



Laneways Action Plan

Final – August 2018



Laneways Action Plan Masterplan

Final – August 2018

This report has been prepared by the Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership in association with Design Urban Pty Ltd.



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Figure 1. Future vision for Shorts Place.



whole
foods
store

coffee

Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan

The City of Greater Geelong and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning are working together as the Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership with the Geelong Authority to plan and deliver projects identified in the Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan.

The Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan is a ten-year plan designed to deliver new jobs, homes and services to revitalise Central Geelong.

The Action Plans' Stronger CBD, Planning for Growth, Green Spine and Getting Around initiatives propose a stronger integration and greater diversity of health, education, residential, commercial and cultural uses.

To deliver on these outcomes, one of the initiatives is to improve the existing laneways and construct new laneways in Central Geelong. This document outlines where these might be and how they might be planned and designed so that the laneway network in Central Geelong supports future growth and revitalisation.

A Stronger CBD

- > New jobs
- > New development opportunities
- > New civic centre (location to be determined)

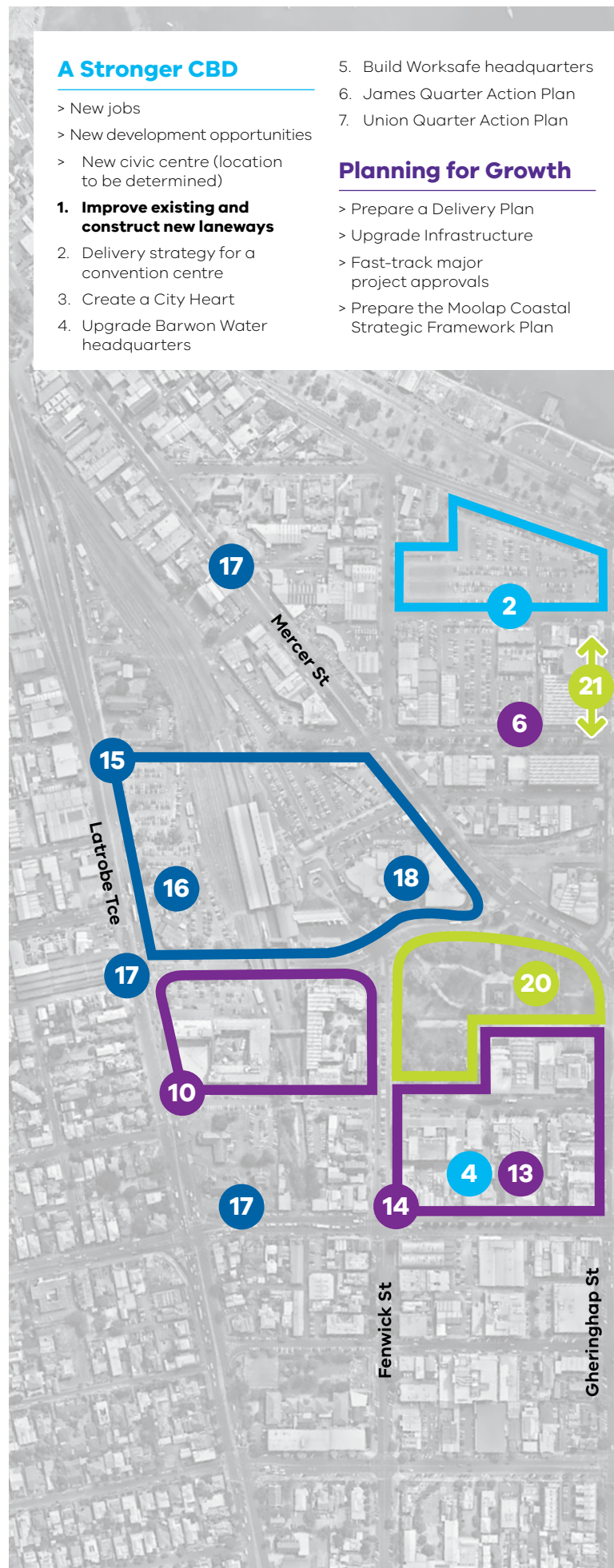
1. Improve existing and construct new laneways

2. Delivery strategy for a convention centre
3. Create a City Heart
4. Upgrade Barwon Water headquarters

5. Build Worksafe headquarters
6. James Quarter Action Plan
7. Union Quarter Action Plan

Planning for Growth

- > Prepare a Delivery Plan
- > Upgrade Infrastructure
- > Fast-track major project approvals
- > Prepare the Moolap Coastal Strategic Framework Plan



Inhabiting the City

- > Support delivery of city housing
- > Plan for community infrastructure
- > Host events
- 8. Construct the Royal Geelong Yacht Club safe harbour
- 9. Construct upgrade of Kardinia Park stadium

Smart City

- 10. Construct the Geelong Tech School
- 11. Support delivery of student housing
- 12. Plan for expansion of health and education facilities
- 13. Construct upgrade of Geelong Performing Arts Centre
- 14. Plan for cultural precinct

