

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

# PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK

DRAFT 2026

CITY OF GREATER
GEELONG

We Acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Across Greater Geelong, activity centres are where people come together to shop, work, and connect. Their streets and public spaces shape how people experience these places and support everyday life, local business, and a sense of identity. The quality of these spaces affects walkability, social interaction, and overall vibrancy.

As the population grows and more housing and jobs are added, these centres will become busier and more built up. This will increase pressure on streets and public spaces, but also create opportunities to improve them.

A 2026 public realm audit found clear opportunities for improvement. Some centres, particularly in newer growth areas, lack a strong local identity and do not reflect local heritage, landscape, or Wadawurrung culture. Ageing infrastructure, inconsistent materials, and incremental upgrades have contributed to visual clutter, reduced legibility, and higher maintenance costs. In many places, streets remain vehicle-dominated and do not effectively support walking, social interaction, or local activity.

Community feedback reinforces these findings. Residents consistently highlight the need for safer, more accessible environments, increased tree canopy and shade, improved maintenance, and places that better reflect local identity and culture. Without a coordinated approach, future growth risks reinforcing these issues.

In response, the Public Realm Framework sets out a targeted and coordinated approach to public realm investment in Greater Geelong's activity centres. It provides consistent guidance for Council projects, developer works, and partnerships to deliver place-responsive outcomes.

The Public Realm Framework  aligns with key state and local strategies guiding growth, infrastructure, and community outcomes, ensuring public realm investment supports a connected, sustainable, and prosperous Geelong.

## ALIGNMENT WITH KEY STRATEGIES AND PLANS

- *Paleert Tjaara Dja (Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan)* 2020–2030
- *Plan for Victoria* 2025
- *Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria 2.0* 2026
- *Movement and Place in Victoria 2.0* 2026
- *Greater Geelong Planning Scheme*
- *Central Geelong Framework Plan* 2023
- *Council Plan* 2025–2029
- *Settlement Strategy* 2020
- *Retail Strategy* 2020–2036
- *Economic Development Strategy* 2024–2034
- *Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy* 2025–2029
- *Social Infrastructure Plan* 2020–2023
- *Arts and Cultural Strategy* 2021–2031
- *Outdoor Dining Guidelines* 2025
- *Climate Change Response Plan* 2021–2030
- *Geelong's Plan for Nature* 2026–2036
- *Open Space Strategy* (draft 2026)
- *Urban Forest Strategy: Healthy Community* (draft 2026)
- *Public Art Strategy* (under development)
- *Municipal Road Management Plan* 2025
- *Road Management Act* 2004 (Vic)

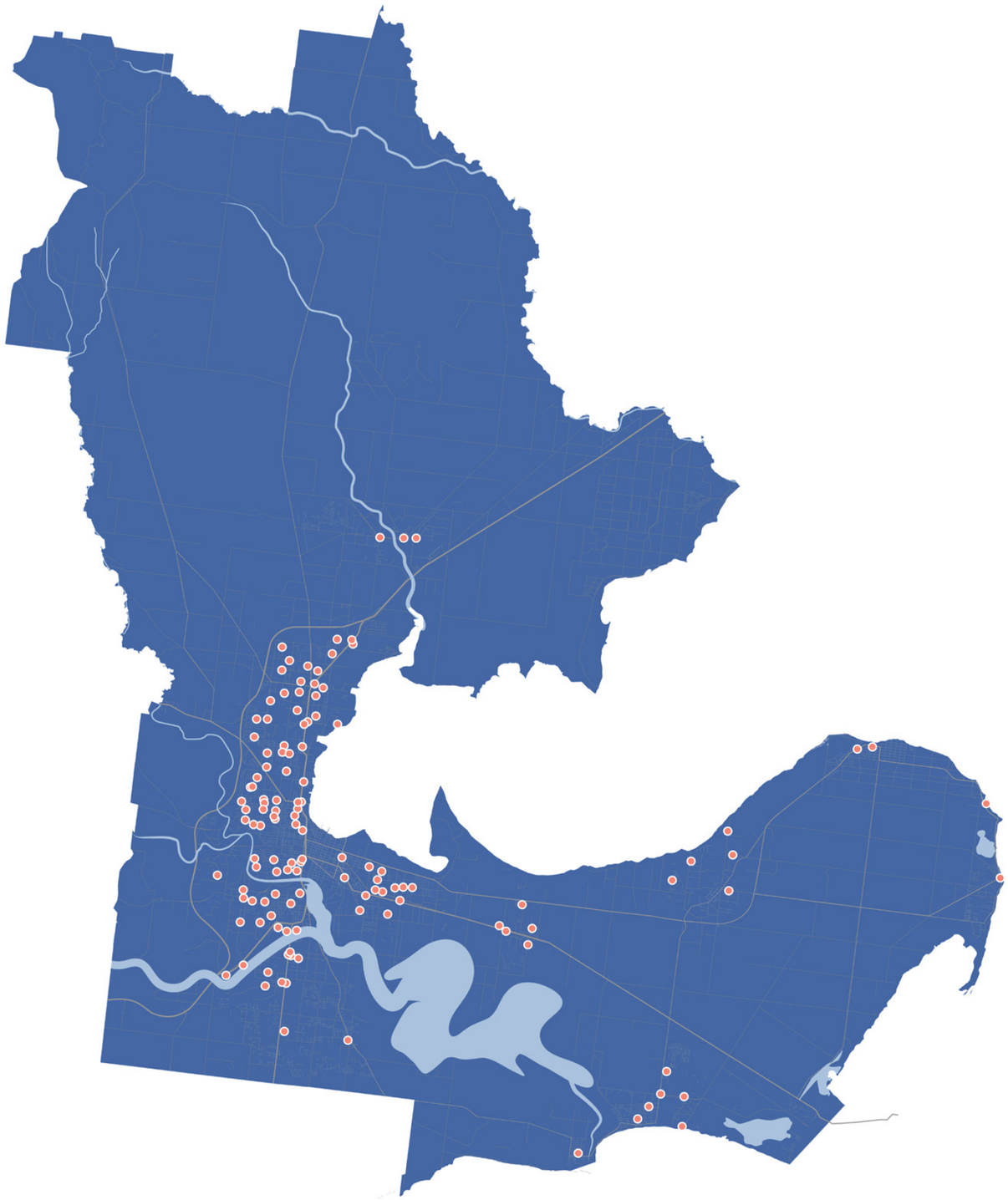


Figure 1. Greater Geelong's Municipal Area and Activity Centres

# 2. GEELONG CONTEXT:
## GROWTH, STRUCTURE AND IDENTITY

Greater Geelong is one of Australia's fastest growing regional cities. The population is forecast to increase from approximately 306,000 people in 2026 to more than 440,000 by 2046, placing significant pressure on housing, transport, services and public space.

This growth is occurring within a highly dispersed and centre-based urban structure. Geelong is not a single-centre city; it comprises a primary regional centre at Geelong, supported by a network of sub-regional, neighbourhood and local activity centres across established suburbs, growth areas and coastal townships. These centres play a critical role in providing access to jobs, services and community life.

Historically, public realm investment has been delivered across many locations on a project-by-project basis. As a result, the quality and performance of activity centres varies significantly across the municipality.

Activity centres are central to Geelong's economy, supporting more than 23,000 local businesses across a diverse range of industries. The performance of these centres is closely linked to the quality of their public realm, which influences foot traffic, dwell time, visitation and the overall attractiveness of places for business, investment and community use.

Geelong's identity is shaped by its landscape and history. The city sits on Wadawurrung Country, with enduring cultural connections to land, water and sky. Its coastal setting, the Bellarine Peninsula, the Barwon River corridor and surrounding open landscapes all contribute to a strong and varied sense of place. These elements are complemented by layers of industrial heritage, civic institutions and evolving suburban and township communities.

Across the municipality, there are clear examples of how public realm investment can reinforce local identity and support vibrant places. Coastal centres across the Bellarine Peninsula demonstrate strong relationships to landscape and environment.  Geelong and surrounding inner urban areas reflect a more urban character shaped by heritage, civic functions and increasing levels of activity. Established suburban centres and township centres similarly demonstrate how targeted improvements to streets, civic spaces and community infrastructure can strengthen local identity and support everyday use.

These varied conditions highlight the need for a place-led approach that responds to the distinctive qualities of different centres while delivering consistent, high-quality outcomes across the network.

# 3. FRAMEWORK APPROACH

The framework builds on existing strategic and statutory planning frameworks, including the Greater Geelong Retail Strategy and the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. It recognises the role and function of each centre, while applying a place character lens to guide the design, renewal and management of the public realm.

### 1 Understand the Place Context and Character



Identify the centre's strategic role, planning context, local setting, scale, identity and character.

### 2 Apply the Design Principles



The design principles define how the street or space should function and the outcomes it should achieve.

### 3 Apply Place-Specific Design Directions




The place-specific design directions apply to specific public realm types (e.g streets, laneways, civic plazas). They are supported by detailed design standards.

Together, centre role, place character areas, design principles and place-specific design directions form an integrated approach that ensures public realm projects respond to strategic priorities, local identity and community needs.

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS FRAMEWORK

This framework is intended to guide consistent public realm outcomes across City and with delivery partners.

- **City staff:** Use the Framework to guide planning, design, capital works, asset renewal and maintenance, ensuring all public realm projects align with the objectives of this framework, including place and cultural outcomes.
- **Developers and major landholders:** Apply the framework when delivering development projects, ensuring public realm outcomes align with the expectations set out in this Framework.
- **Planning, design and technical professionals:** Use the Framework as a key reference when designing, assessing and delivering public realm outcomes across both City-led and development-led projects.
- **State government agencies and funding partners:** Use the Framework to align investment decisions and project delivery with City priorities.

