

# CENTRAL ACTIVITY DISTRICT REVITALISATION

## HORSHAM STREETScape PLAN

### ROUND 3 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

JULY 2022



**Horsham Rural City**  
Council urban rural balance



## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report summarises the commitment, approach and outcomes undertaken to develop the Horsham Streetscape Plan.

The engagement process aimed to:

- Build relationships and trust with the community
- Enable the opportunity for any community member to provide input and influence outcomes
- Provide an open and transparent process that the community understands and supports
- Gain diverse community input into a plan for positive change within the CAD
- Clearly communicate the opportunity to be engaged and the progress of the project

The report provides a snapshot of the key messages heard during Round 3 of the community consultation for the Streetscape Plan.

The analysis has been structured around written feedback received via the HRCC online survey and in person feedback provided during popup events between 18 February and 1 April.

This report provides a brief summary of the changes that have occurred to the Streetscape Plan since it was exhibited and summarises the community ideas and thoughts shared with us.



## ABOUT THE STREETSCAPE PLAN

The Streetscape Plan looks at ways we can improve our streetscapes and public spaces within the town centre of Horsham (also referred to as the CAD).

In developing the Streetscape Plan, we used ideas from the community, as well as expert advice from an independent urban design and landscape consultant, UrbanFold.

The project focuses on influencing the design of:

- public spaces and meeting places
- footpaths, laneways and streets
- places for sitting, gathering, socializing and outdoor dining
- bicycle infrastructure
- street trees and canopy
- wayfinding and signage
- local character and heritage

Central to this was involving the local community in the analysis and design processes to engender community support and ownerships of the CAD's public spaces.

## PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is a key focus of the project and is centred around designing and creating a contemporary and distinctive urban centre in Horsham. The CAD will offer public spaces for people that are safer, more enjoyable and of a higher quality that will in turn better support social and commercial activity. The Streetscape Plan provides a framework for reimagining Horsham in the 21st century as a sustainable and attractive city with connected and interesting public spaces and vibrant street life.

## PROJECT OUTCOME

The outcome of this project is a set of recommendations focused on urban design, built form, landscape architectural, public realm and transport improvements and identifies projects for capital investment and further investigation.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

The Streetscape Plan project has been undertaken in four stages, with three rounds of community consultation, leading to the current revised Streetscape Plan being presented to Council:

### Stage 1

Project inception / development of project aspirations (round one of consultation in October 2021)

### Stage 2

Urban Design Analysis (round two of consultation in November – December 2021)

### Stage 3

Draft Streetscape Plan (round three of consultation in February – March 2022)

### Stage 4

Revised Draft Streetscape Plan (current stage – Council adoption)

## THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Community engagement provides Council with a greater opportunity to make informed decisions that impact all members of the community and by engaging with the community, Council is better placed to understand local issues, needs and aspirations.

Council made a commitment as part of this project to undertake genuine and thorough community engagement, aiming to gather feedback and diverse points of view prior to making final decisions. The first activity Council undertook was reviewing the results of earlier rounds of engagement for previous projects that had relevance to the scope of the Streetscape Plan. A considerable amount of engagement had already taken place and those ideas and concerns already shared remained highly relevant and could be built upon.

Next Council considered it important that community consultation took place at an early stage to guide the direction of the project. An online questionnaire sought to help Council understand the issues of a higher priority to the community and inform key themes. This engagement ran for four weeks in September and October 2021. The results of this early stage of consultation provided a preliminary but valuable understanding of the public sentiments towards the condition of the CAD's streetscapes and public spaces as they are presently, what they liked and valued and what could be improved.

The community was then presented with a background paper, the **CAD Urban Design Analysis**. This document provided a detailed evaluation of the current condition of the CAD and was divided into themes; current land use zones + overlays, precincts + key sites, public realm + tree canopy, streetscape amenity, access + movement, built form and street sections. It also identified five preliminary opportunities that could guide the direction of the Streetscape Plan and stimulate public discussion. The community was asked to provide their feedback to validate the analysis, ensure themes identified were context sensitive and/or raise other issues and opportunities overlooked. This consultation took place over a period of four weeks in November and December 2021.