Getting Around

- > Finalise an operating plan for the Transport Network
- > Prepare a city parking strategy
- 15. Revitalise the Geelong Station Precinct
- 16. Develop a commuter parking strategy
- 17. Highlight city arrival points
- 18. Identify long term needs of Department of Justice and Victoria Police

Green Spine

- 19. Construct Green Spine Stage 1 (Moorabool to Yarra)
- 20. Construct an integrated public space and water management project in Johnstone Park
- 21. Plan for improved linkages between the city and waterfront



The Laneways Action Plan

1. Identifies principles for laneways
2. Shows different laneway functions within Central Geelong
3. Identifies possible future laneway connections by both private and public agencies and owners

Laneway Connections by Public Agencies

Priority laneway connections to be delivered over time by public agencies are identified and prioritised from 1 to 5 on pages 9 to 13.

Laneway Connections by Private Landowners

Desirable laneway connections on private land prioritised from 1 to 3 on pages 14 to 16. These are provided as guidance for landowners to consider when upgrading existing buildings or redeveloping their property.

The Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership commissioned an evidence-based spatial analysis of Central Geelong to understand the role and performance of the city's movement network with respect to future land use and connectivity projects.

The study focussed on both pedestrian and vehicular movement within existing laneways, streets and public spaces.

The study conducted by Space Syntax Limited revealed that, "Overall, Central Geelong has smaller urban blocks in comparison to the wider city. However, many blocks still require more than a 10-minute walk to go around them. The connections provided through the malls are convoluted and offer little inter-block connectivity. A number of smaller laneways, which are currently disconnected, provide an opportunity to enhance the connectivity and permeability of Central Geelong."

This Action Plan recognises those laneways and connections that were recommended by the study to make the greatest contribution to the future prosperity of the city through a more effective laneway network. Other potential laneway connections and improvements may be considered in the future.

A number of optional links to the laneway network were tested as part of the study to see the possible effect they would have on the social, economic and environmental performance of Central Geelong.

The following principles and criteria for successful laneways were identified.





Principles for Successful Laneways

- laneways should be as axially straight as possible, well lit and safe, so that people can see where they lead and feel confident using them.
- laneways should prioritise pedestrian use.
- buildings along laneways should have "active frontages" with many doors and windows facing the lane.
- wherever possible laneways should be open to the sky.
- buildings should have no setbacks from laneways at lower levels so that the laneway space is well-defined.
- new laneway connections should link up existing or former laneways where possible.
- laneways should, wherever possible, incorporate public art.
- heritage buildings in laneways should be protected and re-purposed if necessary for retail, commercial and residential use.

Criteria for Selecting Laneways

- Does the lane have the potential to contribute to a cross-city link?
- Is the laneway essential to provide servicing of properties which face streets?
- Does the laneway contribute to improving north-south connectivity?
- Can the connection be economically acquired?
- Is there potential for laneway activation in the future?

Laneway Types

Two types of laneways were identified: service laneways and activated linking laneways. The latter includes the “little” streets. The following principles apply to each laneway type:

Service Lanes

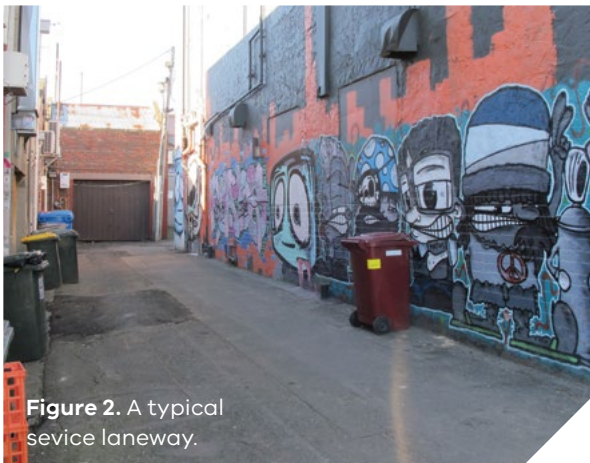


Figure 2. A typical service laneway.

Service laneways provide for delivery of goods and the servicing of properties which face either major or minor streets. As such, they are fundamental to maintaining good streetscapes in central Geelong and facilitating efficient servicing of properties. Service laneways avoid disruptions to the street edge so that buildings can be continuous on the city’s streets. This supports the urban quality of the city centre and helps to create a safe and pleasant walking environment.

Over time as Geelong develops and the local population increases, it is likely that these lanes will become more active. Until then, their primary role is to provide access for loading and servicing of properties facing streets. These lanes are:

- functional;
- primarily for loading and servicing properties facing streets; and
- sometimes in transition to activated linking laneways.

Activated Linking Laneways



Figure 3. A typical activated linking laneway.

