



City of
DAREBIN

December 2023

PRESTON CENTRAL

DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN

the place
to live



This report has been prepared by Ratio Consultants in conjunction with Darebin City Council.
Ratio Consultants has taken all due care in the preparation of this report.

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Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The City of Darebin acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Darebin stands. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Structure Plan is to enhance the role and function of Preston Central by creating a more vibrant, welcoming, and greener Preston Central.

The challenge is to promote these outcomes while also accommodating substantial growth in the Centre's population. Between 2021 and 2041, Preston Central's population is expected to increase from 4,798 to 19,505 residents. This Structure Plan details the objectives, strategies, and actions to support Preston Central's growth, creating opportunities for new businesses, more housing, better design and more accessible public spaces.

Through proposed new planning controls, the Structure Plan seeks to facilitate an increase in population by establishing new built form (development) requirements, which will support increased density and better design. Innovative built form controls, such as Floor Area Ratios, support more interesting and sustainable buildings.

Flexible zoning controls, in the form of a new Activity Centre Zone, aim to reduce planning burdens and opportunity costs for small businesses and creative enterprises. In turn attracting more businesses, more people, and more investment to the Centre.

With limited opportunity to acquire new open spaces, the Structure Plan takes an innovative and economical approach to open space provision. Existing and underutilised open spaces will need to be redesigned and upgraded to maximise their efficiency, functionality, and accessibility for the growing population.

New strategies interrogating streetscape designs will ensure that wherever possible, publicly owned land becomes greener and easier to use. Reducing the amount of impervious surfaces will help to create a cooler and greener public realm through increased landscaping and greater canopy coverage.

Improved streetscape designs with clearer wayfinding mean more direct transport links with easy access to the services that people working, shopping, and living in the Centre need.

Overall, this Structure Plan aims to enhance the community's experience of the Centre by creating a more vibrant, welcoming, and greener Preston Central.





CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a structure plan?

A structure plan is a long-term strategy that provides the framework to guide and facilitate change and growth. Underpinned by a community vision, it sets out how land should be used and developed within the Centre.

The Darebin Planning Scheme will be updated via a planning scheme amendment process to reflect the key objectives, strategies and actions of the Structure Plan. Future permit applications will be assessed against the Structure Plan and relevant updated planning scheme provisions. The Structure Plan is also intended to guide Council actions that sit outside the realm of the planning scheme but ultimately assist in delivering the vision for Preston Central.

“The key aims of a Structure Plan are to plan for and develop a shared vision for the activity centre, and to identify the type and scope of change projected within the activity centre over time. The structure plan should be a tool to help manage, influence and facilitate change within individual activity centres, in accordance with the directions of State planning policy” (Victorian Government Planning Practice Note 58: Structure Planning for Activity Centres, 2015).

1.2 How to read this document?

The Structure Plan is a background document in the Darebin Planning Scheme. It should be read as providing context to and assisting with the understanding of the relevant provisions of the planning scheme.

The Structure Plan should be read in the following manner:



