERCHANGE AND PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

Lara is a commuter suburb with a large proportion of residents working outside of Lara. For these residents, the only modes of transport are car, bus or train. To encourage residents to use more sustainable transport alternatives to the private car and ensure the high level of patronage is increased, the current Lara train station and surrounds will be upgraded and transformed into a vibrant node of public transport and other functions, including state-of-the-art Transit Interchange serving both rail and bus transport. This will be incorporated into the wider movement network through the creation of new, direct and legible pedestrian links between the town centre and the interchange including a pedestrian overpass.

## Key Features:

- ① The creation of a new, state-of-the-art Transit Interchange comprising of:
    - Kiss and ride stop, taxi ranks, bus stop and shelter
    - A Sports Centre and flexible spaces. This would possibly occupy one to two floors of the building and include a gym and flexible spaces for offices or other uses.
    - New parking area with 300 spaces and upgraded existing car parking on Hicks Street
    - An easily identifiable entry feature
  - ② The creation of a new pedestrian overpass from Mill Road comprising of:
    - Kiosks providing shelter, shopping and seating
    - Both stairs and elevators to provide DDA compliant access to the existing (upgraded) station platforms from both Mill Avenue and Hicks Street
    - Excellent pedestrian links to the town centre and schools
- A distinctive, holistic signage strategy with clear and legible signage to direct people to the train station and town centre for all transport modes including cycling, walking and driving



Transit Interchange and Pedestrian Overpass



# 3 car park management



### 3 | CAR PARKING

There is a need to increase and upgrade the current parking in and around the town centre to ensure adequate levels of parking are provided. The parking will be comfortable legible and well landscaped to provide shade and a green edge. The parking will be easy to use and well connected in with the vehicular and pedestrian movement networks and facilitate easy use.

The following tables and illustrations identify key features and capacity of the car parking within the town centre.

CURRENT CENTRE	EXPANDED CENTRE	Provision	Estimated Peak Demand
<b>Floor Area</b> 5200	<b>Floor Area</b> 13400	<b>Customer Parking Spaces</b> 324	<b>Customer Parking Spaces</b> 467
<b>Parking Spaces</b> 243	<b>Parking Spaces</b> 595	<b>Staff Parking Spaces</b> 271	<b>Staff Parking Spaces</b> 271

Car parking provision of the existing and expanded Town Centre



Central car park - cross-section

**Key Features:**

- an increase in the current town centre car park from 72 to 145 spaces
- the ability for part of the central car park to be used as an events space which is well connected to the town square and Austin Park
- retained on-street parking in The Centreway
- introduction of rear of shop parking as part of some of the developments
- thresholds to connect with specific pavement locations
- a central pedestrian link across the car park with a feature surface to promote shared pedestrian traffic and an events space
- fully landscaped with low indigenous shrubs and groundcovers and feature evergreen street trees
- existing evergreen street trees underplanted with indigenous shrubs and groundcovers



USE	CURRENT CENTRE Floor Area	EXPANDED CENTRE Floor Area	EXPANDED CENTRE Estimated Demand
Speciality Shops	2400	3800	Speciality Shops 3,800m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5/100m <sup>2</sup> 133
Supermarket	1400	3500	Supermarket 3,500m <sup>2</sup> @ 4.5/100m <sup>2</sup> 158
Commercial & Community	1400	2200	Commercial & Community 2,200m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5/100m <sup>2</sup> 77
Showroom	0	2500	Showroom 2,500m <sup>2</sup> @ 2.0/100m <sup>2</sup> 50
Mini-major	0	1400	Mini-major 1,400m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5/100m <sup>2</sup> 49
<b>Total</b>	<b>5200</b>	<b>13400</b>	<b>Total Peak Demand 467</b>
<b>Staff Parking Spaces</b>		79	
Private Off Street		9	
Waverley East		53	
Safeway Northern Carpark		110	
Rear of Showrooms		20	
Motel Frontage		<b>271</b>	
<b>Total</b>			
<b>Customer Parking Spaces</b>		36	
The Centreway		41	
The Centreway North		154	
Central Car Park & Waverley Rd		22	
Southern Service road & island		71	
Triangular Pod		<b>324</b>	
<b>Total</b>			