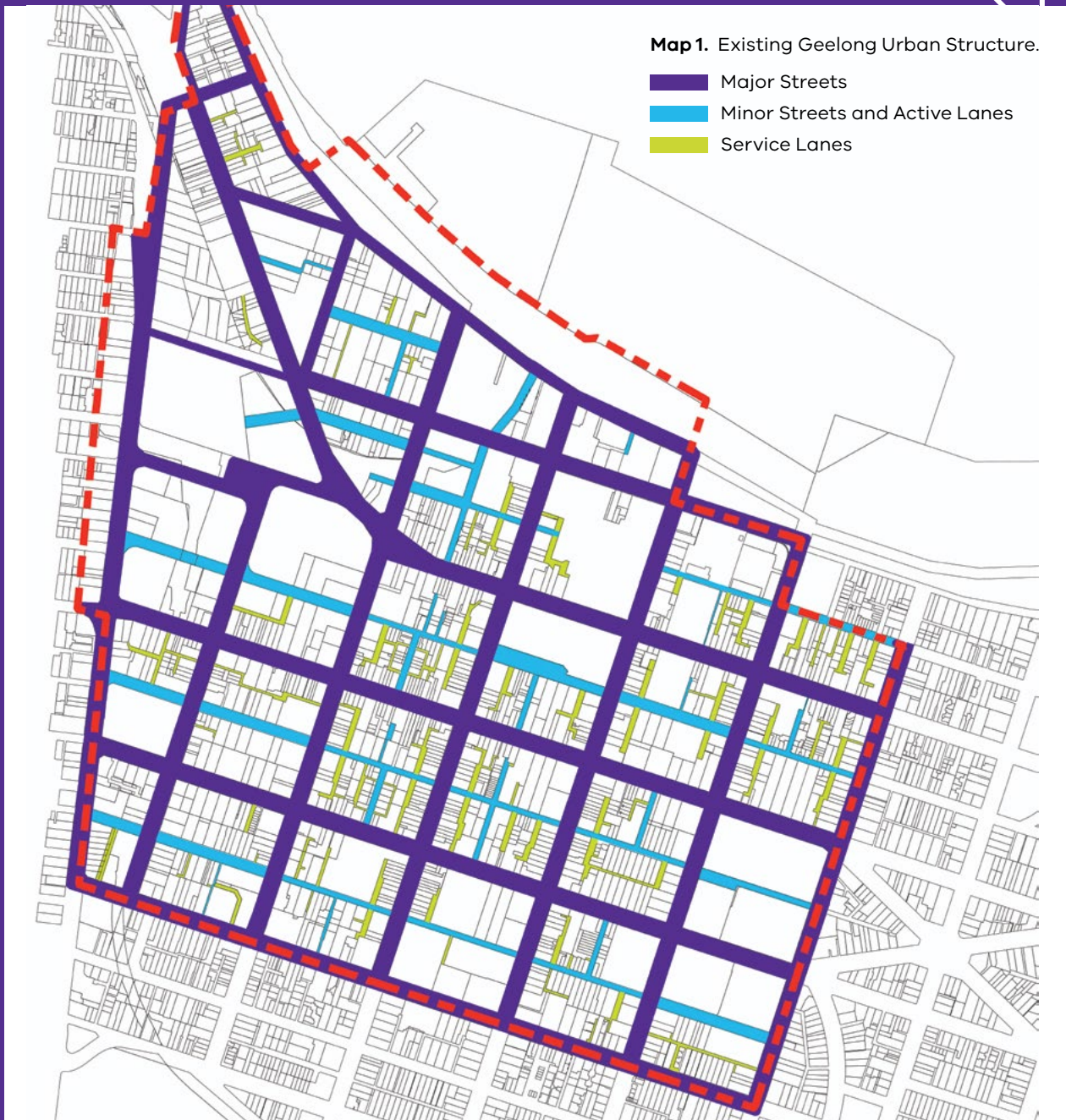
These laneways are “active” because they are used by pedestrians as pathways through the city centre. It is therefore essential that buildings along these lanes have “active frontages” with doors and windows opening directly onto the laneways. This helps to improve the perception and reality of personal safety, and makes the walking experience more enjoyable and pleasant. Blank walls, and continuous garage crossings or doors should not be located alongside these laneways.

Every effort should be made to design buildings which contribute in a positive sense to the urban quality of the laneway. These laneways:

- support walking safety, convenience and amenity;
- have no blank walls (greater than 3m in length);
- do not have continuous garage doors opening onto these laneways;
- have frequent doors and windows opening directly onto the laneways;
- have minimal or no building setbacks from the laneway;
- are mainly open to the sky; and
- have uses above ground level which assist in providing passive surveillance.

Central Geelong Urban Structure

Central Geelong inherited very good urban structure for walking, cycling, vehicle access and loading.



There are three main components to this structure as shown in Map 1, namely the wide streets (shown in purple), the minor streets and activated lanes (shown in blue), and the service lanes (shown in green).

The layout of major streets is consistent providing an easy to navigate and coherent network for all street users. The network of minor streets and lanes is less consistent where there are better east-west than north-south connections.

This may be a response to topography where slopes run north-south to the bay, as well as disruptions resulting from street closures, constructing over streets and the internalisation of pathways in large inwardly focused shopping malls. While there is still the possibility of navigating through these malls, these are no longer public pathways nor are they direct or easy to navigate.

