

An aerial photograph of a city grid, likely Horsham, showing a river winding through the center. The image is overlaid with a dark, semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered over the grid.

Horsham Wimmera River Precinct & Central Activities District

Vision & Masterplan

JUNE 2019 | FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Horsham Rural City Council gratefully acknowledges the valuable contributions made by businesses, government and referral agencies, special interest groups, community representatives, traditional owners and residents for attending consultation sessions and providing input into this project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagalk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people.

We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.



PROJECT CONSULTANTS:



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Overview

Horsham Rural City Council is planning for the long-term future of the Wimmera River Precinct and Central Activities District (CAD). The aim is to transform and revitalise the area to make it a more attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in.

This project forms part of *Transforming Horsham*, a suite of projects being undertaken concurrently by Council with a view to creating a brighter future for Horsham over the coming decades. *Transforming Horsham* is about imagining together, talking together, working together and moving forward together.

This document is a long term Vision and Masterplan for central Horsham and will be used to guide the revitalisation of the area over the next 20 to 30 years. The Vision and Masterplan is informed by independent research, analysis and consultation with representatives of community groups, organisations, businesses, Government agencies and traditional owners.

To respond to research and analysis, initiatives were identified where they could materially improve one or both of the following principles:



Liveability



Economic Resilience

Council invites input and feedback from all members of the community on the content of this Vision and Masterplan.

THE PROCESS

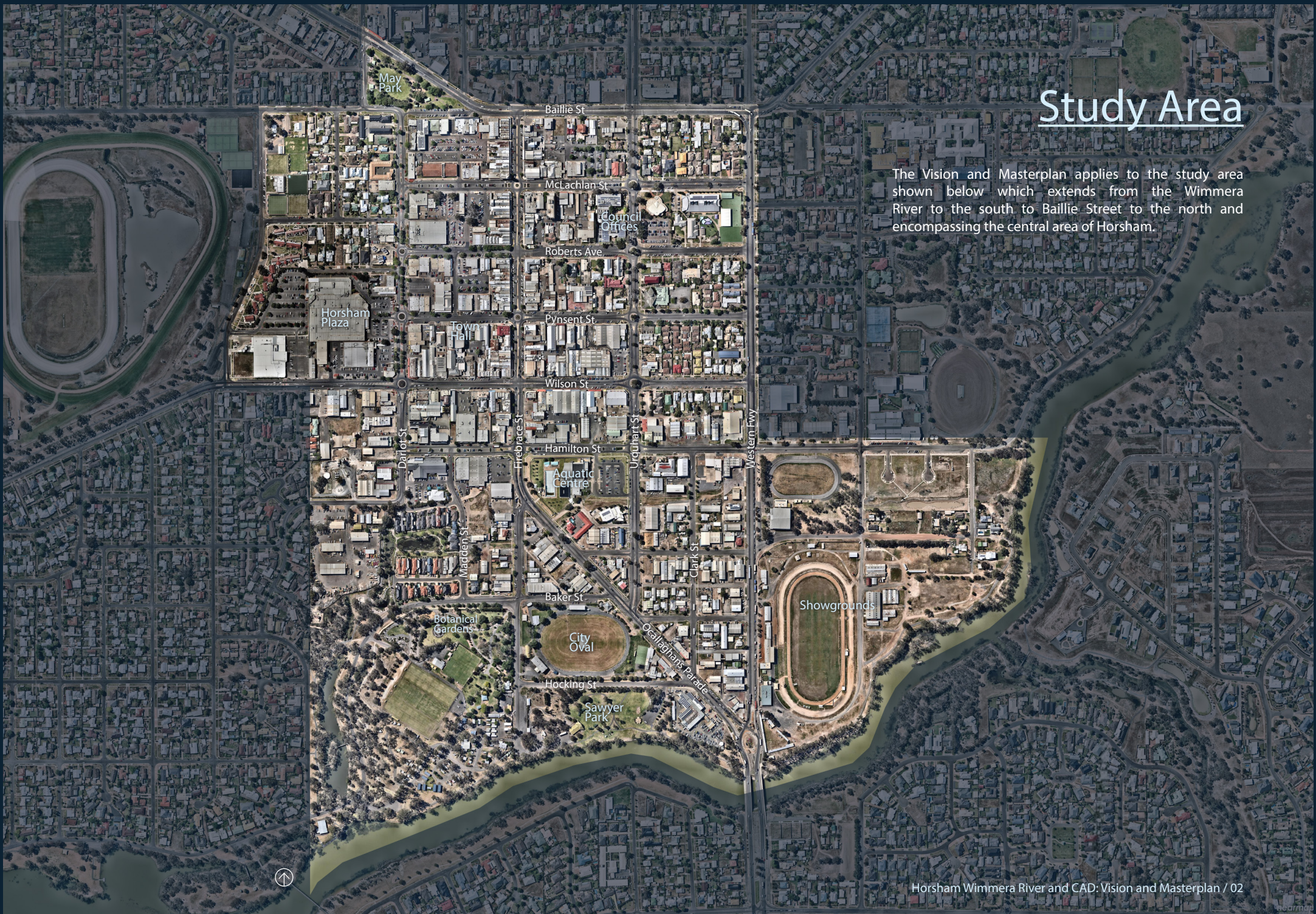
The Vision and Masterplan is the culmination of a series of steps depicted in the graphic below. The detailed research and analysis is included in the Technical Reports and Background Report.



William Guilfoyle's plan for the Horsham Botanical Gardens (1880)

Study Area

The Vision and Masterplan applies to the study area shown below which extends from the Wimmera River to the south to Baillie Street to the north and encompassing the central area of Horsham.



Vision Statement

Horsham is the heart of the Wimmera and supports the region's economy and communities. The success of the City is linked to its rich history, strong community and resilient economy.

The centre of Horsham is a thriving commercial, cultural, civic and recreation hub that will continue to evolve over time to meet the needs of the community, support and grow business activity and support and grow visitors to the region. The CAD will be better connected to highly accessible and quality open spaces, will incorporate substantially more shade and active transport opportunities and will accommodate more housing.

Horsham celebrates its connection to the Wimmera River, its greatest natural asset. The cultural, recreation and tourism potential of the riverfront precinct will be maximised to increase recreation, socialising, play, events, activities and infrastructure for visitors and residents. The riverfront will be better connected with surrounding areas, provide opportunities for public and private investment and creatively communicate the history and ongoing importance of Indigenous culture in the area.