Car parking provisions in the Lara Town Centre



# 4 austin park



## 4 | AUSTIN PARK

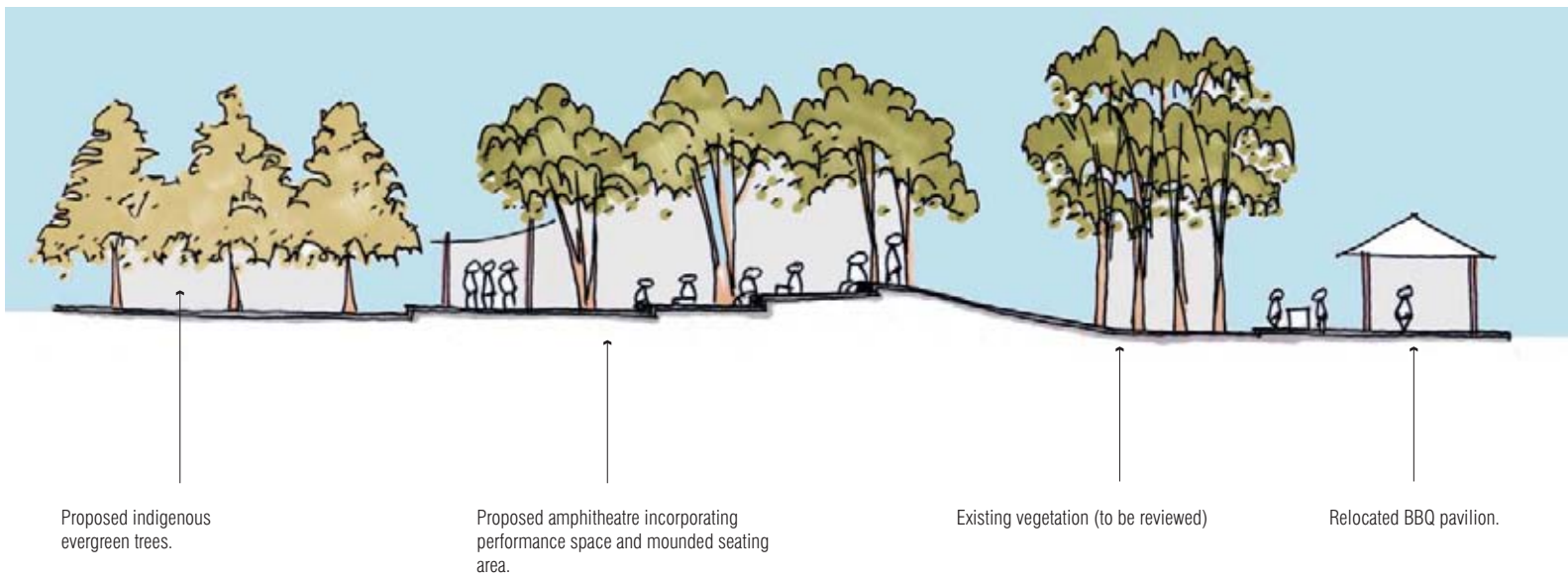
Austin Park is to be a key focal point of the town centre. It is to be reshaped and reconfigured to create a more useable, functional space with a direct interface to and overlooked by new key buildings including the library and a number of offices and non-retail buildings, possibly including a new motel. The south-west corner of Austin Park will abut the new town square creating a civic focal area. The following plans and illustrations identify potential improvements to Austin Park.



## 4 | AUSTIN PARK

### Key features:

- a reshaped and reconfigured park creating a more useable, functional space with a direct interface with buildings including the library.
  - thorough, coordinated landscaping of indigenous trees, grasses, shrubs and ground covers.
  - better linkages with the surrounding areas including a pedestrian and bike link between the Town Centre and the new Transport Interchange.
  - improved facilities which support the new civic role such as the amphitheatre.
  - a strong pedestrian link between the town square and Austin Park with feature paving and landscape treatments.
  - a new entry feature to promote Austin Park
- incorporating feature trees, shrubs and signage.
  - a new amphitheatre including performance space and mounded seating area which can become the focus for community interaction through events.
  - relocated and updated amenities including the Lions Club BBQ Shelter, toilets, skate park, and play ground.



Austin Park - cross-section

## 4 | AUSTIN PARK

- coordinated furniture throughout Austin Park including:
  - Recycled Ironbark Timber Bollards (200mm x 200mm) with chamfered edges, dressed and oiled.
  - Recycled Ironbark Timber Post and Rail Fencing (190mm x 145mm posts and 140mm x 45mm rails, with corner posts 200mm x 200mm), with chamfered edges to all posts.
  - 'Street & Park Furniture' Bin Enclosure for a standard 120 / 240 litre mobile garbage bin. Zinc plated mild steel in powdercoated grey.
  - 'Street & Park Furniture' Parade Seat, galvanised mild steel slatted seat with cast iron frame in powdercoated grey.