Possible New Laneway Links

Possible new links to enhance the active linking laneway network in Central Geelong.

Public laneways and links

1. Dennys Place to Malop Street
2. Ryrie Street to Market Street
3. Market Street to Little Myers Street
4. Aitchison Place laneway

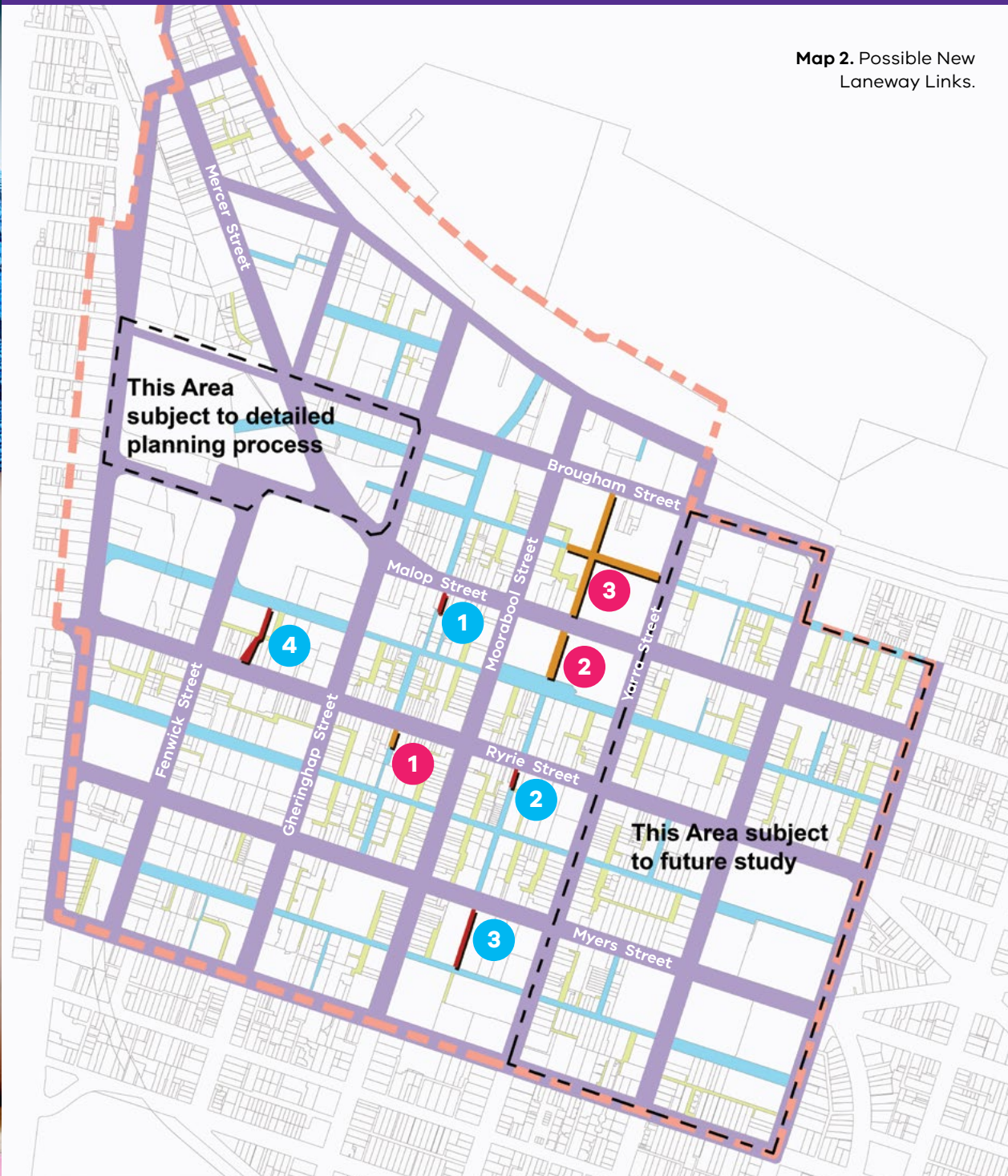
Private laneways and links

1. Wright Place link
2. Market Square Shopping Centre link
3. Westfield Shopping Centre links



Possible New Laneway Links

Map 2. Possible New Laneway Links.



1. Dennys Place to Malop Street

The benefits of this link include:

- providing ease of access from Malop Street to food, beverage and retail outlets focused on Little Malop Street, James Street and surrounding laneways;
- creating further reaching pedestrian-focussed connections between West End and the waterfront to the north, and the medical precinct to the south;
- improving options for moving around the city; and
- adding to experiences and vitality of the Green Spine by providing direct connections to it.

Without demolition, the existing building could be modified to include a new public link from Dennys Place to Malop Street while creating opportunities for new shops oriented to the new link.



Map 3. shows the increased pedestrian movement potential that would result from developing a direct link between Malop and Little Malop Streets at Dennys Place.



Figure 4. Dennys Place today.



