

inspiring place



SORELL STREETSCAPE PLAN 2014

SORELL COUNCIL



SORELL STREETSCAPE PLAN



Inspiring Place

placemaking: landscape + environment + tourism + recreation

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VERSION

INTERNAL REVIEW

PUBLIC REVIEW

FINAL



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**IT'S NOT SOLITUDE PEOPLE ARE SEEKING IN SMALL TOWNS —THE
FRUITS OF HUMAN CREATIVITY ARE BEST SHARED—BUT, RATHER,
ENRICHMENT UNBOTHERED BY THE TUMULT OF INCREASINGLY
LIVES DISCONNECTED FROM A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**



INTRODUCTION



The town of Sorell is strategically located on the doorstep to Tasmania's largest City and as the gateway to the East Coast and Tasman Peninsula, two of Tasmania's biggest tourist destinations.

1. SORELL MOVING FORWARD ...

Sorell is rapidly changing with substantive relocation of business and service activity away from the 'main street'. The once walkable town centre has been by-passed and the Tasmanian economy has slowed. The result is the historic town centre is seemingly empty. Meanwhile, nearby, suburban shopping centre expansion and new Government service facilities flourish as stand alone destinations surrounded by swathes of car park.

Increasingly, there are two disconnected centres in the same town with no plan that describes the integration of these areas, only the knowledge that they both must thrive if services are to meet the full range of benefits that residents expect from their town. One area needs to be made more humane and the other has to be re-imagined to create the communal benefits of a burgeoning town life.

Sorell is not alone as a historic town adapting to modern times. Towns all around the western world are undergoing similar changes and likewise are in the process of envisioning their futures – futures that imagine their place as active, beautiful, safe, easy to get around and pleasant to be in. The key to success, where it has occurred, is improvements to the public space of the street: the stage for daily life, the place where people meet, relax and enjoy the day's activities. A place where people want to be.

The Sorell community have expressed their needs (1) and Council have responded by engaging Inspiring Place to create a streetscape plan that focuses on improvements to the public realm that will foster investment and encourage people out of their cars to fill the streets once again with life.

The Sorell Council, in preparing the *Sorell Streetscape Plan 2014* is putting itself at the forefront of a world movement to create livable town centres. Importantly, the streetscape plan ensures that Sorell will be a 'good place to live' for many years to come.

1. See Inspiring Place Pty Ltd 2013. *Sorell Streetscape Consultation Findings* unpublished report to the Sorell Council.



Gordon Street. Much of the history of Sorell's settlement has been overlain by modern development. Nonetheless, important historic patterns and fabric remain.



A FRAMEWORK FOR SORELL'S STREETScape



The Streetscape Plan is a framework for capital investment, aimed to inspire the community, business and Council to take sustained action.

2 ... TOWARDS A LIVABLE TOWN CENTRE

The streetscape plan establishes a framework for future capital investment in Sorell's main streets, a framework that seeks to:

- sustain the values of the place that the community appreciates - its history, evolving modern character and its friendly small town atmosphere;
- create distinctive settings within the town that exhibit quality design and embrace environmental sustainability to invite people to visit and stay longer in the street;
- resolve issues of vehicle and pedestrian circulation to make the place safe and friendly for people to move about;
- inspire the community, business and Council to take sustained action; and
- attract State, Federal and private funding for new works.

The *Sorell Streetscape Plan 2014* is an important opportunity to make a difference to the livability of the town and to influence how its main streets operate to support business and the community.

**ONCE YOU GET BENEATH THE VENEER, YOU GET TO WHAT MAKES OR
BREAKS A SMALL TOWN — ITS ATMOSPHERE**



A VISION FOR SORELL'S STREETSCAPE

Qualities of the Pedestrian Environment

Protection



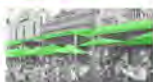
against vehicular traffic

- traffic accidents
- pollution, fumes, noise
- visibility



against crime & violence (perceived safety)

- lively/active
- street life
- passive surveillance
- overlapping function in space & time



against unpleasant sensory experiences

- wind/draft
- rain/snow
- cold/heat
- pollution
- dust, glare, noise

Enjoyment



scale

- dimensioning of buildings and spaces should relate to human dimensions and senses



possibilities for enjoying positive aspects of climate

- sun/shade
- warmth/coolness
- breeze/ventilation



aesthetic quality/positive sensory experiences

- quality design & fine detailing
- vistas/views
- trees, plants, water

Comfort



possibilities of walking

- room for walking
- accessibility to key areas
- interesting facades
- no obstacles
- quality surfaces



possibilities of standing/ staying

- attractive edges 'edge effect'
- defined spots for staying
- objects for leaning against



possibilities of sitting

- zones for sitting that maximise advantages; pleasant views; people watching



possibilities to see & hear talking

- distance to objects
- unhindered views
- interesting views
- lighting (when dark)
- low ambient noise levels
- sitting arrangements conducive to communicating



possibilities for play, recreation, interaction

- allowing for physical activity, play, interaction and entertainment
- temporary activities (markets, festivals, exhibitions, etc.)
- optional activities (resting, meeting, social interactions)



day & night activity seasonal activity

- 24 hour city
- variety of functions through the day
- light in windows (residences)
- mixed use, lighting in human scale
- seasonal activities, extra protection from unpleasant climatic conditions
- lighting

Activation of the street requires protection, enjoyment and comfort. When streets are active, business is energised, people are healthier and community pride blossoms.

3. A VISION FOR SORELL - AN ACTIVE TOWN CENTRE

Town pride of place grows when the public realm is active, beautiful, safe, easy to get around and pleasant to be in.

The benefits of an active town centre are many. Businesses are energised when there is more foot traffic past their door. Towns are healthier when streets are safer and friendlier and encourage people to get out and walk. There are environmental benefits too as people leave their cars behind, street trees ameliorate pollution and landscaping cleans stormwater runoff.

With these benefits in mind the vision for Sorell's town centre is to be:

AN ACTIVE, LIVED IN PLACE, STEEPED IN ITS HISTORY BUT LOOKING TO ITS FUTURE AS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO DO BUSINESS, SHOP, WORK, VISIT AND PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.

The vision is consistent with State and regional policy, the community's views about the future of the town and with theories of modern urban planning.

Importantly, much of what is put forward in the Sorell Streetscape Plan is within the reach of Council given its significant land holdings within the town centre and its role in the care, development and management of the public space of the town's streets.

**TOWN CENTRES ARE ... "THE FOCUS OF CIVIC IDENTITY, EXPRESSING
THE ESSENCE OF WHAT EACH TOWN IS AND HOW IT IS DIFFERENT
FROM OTHERS."** KEN WORPOLE TOWNS FOR PEOPLE



PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN



Good public space is the result of a shared agenda, a plan and an agreed set of principles to guide decision making. Above - Sorell today. Below - Sorell in the future?