By focusing on improvements which support liveability and economic resilience, the area will promote the attraction and retention of population and investment which will preserve the City's critical role for Horsham and the Wimmera region.

Together, the Horsham Central Activities District and the Wimmera riverfront will form an attractive, prosperous and sustainable destination that residents are proud of, businesses thrive within, investors covet, and visitors enjoy.



Objectives

The following objectives have been identified to guide the achievement of the vision across four main areas.

OBJECTIVE ONE

Wimmera River Precinct

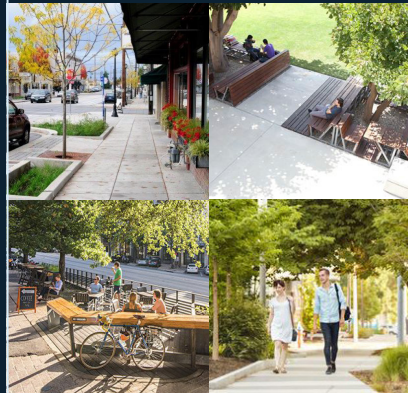
Activate, connect and add value to the Riverfront Precinct to establish an iconic community, recreation and tourist destination.



OBJECTIVE TWO

Horsham's Central Activities District

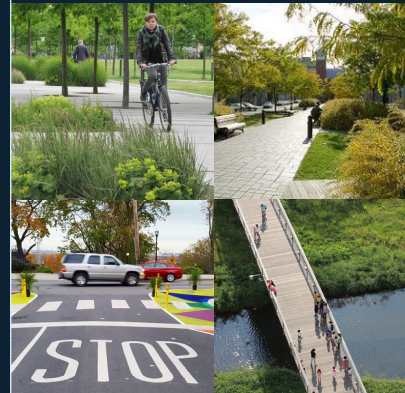
Improve the amenity of the CAD and the diversity of land uses to strengthen the existing business environment, attract more visitors and accommodate greater housing, hospitality, open space and events.



OBJECTIVE THREE

Transport and Connectivity

Better integrate and improve the connection between the CAD and the Riverfront and improve access to, and connectivity within the study area.



OBJECTIVE FOUR

Sport and Recreation

Adopt a long term strategic approach to developing sporting infrastructure that meets contemporary standards, promotes participation, accommodates regional events, makes efficient use of public land and integrates with urban and river areas.



OBJECTIVE ONE

The Wimmera River Precinct

A series of key directions are provided and are considered paramount to achieving and satisfying the objective for the Wimmera River Precinct.

1: Activate the riverfront to increase utilisation by residents and visitors:

- Construct a dedicated meeting place;
- Formalise and upgrade walking/cycling trails;
- Introduce a water play area;
- Develop and upgrade recreational fishing and boating infrastructure;
- Upgrade the soundshell at Sawyer Park;
- Public art and indigenous interpretive content; and
- Improve street furniture, upgrade lighting and public toilets.

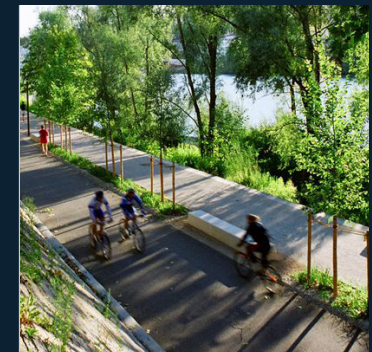
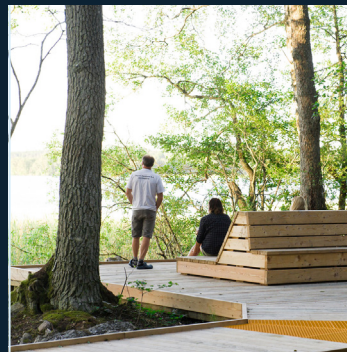
2: Improve the integration and accessibility of existing areas within the Riverfront Precinct

Including City Oval, Sawyer Park, Caravan Park, Botanic Gardens and the Showgrounds precinct and relocate existing uses to achieve optimal integration and accessibility.

3: Leverage activation to establish commercial and tourism development opportunities.

Identify sites and encourage development of:

- Hospitality – destination restaurant / café;
- Visitor accommodation;
- Business event facilities; and
- Arts and cultural spaces (e.g. Horsham Museum).



OBJECTIVE TWO

Horsham's Central Activities District

Five key directions have been identified to achieve the objective for the Central Activities District.

1: Implement the recommendations of the CAD Revitalisation Strategy

This includes improving streetscapes, prioritising pedestrian/cycling transport and connectivity and better integrating the CAD and the riverfront precinct with clear visual connections and landscaping.

2: Develop a series of meeting places in the CAD

Establish a series of meeting places in the CAD, which link with other CAD anchors including the Town Hall, May Park and the Riverfront.

3: Investigate the potential to redevelop/develop a high-quality purpose-built Government facility in the CAD

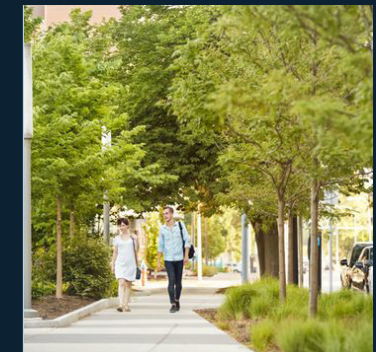
Co-locate a range of Government agencies (e.g. Local and State Government departments, agencies, Police).

4: Identify sites or precincts suitable for urban renewal between the riverfront precinct and Wilson Street.

These sites could both transition unsuitable industrial uses to other locations and accommodate new housing and commercial uses in the CAD. This includes relocating the Council Depot to an alternative location and encouraging land use transition along key pedestrian routes between the riverfront and CAD. Consider Burnt Creek Estate or Enterprise Estate as a location for any industrial uses wishing to relocate.

5: Transform the Wimmera Business Centre.

to meet contemporary business needs including reconsidering the operating model, physical requirements and optimum location. Potential to provide an integrated model that co-locates multiple uses including permanent and co-working office accommodation, temporary meeting rooms, community uses (e.g. small library space / gallery space / education facilities) and a café.



OBJECTIVE THREE

Transport and Connectivity

The following key directions are designed to support the objective for Transport and Connectivity.

1: Implement the transport recommendations of the CAD Revitalisation Strategy.