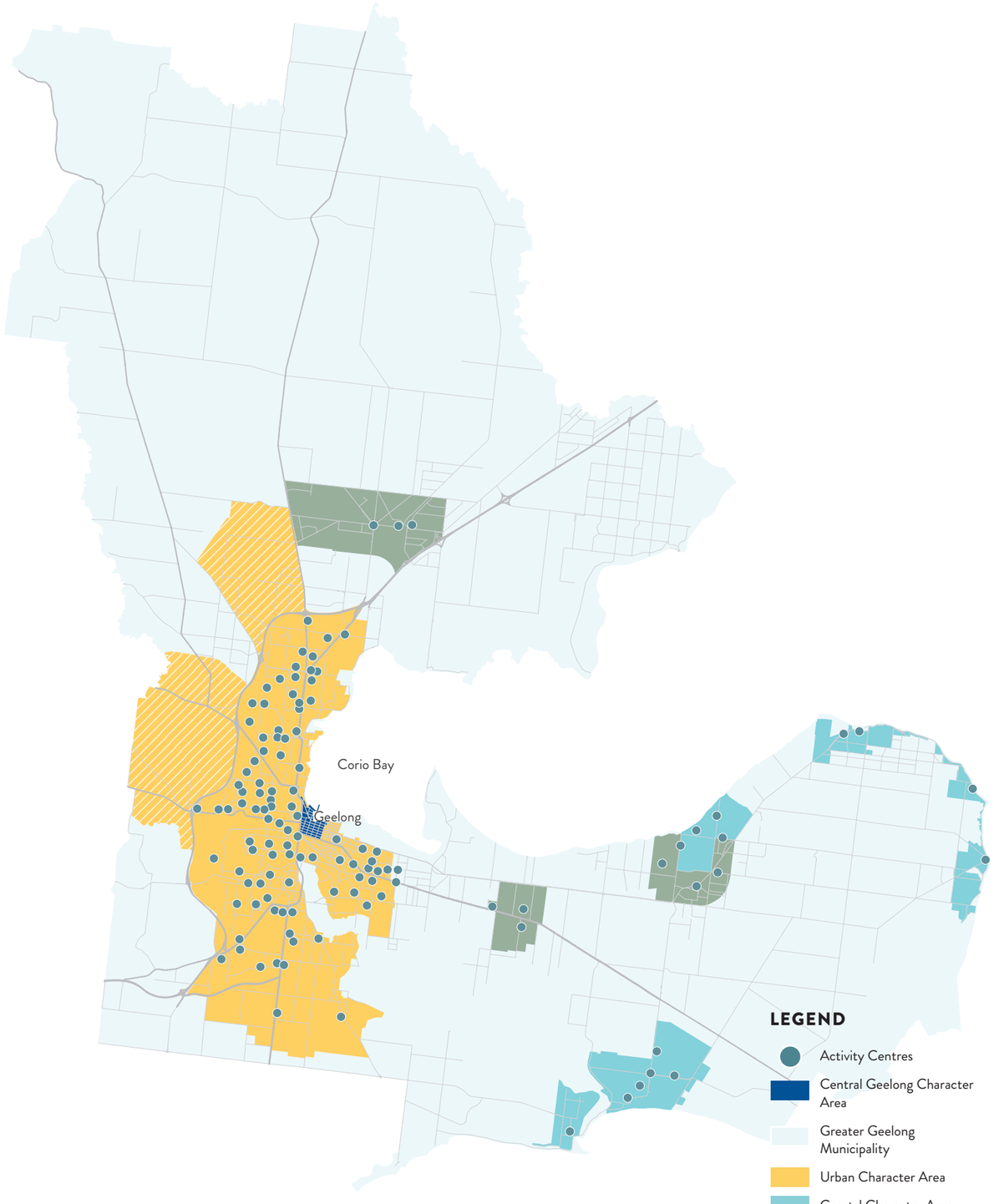



Figure 2. Greater Geelong's place character areas and activity centres

# 4. PLACE CHARACTER AREAS:
## OUR STRATEGIC FOUNDATION

Activity centres are defined through an established hierarchy and classification system that sets their role and function across Greater Geelong and provides the primary planning context for each centre.

Place Character Areas sit alongside this framework and define local identity, reflecting landscape, history, community values, and connections to Wadawurrung Country, and should be used to guide design response.

**1. CENTRAL GEELONG**



**2. URBAN CENTRE**



**3. COASTAL CENTRE**




**4. RURAL CENTRE**



Images: Place Character Area Examples

1. Cunningham St
2. High St, Belmomt
3. Newcombe St, Portarlington
4. Wyndham St, Drysdale

# CENTRAL GEELONG

## *FORMAL, STRUCTURED, CIVIC*



Central Geelong is the historic civic and economic heart of the region, characterised by grand boulevards, fine-grain heritage streetscapes and a strong concentration of civic, cultural and commercial activity. Its identity is closely linked to its waterfront setting along Corio Bay.

### CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

A formal, unified and highly legible civic environment. Streets should reinforce hierarchy, with strong building edges, active frontages and clearly defined civic spaces.

Key streets and corridors should maintain and strengthen visual and physical connections to the waterfront, reinforcing central Geelong's relationship with Corio Bay.

### MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Refined, durable and high-quality materials applied consistently. Materials should reinforce civic character and clearly define key streets, nodes and movement corridors.

### LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING

Structured and consistent planting should reinforce street geometry, civic order and Geelong's identity as the 'City of Trees'. Boulevard and avenue planting should define key streets and civic routes, particularly those connecting to the waterfront.

Planting should support diversity and resilience, using canopy trees and lower planting layers to establish a clear and recognisable streetscape.

Design should respond to historic street patterns, where east–west streets incorporate central planting to reinforce civic axes, and north–south streets use edge planting to support movement and maintain key view corridors, including towards the waterfront.

### STREET FURNITURE AND ELEMENTS

A coordinated and ordered furniture layout using a consistent civic palette. Placement should reinforce clear pedestrian movement and minimise clutter, with bespoke elements in key civic spaces.

### HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

Integrated cultural and curated interpretation embedded within streets and public spaces, reflecting central Geelong today, its maritime, industrial, and civic history, and its connection to Corio Bay.























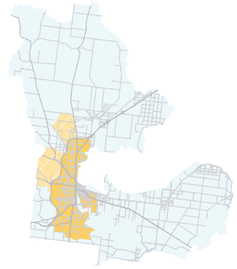


Images:
1. Lt Malop St
2. Bellerine St
3 & 4. Malop St
5. Moorabool St
6. Brougham St
7. Dennys Place
8. Cunningham St



# URBAN CENTRES

## *ACTIVE, LOCAL, PEOPLE-FOCUSED*



Urban centres include established and emerging neighbourhood hubs such as Geelong West, Newtown, Belmont, Armstrong Creek, Waurn Ponds and Lovely Banks.

In established centres, character is often shaped by existing built form, street patterns and local history. In newer and growth area centres, where built form may be more standardised or evolving, the public realm plays a key role in defining character, supporting identity and creating distinctive places.

Across all urban centres, the quality and design of streets, planting and public spaces are critical in shaping local identity and supporting vibrant, people-focused environments.

### CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

Distinct and legible centres with a strong main street character. Active frontages, fine grain development and visible street life should be reinforced.

### MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Simple, robust materials suited to high-use environments. A limited palette should define main pedestrian areas, with feature materials used to highlight crossings, corners and key gathering points.

### LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING

Planting should prioritise pedestrian comfort, providing shade, seasonal variation and visual interest.

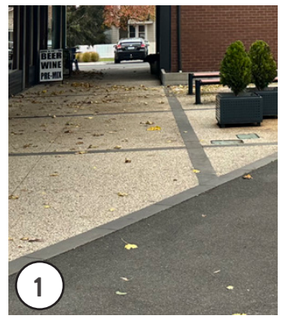
Tree species may vary between centres to create identity, while maintaining consistency within individual streets.

### STREET FURNITURE AND ELEMENTS

Furniture should be selected using the standard civic palette and arranged to support informal gathering while providing opportunities for rest.

### HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

Interpretation that reflects local identity and neighbourhood history, integrated into key streets, civic spaces and activity nodes.









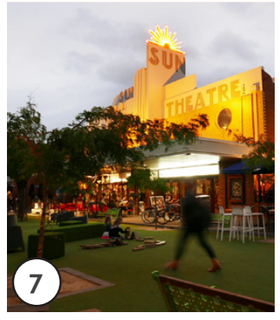












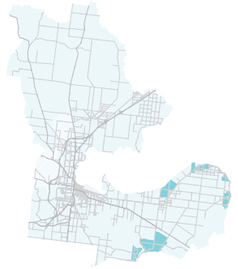




Images:
1. Ormond Road, Elwood
2. High Street, Belmont
3. Geelong West Town Hall Plaza
4. Armstrong Creek
5. High Street, Belmont
6. Labuan Square, Norlane
7. Ballarat Street, Yarraville
8. M40 Cycle Path

# COASTAL CENTRES

## *RELAXED, OPEN AND CONNECTED TO THE COAST*



Coastal centres include townships along the Bellarine Peninsula such as St Leonards, Portarlington, Barwon Heads, Ocean Grove and Clifton Springs. These centres are defined by their proximity to the water, relaxed coastal character, maritime heritage and seasonal tourism.

### CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

A relaxed, open and informal coastal environment with strong visual and physical connections to the water. Streets should avoid overly formal or urbanised treatments.

### MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Light-toned, durable materials suited to coastal conditions, including sun exposure, salt and wind. Materials should weather naturally and reinforce the coastal setting.

Footpaths should be generous to accommodate seasonal peaks and active frontages.

### LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING

Planting should reflect coastal environments, including dune, saltmarsh and foreshore landscapes. Species selection should respond to wind, salt exposure and sandy soils.

Design should maintain view corridors and reinforce a sense of openness, rather than density or enclosure.

### STREET FURNITURE AND ELEMENTS

Durable, low-maintenance elements suitable for coastal conditions. Seating and gathering spaces should be informal, flexible and oriented to views and movement toward the foreshore.

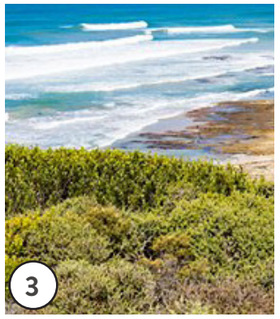
### HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

Interpretation celebrating maritime, coastal and community cultural life. Wayfinding should clearly reinforce connections to the foreshore and key destinations.



1


2


3


4


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7


8

Images:
1 & 2. Ocean Grove
3, 4 & 5. Barwon Heads
6, 7 & 8. St Leonards



# RURAL CENTRES

## *SPACIOUS, SIMPLE, LANDSCAPE-LED*



Rural centres include the township hubs of Lara, Leopold and Drysdale, located within the Western Plains and Bellarine hinterland. These centres are shaped by their surrounding rural landscapes, with a character defined by openness, spaciousness, vegetation and strong community identity, while continuing to accommodate growth and change.

### CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

A low-scale, informal township character that maintains strong visual and physical connections to surrounding rural landscapes. Streets should retain openness and avoid continuous hard urban edges.

### MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Simple, durable and locally responsive materials applied in a restrained manner. Paving should be limited in extent, with opportunities for informal or softer surfaces where appropriate.

Materials and colours may draw from local rural and agricultural context.

### LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING

Planting should reflect local grassland and woodland landscapes, with emphasis on openness, spacing and climate resilience.

Species selection should prioritise locally appropriate vegetation, and reinforce existing landscape patterns rather than introduce highly structured planting.

### STREET FURNITURE AND ELEMENTS

Minimal and functional elements applied sparingly. Furniture should be concentrated at key gathering points, avoiding over-provision and visual clutter.

### HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

Interpretation reflecting agricultural history, landscape character, local industries, and creative connections, expressed in a simple and understated way.


1


2


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4



5

Images:
1, 2 & 3. Drysdale, Borongook Library and Wyndham St
4. Royal Park native/ indigenous grassland meadow
5. Estes Park, Colorado

# 5. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The design principles set out a clear and consistent approach for planning, designing and delivering public spaces across Greater Geelong's activity centres. Each principle outlines what we want to achieve through objectives and how this can be achieved through design directions. They apply to all public realm types (refer chapter 6) and guide all projects, supporting high-quality outcomes that reflect place character across central, urban, coastal and rural centres.

## PRINCIPLE 1: AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

Public realm will reflect and strengthen the unique identity and character of each place

### OBJECTIVES

- Reflect Place Character Areas across central, urban, coastal and rural centres.
- Embed recognition of Wadawurrung Country through engagement and cultural expression.
- Express local landscape, history and community identity through design.

### DESIGN DIRECTIONS

- Respond to local context, including landscape, history and community values.
- Design reflects Wadawurrung engagement or a co-design process, where this has been undertaken.
- Integrate public art and interpretation into streets and spaces to create a more authentic and distinctive sense of place.
- Coordinate materials, planting and furniture to express local identity.
- Reinforce identity at key gateways and civic nodes.



















Images:
1. Quay Quarter Lanes, Sydney
2. Dennys Place breakthrough, Central Geelong
3. Festival Plaza, Adelaide
4. University of Western Sydney
3. Prince of Wales Hospital
6. Hitchcock Ave, Barwon Heads

# PRINCIPLE 2: ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

Public realm will support everyday activity, social interaction and a lively, welcoming public life.

## OBJECTIVES

- Create inviting and comfortable public spaces that support gathering and lingering.
- Support active frontages, outdoor dining and activation.
- Enhance vibrancy and safety during day and night.