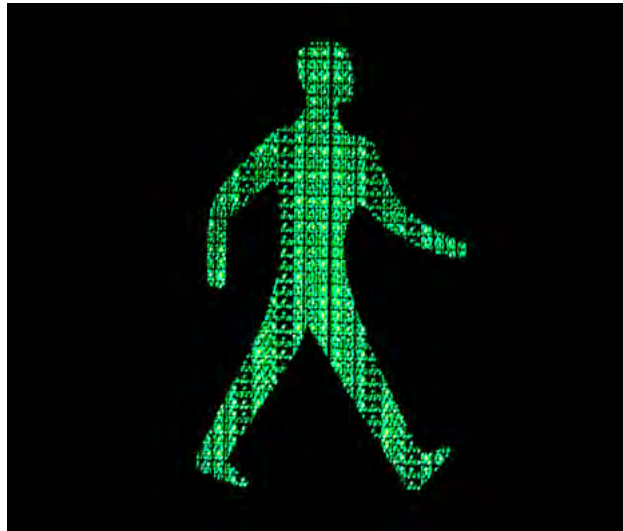
4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In successful towns, daily life is a rich experience. Where this is the case, the local Council has identified, planned and implemented strategies to enliven their towns basing their decisions on how they affect the people who will occupy the town centre. The point is that great town centres don't just happen, they are the result of a shared agenda, a plan and agreed principles that guide decision making.

Placemaking is at the heart of building great towns and behind it all is a suite of ideas about how vibrant centres are created. The following section looks at the issues facing Sorell through the lens of 21 placemaking concepts:

1. Leverage off Sorell's place in the region
2. Take advantage of the town centre's topography
3. Connect with the setting
4. Engage with the history of the place
5. Define the boundary
6. Encourage people to live in town
7. Promote mixed-use development
8. Create a civic heart
9. Connect the town to where people live
10. Expand cycle access and infrastructure
11. Diversity the street edge
12. Activate street frontages
13. Create places to sit and watch
14. Leverage off public transport links
15. Make street crossing easier
16. Reconsider the car park
17. Encourage an outdoor culture
18. See the town centre as a stage
19. Make the place playful
20. Interject art
21. Light the night
22. Promote events

“NO CITY SHOULD BE TOO LARGE FOR A MAN TO WALK OUT OF IN A MORNING” CYRIL CONNELLY UNQUIET GRAVE





PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



All journeys begin and end on foot. Sorell's topography is ideally suited to walking. The Streetscape Plan looks to enhance walkability through better footpaths, more safe mid-block crossings and the addition of livability infrastructure - trees, seats and pedestrian scale lighting.

ISSUE 1. SORELL NEEDS TO BE A DISTINCTIVE TOWN NOT ONE AMONG MANY

Sorell's character arises from the interplay of its surrounding landscape, its gentle topography and its history of settlement. Where these factors are ignored, Sorell has become more like everywhere else. Where they have been recognised, Sorell remains its own place with its own sense of identity.

The starting point for retaining the identity of Sorell is to 'ground' the town centre in its setting. This can be achieved by adopting the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 1. LEVERAGE OFF SORELL'S PLACE IN THE REGION

Sorell sits within easy travel distance of Hobart, the biggest market in Tasmania and at the crossroads to the East Coast and the Tasman Peninsula two of the biggest tourism destinations in the State. Crossroads are important generators of interaction and decision. When paths cross, encounters occur - a good starting point for a livable town centre.

On the one hand, Sorell's location means residents can travel readily to work in Hobart but also on the other that the town is well poised to attract people to it for unique shopping experiences, special events, open space use and sporting activities. Locals stay in the street a short time. By contrast, social and cultural visitors, leisure shoppers and tourists stay longer and spend more.

PRINCIPLE 2. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TOWN CENTRE'S TOPOGRAPHY

Sorell's town centre and adjacent residential areas sit on a flat plain that rises gently to the north of Dubs and Co Drive and only falls away at the foreshore of Orielson Lagoon and Pitt Water. Access is easy for those of all abilities. The flatness of the landscape means that people can readily walk, cycle, push prams or take their motorised wheelchairs to and from the town centre.

We also know that empty nesters want walkability. As Tasmania's population ages, people will look for communities that promote healthy living and good access for citizens of all abilities and housing that is close to services and centres of daily life. Sorell is ideally placed to meet these objectives.

PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



Safe trail circuits with a variety of views and landscape experiences are an attractor. Families will travel to ride such networks if they are promoted.



The public realm should expose and interpret the town's history and its relevance to contemporary life, that is, the emphasis must be on livability in the present.

PRINCIPLE 3 CONNECT WITH THE SETTING

Towns don't exist in isolation, they link to a wider setting physically and visually. Sorell enjoys fine views down its streets to surrounding hills, rural landscapes, Pitt Water and Orielson Lagoon. Sorell Creek is a strong defining feature, creating a clear boundary between the residential setting and its abutting farmland. All these features contribute to Sorell's distinctiveness.

Council has already started a shared trail along Sorell Creek. The trail is part of an intended circuit around the township. Coming stages should create strong links to Orielson Lagoon and Pitt Water, these water bodies offering world-class birdlife experiences as well as the joy of proximity to an estuarine setting.

Safe trail circuits with a variety of views and landscape experiences are an attractor. Families will travel to ride such networks if they are promoted. The effectiveness of the trail in converting visitors to spend depends on how the network is connected to the town centre. The facilities in Pioneers Park are excellent, but they are disconnected from the economy of the town. Better connections between the Pioneer Park and the town centre will help draw visitors to what it is on offer in Sorell.

PRINCIPLE 4 ENGAGE WITH THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE

Much of the history of Sorell's settlement has been overlain by modern development. Nonetheless, important historic patterns remain such as the original rail alignment and 20+ listed heritage buildings including churches and cemeteries, Council's former offices, homes and cottages, the rail station and rail shed.

Reliance on the past as a 'theme' for town branding, however, is fraught if the density of historic content is not there – think of the comparison with Richmond, Oatlands or Ross, where the sense of history is pervasive. Tourism data also supports a view that historic content alone is not enough to attract visitation. In Tasmania, the data suggests that history must be paired with food, culture and/or nature to gain its best advantage. Where history does draw, it is because it is authentic not a pastiche.

All remnants of the past are important as part of the part of the layered history that is the town and as components of its identity. The public realm should expose and interpret the town's history and its relevance to contemporary life, that is, the emphasis must be on livability in the present.



PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



'Gateways' create identifiable precincts. Above. Proposed upgrading to Sorell just off the causeway. New fencing, planting and paving of the gravel shoulder. Below. Entry from the Tasman Peninsula with proposed new avenue planting, base planting and paved surround to the entry signage.



ISSUE 2. THE TOWN CENTRE SHOULD BE COMPACT NOT AN ENDLESS SPRAWL.

Sorell follows a pattern of development much like many expanding rural towns – a commercial activity centre at its core, single family housing with larger pockets of un-developed land sprinkled throughout and with rural residential properties and rural acreages immediately adjacent to the town. Strip development also features along main entry roads.

In Sorell's case, large open landscapes abut the town to the east of Sorell Rivulet, with rural residential land to the west and rural properties to the north. In the town centre, there are large, privately owned blocks that remain vacant. Where housing has developed, lots sizes are often large and density low. Strip housing lines the highway from the causeway on the south.

Successful towns encourage people to live within walking distance. Better yet, the create conditions where people live and work within the centre.