2: Create safe crossing points over the Western Highway and advocate for the downgrading of the road / creation of an alternative truck route

to remove large vehicles from the CAD given proximity to schools and the need to improve access to recreation facilities to the east of the highway.

3: Improve north-south routes connecting the riverfront with the CAD

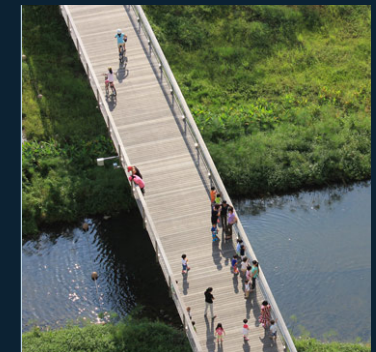
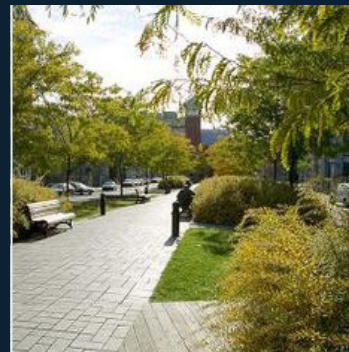
using existing road reserves as well as opportunities for 'off road' or laneway connections.

4: Establish an east-west linear trail along the existing drainage easement

commencing at Hamilton Street and extending in a south west direction past the Aquatic Centre to Madden Street.

5: Establish a pedestrian bridge at Hamilton Street

to provide an off-road connection between residential areas, schools, the river corridor and the CAD and to create a continuous north and south bank trail loop along the river in conjunction with the ANZAC bridge.



OBJECTIVE FOUR

Sport and Recreation

Three overarching key directions are identified to achieve the objective for Sport and Recreation.

1: Upgrade City Oval as Horsham's premier regional AFL/cricket venue

Upgrade City Oval to a regional standard to enable regional AFL and cricket sporting events and other non-sporting events to be hosted. Upgrades required are likely to include expansion of the size of the field, a new multi-purpose pavilion and clubrooms (including fully accessible and female friendly facilities) and covered spectator areas. Delivery of a second netball court would assist in club training and matches.

2: Develop a Regional Indoor Sports Precinct

Develop a regional indoor sports precinct at the McBryde Street site, providing for basketball, netball, badminton, table tennis, volleyball and squash. This project should build on the work completed as part of the Wimmera Sports Stadium Business Case and Concept Design Report (2017) and reflect the outcomes of consultation with key stakeholders during 2019.

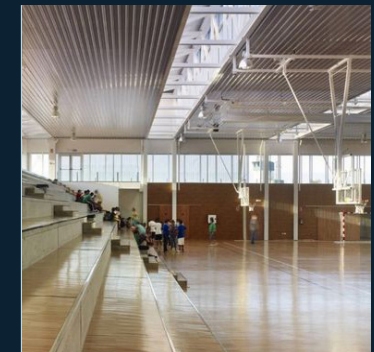
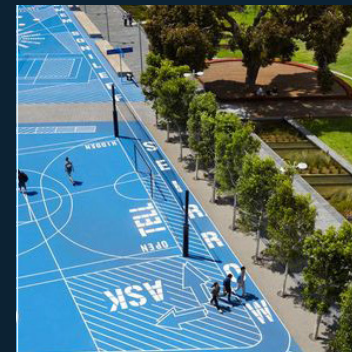
3: Develop an outdoor multi-purpose sports precinct

Plan for and develop a new multi-purpose shared outdoor sports precinct on the Crown land reserve at the Horsham Showgrounds precinct, currently occupied by the Horsham Greyhounds.

As a preliminary concept this should include provision of multipurpose sporting facilities. Key sports facilities considered for inclusion include Athletics (including 8 lane grass track and associated athletics facilities), soccer/rugby fields and a synthetic hockey pitch.

Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of a shared use oval for AFL/ Cricket training and matches, this could be delivered as part of a multi-purpose grass field that has the capacity to accommodate multiple sports (i.e. soccer, rugby, AFL, cricket). Consideration could also be given to the inclusion of tennis courts with the synthetic hockey facility.

Further work is required to finalise this concept, including an assessment of facility and site requirements and the preparation of a masterplan and business case to support investment.



Masterplan

A Masterplan for the study area has been prepared by landscape architects based on the vision, objectives and directions for the area.

The Masterplan shows the desired indicative long-term layout of the study area, in particular those areas that are proposed to transition from their existing uses to new or improved uses.

The Masterplan shows an indication of potential building locations, public realm upgrades, sporting precincts and other open space proposals, however the exact locations and layouts within each site may change depending on more detailed planning.

The most important role of the Masterplan is to show the desired long term direction for land within the area and an overarching physical aspiration that Council will seek to achieve through a range of actions, investment and partnerships over time.

Detailed elements of the Masterplan are shown on the following pages.