The Urban Design Analysis became the strategic justification for the proposed strategies and opportunities for change in the Streetscape Plan. The Streetscape Plan formalises the key themes into seven **Improvement Strategies** and proposes **15 individual projects** for Council to pursue. Community feedback was sought on the proposal in February – March 2022.

This document summarises the findings from the Streetscape Plan consultation only.

## What DID WE DO?

Pop up information and feedback sessions in Roberts Place were held on Wednesday 2 March and Thursday 3 March and there were 20 interactions with community recorded.

Online and paper based survey open between 18 February and 1 April with **147 responses** received.

## What DID WE HEAR?

### Summary

The most frequent themes in the free text responses were:





## Quotes from respondents

### General support

*"I think it's a great draft plan and will benefit Horsham's tourism and improve its overall vibe, and will hopefully bring even more life to it."*

*"Overall I think the Plan is excellent and I support the proposals. If these are implemented it will be a great improvement for the City."*

*"Fantastic - love all of the ideas to revitalise the streetscape and bring people out to town more."*

*"It's wonderful. As a woman with children I do a lot of my activities on foot or bike. The activation improves accessibility and safety for my family."*

*"It's a step in the right direction in terms of pedestrian accessibility and utilisation of lane ways."*

*"I think it will be fantastic. Any improvements that improve safety and liveability while considering environmental sustainability is good".*

*"I think it's a great draft plan and will benefit Horsham's tourism and improve its overall vibe, and will hopefully bring even more life to it."*

### General Disapproval

*"I don't like it. This place is a country town stop trying to make it a city."*

*"Nothing about this evokes a sense of small business shopping for locals. It is a very small percentage of local shoppers who park their car and wander through with all the time in the world. Stop having city metro centric consultants make design ideas on a lifestyle (living regionally) they have no connection or experience with."*

*"It's a shopping centre not amusement park."*

*"Why just why! You're trying to fix something that's not broken..."*

*"It is disappointing to see that there are a lot of rehashed ideas from other towns across Victoria. Nothing jumps out at me as making this plan give Horsham any individuality by comparison to any other town in the state."*

*"We are a country town and the designs that are in the city are not suitable for country towns."*

### Waste of Money

*"It is not needed, you should be reducing costs for businesses, not spending more rate-payers money."*

*"As a rate payer I'm very disappointed at the fact you are willing to waste money on things that aren't broken."*



## Mixed views on parallel parking

*"Parallel parking? A lot of motorists can't angle park! Traffic will clog as cars maneuver."*

*"Please DO NOT replace the parking in Firebrace St with parallel parking. There aren't enough car parking spots now, let alone if you reduce them. There isn't adequate alternatives anywhere near the CAD to park and walk to the main St, and it's not appropriate for everyone to do so."*

*"The fact that parking is even being touched is ridiculous. It's hard enough getting car parks as a shopper and as a worker in the CBD."*

*"Hate parallel parking. It will decrease the amount of parking spaces which already it is hard to find a park. I will literally move towns if there is parallel parking brought in down the Main Street."*

*"I think the Horsham Walk idea is quaint but a meaningful positive change would be to make Firebrace completely pedestrian. Shop owners could have permits to drive in. Apart from that it seems totally unnecessary to have cars on*

*Firebrace. There should at least be a 'Scenario D' in which there is no parking available. The centre of Horsham is generally quite bland, but the parked cars everywhere are the worst bit. Scenario C could also include shared access along the whole street instead of just wombat crossings."*

*"Good, people in Horsham need to get over their obsession around parking and realise that a more appealing streetscape is better for business than being able to park right out the front."*

*"One of Horsham's key issues currently is traffic movement is deemed a priority over pedestrian friendly spaces i.e. Horsham mentality in order to visit a shop you must park in front of said shop then drive to the next block and park in front of the next shop."*

*"The creation of spaces for dining and gathering would make Horsham an attractive place to live. I'm very happy with the reduction in parking to create extra room. Walking short distances will improve health and people will adjust behaviour as a result."*

Scenario A



Scenario A Plan - A widened planted median in Firebrace Street

Scenario B



Scenario B Plan - A widened median and widened footpath along Firebrace Street

Scenario C



Scenario C Plan - A widened median and bike lane along Firebrace Street



## Laneway activation

*"Easier pedestrian access across streets is important - not just up and down Firebrace St but also Darlot St and the lanes in between."*