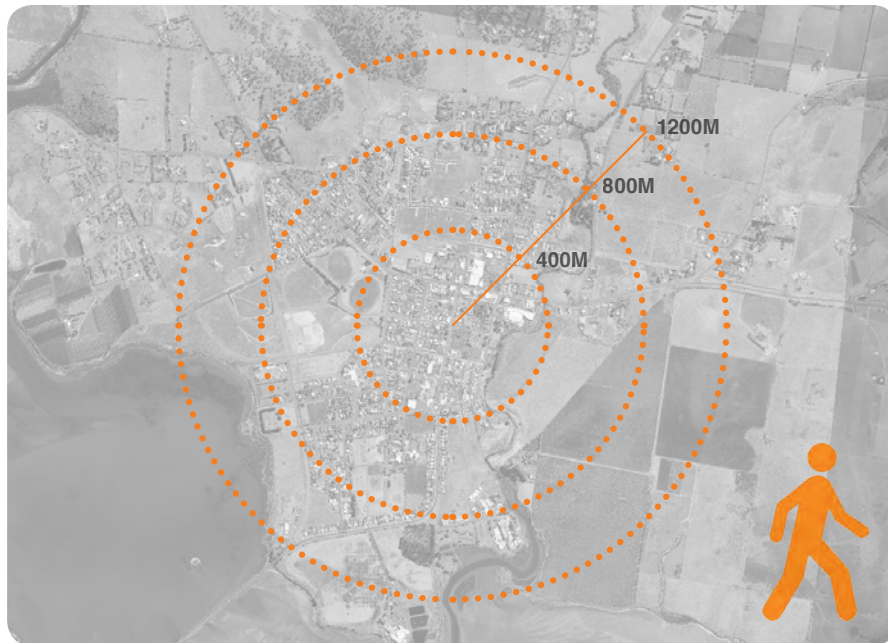
In Sorell, a compact centre can be created by adopting the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 5 DEFINE THE BOUNDARY

'Gateways' help create identifiable precincts. They orient visitors, mark boundaries and create a sense of inside and outside. When boundaries aren't defined there is the tendency to spread thinking and funding too far. Celebration of boundaries encourages investment in the right places and creates a welcoming arrival that the town should be known for.

Sorell has recently marked its town boundaries with attractive entry signage. These signs can be reinforced through planting and/or creation of a gravel surround. The next step is to celebrate the town centre through creation of a secondary level of gateway such as a transition from quality general-purpose concrete footpaths to a more decorative paving treatment.

PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



PRINCIPLE 6 ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO LIVE IN TOWN

Success in activating a town centre lies in getting more people to live within walking distance (1200m) and in getting those people to use the public realm as an extension of their home. This is realised by intensifying density in residential living areas through infill development near to the centre where people can walk to the shop, relax in the town's outdoor rooms, play in its open spaces and eat in its 'dining rooms'. Safety is also enhanced and anti-social behaviour diminishes when more people occupy the centre.

More people living in and near the centre also improves the economy. House value correlates strongly with walkability. Homes in close proximity to services such as shops, schools and sporting facilities fetch a premium over those where residents must drive.

Sorell is well placed in this regard with the whole of the township within a 1200m walking radius of Georges Square. Density within this radius, however, is low. In the 1200m radius there are only 1100 homes. Closer in, within a 600m radius, there are only ±550 houses, a density of ~5 houses/hectare. Granted, there is significant amount of publicly owned land and/or greenfield sites within this radius, the density is still low with numerous larger home lots close to the town centre where living density could be intensified.



HOUSING DENSITY 2014

As housing density increases in town, so too will the numbers of residents who can walk to the shop, relax in its open spaces and enjoy the streetscape.



2034?



PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



Mixed-use development is already occurring in Sorell. A positive sign for more people on the streets, more business for local shops and healthy living for residents.



PRINCIPLE 7 PROMOTE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Mixed-use development is a traditional form of living. It blends commercial, cultural and residential uses to create a lived in and worked in centre and expands the type of housing on offer in the community. Mixed-use development is particularly attractive to an aging populace and single person/ single parent households looking to downsize their footprint but also to remain in the community.

In Sorell, gaps in the building line along the main street, the addition of a second level of building or replacement of single-family houses all offer opportunities for mixed-use development. There are also infill opportunities within the town centre where commercial buildings line the street, but are attached to significant land holdings behind that are little used.



Calls for more open space in the town centre (left) should be resisted and greater density of living through mixed-use and other housing development encouraged (right).

**I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT EVERY GREAT CITY ... NEEDS A
VIBRANT CENTER.** ELI BROAD



PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



PRINCIPLE 8 CREATE A CIVIC HEART

The daily life of great towns revolves around their civic spaces. In older times, the principle civic space was the market place or the piazza at the front of the cathedral. In modern times, the principle town space is often the square in front of a municipal building.

Civic space works best where it is uncluttered, flat and bounded by buildings and/or active uses and sheltered edges. Such spaces are inherently flexible, promoting a diversity of uses and events but when un-programmed can remain active when their edges are lively.

In Sorell, St Georges Square is the assumed centre of town with infrastructure including the Visitor Centre, a small playground, a gazebo, rose gardens, St George's church and the adjacent cemetery. Despite its central location and tidy appearance it fails to attract the level of use it might. The space is over-large for the scale of the town and the activity it attracts. It feels empty, even when it is not.

The space at the front of the Visitor Centre on Gordon Street lacks seating and shade and is cut off from the street. The bus shelter nearby attracts a level of use but is unattractive, heavy in materiality and dark in atmosphere. Lack of activity at the Telstra facility, the limited use of the church, the cemetery and the rear of the bowling club facing the park all further contribute to its under-used character.



St Georges Square has the hallmarks of a great town square - size, flat topography, centrality and a level of amenity. Nonetheless it is little used. Thought needs to be given to its redesign to better open it to the street and to make it more engaging through play, picnic and performance.

ISSUE 3. SORELL'S MAIN STREETS SHOULD INVITE PEOPLE IN AND BE EASY TO GET AROUND

Barriers such as highly trafficked roads, large car parks, fences and impermeable building facades act as moats to entering a town, moving through it or seeing into it.

Good towns invite people in. They open up and reduce barriers and introduce footpaths, cycle lanes and public transport to facilitate ease of movement. They clearly and safely connect where people live with the town centre – the quality of the connection speaking volumes about the value of what awaits on arrival.

Sorell can be made more inviting by adopting the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 9 CONNECT THE TOWN CENTRE TO WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

Pedestrian pathways and cycle routes that are safe, direct, interconnected and pleasant are important to bringing the town centre to the place where people live. Path networks underpin the health of the community and add to the quality of life.

Council has already made positive strides in establishing high quality links from side streets to the CBD. The continuing program of paving will continue to add to the quality of life in the town. In planning for future works, consideration needs to be given to which streets might incorporate bicycle lanes or where footpaths can be made wider so they can be shared between bikes and pedestrians.

PRINCIPLE 10 EXPAND CYCLE ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In modern times, transport has come to mean movement by cars and trucks. Town planning has thus favoured road infrastructure over all other forms of transport. A revolution is underway around the world. Towns have found that if they create cycling safe infrastructure and denser living environments, people will take up riding despite the climatic challenges.

Safe and well-connected cycleways will encourage access to the town centre. The benefits are many. More cycles means fewer cars and car parks, one car parking space storing 10-12 bicycles. People will be healthier. Town will be quieter, the pace slower and the air cleaner. Significantly, cycling infrastructure is a hot point for some in the younger generation who are wanting to live and work in connected communities with a high level of livability infrastructure.