LANDSCAPE FURNITURE:

- Predominantly timber elements to reinforce rural character
- Robust elements to deter vandalism

Unify street furniture (rubbish bins, seats and lighting).

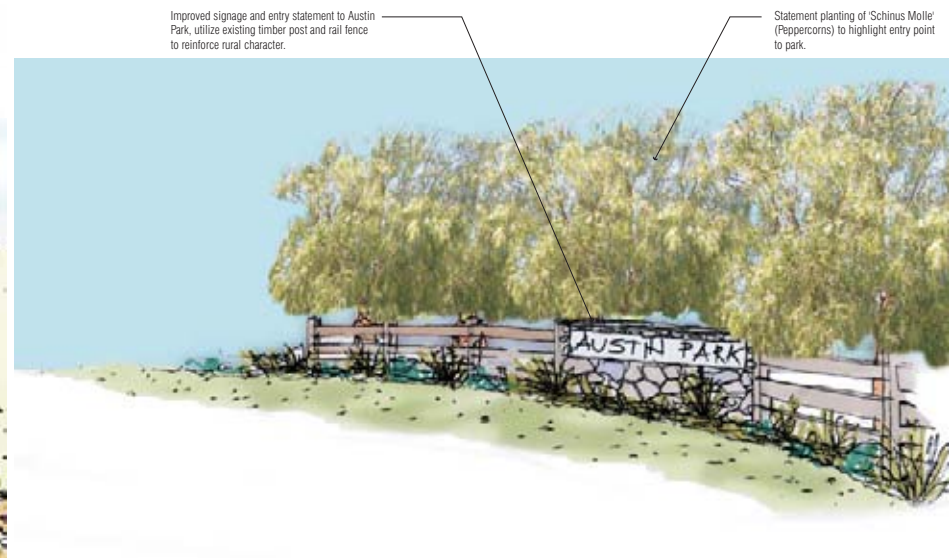
Feature planting 'Schinus Molle' (Peppercorn tree).

Timber post and rail fence to help define entry points and improve safety.



A meandering path through the park

Understorey planting of indigenous grasses, low shrubs and groundcover to existing trees and to delineate path and improve amenity.



The gateway feature

Improved signage and entry statement to Austin Park, utilize existing timber post and rail fence to reinforce rural character.

Statement planting of 'Schinus Molle' (Peppercorns) to highlight entry point to park.



Austin Park and the Town Square

## Open Space Calculations

### Existing Austin Park

Gross	<b>37823</b>	<b>sqm</b>
Net (useable open space)*	<b>26879</b>	<b>sqm</b>

Difference between Gross and Net **71.1%** therefore only 71.1% of the space is useable open space

### New Useable Open Space

New Austin Park (includes Bowling Club)	26627 sqm
Town Square	660 sqm

**Total New Useable Open Space 27287 sqm**

## Area Comparisons

- Existing Gross Austin Park vs New Austin Park **70.4%** therefore there is a 29.6% decrease
- Existing Net Austin Park (useable open space) vs New Useable Open Space (Austin Park only) **99.1%** therefore there is only 0.9% decrease (252sqm) in useable open space
- Existing Net Austin Park (useable open space) vs Total New Useable Open Space **101.5%** therefore there is a 1.5% increase (408sqm) in useable open space

### \* Useable Open Space

Useable Open Space is:

- o space that is open to the public
- o space that has amenity and form which makes it useable for recreation purposes, both active and passive
- o space that supports the function of the open space such as access roads