Figure 5. Artists impression of a possible future Dennys Place and pedestrian link.

2. Ryrie Street to Market Street

The Space Syntax study indicates that a link from Market Street to Union Street would create significant north south movement opportunities. This would improve pedestrian flow to the Market Square Mall which may in turn alleviate some of the anti-social behavioural issues currently being experienced in that public space. Figures 6. and 7. indicate where that link could be made viewed from the north and south.

The project would assist in delivering the Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan by:

- creating a stronger CBD;
- creating new jobs; and
- improving linkage to the Green Spine and waterfront.

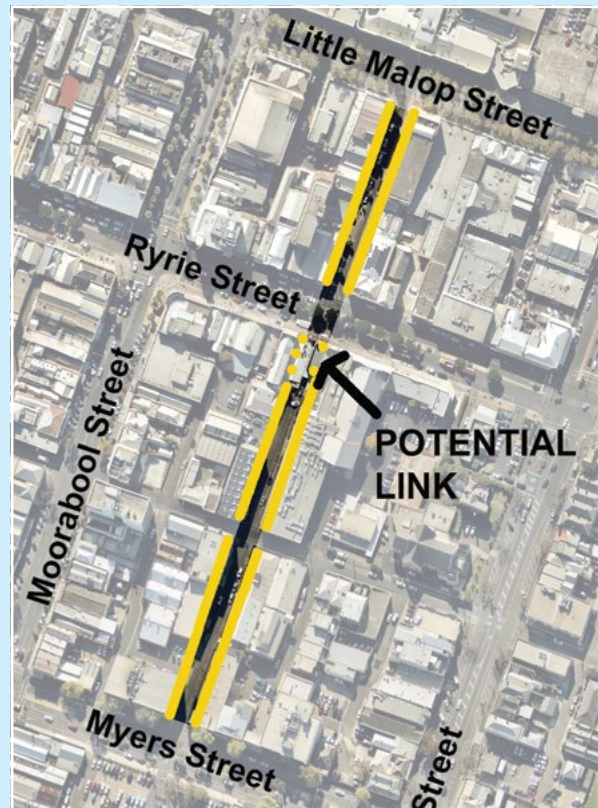


Figure 8. Potential to link Union Street to Market Street.



Figure 6. Potential link seen from north. Note existing pedestrian crossing over Ryrie Street.



Figure 7. Potential link seen from the south along Market Street.

3. Market St To Little Myers St

The existing Haymarket car park has significant future development potential. A future development should provide for a continuous link between Market Street and Little Myers Street.

If the site is developed with an underground parking structure to replace and supplement the number of surface parking spaces, there is the possibility of developing a new public park, which would add to the setting for St Mary of the Angels Basilica.

Along with the park, residential development is encouraged on the portion of the site with residences facing the new laneway and park, while still respecting the heritage assets on the site.

This development would:

- create a stronger CBD;
- support delivery of city housing;
- plan for community infrastructure;
- plan for improved linkages between the city and the waterfront when combined with other laneway projects and improvements to Market Square and Westfield shopping centres; and
- upgrade parking infrastructure in a strategic position.

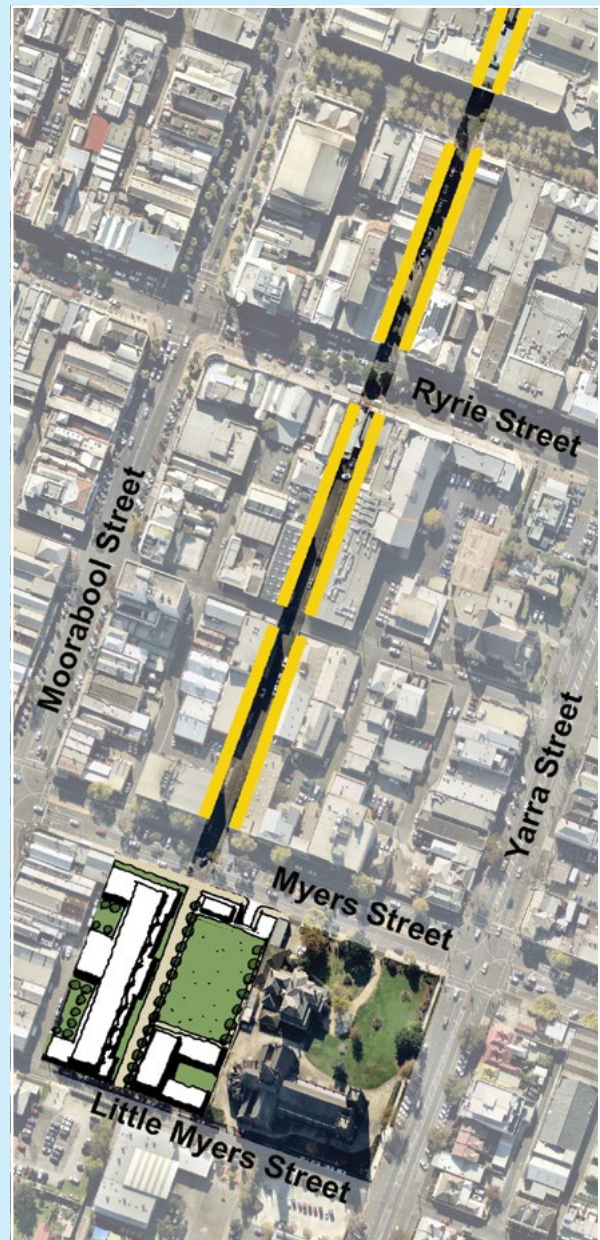


Figure 9. Potential development of the Haymarket car park to create an underground car park, a new park and residential development with a laneway extending Market Street (shown in yellow) to Little Myers Street.