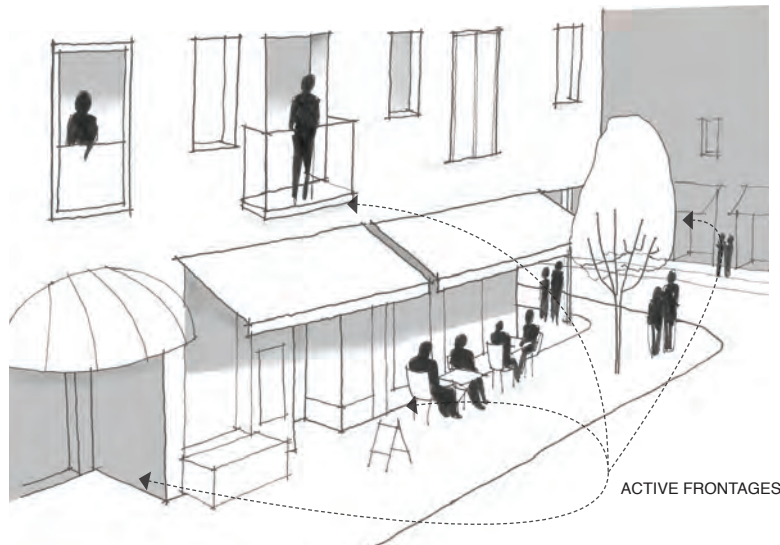
Enhanced pedestrian and cycle connectivity along Fitzroy Street for instance will strengthen the linkage between Pembroke Park and Pioneers Park and build on the good work already done along Sorell Creek. As greenfield areas to the east of Sorell Creek develop, this linkage will become even more important to connecting residents to the town centre's destinations.

Road cycling is also on the rise. One mechanism to invite road cyclists to town could be to highlight the historic rail line. Already, peletons of cyclists regularly ride from Hobart to Shark Point Road. These groups could be invited into town through development of the historic rail corridor.





PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



Active street frontages that allow direct physical and visual connection between inside and outside invite people in.

PRINCIPLE 11 DIVERSIFY THE STREET EDGE

Building edges along the street greatly influence its vitality. Edges define the street and are the zone where physical and visual connections are made between inside and outside. Homogenous, straightline building façades dampen opportunities for use and enjoyment. Meandering buildings edge create space where people can step off the path, sit or stand and observe life around them. Nooks and crannies are open to imaginative uses. Some will be sunny and quiet, places for conservation perhaps or a pop up stall or shop. Some will be open and exposed, places for street performance or display. Importantly, they will be occupied.

The town centre already enjoys some diversity of edge and spatial layout. The detailed amenity in these spaces determines whether they are used or not.

PRINCIPLE 12 ACTIVATE STREET FRONTAGES

Active and interesting building frontages are central to the experience of a town. Narrow building frontages with multiple entries to the footpath, transparent shop and office windows with internal views and verandahs enhance the experience of the street.

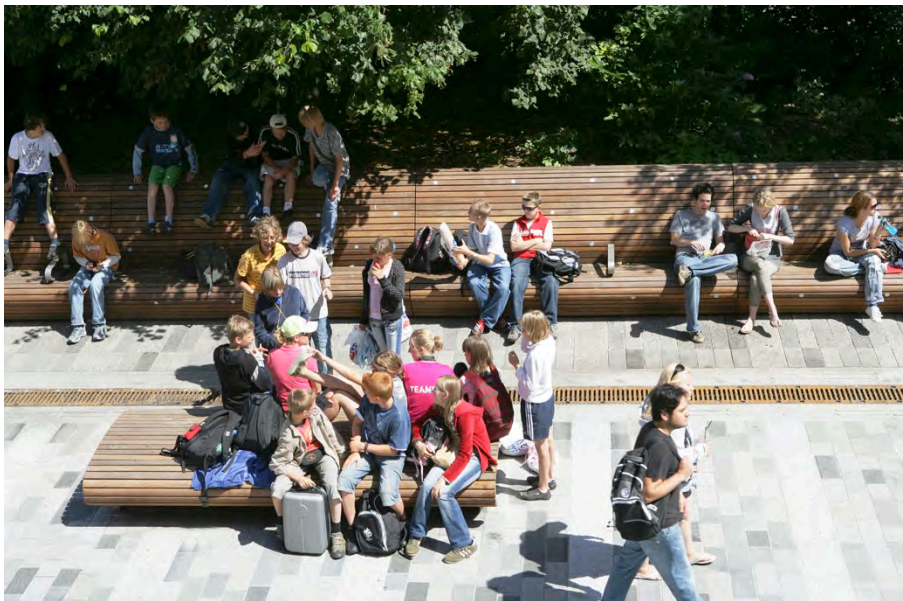
Modern building patterns are particularly problematic where large blank facades to the street are often fronted by car parks. In such cases, the footpath is cut off from the destination and only physically accessible when people are willing to walk through the car park to get to the door and then only visually accessible once inside. The result is people drive to their destination or don't come at all. Worse, the street is devoid of the life that would make the place attractive to more shoppers and other daily activities.

In Sorell, the extent of inactive street frontage is high, particularly in the newer developed shopping centres. The opportunity and possible strength of the older town area or in yet to be developed locations is that shops in these locations could offer active street frontages as an attraction to activation.

PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



Footpaths in Sorell (above) need to be widened to create seating areas not just seats. Seating areas (below) offer greater appeal to gather and stay in the street. Groups of seats facing each other, comfortably wide footpaths to allow others to pass by and shade all contribute to a successful seating area.



PRINCIPLE 13 CREATE PLACES TO SIT AND WATCH

Places to sit invite people to stay in town. Seats need to be located to provide prospect, or oversight to the public space and refuge such as a back to a safe space or edge that is out of the flow of people and traffic. Consideration also need to be given to microclimate, warm materials, easy access to food and drink, the view and low noise levels. Seats with arms offer comfort for the elderly and infirm. A generous number of seats and benches combined with informal sitting opportunities such as steps and ledges, give visitors choice and increase the likelihood that they will stay and linger.

Council have made a good start to rolling out quality street furniture. The next step is to better consider their locations and to combine these seats with better paving, street trees and other amenity to create 'seating areas' not just seats to encourage more frequent use.

PRINCIPLE 14 LEVERAGE OFF PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS

Public transport creates an ebb and flow of people that can activate the street. Council has recently invested substantially in a park and ride facility - an investment they can now capitalise on through improvements to Station Lane. Streetscape improvements will encourage investment in upgrading of adjacent properties and infill of the blank spaces in the street. Street improvements will encourage users to stop and participate in the town's life rather than just park and leave when they are dropped off at the bus.



New 'park and ride facility' in Station Lane. The trick now is to turn it into a 'park and stay' facility. Street improvements combined with activation and infill of Station Lane will encourage users to participate in the town's life and increase Council's return on investment.



PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN



The intersection at Gordon and Cole Streets is dominated by cars. Waiting areas are small and it is a long way across the street. The creation of the by-pass offers possibilities for increasing the pedestrian space now that there are fewer cars and the desire for more pedestrians.