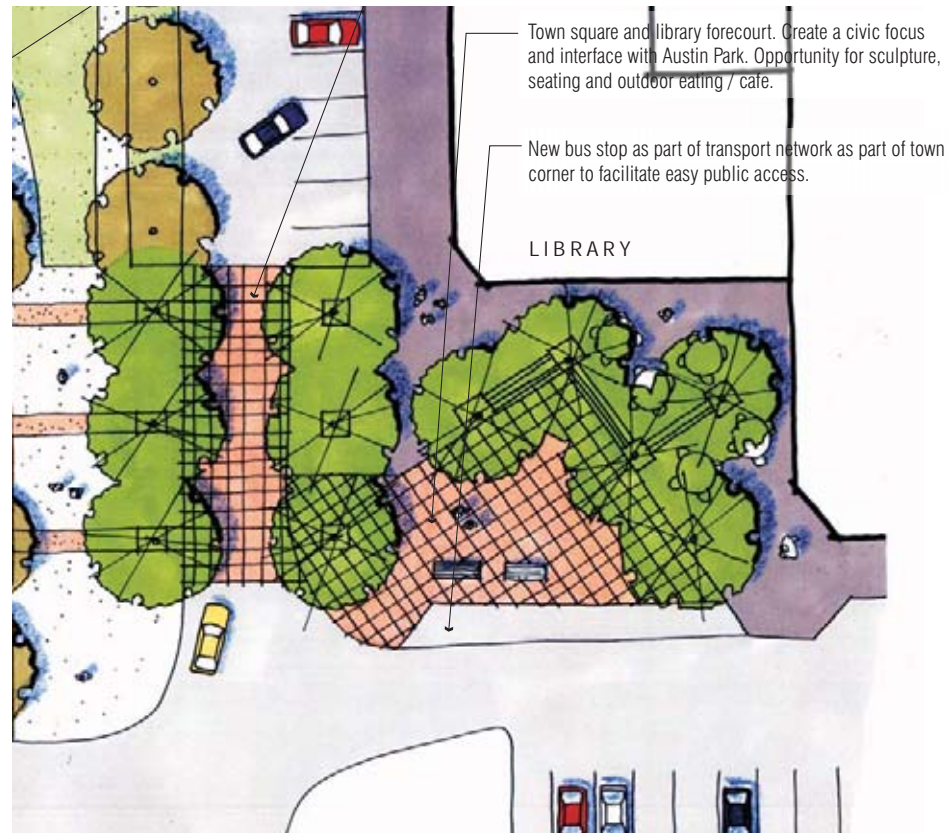


# 5 town square



## 5 | TOWN SQUARE

The town square is to be a civic focus creating social and socially inclusive spaces within the town centre. The town square will form a key interface between the reconfigured Austin Park and amphitheatre, the Library, central car park and the area in which restaurants are encouraged to locate. Its purpose is as a gathering space, and a space for celebrations as well as a place which expresses civic pride. As part of the movement network, a bus stop is located on the edge of the square to promote public transport usage. The following plan and illustration identifies the elements of the new town square.