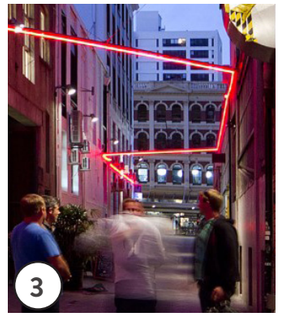
## DESIGN DIRECTIONS

- Provide frequent seating in visible locations along desire lines.
- Ensure access to shade, shelter and weather protection.
- Support active frontages and minimise conflicts with servicing and vehicle crossovers.
- Integrate lighting for both safety and place activation.
- Enable flexible use for events, outdoor dining and temporary activation.
- Incorporate public art, interpretation and interactive elements to enrich experience.



















Images:
1. Beach Road, Christie's Beach, South Australia
2. Lt Malop Street, Central Geelong
3. Randwick Eyelight Lane Auckland
4. Nemarket, Randwick
5. Magill Village, Adelaide
6. Gordon St, London



# PRINCIPLE 3: SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

Public realm will prioritise safe, inclusive and legible movement, while also supporting comfortable, welcoming and well-connected places for people to gather, pause and interact.

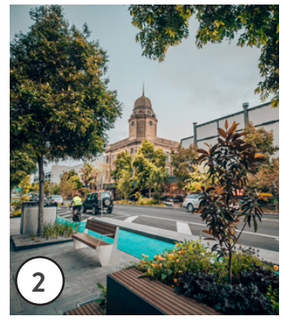
## OBJECTIVES

- Create a safe, legible and universally accessible public realm.
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport over private vehicles.
- Create well connected and continuious movement network.

## DESIGN DIRECTIONS

- Provide continuous, accessible paths of travel for all users.
- Prioritise pedestrian and cyclist movement through street design.
- Improve crossings, visibility and passive surveillance using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Reduce traffic speeds and support low-speed environments.
- Integrate wayfinding along key routes and desire lines.
- Remove barriers, reduce clutter and improve accessibility of footpaths.
- Provide direct connections between key destinations and transport nodes.
















Images:
1 & 2. Magill Village, Adelaide
3. Malop St, Geelong
4. Flinders Parade, Brisbane
5. Lonsdale Street, Dandenong
6. Beverley, Western Australia

# PRINCIPLE 4: GREEN AND RESILIENT

Nature and climate-responsive design will be embedded to support resilience, biodiversity and wellbeing.

## OBJECTIVES

- Increase tree canopy, shade and greenery in public spaces.
- Support biodiversity and ecological function.
- Improve climate resilience and urban cooling.

## DESIGN DIRECTIONS

- Integrate tree canopy and landscaping to provide shade and cooling.
- Apply Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) to manage stormwater and support irrigation.
- Use diverse, climate-appropriate and locally responsive planting.
- Provide deep soil zones, permeability and passive irrigation for planting.
- Align greening with walking and cycling routes to create cooler movement corridors.
- Incorporate sustainable and low-carbon materials where appropriate.



















Images:
1. Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Wyndham Vale
2. Bakery Hill, Ballarat
3. Sherbrook Reserve, Ringwood
4. Malop St,  Central Geelong
5. Brougham St, Central Geelong
6. The Rocks Sydney



# PRINCIPLE 5: SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

Public realm will be practical, coordinated and designed for long-term performance.

## OBJECTIVES

- Deliver cost-effective and maintainable public realm outcomes.
- Integrate public realm planning and design early in development and infrastructure projects.
- Ensure coordinated, consistent and efficient delivery across the municipality.
- Support adaptable public spaces that can respond to future change.

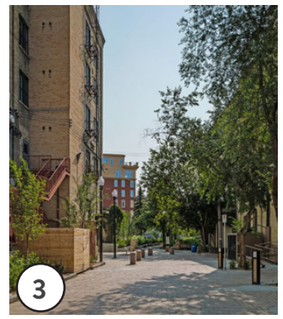
## DESIGN DIRECTIONS

- Consider whole-of-life cost, durability and maintenance requirements in design decisions.
- Apply consistent palettes, materials and public realm standards across projects.
- Prioritise durable, low-maintenance and locally sourced materials where appropriate.
- Design adaptable and flexible spaces that can accommodate changing uses and needs.
- Coordinate utilities and infrastructure to reduce visual clutter and improve amenity.
- Integrate public realm requirements early within planning, servicing and infrastructure coordination processes.











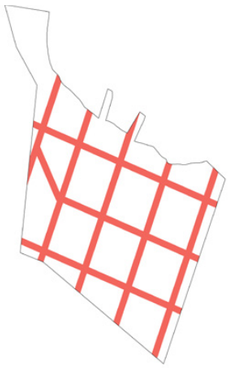


Images:
1. Darling Harbour, Sydney
2. Randwick,Sydney
3. Winnipeg, Manitob
4. Beverley, Western Australia

# 6. PLACE-SPECIFIC DESIGN DIRECTIONS

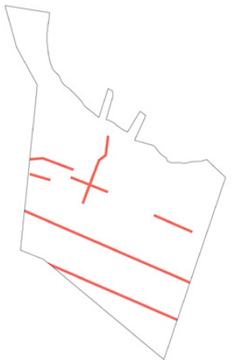
The place-specific design directions guide the design and development of specific public realm types in Central or Greater Geelong. In central Geelong, these are structured as a series of plans addressing key typologies, big streets, little streets, laneways and arcades, and civic spaces, each responding to different movement patterns, levels of activity and public life functions.

## CENTRAL GEELONG



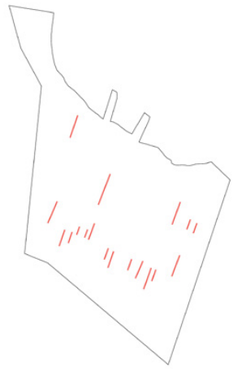
**BIG STREETS**

PG 20-23



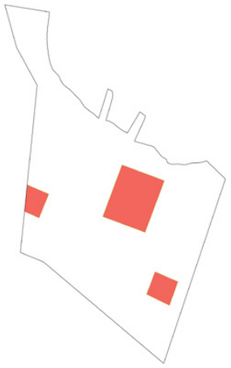
**LITTLE STREETS**

PG 24-25



**LANEWAYS AND ARCADES**

PG 26-27



**CIVIC SPACES**

PG 28-29

# CENTRAL GEELONG: BIG STREETS

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Big streets should be designed to provide priorities to different transport modes according to their relationships to land uses and Waterfront, and to their formal role in the structure of the city.

2. Big streets should provide dedicated, separated bicycle lanes and integrated infrastructure on streets identified as strategic cycling corridors and encourage the provision of bicycle lanes on other big streets.

3. Big streets that provide primary and secondary pedestrian links (refer to *Central Geelong Framework* Figure 12) should prioritise pedestrian movement and accessibility with consideration for footpath width, surface quality, slower speed limits, frequency of crossing points at intersections and mid-blocks, and improved lighting.

4. Big streets that provide primary and secondary pedestrian links or strategic cycling corridors should incorporate intuitive wayfinding and signage through the streetscape that supports ease of navigation for pedestrians and cyclists.

5. Big streets should have lighting design that is layered and balances different transport mode needs and is integrated with smart controls.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

Big streets should support increased tree canopy and reinforce Geelong as the 'City of trees' while promoting distinct character and species diversity between streets. Streets should be assigned with a primary and secondary street tree species to define street character and encourage diversity.

6.
- On East-West big streets - Tree planting should be promoted in the central medians and footpaths.
- On North-South big streets - Tree planting should be promoted in the side of streets and footpaths. Tree planting should be discouraged from the central median.
- Streets identified as Green Spine streets are exempt from these parameters.

7. Big streets should incorporate WSUD into the streetscape where possible, including rain gardens at low points within the topography, permeable surfaces in centre medians and tree-pits for water collection, filtration, and passive irrigation.

8. Big streets should incorporate increased understorey planting through the creation of garden beds in kerb out-stands and medians if there is room in the footpath.

9. All developments and infrastructure works adjacent to big streets should undertake services and utility coordination to allow adequate space for street tree root zones.

10. The design of big streets should consider mitigation of urban heat and flooding impacts through the use of high-albedo paving materials, permeable surfaces, and detention tanks and pipes.

11. The design of big streets should incorporate wind mitigation strategies to reduce wind tunnelling and enhance pedestrian comfort, including street trees, layered planting, and appropriately scaled street furniture.

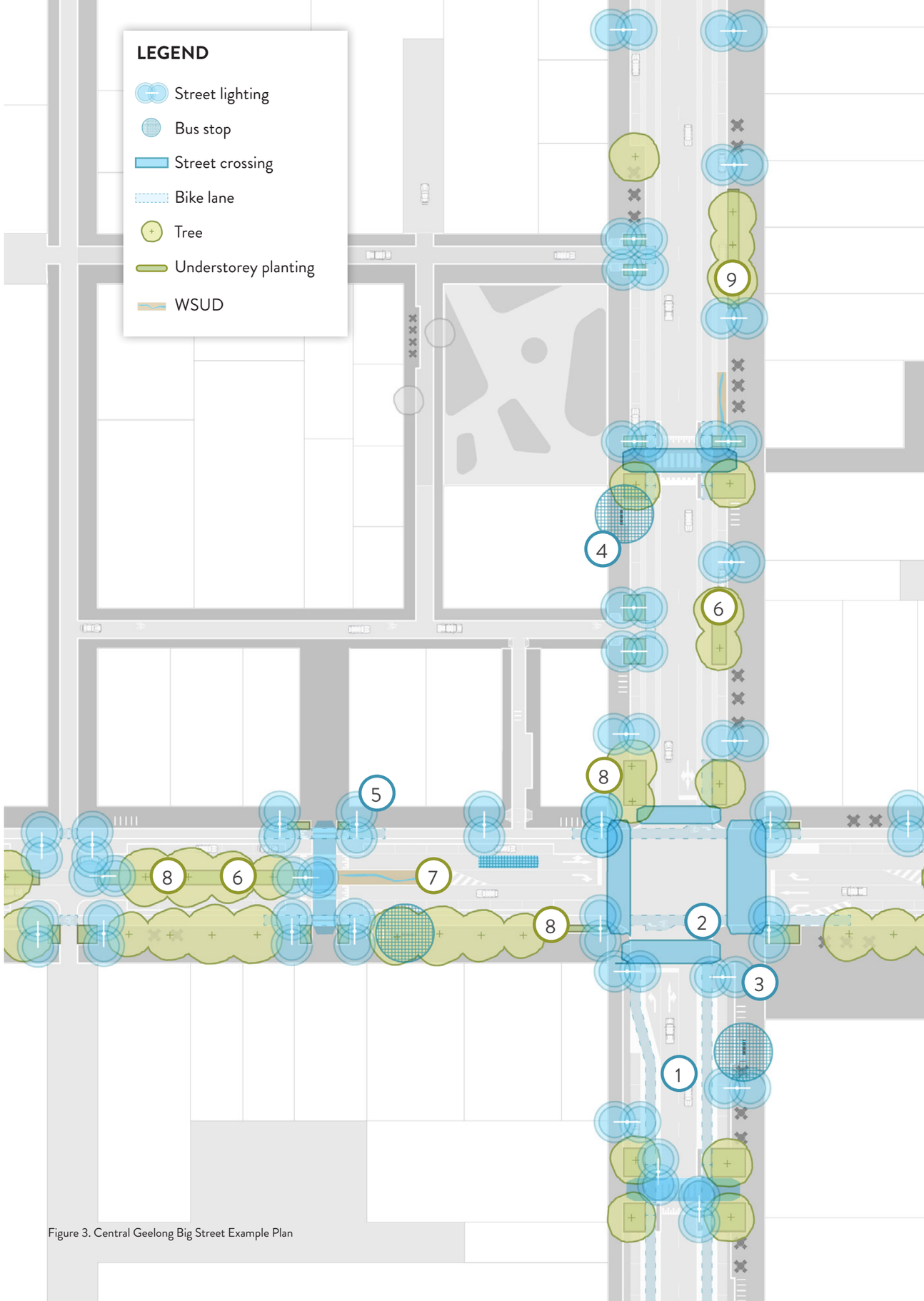



Figure 3. Central Geelong Big Street Example Plan

# CENTRAL GEELONG: BIG STREETS

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

12 Ground-level frontages should be activated on all big streets by minimising the number of driveways and encouraging active, engaging ground-floor spaces.