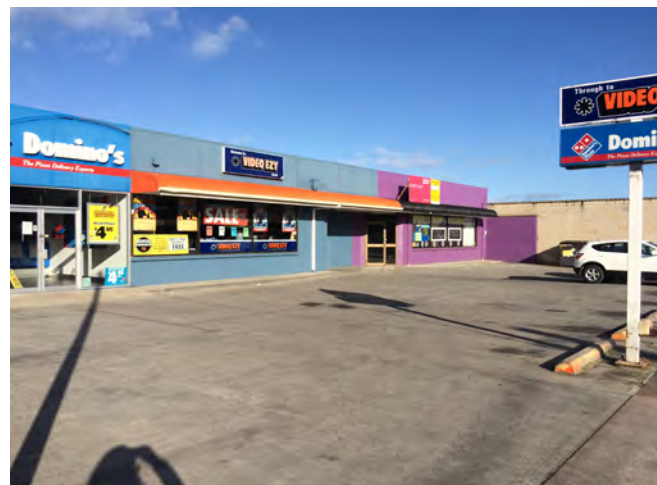


PRINCIPLE 15 MAKE STREET CROSSING EASIER

Cars invaded the town centre years ago. From one side of the street to the other, cars have priority. The emphasis on the flow of cars has meant that pedestrian footpaths have been narrowed as turning radii increase and slip and turning lanes are added. Signalisation at intersections favours vehicles. People need 'permission' to cross the street and when they get it, the time allowed to cross is minimal, the lights flashing before one even gets across the street.

Street crossing needs to be easy if pedestrian flow is to be encouraged. At intersections, crossing distances need to be shortened, crossing times lengthened and the size of waiting spaces increased so that people feel safe as they pause for the light to change. Away from intersections, numerous, safe mid-block crossing opportunities need to be provided to encourage free movement.

In Sorell, crossing Gordon Street could be improved with more mid-block crossing furniture and/or a greater number of kerb bulbs to shorten the distance from one side of the street to the other. With the creation of the by-pass, there is also an opportunity to examine traffic volumes at the intersection of Gordon and Cole Streets. The intersection there possibly could be narrowed and priority signalisation given to pedestrians to make this particularly unfriendly intersection more amenable to those on foot.



PRINCIPLE 16 RECONSIDER THE CAR PARK

Modern suburban business development has given priority to cars, pushing buildings back from the street edge. For the pedestrian, getting past the cars to these set back destinations is fraught.

Car parking should be to the side or at the back of the shops so that pedestrians can 'window shop' the street frontage. When people can see where they want to go and what they are after signage no longer needs to shout at them and dominate the visual landscape. Rather than say 'parking at the rear', simpler signage using universal symbols is less intrusive and easily understood in any language. Car parks out the back need clear, comfortable and well-lit connections into the main street.

Sorell has extensive areas of off-street parking, however, much of it is not on public land. Businesses would be wise to encourage people to use this space for its convenience and to assist in freeing space in the street for people.

Buildings should front onto footpaths not cars. Pedestrians walk past car parks quickly as there is nothing for them to see or do. Where the horse has bolted, better footpaths, seating areas and shade will help break down the scale of pavement and the look of emptiness.



Bring indoor activities outdoors. Activation takes many forms. Imagination is required to see the possibilities. One imaginative use can inspire another and another and another. It only takes one brave soul to start a movement.

ISSUE 4. THE TOWN CENTRE SHOULD BE A VIBRANT LIVED IN PLACE

Blank walls, car parks as barriers to shops behind and a lack of programming of the street dull the experience of town. In a lived in and lively town people seek out other people – street life begets street life. Chance encounters encourage dialogue, lead to friendships and add meaning to the trip to town. Activity creates excitement, enthusiasm and return visitation. Economies thrive because people are drawn to what is on offer. They can see the activity of the street and choose to either watch it pass or to participate.

In Sorell, the town centre can be activated by adopting the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 17 ENCOURAGE AN OUTDOOR CULTURE

People are increasingly feeling trapped indoors or in their car by their work and lifestyle and they want out. Fresh air and exercise are good reasons to be outside in the town centre. Entertainment and events expand on these reasons. To increase participation in the outdoors, the civic realm must be inviting, safe and accessible. Comfortable places to sit and stop, good path networks, food and active promotion and programming of civic space will all draw people out of their 'caves' and onto the street where we want them to be. Greatest use will occur where a variety of spaces that are flexible in arrangement are provided. While some spaces might be fixed, others should be open and unencumbered, some shaded, some not, some treed, some open.... all to allow people to imagine uses suited to the variety of offering that we can't predict.

PRINCIPLE 18 SEE THE TOWN CENTRE AS A STAGE

Historically Sorell has been a rural service centre. The modern town must be a stage for living. As a stage, the public realm must offer memorable, personal and engaging experiences. Aesthetics matter but so too do the activities that are on offer and the way they engage and educate visitors. When the 'experience' of a place is addressed the service centre becomes a distinctive place – a place where people are encouraged to stay and participate and where memories and community are created.

Council can encourage activation through promotion of events in street locations: use the old Council chambers, the Visitor Centre, the picnic shelter at Pioneer Park, the gazebo in St George's square, etc. as venues for meetings that otherwise be held indoors at car dependent locations. By mixing it up, people will see opportunities they might not otherwise have imagined. By seeing people around town they will be encouraged to be around town themselves.



PRINCIPLE 19 MAKE THE PLACE PLAYFUL

Play has increasingly been eliminated from town centres. Today, it is making a comeback both formally and informally. Parents and carers want to be in a lively centre but need facilities that are safe and inviting. Traders recognise that the activity that playful spaces bring to the city attracts expenditure. Provision of formal play opportunities and encouragement of informal or ephemeral use of urban space for play add life to towns.

St Georges Park has a small play area but its fixed equipment sparks no imagination. It is the kind of installation that occurs in suburban parks everywhere. If it is to be an attractor and hold users, it needs to be more imaginative and expansive. Families will travel to get to places like 'the train park', 'the boat park or the 'curly slide park'.



PRINCIPLE 20 INTERJECT ART

The quality and quantity of art in a town speaks to its culture. Introducing public art adds beauty, can tell the story of the place and enliven space through colour and motion. Well-placed, well-executed art can turn the town into an open air gallery, add an element of surprise and engage people in the experience as participants not just passers-by.

Youth art is particularly important as it helps build self-esteem. Opportunities for considered engagement in making street art can turn youth away from spontaneous and poorly executed graffiti.

Sorell is a canvas yet to be worked on. Public art is thin on the ground and where it has occurred (say at the Library) it is dated. More and better public art will add to the richness of the place and help build an appreciation for the town as a destination.

Above. Great play spaces are magnetic, local economies can build around them. Combine play with a flexible event space and synergies emerge.

Below. Art takes many forms. Excellence in execution is critical to its success.



Night lighting adds to the perception of security. Short days in winter can be lengthened if footpaths are lit as well as the roadway.

PRINCIPLE 21 LIGHT THE NIGHT

A lack of nighttime activity in town limits return on investment by Council and shop owners. Streetlighting in Sorell like in most towns and cities is designed for cars that have headlights. People lighting that enables facial recognition. With better lighting comes a perception of safety and with safety comes increased night use, and with use, profits and better return.

PRINCIPLE 22 PROMOTING EVENTS

Flexible public space provides an opportunity for events to happen. Events animate space, offering visitors a changing palette of activity and more reason to visit Sorell regularly. Events can be big productions such as markets or performance or more singular activities such as a busker, pop-up food van, bake sale or promotion. The important thing is there are physical spaces and a governance structure that allow for events to happen.

Sorell market already attracts 60+ stalls each week and hundreds plus people to browse. However, the disconnect between its location and the town centre means that other businesses miss out on the benefits that flow from such visitation. Development of Fitzroy Street as a 'market street' in synergy with the existing market would leverage off an established event and attract visitors into the old town centre, the flow between the two locations activating the street and increasing spend in the shops along the way. Use of Fitzroy Street will also add life to St Georges Square, taking advantage of its capacity to absorb 'overspill' from the market.