1.3 The Structure Plan Process

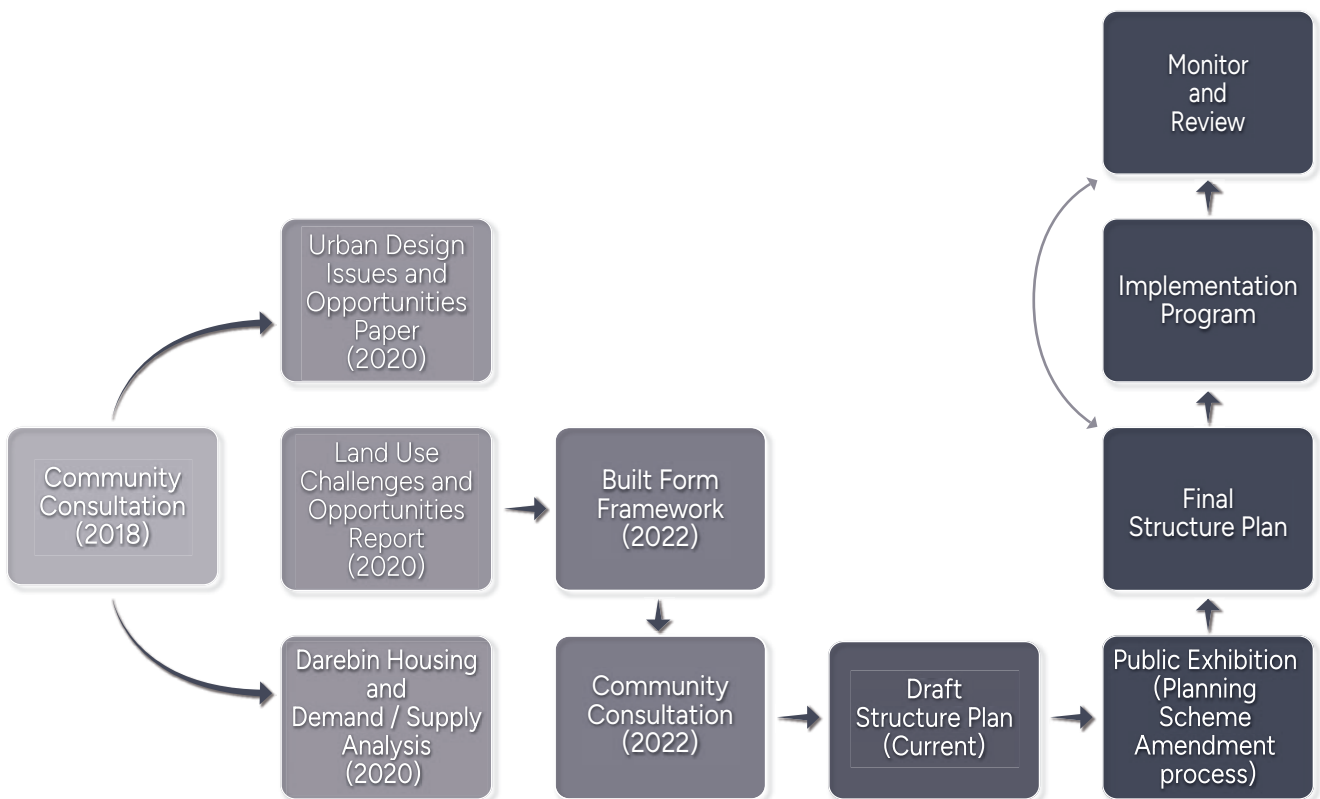
The preparation of the Structure Plan has undertaken the necessary steps to answer the following key questions:

- What is the capacity for increased housing?
- How much retail and office floorspace is needed for local and regional functions and where/how these are accommodated?
- What community service, open space and facility upgrades will be needed?

The key steps undertaken in the preparation of the structure plan are shown below.

The Structure Plan is supported by a Background Report that draws upon an extensive suite of technical work, which includes:

- Preston Central Land Use Challenges and Opportunities Report (City of Darebin, 2020),
- Future Preston Urban Design Issues and Opportunities Paper (Tract, 2020),
- Future Preston Community Directions Report (Tract, 2018),
- Shaping our Future Together: Future Preston Central Summary Document (Darebin City Council, 2022),
- Preston Central Analysis (Ethos Urban, 2023).
- Preston Central Built Form Framework (Hodyl & Co, 2022),
- Preston Central Built Form Framework – Technical Report (Hodyl & Co, 2022),
- Future Preston Central Community Engagement Report (Greenshoot Consulting, 2022),
- Darebin Housing Demand & Supply Analysis (SGS Economics & Planning, 2020).



1.4 The Structure Plan Boundary

The Structure Plan boundary has been guided by the State Government's Planning Practice Note 58 – Structure Planning for Activity Centres.

The boundary serves an important role in providing a defined area of focus to deliver the Structure Plan vision through the application of planning policies and controls, and future projects.

The Structure Plan identifies seven precincts, which are based on locational attributes, land uses, built form, road, and rail infrastructure. The precincts are discussed in **Chapter 5**.

Note: The Preston Market Precinct has been excluded from the Structure Plan boundary because the site is subject to planning controls developed through a separate State Government planning process.

1.5 Why has the Structure Plan Boundary changed?

The 2006 Structure Plan boundary covered a substantial area beyond what would generally be considered as "Preston Central".

The plan incorporated residential areas to the west of St Georges Road, south of Bell Street as well as residential areas north-west of Spring Street. In the current context, these areas are not required to meet forecast demand for development, are not integrated with the activity centre and do not have a strong functional relationship with the activity centre itself.

The 2023 Structure Plan boundary reflects a more focused and refined approach to contemporary activity centre planning.