13 Big Streets should promote the widening of footpaths to support safe movement and outdoor dining uses where possible.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

14 Big Streets in central Geelong should incorporate Wadawurrung language and design through integrated interpretation, signage, and public art, guided by Wadawurrung where appropriate.

15 North-South oriented big streets such as Yarra and Gheringhap Streets should adopt a unified character that promotes their physical and visual connection to Corio Bay. This may be achieved through lighter-toned materials and furniture that references Geelong's industrial and maritime heritage.

Where streets offer significant visual connections such as views to Corio Bay, prioritise the protection of these sight-lines. Elements like central median tree planting and light pole mast arms should be avoided.

16 East-West oriented big streets such as Ryrie Street, Myers Street and the eastern portion of Malop Street should adopt a unified character that focuses on their urban and civic context. This may be achieved through materials and consistent furniture styles. Elements such as tree planting, car parking and light pole masts may be incorporated into the centre median of the street to support safety, accessibility, and urban amenity.

Darker toned materials and furniture should be limited to the existing Civic Spine areas along Malop Street and part of Little Malop Street.

17 Designs of big streets should consider land use relationships and precincts. (See *Central Geelong Framework Plan* Figure 15)

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

19 Upgrades of big streets should consider the use of higher quality materials sparingly and for key details to help lift the areas aesthetic and long term function while balancing cost.

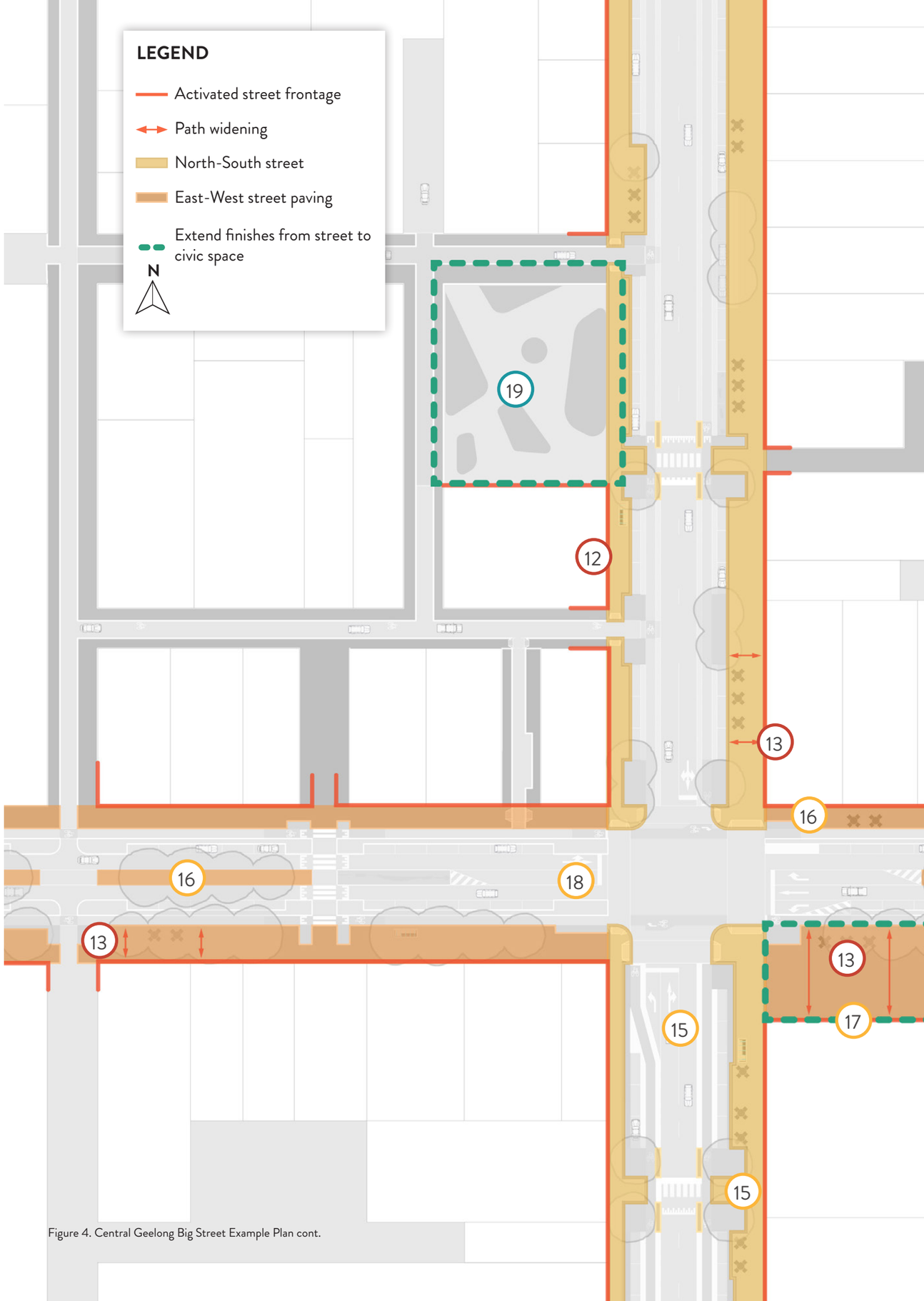



Figure 4. Central Geelong Big Street Example Plan cont.

# CENTRAL GEELONG: LITTLE STREETS

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, AND CONNECTED

1. Little streets should be designed for local access, and a shared roadway with bicycle riders. This should be achieved by restricting through-traffic.
2. Little streets should transition to shared and pedestrian zones where appropriate. These zones should allow for increased pedestrian amenity while allowing for controlled vehicle / servicing access.
3. Little streets should target reduced traffic speed limits (to 20-30 km/h) where they do not transition to shared zones. Narrower vehicle lanes and tighter turns may be used where appropriate to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.
4. Design lighting on little streets to provide consistent, warm illumination with a focus on junctions and crossings.
5. Little streets should support continuous footpath travel at intersections.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

6. Little streets should support increased tree canopy while promoting distinct character and species diversity between streets. Streets should be assigned with a primary and secondary street tree species to define street character and encourage diversity.
7. Where space is constrained, little street design should consider the use of integrated modular planters, and vertical greening structures to provide shade and amenity.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

8. Little streets can be hubs of intense retail experiences and should allow for that use over time with the set-out of the street.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

9. Little streets should adopt a unified character that promotes their role as places of intimate human-scale experience and flexibility. They should have a consistent treatment for shared and pedestrian focused little streets that supports flexibility and activation.

   Consider the use of finer details and materials such as stone, brick, timber to show the character of place and create a rich sensory experience.
10. At key intersections, street hierarchy should be respected with big street character taking priority over little street character.

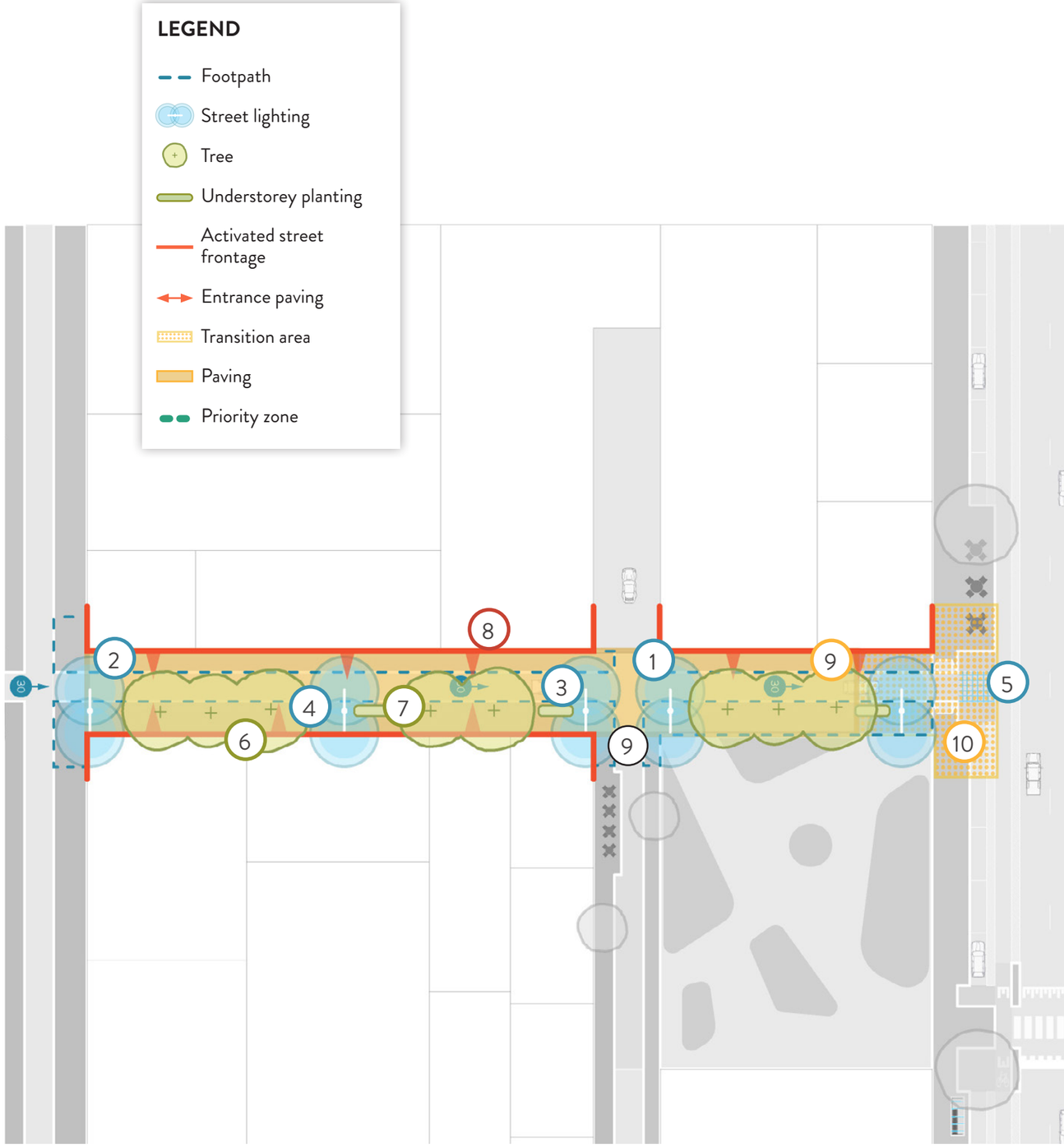



Figure 5. Central Geelong Little Street Example Plan

# CENTRAL GEELONG: LANEWAYS & ARCADES

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Laneways should support shared and pedestrian zones where appropriate. These zones should allow for increased pedestrian amenity while allowing for controlled vehicle / servicing access.
2. Laneways that do not transition to shared zones should support reduced traffic speed limits (to 30 km/h) or introduce traffic calming to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.
3. Where laneways transition to pedestrian-only zones, consider appropriate measures to improve pedestrian safety. This may include retractable bollards, planter boxes, or other barriers, depending on site conditions or operational needs.
4. For laneways servicing businesses and residences, ensure design accommodates loading, waste collection, and utilities.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

5. Laneways should contribute to urban greening and climate resilience through tree and understorey planting. Where space is constrained consider integration of modular planters and vertical greening structures.
6. Laneways should coordinate tree and light pole placement to avoid conflicts and ensure solar access is not compromised.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

7. Laneways should provide pedestrian permeability and interest in the street network that invites people to linger and explore.
8. Laneways should support small scale activation such as pop-up events, outdoor dining or micro-retail.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

9. Laneways should celebrate their unique context, character and history. Where appropriate, their design should borrow materials and finishes from the primary street network palette to create visual continuity.
10. The design of laneways should encourage creative interventions such as murals, lighting or bespoke signage to express local identity and create a sense of discovery.