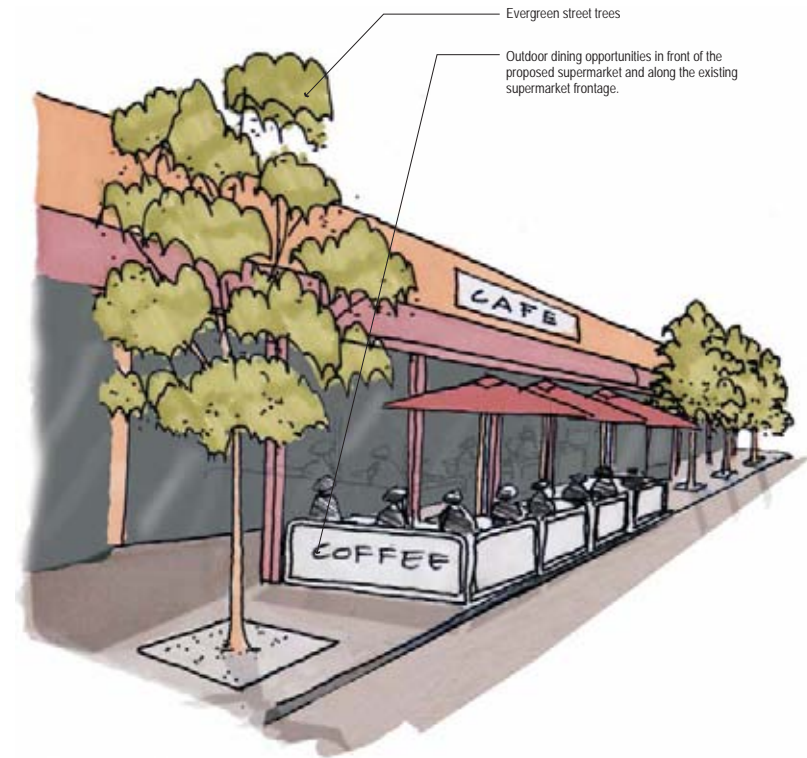


The new Town Square

## 2 | TOWN SQUARE

### Key Features:

- a strong pedestrian link between Austin Park and the town square with feature paving and landscape treatments.
  - a strong link between the social space of the town square and the new amphitheatre in Austin Park.
  - a public square that forms a comfortable and attractive forecourt to the library.
  - feature paving, landscape, street furniture and public art such as sculpture that creates an urban space within the town centre.
  - a variety of activities such as restaurant/café and library fronting onto the space, ensuring a safe, comfortable and active space throughout the day and well into the evening.
- spaces which are activated by outdoor seating and dining.



Al fresco dining in the Lara Town Centre





# 6 bowling club



## 7 | BOWLING CLUB

The current bowling club facilities require upgrading and renovation.

The reconfiguration of the town centre provides the opportunity for the Bowling Club to improve their facilities through construction of new premises on a new site. The new Bowling Club will be well connected with the town centre fronting – in part – on to Austin Park.

The relocated bowling club will have a greater level of exposure through it being located directly adjacent to the realigned Station Lake Road. It is expected that this greater exposure will further promote the sport and potentially increase patronage.

The facilities at present do not support the use of the club throughout the year. The use of synthetic greens would enable the club to remain operational throughout the year. It is expected that the ability to use this facility throughout the year would add to increased pressure on the facilities, clubrooms, car parks etc. This requires the overall improvement of the clubrooms, car park, lighting etc to cater for increased demand.

Through the relocation of the club and its subsequent

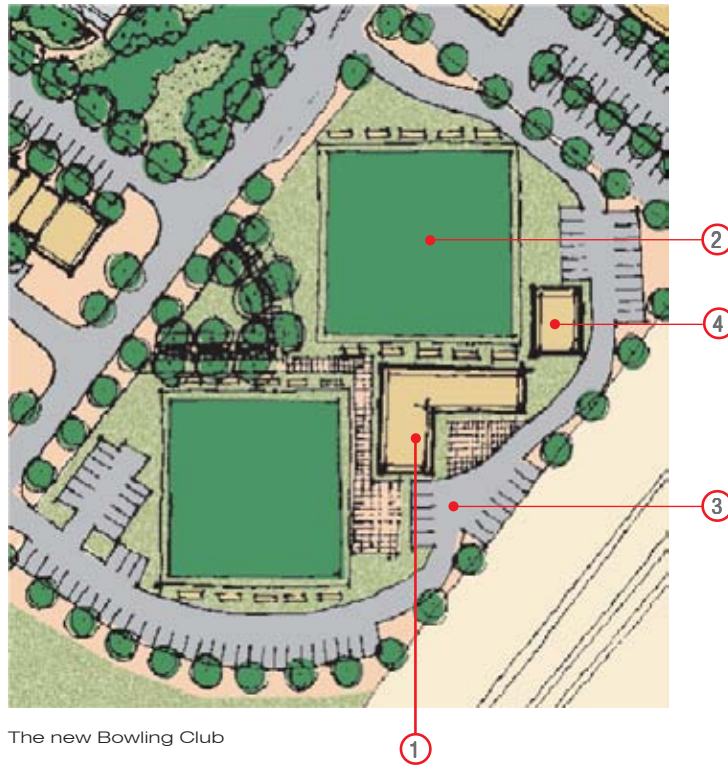
improved integration with the town centre and improved facilities, it is expected that the Bowling Club will play an even greater role in the community, social and sporting life of Lara.

## 7 | BOWLING CLUB

### Key Features:

- ① extended and enlarged clubrooms and bar for various uses including the ability to be hired out as a function room.
- ② new synthetic greens.
- ③ an enlarged and asphalted car park.
- ④ extra storage.
  - outdoor lighting to allow night bowling.
  - a new facility which is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The following plan identifies key elements of the new Bowling Club



The new Bowling Club





# 7 emergency services hub



## 7 | EMERGENCY SERVICES HUB

Currently the Police facilities in Lara are crowded and require substantial expansion, the rural branch of the CFA is located on Forest Road South and there are no ambulance facilities. The Emergency Services Hub will consolidate these and incorporate the new functions into a new, purpose-built central facility, in close proximity to the town centre.