*"I like the pedestrianisation aspect."*

*"The Horsham Walk sounds very doable and would add character to the town."*

*Horsham is not a very pedestrian friendly place so it would be great to see that improved.*

## More Trees/Shade

*"Very supportive, especially of increase in canopy trees."*

*"More trees is great too - Roberts Avenue near Cafe Jas is such a pleasant place and a stark contrast to the rest of the CAD. I'd like to park in shady spots so more trees and shade sails around car parks is to be encouraged."*

*"Creating a tree canopy will not only provide a visual effect, but also reduce surface temperatures for a cooler outdoor experience during our hot summers."*

## Heritage

*"Extremely happy to see that Horsham's heritage buildings restoration is finally a topic of discussion."*

*"Oh absolutely would love heritage buildings restored back to their original..."*

*"I am particularly interested in the restoration of heritage facades and buildings. This is so important to retain our heritage and bring out all the features of the city that makes it so attractive to locals and visitors."*

*"Yes to keeping the heritage buildings. Horsham has already lost far too much of its heritage. Councils in the past have made bad decisions."*

*"Really like the heritage improvement aspects. Would be great to develop a sense pride in the heritage Horsham."*

## Meeting places

*"I like the idea of creating small gathering spaces within town to sit and eat your lunch or hang out with activities such as hoop toss or the like to add activity to the space."*

*"A town square located in Ward St would be ideal for families and small business owners. This creates a better experience of navigating from different parts of the CBD as a pedestrian."*

*"Creation of a town square - after the success of the recent 'Christmas Extravanza' in Roberts Avenue, I like the idea of scenario B, utilising the area opposite the Horsham Town Hall."*





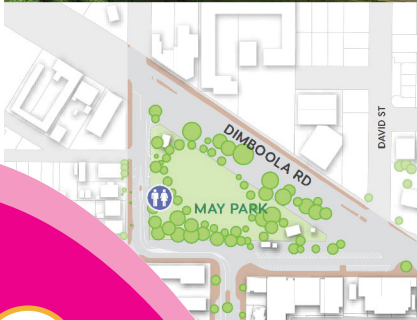
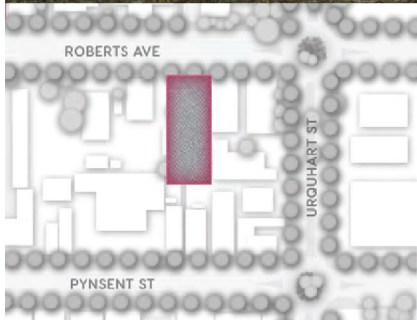
## Family considerations

*"Kids play areas in the Main Street / green areas that attract families to hang out in the community."*

*"Perhaps something for little children and mothers - breastfeeding/ parents area. There is no where in town that is comfortable for breastfeeding. A meeting place for mothers groups (outside the hub) where it is safe for babies and toddlers."*

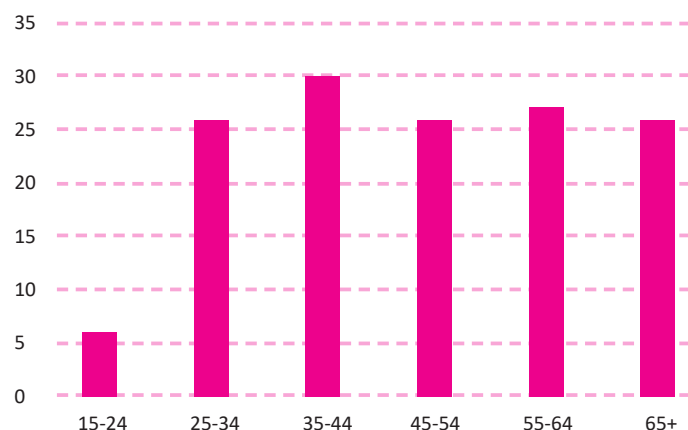
*"A parenting room would be appreciated."*

*"Specific ideas around how we can make the CAD more inviting for families to explore and spend. Horsham does have an older community but in saying that there are a lot of families that would welcome more options."*