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

11. Laneway design should use durable and maintainable materials that are compatible with the adjacent street context and easy to replace over time.
12. Laneways should prioritise grouping of services and furniture in dedicated locations to reduce street clutter and maximise public space.

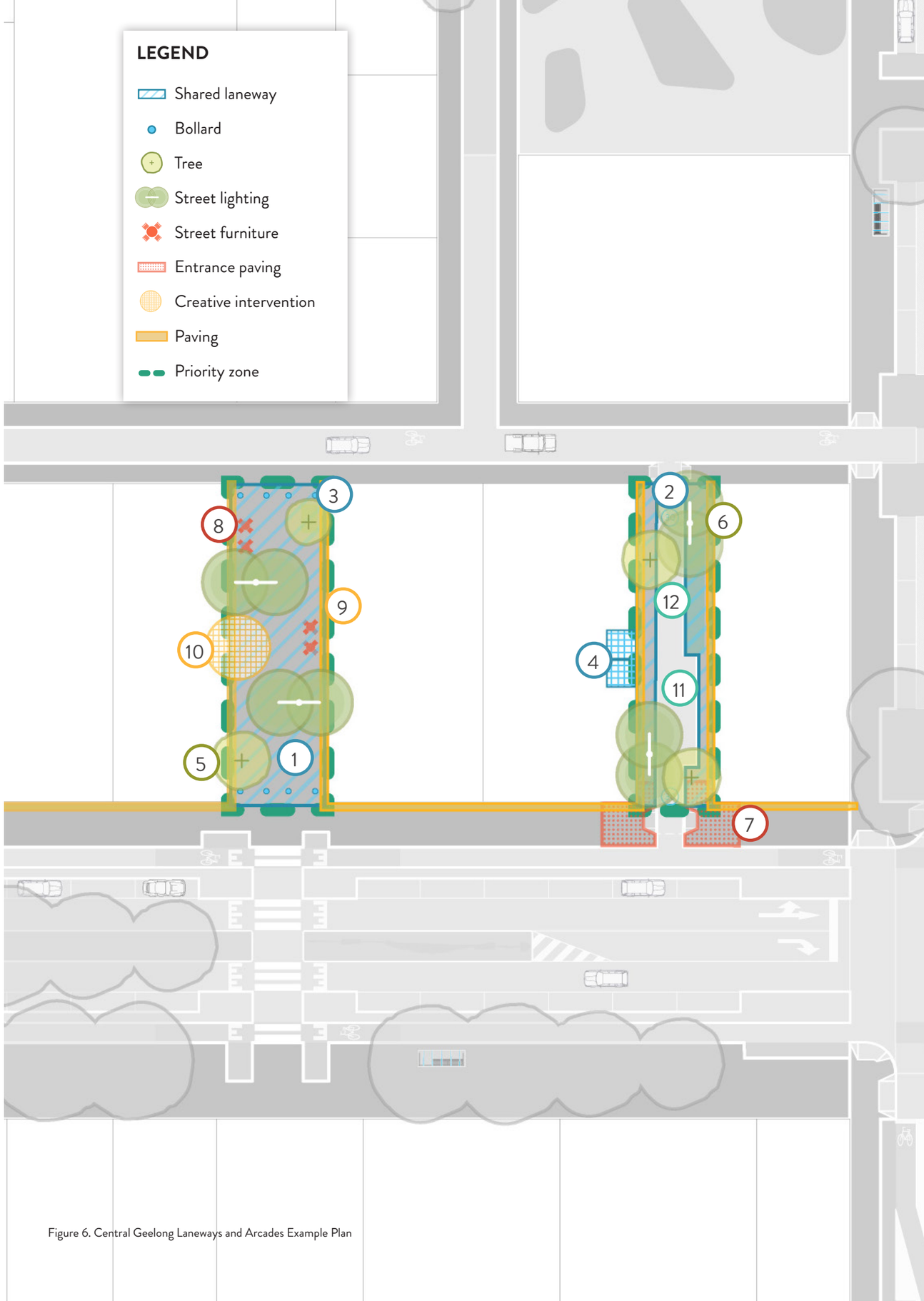



Figure 6. Central Geelong Laneways and Arcades Example Plan

# CENTRAL GEELONG: CIVIC SPACES

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Civic spaces should contain footpaths that are designed to be universally accessible.
2. Civic spaces footpath networks should be designed to link seamlessly into surrounding streets, civic buildings and access ways.
3. Civic spaces should support cycling access with integration of bicycle parking.
4. The design of civic spaces should be coordinated to provide well-placed seating, shade, shelter, and amenities that enable use throughout the seasons, by people of all abilities.
5. Clear views from surrounding streets and buildings should be maintained into civic spaces to enhance passive safety and visibility.
6. Buildings facing or adjoining civic spaces should be designed with active ground floor uses and transparent façades to increase passive surveillance and a sense of security.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

7. Civic spaces should support increased tree canopy while promoting distinct character and species diversity between streets and spaces.
8. Civic spaces should incorporate WSUD where possible, including rain gardens, swales, and passive irrigation of gardens and trees.
9. Civic Spaces should include garden beds and understorey planting with preference for native/ indigenous shrubs, grasses and understorey plant palettes.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

10. Design civic spaces with infrastructure (power, water, handstand areas) to support temporary uses and activation such as art installations, food trucks, and seasonal events.
11. Appropriately locate park furniture in areas that are highly visible and close to or adjoining pedestrian desire lines / gathering spaces.
12. Design civic spaces to be used in different ways at different times, supporting both programmed events and spontaneous activity.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

13. Civic spaces must reflect and enhance the unique character, history, and identity of their place. The design should consider use of local materials and finishes, and where appropriate, materials and finishes from the primary street network palette to create visual continuity.
14. Civic spaces may provide opportunities to reflect Wadawurrung Country and culture through design. The nature of these opportunities, and Wadawurrung involvement in the process, will be determined in consultation with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

15. Civic spaces should incorporate water-wise landscaping with native/ indigenous and low-maintenance plant species.

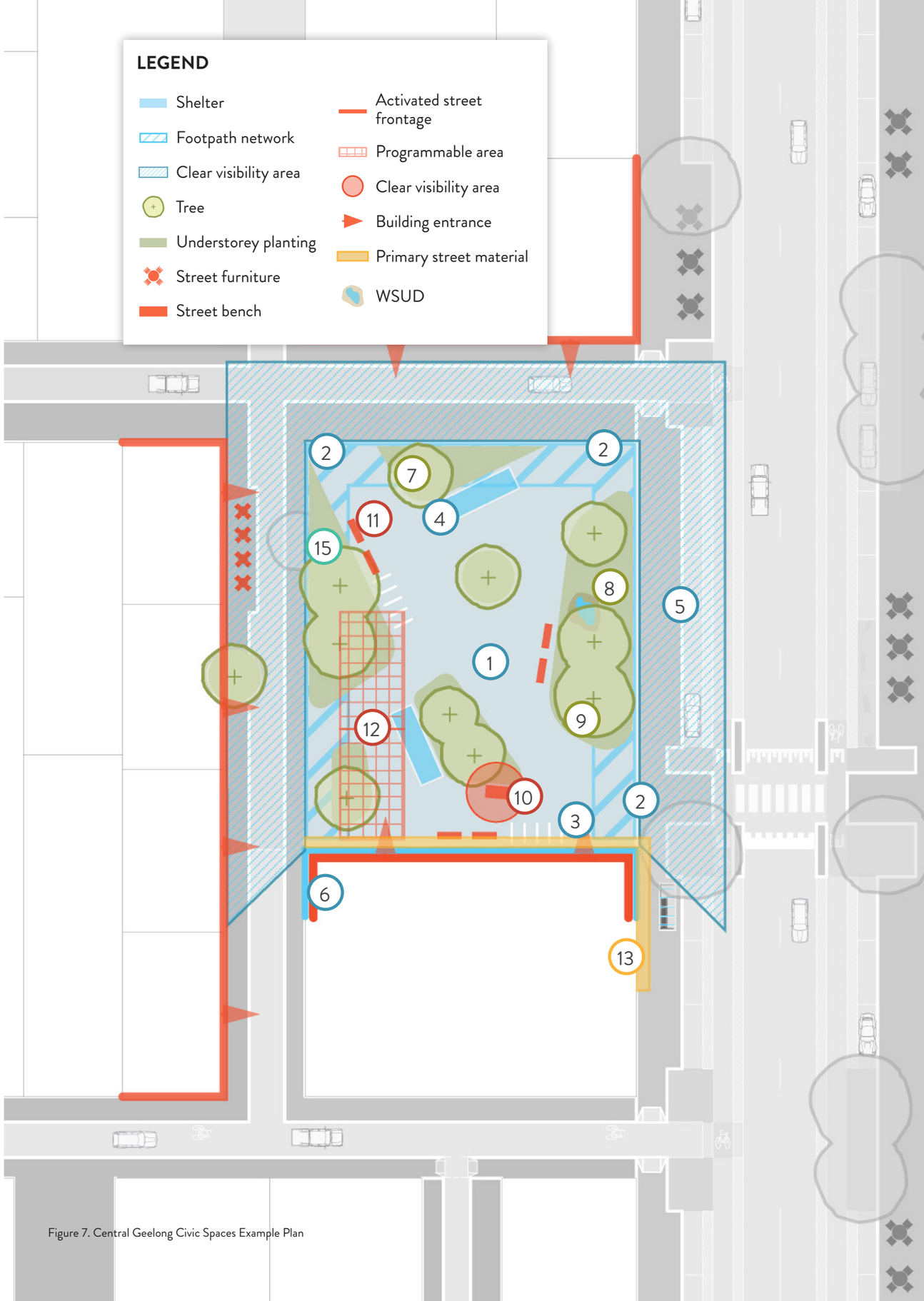
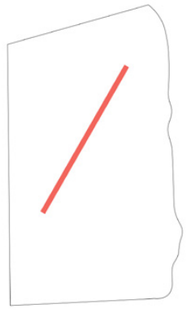



Figure 7. Central Geelong Civic Spaces Example Plan

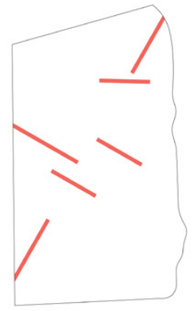
# GREATER GEELONG

In Greater Geelong, the place-specific plans address a different set of public realm typologies,  core streets, transition streets, laneways and arcades, and civic spaces, each responding to varying levels of activity, movement and place function across centres and neighbourhoods.