Fitzroy Street re-imagined as a market street - tree planting, footpaths, seating and the like can be added without interference to existing businesses. Flexibility in the design could allow daytime or nighttime markets that will draw people to the town outside normal operating hours gaining greater value for money on Council's investment in infrastructure.

OVERVIEW

Acupuncture points - small scale but socially catalytic interventions that open possibilities beyond the value of the original investment

1. Re-configure Fitzroy Street as a 'market street' and link via footpaths and cycle lanes to Pembroke Park and Pioneer Park
2. Re-configure and upgrade Station Lane
3. Re-design Visitor Centre forecourt - open to street, repave, add seating areas

Other projects/considerations

4. Begin incremental streetscape works to
 - realign kerb and channel to create an appropriate number of parking spaces, taxi and short term parking in Gordon and Cole and adjacent side streets, supported by the longer term, off-street car parks throughout the town centre;
 - the reconstruction of footpath pavements throughout the town to create modern, attractive and robust seating areas and enhanced pedestrian flow; and
 - introduce street trees
5. Examine options for independent living village or medium to high density housing
6. Prepare Pembroke Park Master Plan - ensure integration with Fitzroy Street improvements
7. Support intensification of residential living
8. Support infill housing along side streets, mixed development along Cole and Gordon Streets and off-street parking at the centre of blocks
9. Liaise with DIER about road re-configuration and signaling to encourage freer pedestrian movement
10. Ensure good pedestrian and cycle linkages along Weston Hill Road and Torquay Drive to town centre
11. Ensure good pedestrian and cycle linkages from future housing area
12. Future civic or commercial use
13. Enhance entries to town (not shown on map)





THE STREETSCAPE PLAN

5. BRINGING THE PRINCIPLES TO LIFE – A STREETSCAPE PLAN FOR SORELL

Town design concerns itself with how a place feels, functions and serves the needs of its residents and visitors. The vision, principles and design directives herein give an indication of what is required in Sorell – greater density of living within walking distance of the town centre, better connection to more distant areas in a convenient manner, promotion of cycling and walking, redefinition of the streets as being for people not cars, leveraging off existing strengths and greater promotion of them in target markets.

Many forces affect how the physical changes in support of these aims will occur. For starters, change is a long-term process, largely un-predictable in timing and extent, physical outcomes strongly influenced by the limitations of the planning scheme. Where private land and investment is involved, market forces, an altruistic desire to contribute back to a town, a willingness between parties to cooperate, a designer's style, a landowners tastes and the functional brief will all influence what might happen.

More predictable are the kinds of interventions that Council can make. In Sorell, Council have substantive landholdings that can be developed to support activation of the town. Importantly, Council control the town's road right-of-ways outside the 7.3 metres at the centre of the State highways. It is these right-of-ways that are the focus of the streetscape plan that follows.

What Council doesn't have is a lot of money - expenditure priorities challenged by the geographic breadth of the community. Its project budget isn't massive. Critical to the successful implementation of the streetscape plan is the identification of lynch pin projects that unlock opportunities and create synergistic opportunities. In town planning, commentators call such projects 'urban acupuncture' – projects that produce small scale but socially catalytic interventions that open possibilities beyond the value of the original investment.

The streetscape plan imagines that the upgrading of Fitzroy Street and its integration with an enlivened St Georges Park is one of those 'acupuncture points'. For this reason, greater detail is provided for this area than elsewhere where a more typical application of streetscape outcomes is illustrated – i.e. well built footpaths, seating areas, connections to off-street parking areas, the narrowing of roadways, insertion of bike lanes, greater street crossing opportunities, etc.

It needs to be noted that the plan is a diagram of desired outcomes that are subject to negotiation, cooperation, funding and consultation. Change to the plan is inevitable but the outcome should be the same –

Sorell should be an active, lived in place, steeped in its history but looking to its future as a place where people want to do business, shop, work, visit and participate in the life of the community.



Key to streetscape plan on following pages



Civic or commercial use

Opportunity for medium to high density housing development

Pedestrian plaza space linking Cole St, Sorell RSL and new Council. Install street furniture, feature paving, trees and pedestrian scale lighting

Proposed roundabout

Upgrade existing path to 1.8m wide concrete foot path. New kerb and channel to road edge

New pedestrian scale lighting and avenue tree planting, exposed aggregate paving

2.6m wide concrete shared pedestrian and cycle pathway to Pembroke Park. New kerb and channel to parallel parking and road

New avenue tree planting - large scale

Commercial use

New avenue tree planting

New Park and Ride opportunity to upgrade public transport services in future and linkage to station street

Explore financial feasibility for a 'Neil Davis' interpretation centre

"Eat Street" mixed use precinct

Mixed use to Cove Street - medium to high density housing behind

Pedestrian plaza space to shop fronts to encourage future commercial development. Install street furniture, feature paving and pedestrian scale lighting and planting. New exposed aggregate paving and kerb and channel to road

Improve pedestrian links to Cole Street

Formalise car parking behind commercial premises

Enhance connectivity to the centre of the block to encourage off street parking

Widen street corners at Fitzroy Street and Gordon Street. Resurface pavements with exposed aggregate concrete; extend pavement around perimeter of service station

Safe crossing location / with central refuge.
Align with pathway to St Georges Square

Widen street corners at Somerville Street
and Gordon Street intersection to enable
a safer pedestrian refuge and improved
pleasant walking experience

New pedestrian scale avenue tree planting,
lighting and exposed aggregate paving

Safe crossing location with central refuge to
identify entry to town centre

New avenue tree planting - large
scale

2.6m wide concrete foot path / cycle
lane. New kerb and channel to
paved parallel parking and road

Consider redeveloping existing
playground, to create a significant
community gathering space focused
around play, picnic and performance

Consider upgrading forecourt to
Sorell Visitor Centre to create a
more welcoming gathering space

New avenue tree planting - large
scale

Relocate bus shelter to park
and ride facility. Install new
architecturally designed shade
structure to front of Telstra building;
remove existing landscaping and
update with paved surface and
seating