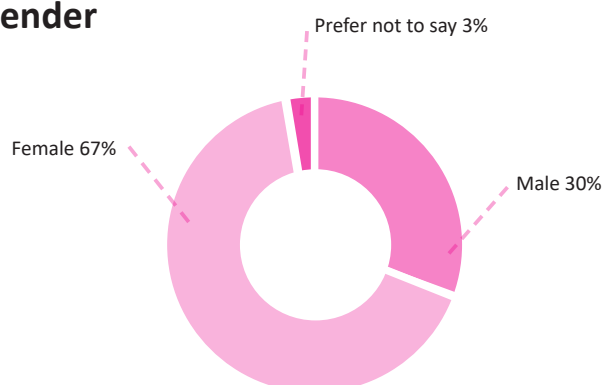


## SURVEY STATISTICS: DEMOGRAPHICS

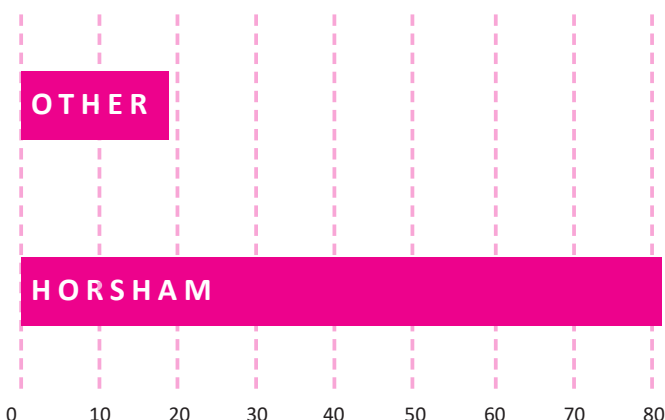
### Age



### Gender



### Location



## SURVEY STATISTICS: NUMERICAL QUESTION

**Which of these projects are the most important?** (Select 3 or less)

PROJECT	Total Mentions
Project 1 Create the 'Horsham Walk'	66
Project 3 Undertake facade improvements to heritage buildings	50
Project 11 Revive the Horsham Shade project and start the #1000 trees for Horsham campaign	50
Project 5 Build a Town Square in Horsham's Town Centre.	29
Project 9 Improve Wilson Street	26
Project 7 Create better connections to locations beyond the Town Centre such as the skate park, bowl club, tennis courts and river	22
Project 2 Reconfigure Firebrace Street	21
Project 6 Build a pedestrian-friendly environment on Ward Street to support the Town Square and connectivity between Roberts Street and the Town Hall	18
Project 8 Create a safer pedestrian experience within the Town Centre	18
Project 10 Create a streetscape design palette manual and begin to implement	8
Project 4 Develop Advertising Signage Controls	7



## WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE DRAFT STREETScape PLAN?

Some of the major areas of comment included concerns about the limited number of places for play and socialising for children and youth in the Town Centre. It also became clear that there was a real need for accessible parenting facilities. Two new projects have been proposed in response to community feedback. **Project 11** would see the site of the former Kindergarten on Roberts Ave turned into a safe and enclosed 'nature play' area for kids, with upgraded facilities including child change areas, and **Project 12** proposes upgrades to May Park to make it a safe and fun area for older kids and teens.

We heard clearly the community desire to retain angled parking on Firebrace Street, and have proposed staged measures to improve safety and amenity whilst retaining the angled parking. Also in response to community desire, bike lanes will not be located on Firebrace Street and will instead be located on the parallel streets of Urquhart Street and Darlot Street.

We also proposed measures to increase safety and amenity on other key streets across the CAD including O'Callaghans Parade, Darlot Street, Urquhart Street and Wilson Street. These measures included investigating how a cycle network can be safely accommodated in the CAD without causing further congestion down the main street, identifying the need for additional pedestrian crossing points in safe and convenient locations, and planting more street trees that green and shade our CAD.

Wide support for laneway improvements and upgrades to heritage facades demonstrated the pride Horsham residents had for their town and their desire to see more programmed events, activities and amenities in their town.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Council to decide on changes to the revised Streetscape Plan and formulate a final plan for adoption.
2. Prepare an Action and Implementation Plan.
3. Commence detailed planning and design for individual projects – further engagement will be undertaken.
4. Source funding for individual projects.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

To read more about the CAD Revitalisation: Streetscape Plan Project and the Draft Streetscape Plan, please visit <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Have-Your-Say/Central-Activity-District-Revitalisation>