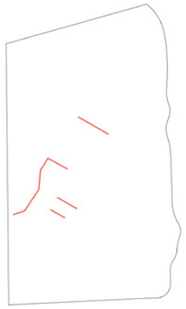
**CORE STREETS**

PG 32-35



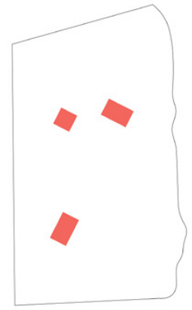
**TRANSITION STREETS**

PG 36-37



**LANEWAYS AND ARCADES**

PG 38-39



**CIVIC SPACES**

PG 40-41

# GREATER GEELONG: CORE STREETS

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Core streets should provide high walkability with wide footpaths, pedestrian priority crossings and legible connections to surrounding neighbourhoods.
2. Core streets should provide high cycling amenity, with the integration of cycling routes, bicycle parking, and integration with public transport and connections.
3. Public transport should be integrated into the design of core streets with bus stops that are visually clear and provide universal access.
4. Core street lighting design should support the retail, social and night time economic activities by providing warm lighting that is integrated with retail shop-fronts.
5. Core street footpaths should be sized comparable to increased activity around shops. They should provide for access, passive areas, and amenity including trees and planting.
6. Planning for carparking in core streets should prioritise flexibility and adaptability. This will allow streets to be reconfigured as transport mode shares change.

   Parking for core streets is typically limited so parking alternatives need to be planned for as needed and as part of the whole activity centre.
7. Support continuous footpath travel at intersections through supporting infrastructure

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

8. Core streets should support tree canopy diversity while promoting the distinct character of activity centres through species selection. Core streets should consider 1-3 key tree species that support streetscape character and provide shade amenity.
9. The design of core streets should prioritise increased understorey planting through greening of kerb out-stands, side medians and footpaths where appropriate
10. Core streets should support WSUD applications where possible.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

11. The design of core streets should support the activation of footpaths by providing space for retail, dining, and other temporary or pop-up activities.
12. Core streets should provide frequent seating nodes in highly visible locations, close to pedestrian desire lines, kerb out-stands and gathering spaces. Ensure they are functional, attractive, and comfortable

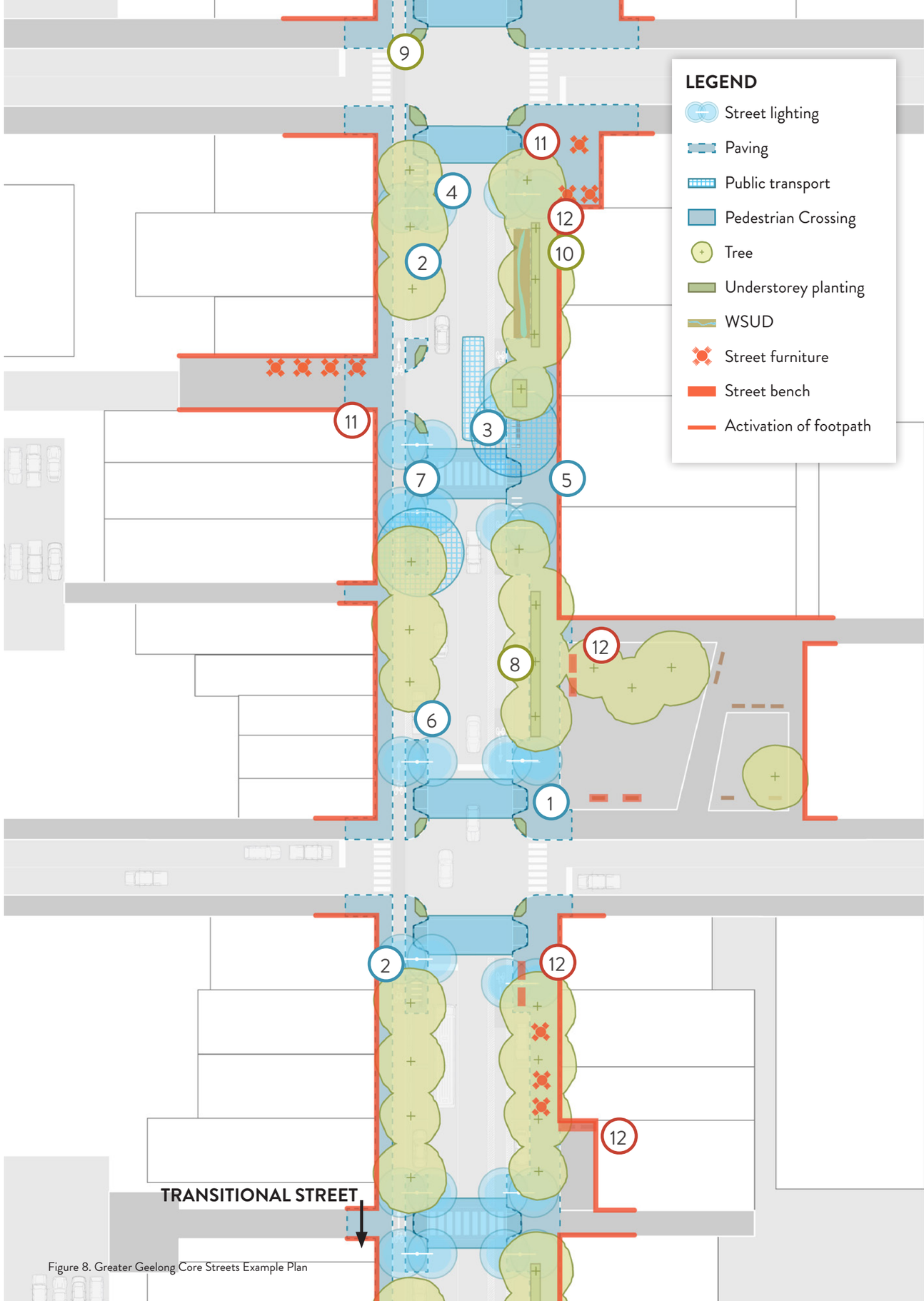



Figure 8. Greater Geelong Core Streets Example Plan

# GREATER GEELONG: CORE STREETS

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

13 Core streets should express a distinct and authentic identity that reflects their role in the urban fabric. This should be informed by the identified place character (urban, coastal, rural) and be expressed through the considered use of materials, finishes, public art, and interpretation.

14 Core streets should employ a simple and refined material palette, including feature paving treatment that visually distinguishes the activity centre from streets outside the activity centre.

15 Where civic spaces occur, ensure the public realm finishes and design are sympathetic to the core street character.

16 Where private or public laneways and arcades adjoin the core street, consider the extension of core street feature paving to create visual cohesion.

17 Provide frequent seating nodes in highly visible locations, close to pedestrian desire lines, kerb outstands and gathering spaces. Ensure they are functional, attractive, and comfortable

18 Support outdoor dining in the footpath or kerbside (where space is constrained) to enhance the pedestrian experience and support local economy.

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

19 The extent of the core street material and paving treatments should be assessed case-by-case. It may be determined based on the extent of the activity centre zoning, masterplans, and current or future development.

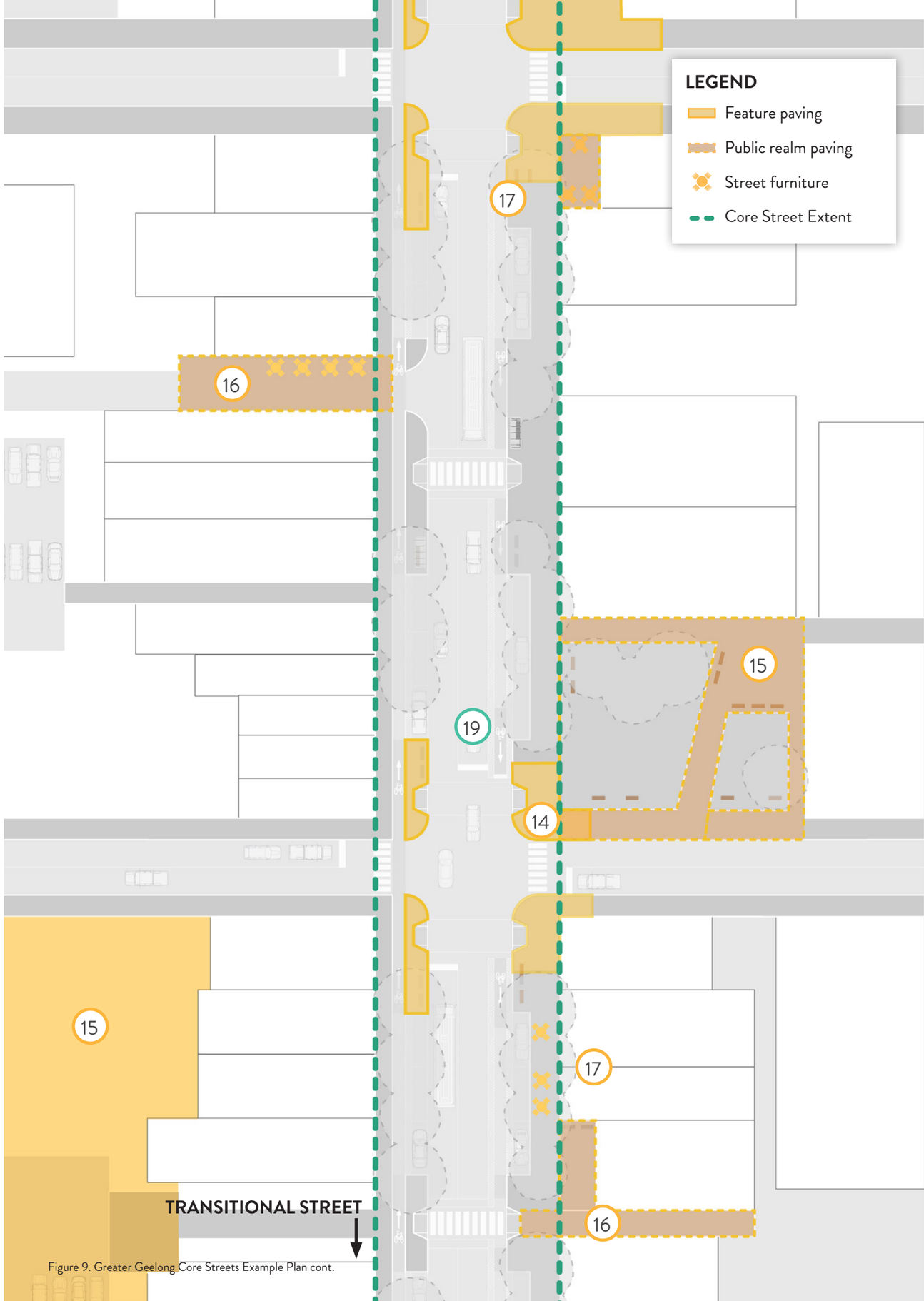



Figure 9. Greater Geelong Core Streets Example Plan cont.

# GREATER GEELONG: TRANSITION STREETS

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Transition streets should provide safe and legible pedestrian and cycling connections between residential areas and local activity centres and key services or community facilities.
2. As Transition Streets approach the core street in activity centres, street design should consider the use of traffic calming measures including lane narrowing, tree planting, and raised crossings.
3. Illumination should be prioritised along key night-time pedestrian routes as well as public transport stops and crossings.
4. As infill development occurs, encourage the improvement of interfacing public realm streets and spaces through uplift and design that prioritises human-scale.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

5. Tree planting selection for transition streets should where possible, extend or "announce" the core street canopy. Select tree species that are similar or visually compatible with the core street species
6. The design of transition streets should look for opportunities to contribute to a greener, cooler, and more climate-resilient City through the prioritisation of garden beds that include base and middle layers of planting, water sensitive urban design systems and integration of tree planting.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

7. Transition streets should clearly signal the approach to core streets and provide a sense of arrival and transition through material selection, furniture and finishes that reference selective elements of the core street palette and character.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

8. Transition streets should incorporate gateway elements such as distinctive signage, public art and feature planting at key entry points to the core street, that reflects the areas heritage, character and creativity.