SEE FITZROY STREET
IMPROVEMENTS PLAN



Scale 1:1000 @ A1

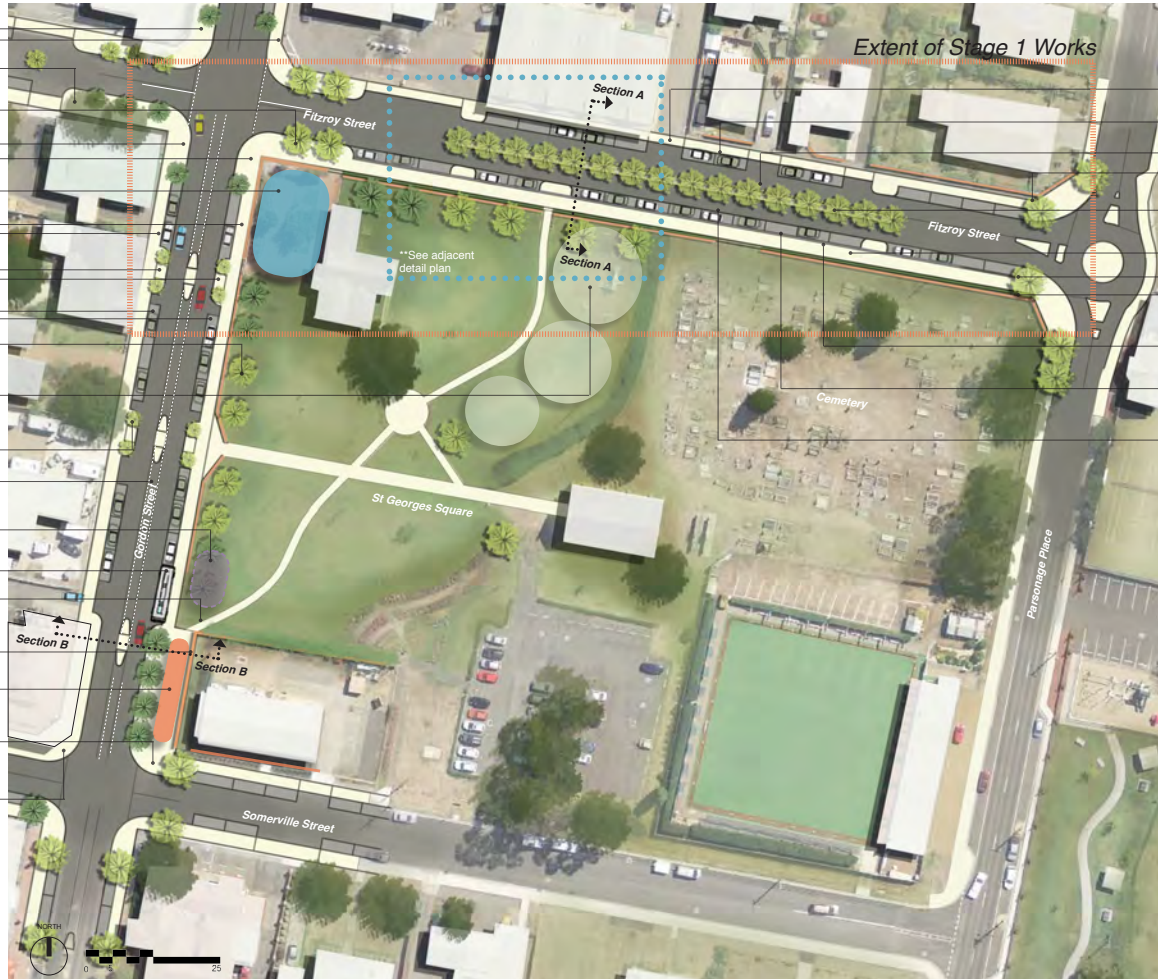
SORELL STREETSCAPE PLAN 2014

Master Plan OCTOBER 2014

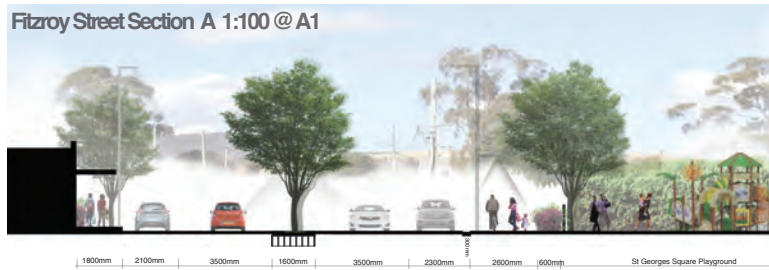
inspiring place



- Widen street corners, resurface pavements with exposed aggregate concrete; extend pavement around perimeter of service station
- Continue shared pedestrian and cycle pathway to Pembroke Park
- Allow for new street trees on corners of Fitzroy Street
- Widen street corner at Fitzroy Street and Gordon Street intersection to enable a safer pedestrian refuge
- Consider upgrading forecourt and fence to Sorell Visitor Centre, to occur in Stage 2 works
- Upgrade pavement with exposed aggregate concrete
- Allow for widening of footpaths around traffic islands
- Consolidate parking spaces, with new line markings
- Provide mature trees around perimeter of St Georges Square
- Consider redeveloping existing playground, to create a significant regional playground facility during stage 2 works
- Allow for mature trees to be planted around former Shell service station site
- Provide new line markings for roadway
- Consider demolition of existing Bus Shelter, to enhance connection between street edge and St Georges Square
- Bus Zone
- Removal of bus shelter allows for potential connection through St Georges Sq
- Provide new fencing screen around perimeter of Telstra exchange building
- Relocate bus shelter to park and ride facility. Install new architecturally designed shade structure to front of Telstra building
- Extend street corner, and repave surface with exposed aggregate concrete
- Extend pavement around Pembroke Hotel to provide separation between pedestrians and hotel smoking zone



Fitzroy Street Plan 1:500 @ A1



Fitzroy Street Section A 1:100 @ A1



Gordon Street Section B 1:100 @ A1

- Exposed aggregate concrete footpath, separated from road / parking bays with typical kerb and channel
- Parking zone, with 13 parallel parking bays
- Bitumen roadway
- Allow for mature trees on corner of Fitzroy Street and Parsonage Place
- Landscape easement in road centre. Permeable paving surface; street trees contained within 1600 x 1600 mm tree grate, flush with road surface
- Shared walking and cycle path: exposed aggregate concrete surface
- Rain garden at end of street
- Landscape easement; existing fence to cemetery retained
- Spoon drain separates parking zone with footpath zone. Water collected in rain garden on corner of Parsonage Pl and Fitzroy Street
- Parking zone, with 18 parallel parking spaces. Parking bays, road way and adjacent pavement flush surface
- Bitumen roadway



Fitzroy Street Detail Plan 1:250 @ A1
Plan demonstrates potential market arrangement

SORELL STREETSCAPE PLAN 2014

Fitzroy Street Improvements OCTOBER 2014

inspiring place





NEXT STEPS



Some beginning points for revitalising the town centre and its main streets.



6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Up to now in this Plan, the emphasis has been on the kinds of streetscape issues that 'designers' can resolve. Designers alone though will not be able to achieve the vision established herein. It will also take the efforts of non-designers – policy makers, law makers and those who influence decision making.

Making the a vibrant, successful town centre will be achieved by:

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE.

People need to take ownership of plans for them to be successful. The early stages of the project involved community engagement with businesses and the community. However, the current framework has largely been developed as a top down analysis by outside experts looking through their professional lenses at the place. The next phases of the project need to bring the community, landowners and other stakeholders along for the rest of the journey. The *Streetscape Plan* is a tool for discussion and education. Refinement based on input is necessary to strengthen it further and to make it most useful for all involved.

COMMUNICATING THE TOWN'S ATTRACTIONS TO TARGET AUDIENCES

Proximity to Hobart is an advantage and disadvantage. On the downside tourists blow through town fresh on the start of their trip, keen to reach the coast or the Tasman. For Hobartians, other towns have established their credentials as day destinations. Without a concerted campaign to heighten an appreciation of what is on offer in the town, these destinations will continue to outshine Sorell as a 'tourism' attraction. Sorell needs clear, simple, well-articulated and shared messages about its strengths. Business must recognise it is not competition that will improve their situation but cooperation. New Norfolk cooperates around antiques, the Huon around food and wine experiences and Richmond and Oatlands around heritage. Success in these cooperative efforts have meant that accommodation and food outlets have built successful businesses and in between, the small boutique shops and galleries have started to succeed as well.