Legend

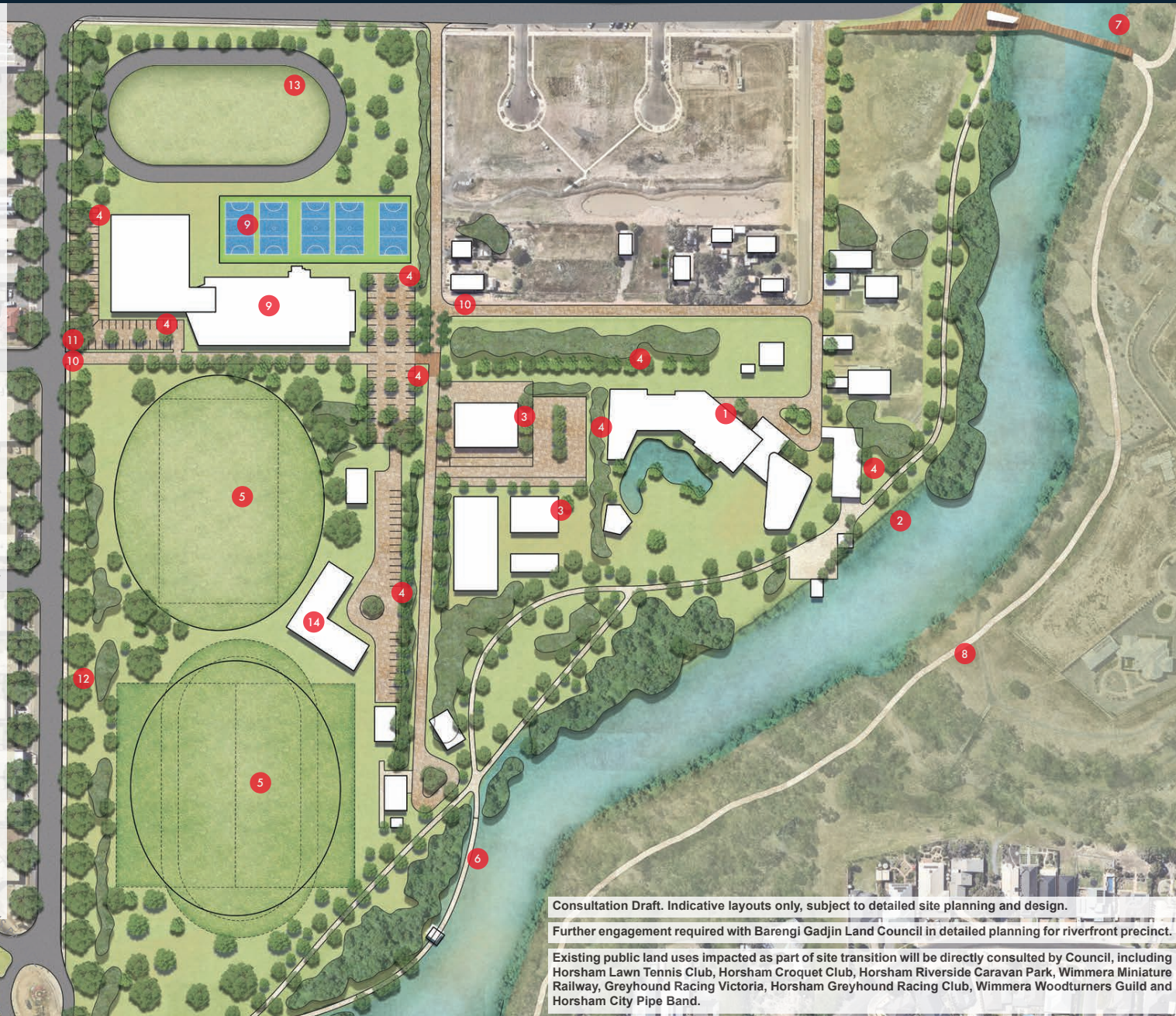
- 1 Firebrace Street redesigned to major pedestrian / shared space route
- 2 Precinct entry: junction remodelled
- 3 Baker Street remodelled. Parking
- 4 City Oval redevelopment to regional standard.
 - New Oval re-aligned and enlarged
 - Community netball courts
 - Improved pavilion and amenities
 - Public access through area increased
- 5 Hocking Street repurposed for car parking and shared use
- 6 New water play facility
- 7 New paths and connections
- 8 Explore commercial opportunities at Wilson Bolton site.
 - Iconic gateway building
 - Generous public riparian access
 - Building activation on Riverfront face
 - Public amenity
- 9 Events provision enhanced at Sawyer Park and connected to City Oval
- 10 Meeting Place and plaza.
 - Existing public toilets to be considered as part of redevelopment.
- 11 New cafe/ Restaurant on river-front
- 12 New waterfront destination
- 13 Improve integration and permeability of caravan park
- 14 New gardens and caravan park entry
- 15 Indigenous/cultural facility
- 16 New recreational fishing and boating infrastructure
- 17 Restored major pedestrian boulevard through gardens to river
- 18 Restored Botanic Gardens plan
- 19 New parking and shade planting
- 20 Existing caravan park.
 - Public through access with key avenues
 - Permeable and transparent boundaries
 - Services centrally located
 - Caravan park size reduced
- 21 Existing Playground
- 22 War Memorial retained



Further engagement required with Barengi Gadjin Land Council in detailed planning for riverfront precinct.

Legend

- 1 New tourism/hospitality site
 - Existing site heritage elements to be reflected in final design
- 2 New waterfront access and boulevards; lookouts
- 3 Cultural and arts facilities with transitional uses
 - Further investigation for a potential museum site
- 4 Parking locations
- 5 New multi-purpose regional sports and events facilities precinct. Indicative only
 - Generous public riparian access
 - Improved street frontages
 - Multiple sport use
 - Closer/ realignment of McBryde St. subject to further traffic management planning.
- 6 Extend river-front bikeway and shared paths
- 7 New pedestrian and cycle bridge
- 8 Pedestrian and bike way continues on opposite bank of river
- 9 New Multi-Purpose Indoor Sports Stadium
 - Siting of parking and netball courts to be subject to flooding considerations.
 - Existing basketball stadium to be retained. New stadium separate.
- 10 Consider vehicle access points to precinct having regard to sporting precinct master plan.
- 11 New precinct entry to work in with heritage gates
- 12 New road frontage planting and boundary treatment
- 13 Existing velodrome retained
- 14 Proposed New Pavilion



Consultation Draft. Indicative layouts only, subject to detailed site planning and design.