The Structure Plan boundary has been determined based on the following key reasons:

- The location of physical barriers such as arterial roads and rail corridors.
- The walkable catchment to the Centre's core
- The extent of integration between the commercial and residential areas.

Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- 2006 Structure Plan Boundary

0 100 200 300 400 500m

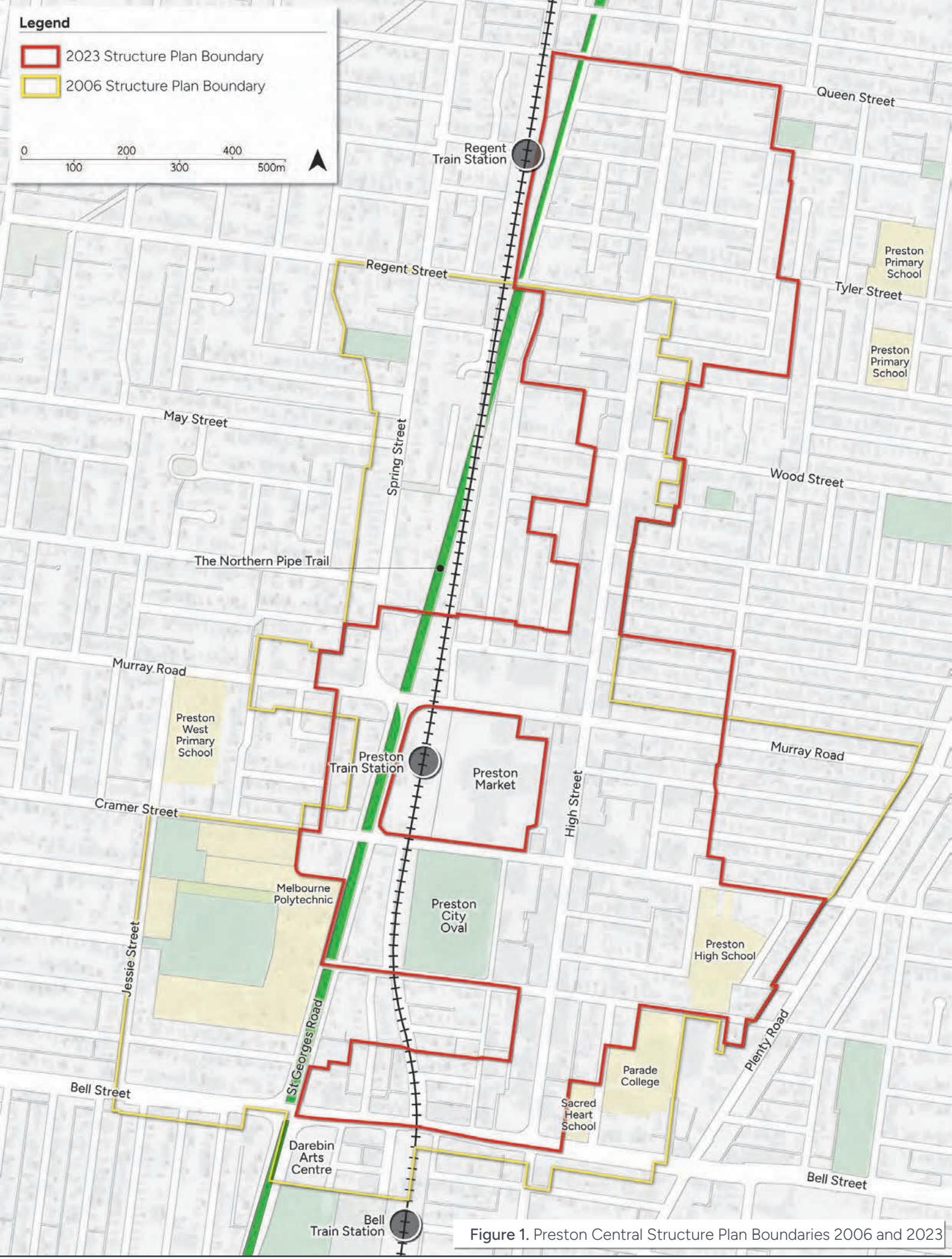


Figure 1. Preston Central Structure Plan Boundaries 2006 and 2023



CHAPTER 2 THE CONTEXT

2.1 Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne is the Victorian Government's long-term plan for accommodating Melbourne's future growth in population and employment.