4. Aitchison Place Laneway

The future closure of the north-south section of Aitchison Place to enable the Geelong Performing Arts Centre (GPAC) Stage 3 expansion (subject to funding) creates an opportunity to create a new laneway connection between State Government offices and GPAC. This would be integrated with the new plaza created alongside the refurbished Barwon Water building.

This laneway will:

- plan for community infrastructure; and
- support the construction of Stage 3 of GPAC.



Figure 10. New plaza created as part of Barwon Water office accommodation. This plaza should be further activated and enhanced.

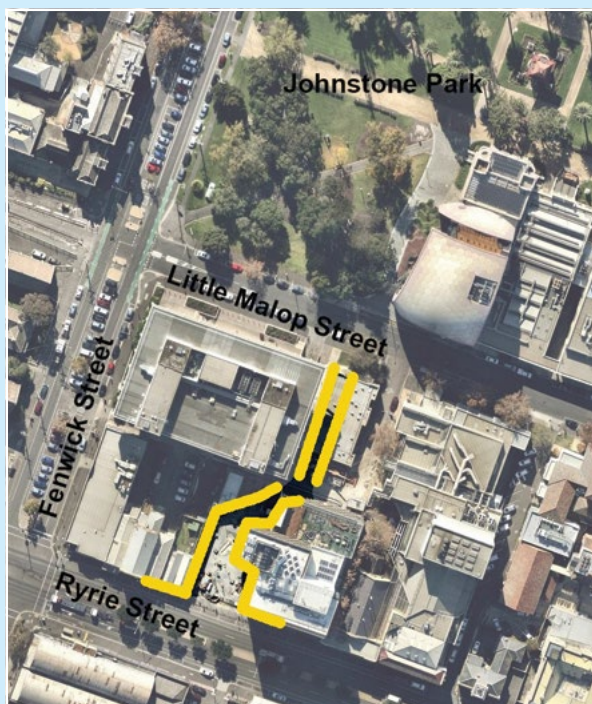


Figure 11. Showing the linking of the Barwon Water plaza to a new Aitchison Place laneway.



Figure 12. The potential alignment of a new Aitchison Place viewed from the north.

1. Wright Place Link

At present, a laneway link exists connecting Wright Place to Ryrie Street. It is supported by a pedestrian crossing on Ryrie Street and a dedicated pedestrian pathway linking Wright Place to Star Street. The quality of this laneway would be improved by access to natural light and increased activation along its edges with frequent doors and windows facing the laneway.

If this project were implemented it would go a long way to improving a significant north-south laneway which would connect from Myers Street to the waterfront.

Improving this laneway would:

- improve safety and the perception of safety;
- strengthen the CBD;
- improve an existing laneway;
- encourage north-south movement from Star Street to James Street;
- improve connections to an existing strategic parking area on Little Ryrie Street;
- improve the potential to redevelop the Little Ryrie Street car park, and continue the laneway from Ryrie Street to Star Street; and
- contribute towards improving the linkages from the southern edge of the CBD to the waterfront.

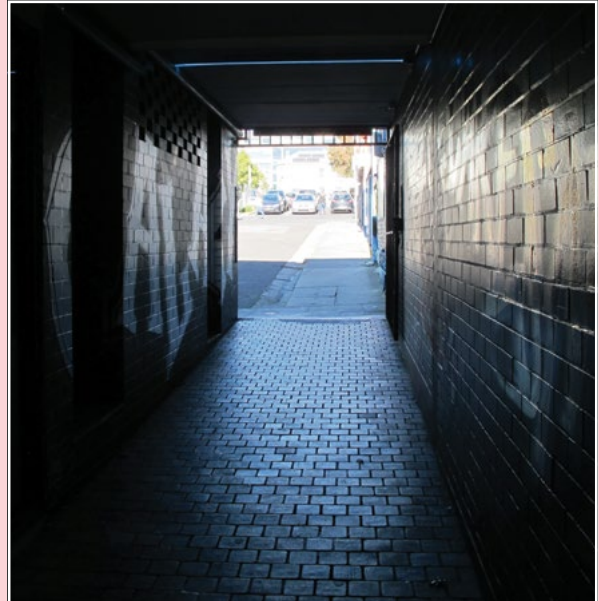


Figure 14. The current Wright Place link is dark and uninviting for pedestrians.