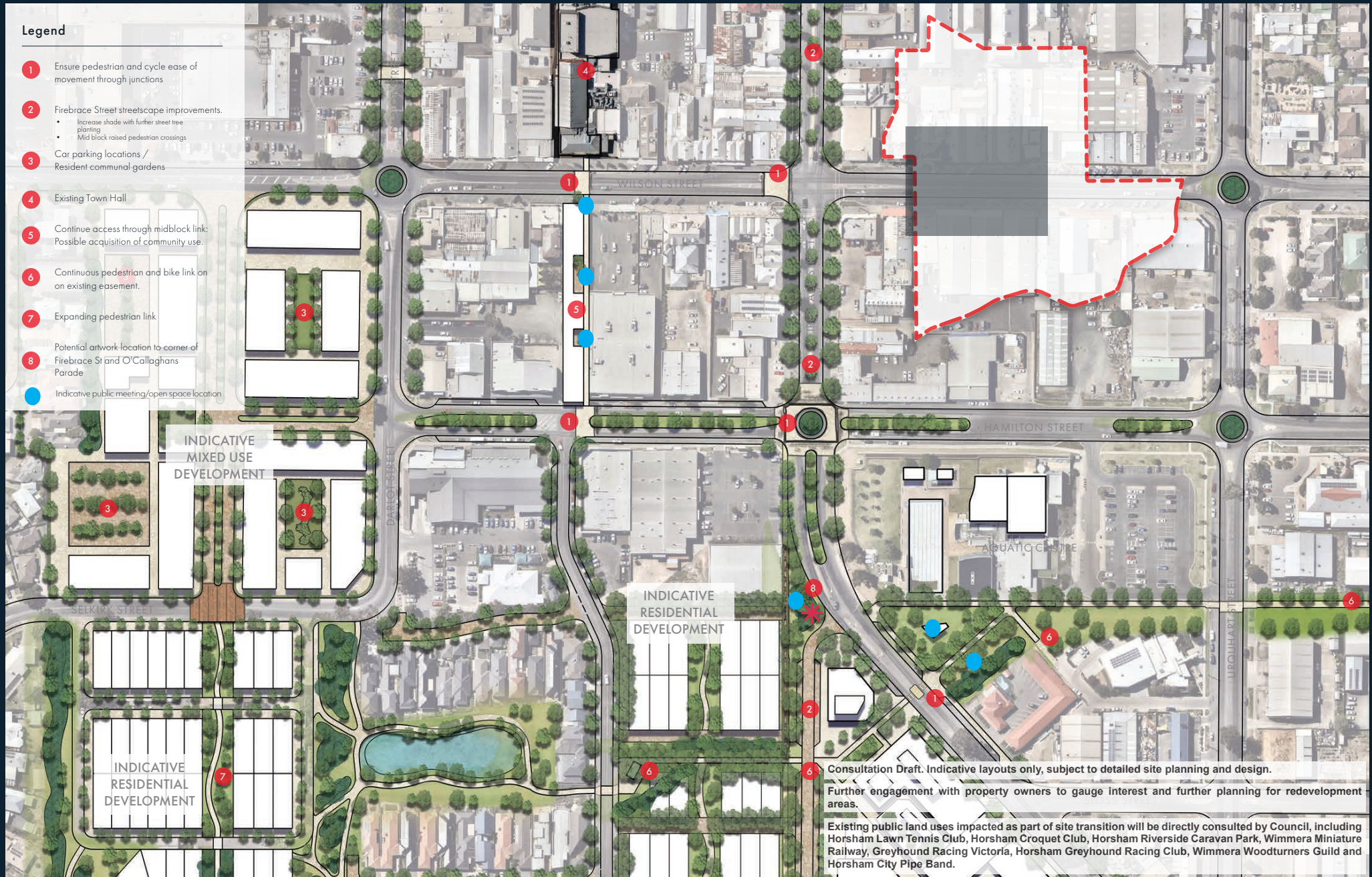
Further engagement required with Barengi Gadjin Land Council in detailed planning for riverfront precinct.

Existing public land uses impacted as part of site transition will be directly consulted by Council, including Horsham Lawn Tennis Club, Horsham Croquet Club, Horsham Riverside Caravan Park, Wimmera Miniature Railway, Greyhound Racing Victoria, Horsham Greyhound Racing Club, Wimmera Woodturners Guild and Horsham City Pipe Band.

Source: Tract, 2019

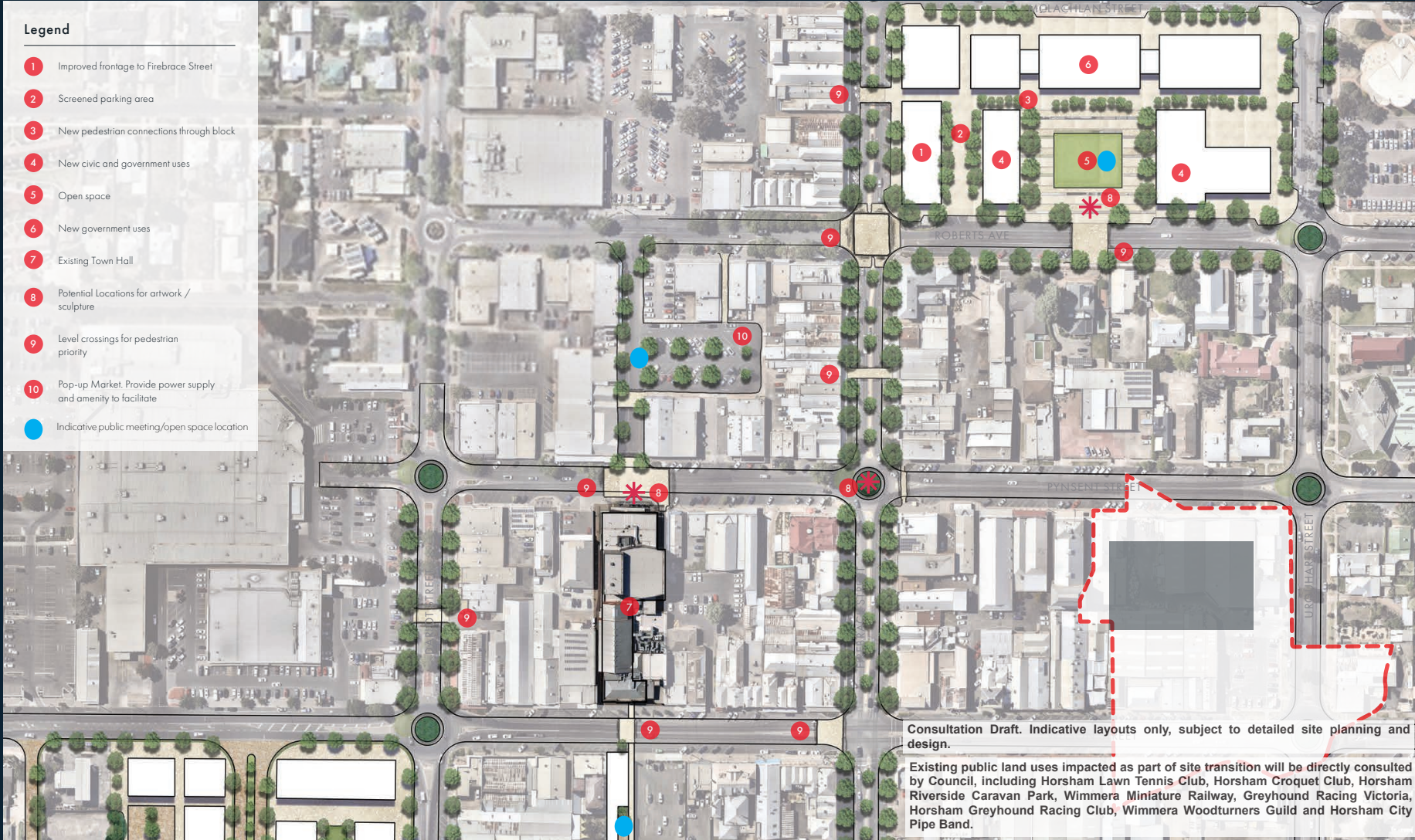
Legend

- 1 Ensure pedestrian and cycle ease of movement through junctions
- 2 Firebrace Street streetscape improvements.
 - Increase shade with further street tree planting
 - Mid block raised pedestrian crossings
- 3 Car parking locations / Resident communal gardens
- 4 Existing Town Hall
- 5 Continue access through midblock link. Possible acquisition of community use.
- 6 Continuous pedestrian and bike link on an existing easement.
- 7 Expanding pedestrian link
- 8 Potential artwork location to corner of Firebrace St and O'Callaghans Parade
- Indicative public meeting/open space location