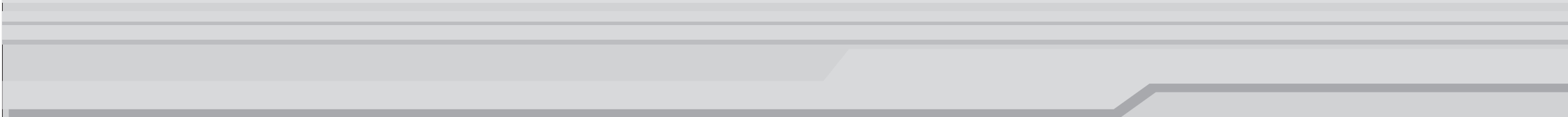
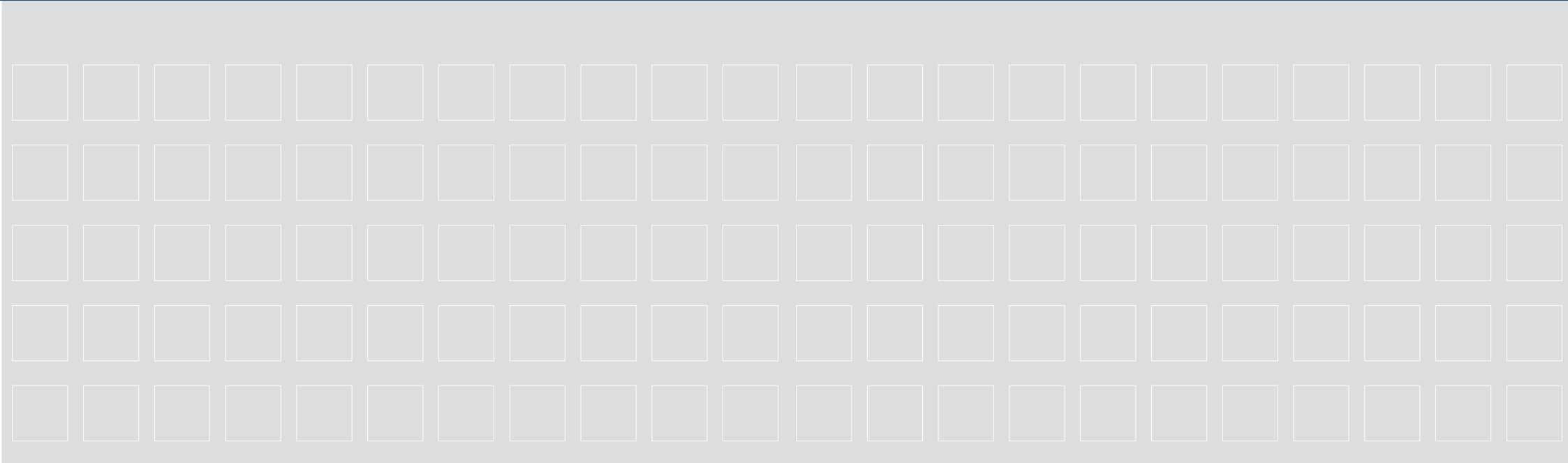
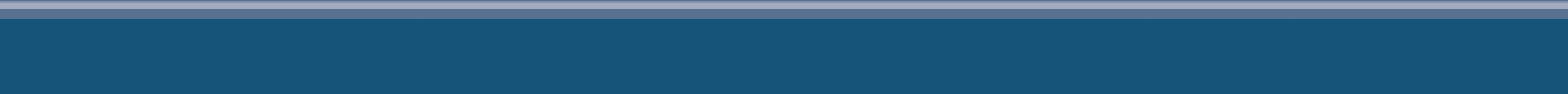
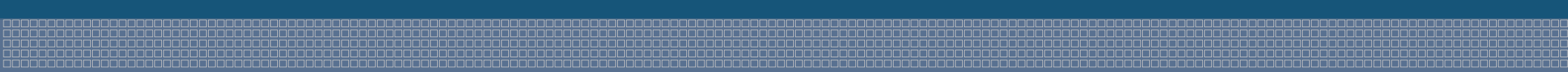
### Key Features:

- shared facilities between the three services for increased staff interaction
- a new ambulance station for Lara
- the opportunity to create a link with the new sports centre
- a signalised pedestrian intersection at the intersection of Walkers and Station Lake Roads to allow quicker response times

The following plan identifies the potential area for the Emergency Services Hub. The Emergency Services Hub may be in an alternative location and/or may require the use of the space identified as the commuter car park.



Potential area for the Emergency Services Hub



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