Figure 15. Showing the potential to link Wright Place to Star Street and develop the Little Ryrie Street parking lot.

2. Market Square Link

Union Street is a reasonably well activated laneway that runs north-south between Ryrie Street and Little Malop Street. A new and direct link from Union Street to the Green Spine (Malop Street) through the Market Square Shopping Centre is likely to induce more pedestrian use and valuable pedestrian traffic for retailers.

The link would be improved by shops facing into an open air laneway that provides natural light from above. This would fit with trends currently taking place in retail planning and design.

Recreating a direct north-south laneway through Market Square shopping centre would:

- improve connectivity to and through the shopping centre;
- increase footfall in the shopping centre;
- improve retail viability;
- reinstate connections from Malop Street to Little Malop Street;
- support the Green Spine;
- improve the potential for better links from the CBD to the Geelong waterfront; and
- create a stronger CBD.

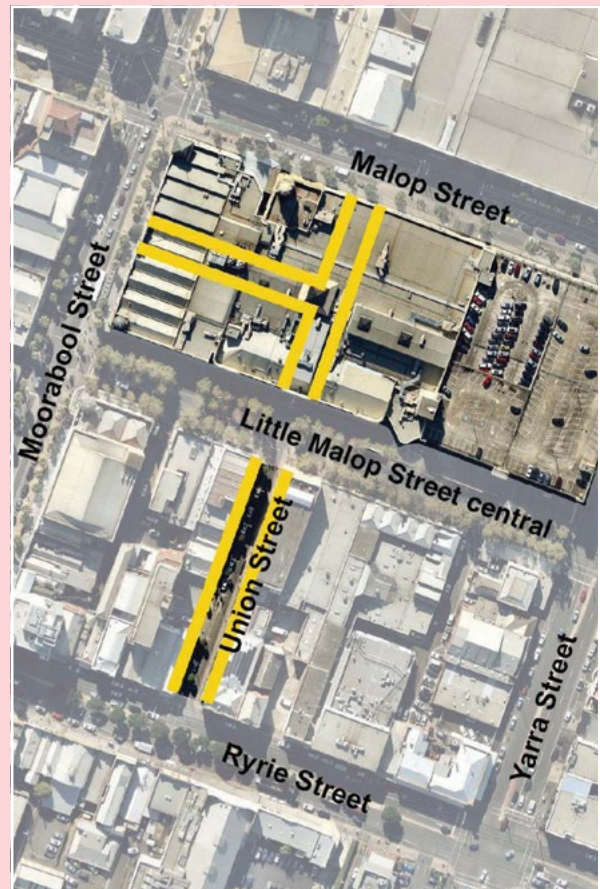


Figure 16. Extending a laneway on the Union Street alignment through the Market Square Shopping Centre.



Figure 17. Union Street.

3. Westfield Linkages

A future redevelopment of the Westfield Shopping Centre would benefit from improved connections from the centre to the surrounding street and laneway network. Corio Street could be connected from east to west, and a former north-south laneway could be reinstated linking the Green Spine to the Geelong waterfront.

These links would:

- improve connectivity to and through the shopping centre;
- increase footfall in the shopping centre;
- improve retail viability;
- reinstate connections from Malop Street to Brougham Street;
- support the Green Spine;
- improve the potential for better links from the CBD to the Geelong waterfront; and
- create a stronger CBD.



Figure 18. Possible laneway pattern linking the internal structure of shopping centres to the external street and laneway network to improve connectivity in Central Geelong.



Figure 19. Showing part of Geelong before the Westfield Shopping Centre was built. The image shows the north-south laneways which were replaced by the shopping centre.

(Image source: Market Square shopping centre, 2015)

A Future Laneway Network

A coherent possible future laneway network if the suggested projects in this Action Plan are implemented.