Consultation Draft. Indicative layouts only, subject to detailed site planning and design.
 Further engagement with property owners to gauge interest and further planning for redevelopment areas.
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Source: Tract, 2019

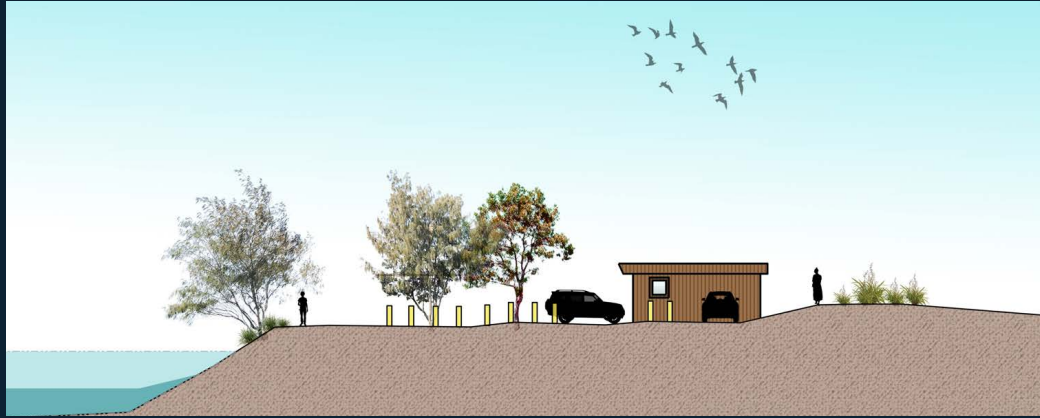


Consultation Draft. Indicative layouts only, subject to detailed site planning and design.

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Source: Tract, 2019

Riverfront Precinct



Before

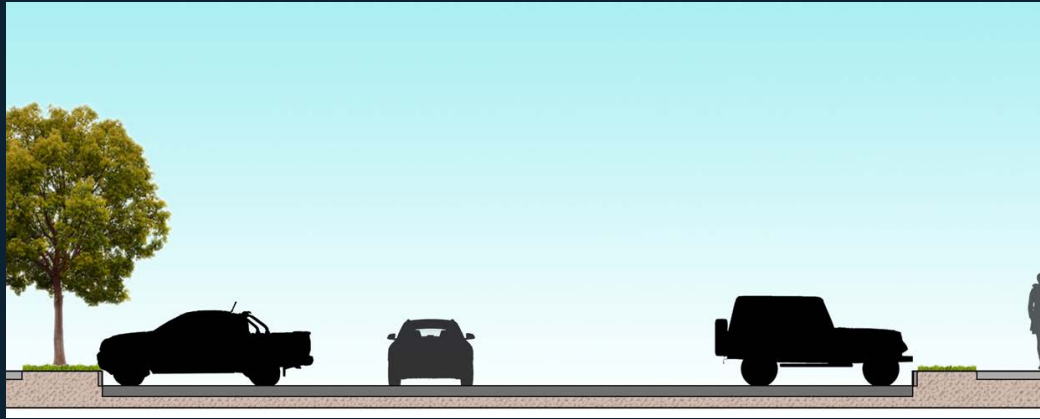
Source: Tract, 2019



After

Source: Tract, 2019

Firebrace Street (River End)



Before

Source: Tract, 2019



After

Source: Tract, 2019

Transformative Projects

A number of transformative projects are proposed as part of the Vision and Masterplan, particularly within public land near the Wimmera Riverfront.

Representatives of existing public land uses that will be impacted during implementation of the Vision and Masterplan will be directly consulted by Council in relation to the appropriate timelines and processes for the transition of public land use in the study area.

The following design principles should be followed for the major transformational projects:

City Oval Redevelopment:

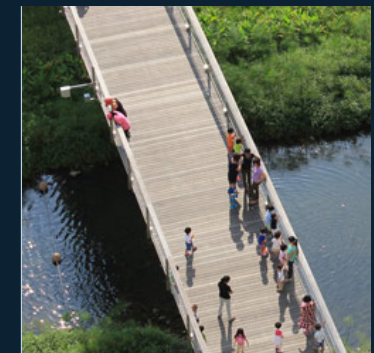
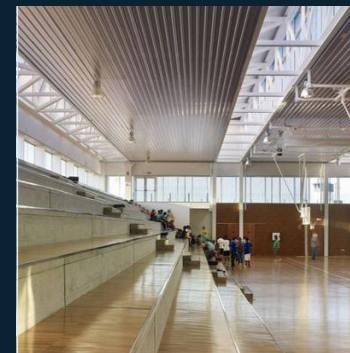
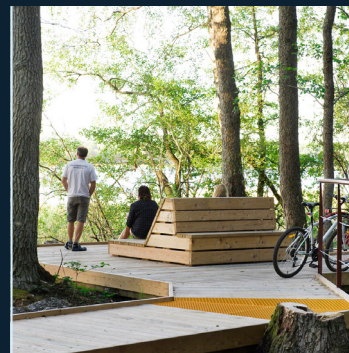
- Maintain the current sporting role and upgrade to meet all contemporary facility standards including Universal Design;
- Increase public access to and through the site by allowing greater permeability, removing fences, encouraging passive recreation and creating an inviting public realm and interface;
- Improve integration with surrounding areas including Swayer Park, the Riverfront and key pedestrian access routes to the CAD.

Riverfront:

- Maximise public use of the Riverfront for residents and visitors, particularly for passive open space, socialising, trails, play and events;
- Restore elements of the original Botanic Gardens Plan;
- Improve physical connections and integration with surrounding areas; and
- Incorporate Indigenous interpretation into design.