NEXT STEPS

PLANNING WITH COMMITMENT

In the past, spatial planning of the town centre has been *ad hoc* and reactive. Town functions are fragmented, the flight of many businesses to the edge of the town centre challenges the historic streetscape to find new directions. Agreement to the *Streetscape Plan* and application of the urban design principles herein, within the context of a strong statutory planning scheme, will create a more unified and considered whole. When agreed, the political will to stick to the plan through election cycles over years to come is then necessary. The *Streetscape Plan* identifies the criteria to evaluate proposed change – politics, chance and opportunity must all be guided by these.

PARTNERING WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT

There is a role for government (State and local) to utilise its land assets to leverage private investment in higher density, mixed-use development in support of strategic directions for land use in Sorell. Mixed-use development creates jobs and increases the population where it is needed – the town centre. Opportunities for low-cost housing or independent living villages to the west of the Council offices offer the potential for quick gains in population density around the centre.

EMPHASISING QUALITY IN DESIGN

Quality design sends a message about the community's expectations for its town centre. Existing infrastructure is tired and doesn't address the vision of contemporary excellence in design and planning that the Council aspires to and the community expects. Insistence on the consistency of planning and design across the breadth of the town centre will help it read as a whole place, steeped in excellence.

PROGRAMMING SPACE

Programming of public space is as important as its construction. A focus on programming addresses the multiple possibilities to use the spaces that are already available in the town centre. Programs activate space, engage with new and existing constituencies and add value to existing investment with little cost.

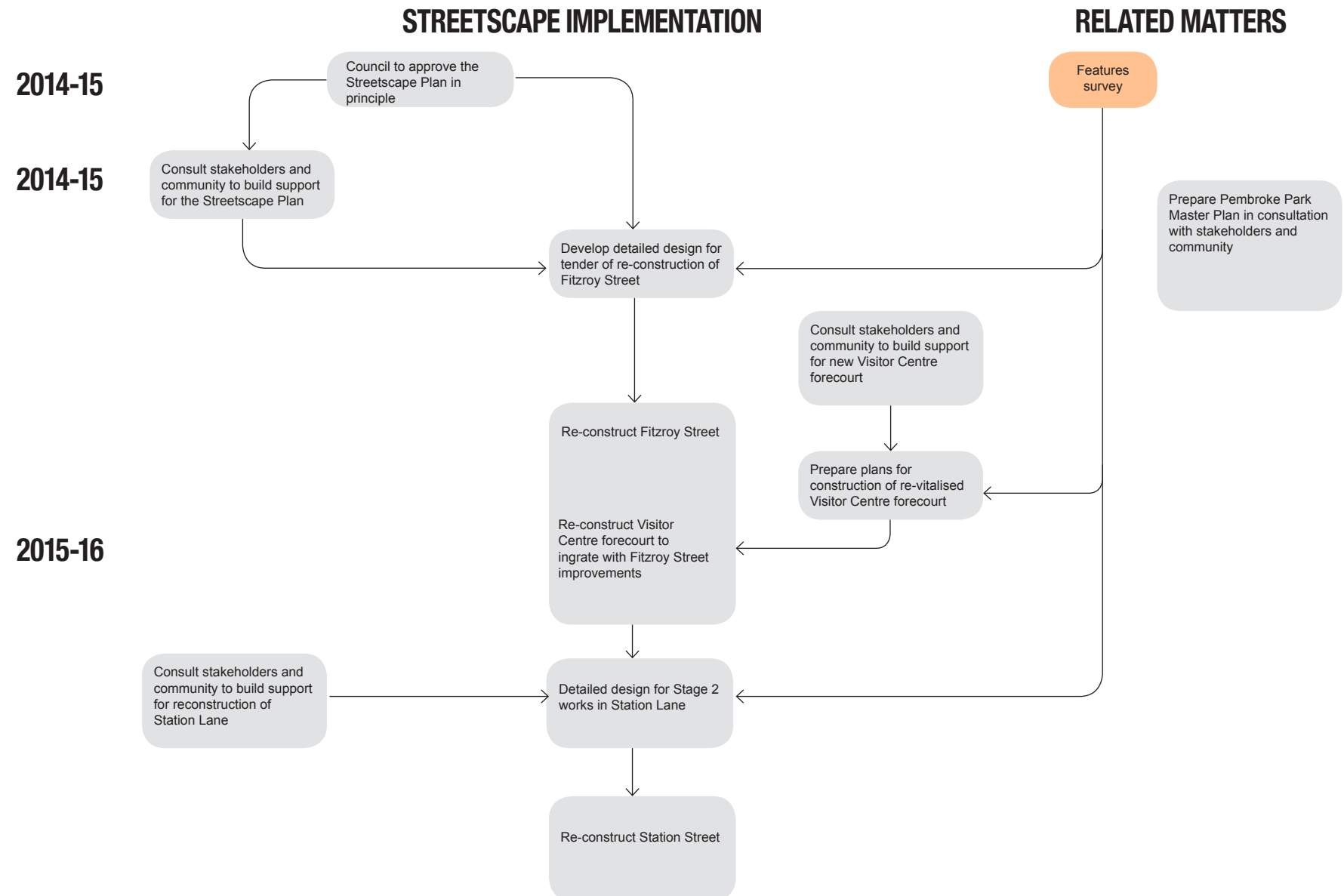
6.2 THE NEXT STEPS ARE IMPORTANT

Some important next steps include:

1. The draft *Streetscape Plan* has been developed by consultant's to Council with some limited stakeholder input. A wider discussion needs to be had. Champions for the projects need to be identified and the community engaged in such a way that they support the call for change.
2. Future development will rely on a detailed features survey of the town centre. Features surveys enable comprehensive assessment of conditions including the location of elements in the street and an understanding of the topography. Modern survey standards and equipment mean that a comprehensive picture can be built up over time as portions of the area are surveyed.
3. Using the survey information gathered, commence more detailed design for key 'acupuncture' projects including:
 - re-configuration of Fitzroy Street to support its potential role as a weekly market venue;
 - re-design of the forecourt to the Visitor Centre; and
 - re-configuration of Station Street.
4. As plans for the town centre progress, master planning for Pembroke Park should give attention to the linkages between the Park, the town centre and Pioneer Park.



NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

6.3 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The *Sorell Streetscape Plan* affirms the potential for a great small town, one that is building the livability infrastructure required to be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. As such, the plan identifies projects that are both visionary in scope and timeframe and immediate and commonplace. Both kinds of projects are necessary – the visionary to spur imagination, the smaller to inspire enthusiasm for needed change. The easy and immediate wins will provide incentive for the continuous investment that is needed.

Great towns are created entities grounded in strong planning. The *Sorell Streetscape Plan* provides that grounding. With its implementation, Sorell will become a great place to live, work and play – a town that is safe and filled with healthy and caring people who come together in a well-maintained, strategically planned and vibrant town centre.





A TOWN IS A STATE OF MIND... “A BODY OF CUSTOMS, AND OF UNORGANISED ATTITUDES AND SENTIMENTS ... IT IS INVOLVED IN THE VITAL PROCESSES OF THE PEOPLE WHO COMPOSE IT, IT IS A PRODUCT OF NATURE AND PARTICULARLY HUMAN NATURE.” ROBERT EZRA PARK THE CITY: SUGGESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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