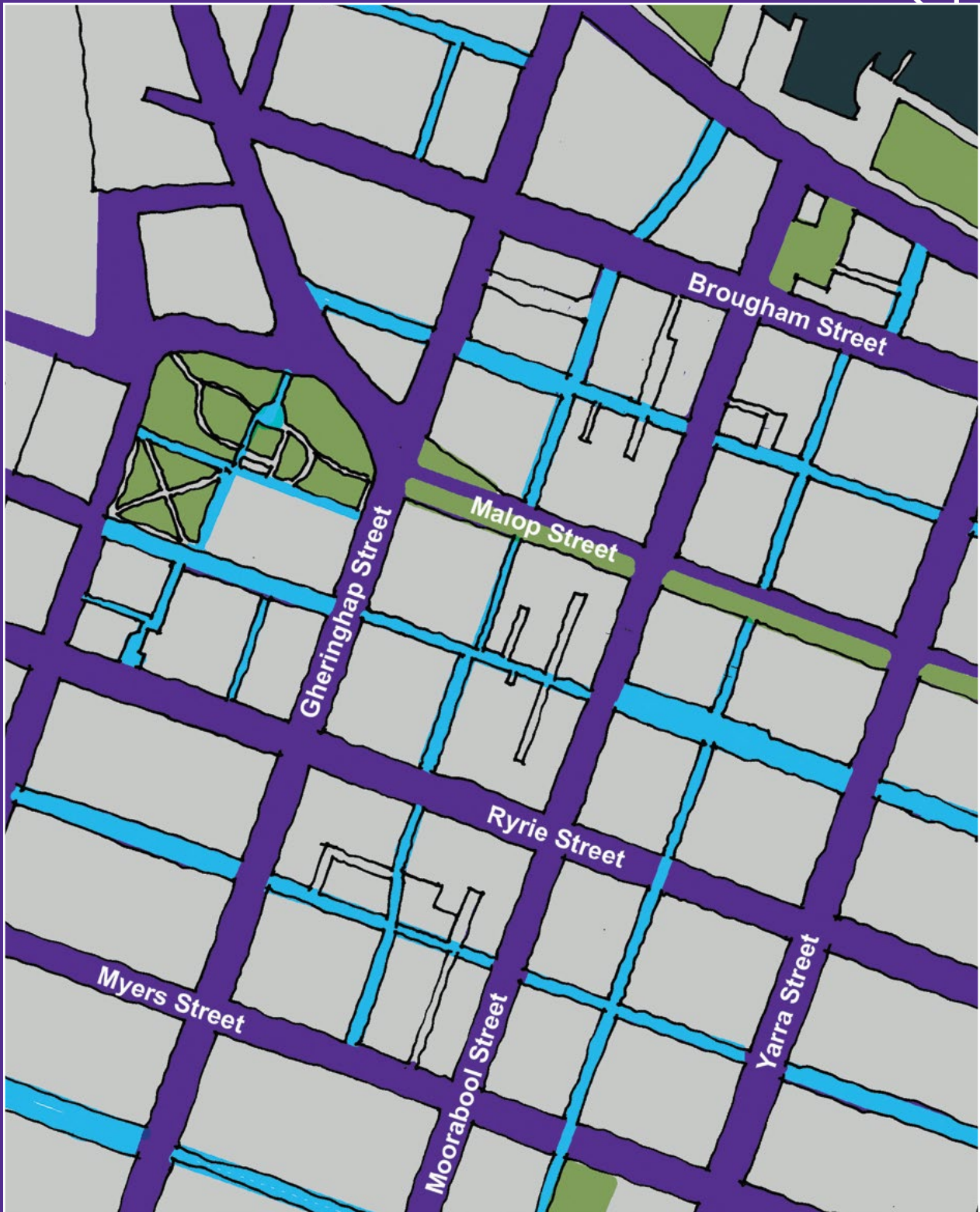


Figure 20. This diagram indicates a coherent possible future laneway network if the suggested projects in this Action Plan are implemented.

Why were these Laneways Selected?

Why were the laneways in this document selected for improvement, while many other laneways were ignored?

Maintaining high quality in the streets of central Geelong is a priority. The streets are the primary element of the Public Realm.

Retail is the most public of land uses, and vacant shops have a detrimental impact on the city centre. The priority is to have good quality shops facing the main streets as a priority. Many shops have laneways behind them. Where there are lanes behind shops, the shops should still face onto the

streets, not laneways, as few shops are able to ‘face two ways’. When they face the laneway, this is usually to the detriment of the street, therefore the laneways should be maintained as service lanes. For this reason, many laneways behind shops have been overlooked as they continue to provide an important servicing role for shops and streets. These laneways include Downes Lane, Shorts Place, Banks Place and the like.



Figure 21. Figure showing laneways evaluated for particular roles or for potential future investment and enhancement.

- Main Streets
- Current activated minor streets and laneways
- Laneways with a primary service function
- Potential laneway improvements and links

Some potential laneway connections are on private property. These include Dennys Place and McLarty Place. In both cases land would need to be acquired from current owners, and so an evidence-based evaluation of each was conducted to explore their city-wide connection potential as well as the potential for activation and change over time. McLarty Place does not add to “line of sight” connectivity to the extent that Dennys Place could simply because Dennys Place lines up with both James Street and Clare Street. Therefore as an option for north-south connectivity, it has much greater potential which will yield social and economic benefits.

All of these factors were weighed up when determining the priority for public fund investment into laneway linkages and improvements.

Other potential laneway connections and improvements are quite remote from the core of the city centre. In future these may be considered for improvement.

Evidence-based evaluation of Dennys Place versus McLarty Place connectivity potential.



Figure 22. Comparison of the connectivity potential of Dennys Place and McLarty Place. (Source: Space Syntax Limited).



SOBER

Tomodachi
IZAKAYA & BAR



Cabinnet Door
geelong



Revitalising Central Geelong

The Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan sets out the Victorian Government's 10 year plan to drive change in Central Geelong. Led by the Minister for Planning, the City of Greater Geelong and the Victorian Government are working together to deliver the plan. Implementation of the Action Plan is overseen by the Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership Team.

The Laneways Action Plan is one of several projects that are underway. For more information, please visit www.revitalisingcentralgeelong.vic.gov.au

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