Showgrounds Precinct:

- Maximise shared use of public land for sports, passive open space and events;
- Make efficient use of shared facilities including car parking, pavilions and infrastructure;
- Consider the need to retain elements of cultural significance such as Showgrounds gates;
- Ensure a high degree of connectivity and integration between all elements of the precinct including velodrome, indoor stadium, outdoor sports, Riverfront and major tourism site;
- Establish an attractive southern gateway to Central Horsham and high quality interface with the Western Highway, including pedestrian access to the western side of the Highway.



Land Use, Redevelopment and Investment

The Horsham CAD and Riverfront Precinct currently accommodates a broad range of land uses. This diversity is a great strength which enables a variety of economic, civic and recreational functions to be performed within a relatively compact urban form.

The Masterplan identifies a range of major projects that will primarily occur within public land. Importantly, these projects are designed in many instances to improve investment conditions for the private sector to take advantage of greater activity and visitation. Investment could take a number of forms, including individual businesses or property owners making improvements or expansions to premises, right up to major redevelopment of key sites to establish new tourism, residential or hospitality facilities.

It is important that clear direction is provided to the market as part of this Vision and Masterplan. This includes identifying the type and location of land use and investment priorities that Council will encourage, support and facilitate over the planning period. This will provide greater direction and certainty to the business, property and investment markets when making decisions.

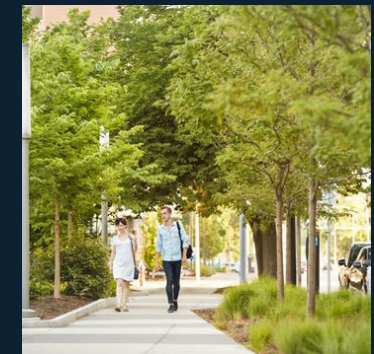
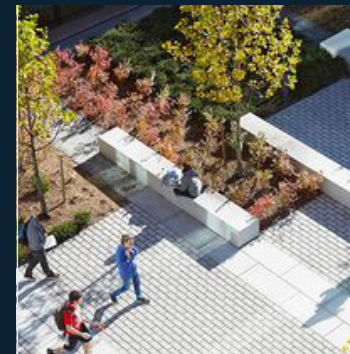
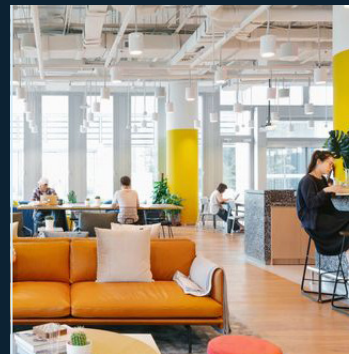
Research and consultation undertaken as part of this project and previous studies identified a range of opportunities to strengthen the land use mix to respond to market needs and capitalise on proposed public investment.

In particular, greater residential, tourism and hospitality uses have been identified as key opportunities for the area, while it is also important that existing retail, commercial, civic and business roles are retained and supported.

The land use priorities and key investment opportunities for each broad precinct as part of this Masterplan are shown in Figure 1.

'Major sites' shown on the plan indicate the locations where particular developments could be undertaken to capitalise on the economic and tourism opportunities identified for the area, with a particular focus on creating new sites for tourism and hospitality investment in proximity to the Wimmera River.

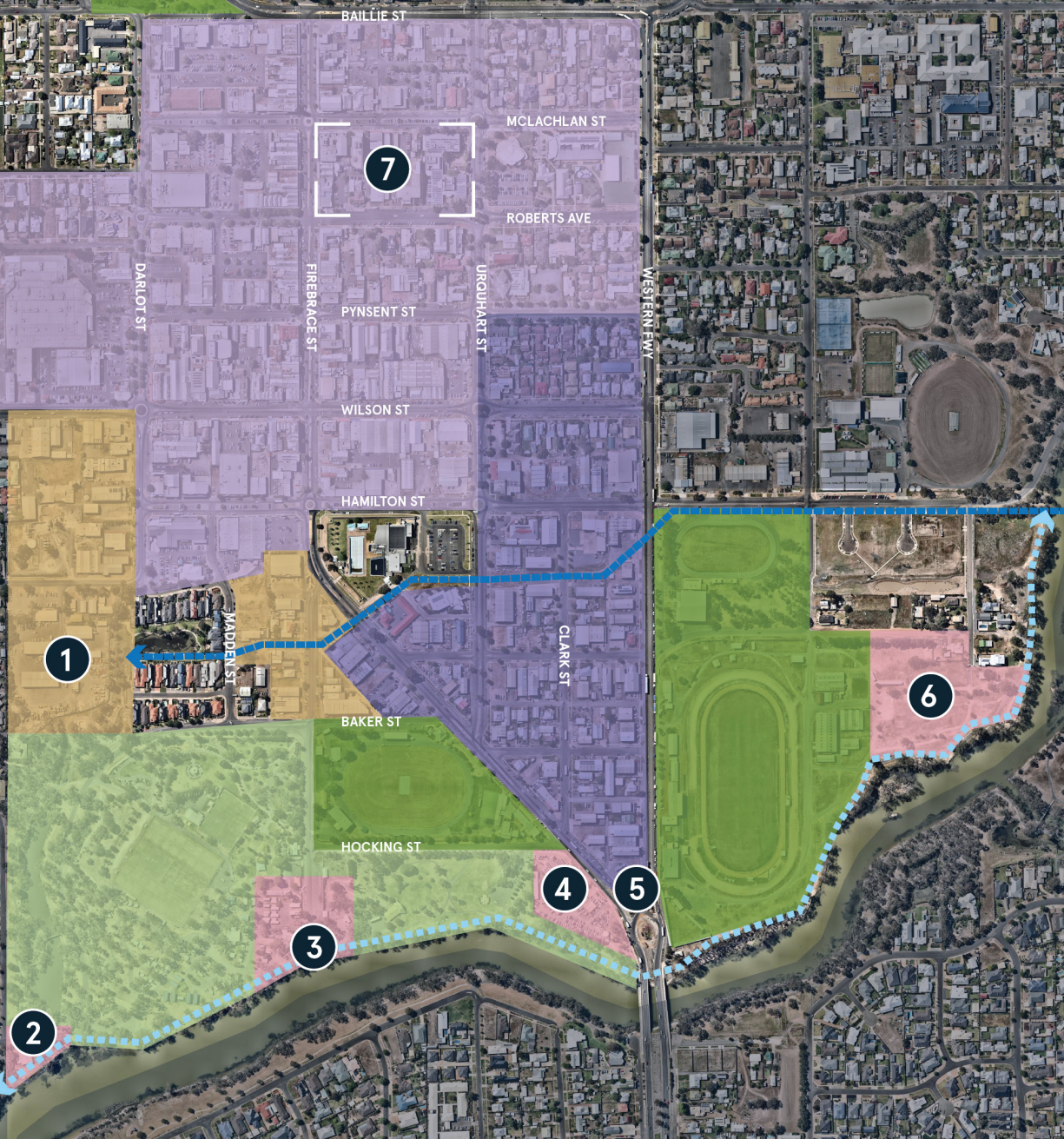
A wide range of other sites across the Study Area will also be appropriate to accommodate redevelopment and investment.