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

9. Transition streets should be sustainable, efficient and feasible to deliver. They should feature durable, maintainable materials that are compatible with and borrow from the core street design at key locations such as street corners and crossings.
10. As infill development occurs encourage the improvement of interfacing streets and spaces through improved finishes, landscaping, consistent street furniture, and improvement of streetscape character.

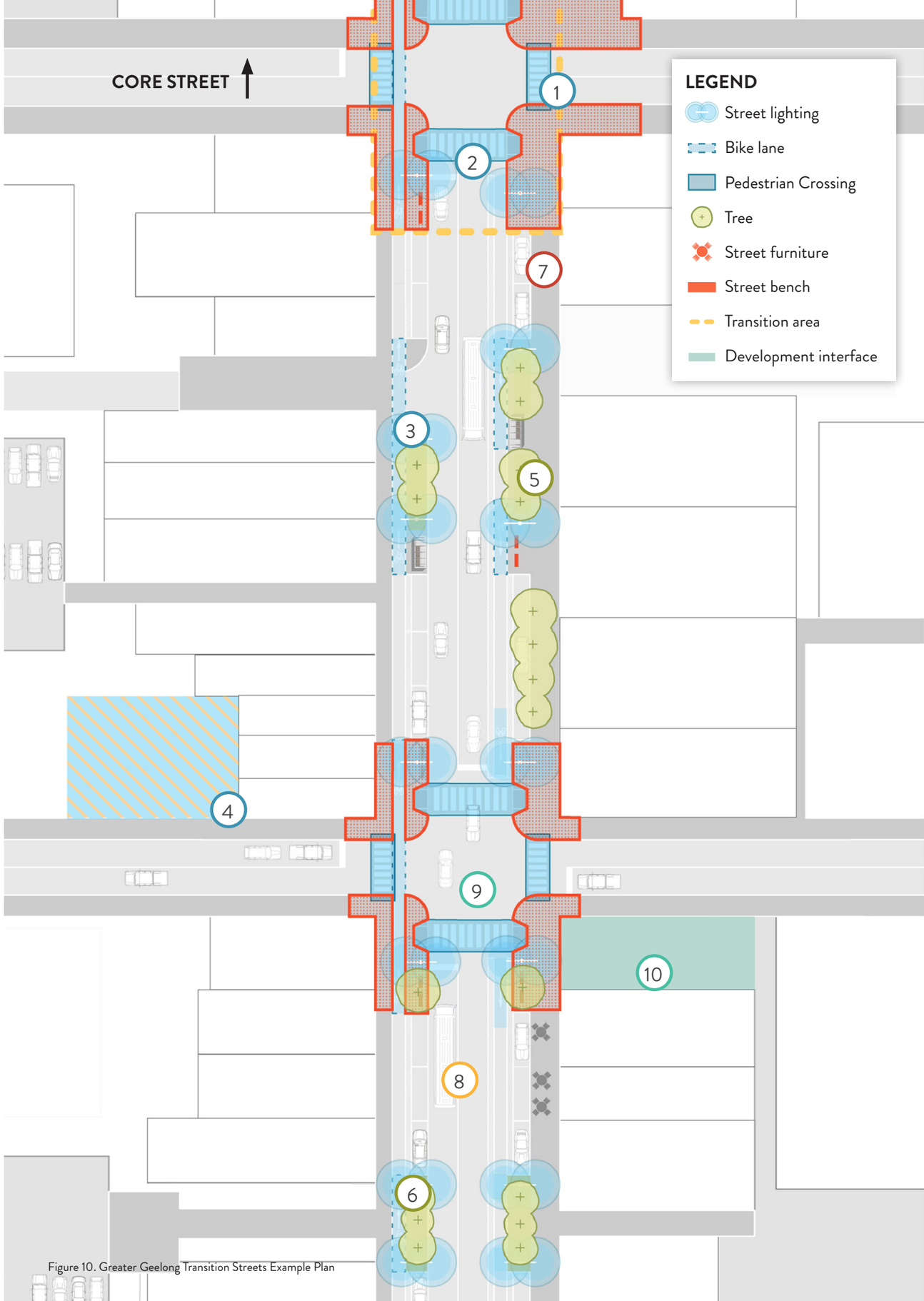



Figure 10. Greater Geelong Transition Streets Example Plan

# GREATER GEELONG: LANEWAYS + ARCADES

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Laneways should support shared and pedestrian zones where appropriate. These zones should allow for increased pedestrian amenity while allowing for controlled vehicle / servicing access.
2. Laneways that do not transition to shared zones should support reduced traffic speed limits (to 30 km/h) or introduce traffic calming to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.
3. Where laneways transition to pedestrian-only zones consider infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety, like retractable bollards, planter boxes and barriers to improve pedestrian safety.
4. For laneways servicing businesses and residences, ensure design accommodates loading, waste collection. Utility boxes and bins should be rationally located, to avoid clutter and barriers.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

5. Laneways should contribute to urban greening and climate resilience through tree and understorey planting. Where space is constrained consider integration of modular planters and vertical greening structures.
6. Laneways should coordinate tree and light pole placement to avoid conflicts and ensure solar access is not compromised.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

7. Laneways should provide fine-grained access and interest in the street network that invites people to linger and explore.
8. Laneways should support small scale activation such as pop-up events, outdoor dining or micro-retail.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

9. Laneways should celebrate their unique context, character and history. Where appropriate, their design should borrow materials and finishes from the primary street network palette to create visual and physical continuity.
10. The design of laneways should encourage creative interventions such as murals, lighting or bespoke signage to express local identity and create a sense of discovery.

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

11. Laneway design should use durable and maintainable materials that are compatible with the adjacent street context and easy to replace over time.
12. Laneways should prioritise grouping of services and furniture in dedicated locations to reduce street clutter and maximise public space.

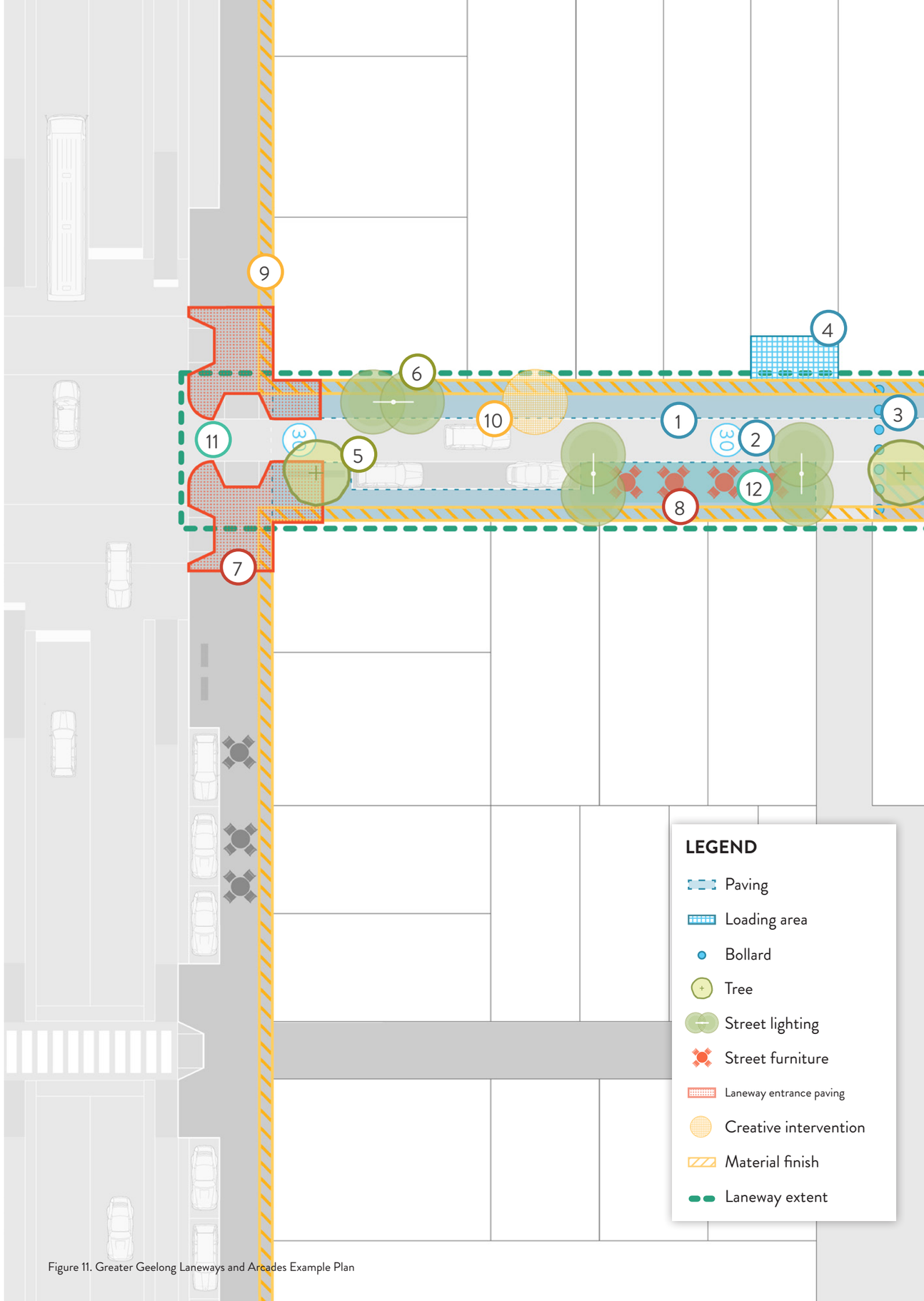



Figure 11. Greater Geelong Laneways and Arcades Example Plan

# GREATER GEELONG: CIVIC SPACES

## SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND CONNECTED

1. Civic spaces should contain footpaths that are designed to be universally accessible.
2. Civic spaces should be designed to link seamlessly into surrounding streets, civic buildings and access ways.
3. Civic spaces should support cycling by providing bicycle parking.
4. The design of civic spaces should be coordinated to provide well-placed seating, shade, shelter, and amenities that enable use throughout the seasons, by people of all abilities.
5. Clear views from surrounding streets and buildings should be maintained into civic spaces to enhance passive safety and visibility.

## GREEN AND RESILIENT

7. Civic spaces should support increased tree canopy while promoting distinct character and species diversity between streets and spaces.
8. Civic spaces should incorporate water sensitive urban design where possible, including rain gardens, swales, and passive irrigation of gardens and trees.
9. Civic spaces should include garden beds and understorey planting with preference for native shrubs, grasses and understorey plant palettes.

## ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT

10. Design civic spaces with infrastructure (power, water, hardstand areas) to support temporary uses and activation such as art installations, food trucks, and seasonal events.
11. Appropriately locate park furniture in areas that are highly visible and close to or adjoining pedestrian desire lines / gathering spaces.
12. Design civic spaces to be used in different ways at different times, supporting both programmed events and spontaneous activity for both children and adults of all ages.

## AUTHENTIC AND DISTINCT

13. Civic Spaces must reflect and enhance the unique character, history, and identity of their place. The design should consider use of local materials and finishes, and where appropriate, materials and finishes from the primary street network palette to create visual continuity.
14. Civic spaces should incorporate recognition of Wadawurrung Country and culture into their design through co-design processes guided by the Wadawurrung, where appropriate.