Melbourne is experiencing significant growth. Consequently, new housing and employment opportunities must be made available in locations that capitalise on access to transport, infrastructure and services.

Plan Melbourne encourages the intensification of these uses within Major Activity Centres, which can provide a suburban focal point for services, employment, housing, public transport and social interaction.

Major Activity Centres play a fundamental role in delivering one of Plan Melbourne's key principles, which is to support the creation of 20-Minute Neighbourhoods.

Plan Melbourne designates Preston Central as a Major Activity Centre.

2.2 Regional Context

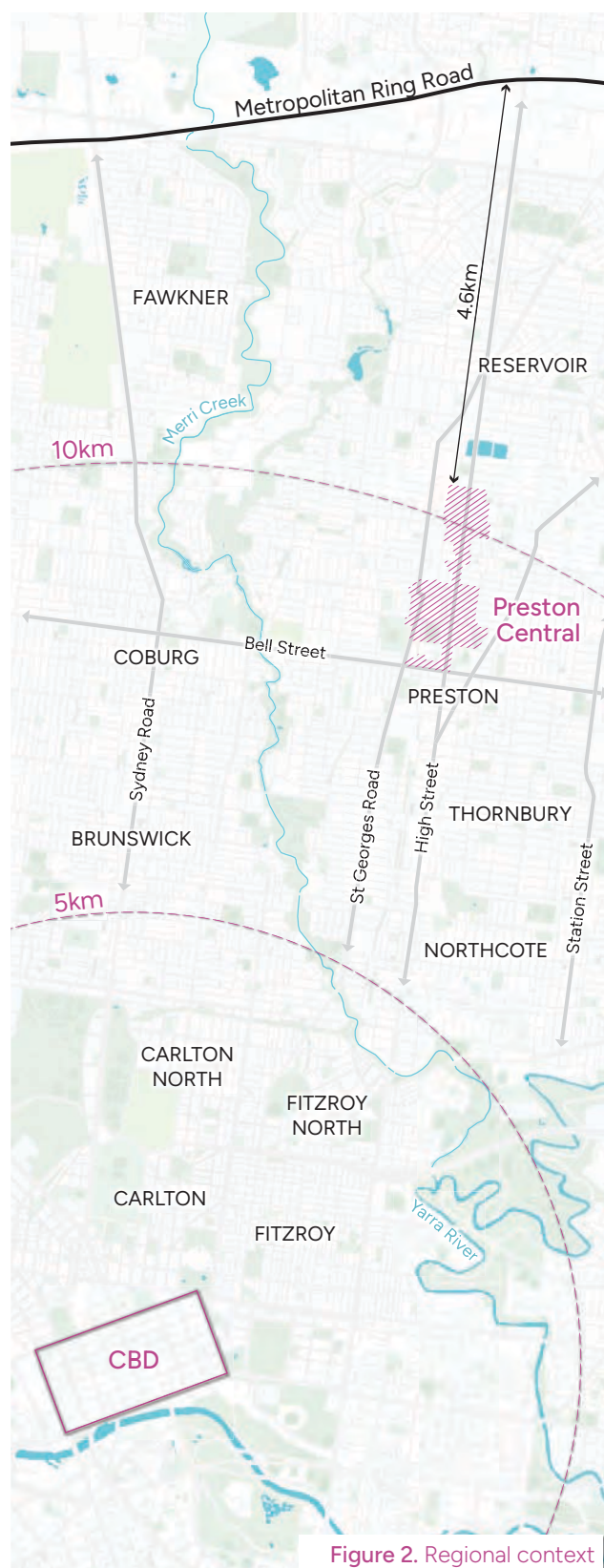
The Traditional Owners of the land on which the Darebin municipality is located are the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. Reflecting the importance of this part of Melbourne to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, some of the most significant Victorian organisations for Aboriginal people have been established and continue to be located in the City of Darebin in the proximity of Preston Central.

The Preston Central Major Activity Centre (the Centre) is strategically located along High Street, extending north from Bell Street.

The Centre provides a range of retail facilities and services in the area. This includes two major supermarkets – Woolworths and Aldi – and an extensive provision of strip retailing, primarily on High Street. Evenwhile Preston Market is not included within the structure plan boundary, it complements the retail offer in Preston Central, providing affordable fresh food and other variety stores.