LAND USE PRECINCTS
AND KEY INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

LEGEND

- Tourism
 - Passive Open Space
 - Sports and Events
 - Retail/Commercial
 - Employment
 - Urban Renewal Opportunity
 - Pedestrian Connection
 - Riverfront Connection
 - Civic/Gov Hub
 - Major Sites
1. Council Depot & Batching Plant
 2. Rowing Club
 3. Firebrace St River Arrival
 4. Wilson Bolton
 5. Strategic Site
 6. Agricultural Society
 7. Government Hub



Source: Urban Enterprise, 2019



nearmap

CAD RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL FOCUS

The CAD accommodates the majority of retail, commercial and civic land uses. It is important that a compact commercial core is maintained to encourage trip sharing and to enable a concentration of economic and social activity to occur within the central area.

Demand for new retail and commercial floorspace is not expected to result in the need for any significant extensions to the core area – therefore the vision for this area is to continue to improve the physical conditions and infrastructure for visitors and businesses through public realm and transport initiatives.

There are opportunities for the public realm to perform a greater linear open space role to promote recreation and social activity in appropriate locations in the CAD. This will encourage greater visitation, footfall and length of stay in the area, leading to greater private sector investment across a variety of retail, commercial, hospitality and creative opportunities.

Opportunities for commercial and retail uses to extend to the south towards the river precinct are proposed in the vicinity of Firebrace Street and Darlot Street as part of two mixed-use 'urban renewal' areas - this is discussed in the following section.

Artist's impression of Firebrace Street (toward riverfront)



Source: Tract, 2019

CAD TO RIVERFRONT TRANSITION AREA: BUSINESS AND URBAN RENEWAL

The section of land between the retail and commercial core and the Wimmera River (the 'transition area') currently accommodates a variety of industrial, commercial, retail and residential land uses. Land uses in this area are relatively inconsistent and there are a number of examples of sub-optimal interfaces, for example between heavier industrial and residential uses.

The land use vision for this area is provided in two parts:

- Land in the eastern section of the transition area has many attributes that support ongoing employment and retail-focused land uses, including good exposure and accessibility from main roads and separation from residential areas. The vision for this area is to remain as an employment area within the Commercial 2 Zone with existing businesses encouraged to continue operations and reinvest.
- By contrast, land in the western section of the transition area presents an opportunity for urban renewal. This could be achieved by replacing existing industrial uses with a mix of housing and business uses. These opportunities have been identified in two areas that are strategically located in close proximity to the retail core, open space and recreation assets, existing residential uses and proposed north-south and east-west linear open space connections through the precinct. This applies to:
 - Land currently occupied by the Council Depot and neighbouring concrete batching plant; and
 - Properties fronting Firebrace Street between Baker Street and Hamilton Street.

RIVERFRONT: RECREATION, EVENTS, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY FOCUS

The land use and investment vision for the riverfront area is to establish a continuous corridor of complementary tourism, hospitality, recreation and events uses which capitalise on the substantial natural advantages offered by the Wimmera River.

Major improvements are proposed in the Masterplan to upgrade and activate the open space along the riverfront and improve and expand the sports and events infrastructure at City Oval, Sawyer Park and the Showgrounds. A number of opportunities have been identified for tourism and hospitality investment to occur on both public and private land in this precinct, with a focus on visitor accommodation and hospitality uses.

The catalyst for private sector investment in the riverfront precinct will be activation of the key public assets in the area to increase visitation, activities and events.

Council's role will focus on providing the strategic and policy support for this investment to occur and pursuing catalyst projects which can improve investment conditions for the private sector.



Source: Tract, 2019

Staging

The vision for the study area will require a broad range of projects and actions over a long period of time. It is important that these actions are delivered in a staged manner so that public projects can catalyse private sector investment, and to enable budget allocations to be staged.

INDICATIVE TIMING	CENTRAL ACTIVITIES DISTRICT	TRANSITION AREA	RIVERFRONT PRECINCT
Early			
	Deliver public realm and public space initiatives	Deliver east-west linear open space	Deliver early stages of riverfront works (Firebrace St entrance) and linear connections, including Hamilton Street Bridge
(0-5 years)	Plan for new north-south link	Plan for urban renewal	Redevelop City Oval
	Plan for government precinct		Plan for Showgrounds precinct
Medium term			
	Deliver new north-south link	Relocate Council depot	Deliver indoor sports stadium
(5-15 years)	Facilitate new civic precinct development	Finalise all urban renewal actions	Redevelopment of Wilson Bolton site
		Deliver all Firebrace Street public realm improvements	Establish tourism investment opportunity at Showgrounds
		Establish access improvements across Western Highway	Deliver remaining stages of riverfront works, including relocation of tennis courts
Long term			
(15+ years)	Realise government precinct outcomes.	Realise urban renewal outcomes	Deliver Showgrounds vision, including sporting infrastructure and relocated greyhounds and show site.

Where to From Here?

This Vision and Masterplan provides a clear blueprint for the future of the centre of Horsham. Without a long term vision and broad participation by the Horsham community, meaningful change, investment and improvement will not be possible.

Council invites input and feedback from all members of the community on the content of this Vision and Masterplan.

Following public exhibition, a detailed action and implementation plan will be prepared. Council will seek funding for major projects in partnership with other levels of Government.



Horsham Wimmera
River Precinct &
Central Activities District

Prepared by Urban Enterprise with masterplan design input by Tract,
for Horsham Rural City Council, 2019.