## SUSTAINABLE AND DELIVERABLE

15. Civic spaces should incorporate water-wise landscaping with native and low-maintenance plant species.

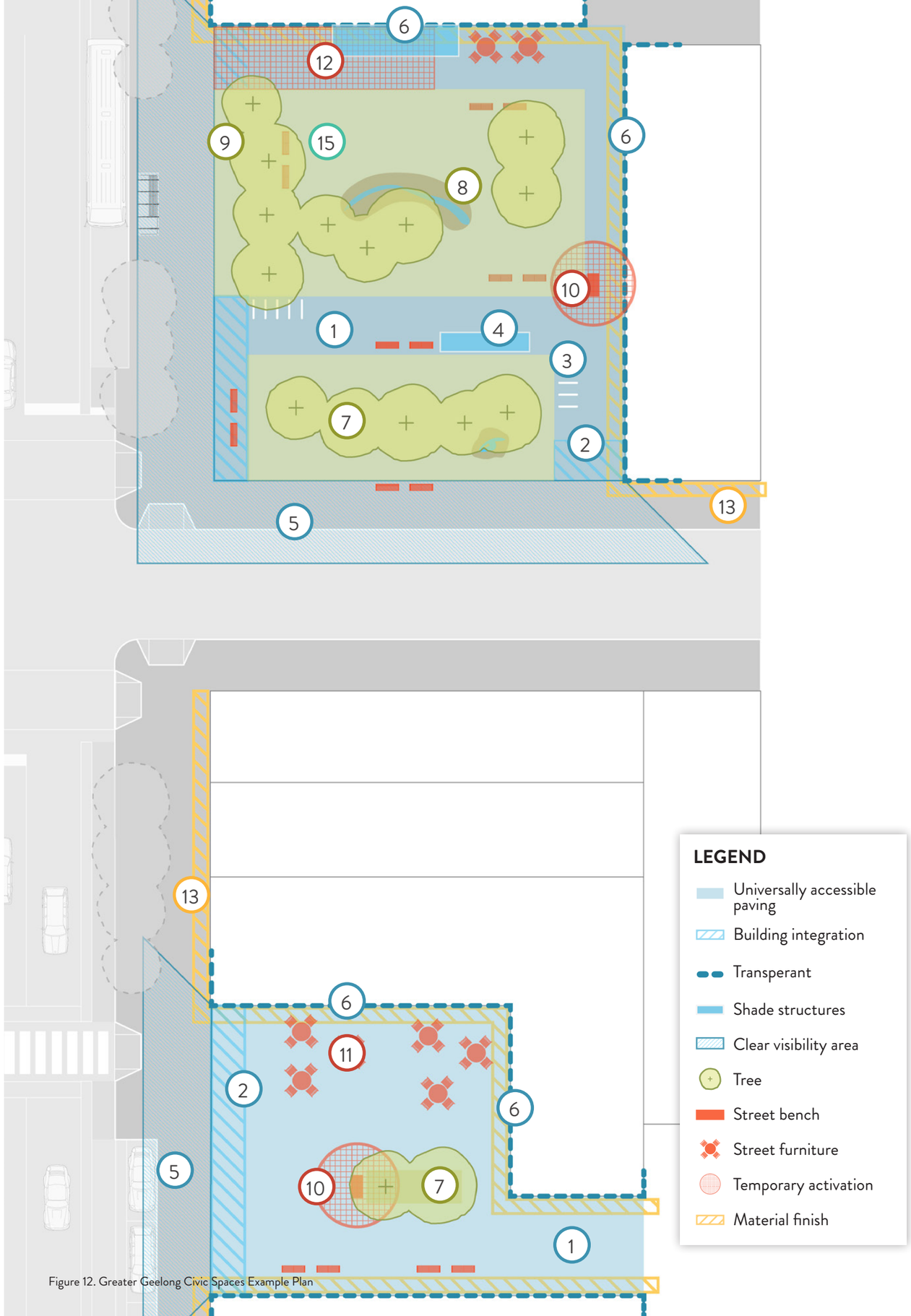



Figure 12. Greater Geelong Civic Spaces Example Plan




# 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The framework is implemented through a coordinated approach across planning, design, delivery and asset management. It will be incorporated into the planning scheme following adoption and integrated into capital works, asset renewal programs, the planning permit process, and partnerships with developers and other agencies. Implementation is structured around three components:

- Policy and Design Tools
- Prioritisation and Investment Framework
- Delivery and Implementation Processes

## POLICY AND DESIGN TOOLS

The Public Realm Framework provides overarching guidance for the planning and design of streets and public spaces across Greater Geelong activity centres. It will be implemented through the City's capital works program, asset management systems, and the planning permit process, and is intended to be incorporated into the Planning Scheme through a future amendment.

Once incorporated, the framework will inform the assessment of development applications within activity centres and major centres, including on privately owned land where public realm outcomes are formed.

**Design Standards (in development)**

Design Standards will establish detailed technical requirements for materials, finishes and streetscape elements, supporting consistent, high-quality and maintainable public realm outcomes across all projects.

## PRIORITISATION AND INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The prioritisation framework directs investment toward projects that deliver the greatest community and strategic benefit. All public realm works within activity centres, whether City-led, development-led or grant-funded, are assessed against four criteria:

- **Community need and equity**, addressing population growth, access gaps and safety issues.
- **Asset condition and risk**, prioritising failing, unsafe or high-maintenance assets.
- **Deliverability and value for money**, ensuring projects are feasible, well-timed and represent efficient use of resources.
- **Strategic alignment**, supporting this framework and broader local and Victorian government objectives.

Projects are assessed using qualitative and quantitative evidence, including demographic data, asset condition, delivery readiness and alignment with relevant strategies. A detailed methodology, including scoring and weighting, will be maintained as an internal tool.

## INVESTMENT HIERARCHY

Public realm investment is structured across five project types, ensuring the appropriate level of intervention is applied in the right place:

- **Maintain**: Sustain high-performing assets. *Funding: operational maintenance budgets and asset renewal programs.*
- **Renew:** Replace ageing or failing assets in a coordinated way. *Funding: asset renewal programs and capital works allocations.*
- **Upgrade:** Deliver targeted improvements. *Funding: capital works programs, developer contributions and place-based grants.*
- **Tactical / Pilot:** Deliver low-cost, temporary interventions. *Funding: operational budgets, partnerships and grants.*
- **Transform:** Deliver major, place-shaping projects. *Funding: capital works programs, State and Federal grants, partnerships and developer contributions.*

Each project type reflects a different scale of investment, complexity and long-term impact.

## FUNDING PRINCIPLES

Funding principles guide how investment is allocated across the program:

- Align funding with place outcomes and strategic priorities.
- Integrate funding across renewal and upgrade programs Leverage external investment.
- Apply whole-of-life cost thinking, considering maintenance and operational impacts.

## GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

Implementation is supported by coordinated governance across planning, urban design, engineering, asset management and delivery teams. Clear roles and responsibilities guide decision-making across the project lifecycle, ensuring consistent application of the framework.

## DELIVERY PATHWAYS

Public realm projects are delivered through complementary pathways:

- **City-shaping and strategic projects** — major streets, civic spaces and green spines in key locations.
- **Activity centre and neighbourhood improvements** — targeted local upgrades.
- **Asset renewal and maintenance programs** —ongoing improvement of existing assets.
- **Development-led delivery** — delivered through private development.
- **Pilot and temporary activation** — short-term interventions to test ideas.

## IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Priority Implementation Actions (Next 2 Years)

- Integrate a public realm audit into asset management systems.
- Finalise and implement Design Standards.
- Establish the prioritisation assessment tool and process.

## PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REVIEW

Progress will be monitored through Council Plan reporting. Performance is assessed at both program and project levels using a defined set of indicators.

Performance indicators are aligned with the framework's Design Principles and are used to inform project scoping and briefs, guide design decision-making, and measure outcomes before and after delivery.

Indicators are applied across the project lifecycle:

- Pre-delivery (baseline) — to understand existing conditions and inform project scope and priorities.
- During planning and design — to guide decision-making and inform project briefs.
- Post-delivery — to evaluate outcomes and inform future investment.

Ongoing asset data and audits support evidence-based decision-making and future capital works planning. The framework will be reviewed every five years, or earlier if required.

## INDICATOR CATEGORIES

Indicators are grouped to reflect key public realm outcomes:

**Place and design quality**

- Proportion of projects aligned with Place Character Areas.
- Application of approved Design Standards across projects.
- Percentage of upgrade or transform projects incorporating public art or interpretation.
- Percentage of upgrade or transform projects with Wadawurrung engagement or input.
- Proportion of projects that document material selection decisions, including consideration of local source availability, lifecycle, performance, and contribution to character.

**Use and activation**

- Average dwell time in key public spaces.
- Number of events held in public spaces annually.
- Outdoor dining capacity (permit data).
- Ground-floor vacancy rates in activity centres.

**Accessibility and movement**

- Percentage of projects meeting accessibility Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) standards.
- Number of missing links in accessible path networks resolved annually.
- Ratio of pedestrian space to traffic space in key streets.
- Percentage of streets with wayfinding or legibility elements.

**Safety**

- Number of pedestrian and cyclist injury crashes per kilometre of street.
- Percentage of key streets meeting public lighting standards.
- Percentage of activity centre streets with speed limits ≤ 40 km/h.

**Environment and urban greening**

- Percentage tree canopy cover in activity centres and key streets.
- Net increase in street trees planted annually.
- Tree species diversity across public realm planting.
- Public realm comfort measures (e.g. shade coverage).
- Percentage increase in permeable surfaces.

**Asset and delivery performance**

- Percentage of public realm assets rated "good" or better.
- Number of projects delivered in partnership with external stakeholders.






# APPENDIX

## A1 GLOSSARY

**Active Transport**
Modes of transport that involve physical activity, such as walking and cycling.

**Activity Centre**
A location that concentrates a mix of commercial, community and service activities, supporting people to live, work, shop and socialise.

**Activity Centre Hierarchy**
The classification of centres based on their scale, role and level of activity (e.g. local, neighbourhood or regional centres).

**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**
An approach to planning, design, and management of the built environment that aims to reduce crime and improve safety by incorporating strategies such as natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance into the design of spaces.

**Design Standards**
Technical requirements for materials, finishes and public realm elements to ensure consistency, durability and quality.

**Hardscape**
The built, non-living elements of the public realm, including paving, concrete and structures.

**Local Materials**
Materials sourced, manufactured, or reclaimed as close as practicable to the project area, with preference given to those that support local and regional industries, reflect the character of the City of Greater Geelong, and minimise environmental impacts.

**Open Space**
Publicly accessible land primarily used for recreation, leisure and environmental purposes, including parks, reserves and natural areas.

**Place Character Area**
A defined area with a distinct identity shaped by landscape, history and built form (e.g. central, urban, coastal or rural).

**Placemaking**
A collaborative approach to planning and design that enhances public spaces to reflect local identity and support community use.

**Public Realm**
All publicly accessible streets and spaces, including streets, laneways, plazas and civic spaces, where people move, gather and interact.

**Softscape**
The living elements of the landscape, including trees, planting and garden beds.

**Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)**
An approach to urban design that integrates stormwater management, water reuse and environmental protection into the built environment.

**Whole-of-life Cost**
The total cost of an asset over its lifespan, including design, construction, maintenance and replacement.

## A2 CREDITS

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges REALMstudios for their contribution to developing the Public Realm Framework.

**SOURCES:**

**Maps and Plans:** REALMstudios

**Images:** City of Greater Geelong; REALMstudios; Tilt Industrial Design; Studio Semaphore; Resilience Studio; The Conversation; E. Holdings Inc.; AKT Project Management; Aspect Studios (David Svensson); Street Furniture Australia; Taylor Brammer; Arcadia; JPE Design Studio; LatStudios; Paul Upward; Krutika Harale; TCL Landscape Architects; GHD; Hassell; Florence Jaquet; Outlines Landscape Architecture; Citygreen Urban Landscape Solutions

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**WURRIKI NYAL**
**CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE**
Wadawurrung Country
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