The Centre serves residents of Preston and beyond, with its unique offering complementing other Activity Centres in the surrounding region including Reservoir, East Preston (Northland), Northcote and Coburg.

Significant destinations and landmarks within the surrounding region include Northland Shopping Centre (2.5 kilometres to the east), La Trobe University's Bundoora campus (5 kilometres to the north-east) and Austin Hospital (6 kilometres to the east).



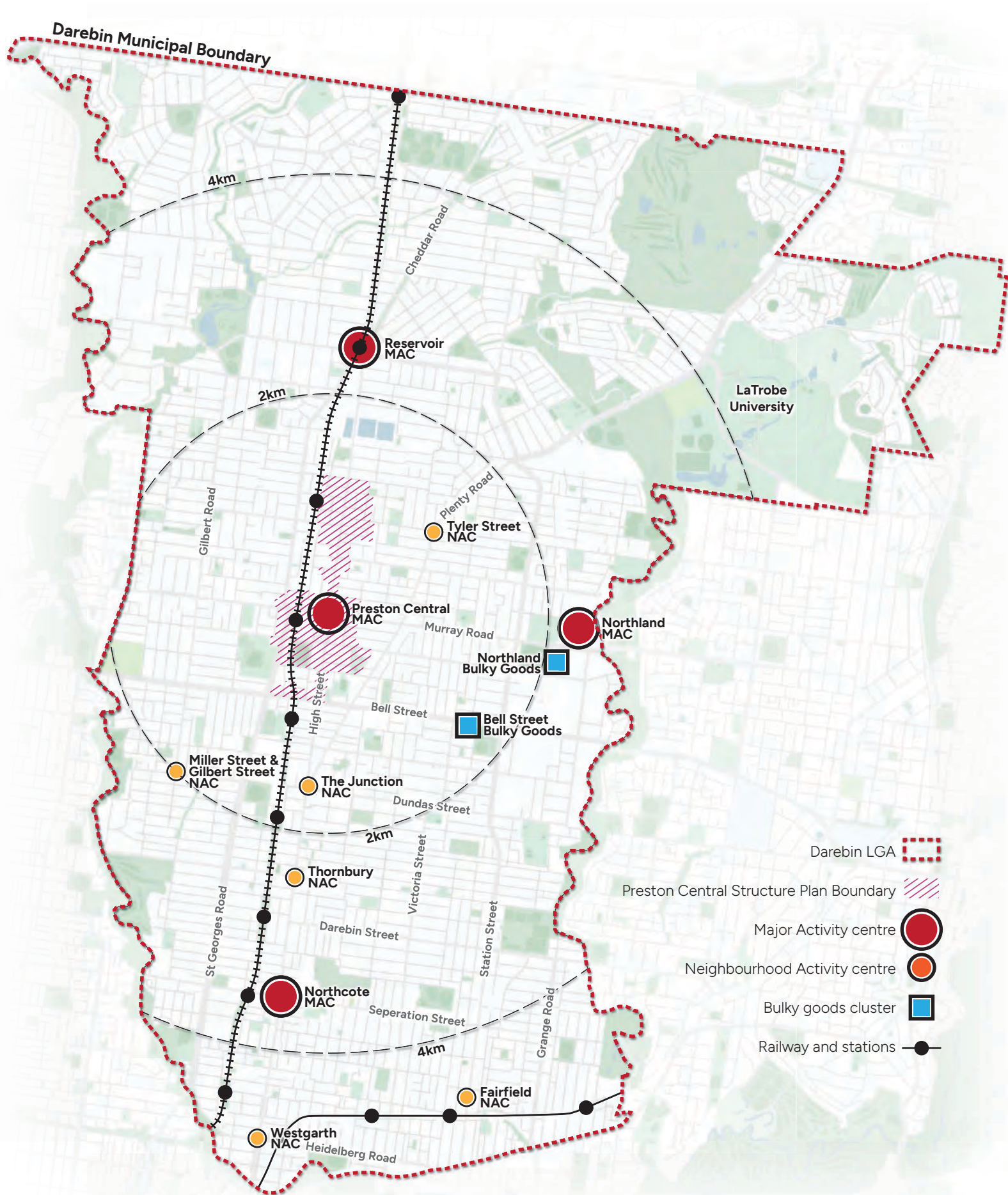


Figure 3. Local Context





2.3 Preston Central Today

Landmarks

The Preston Town Hall - Constructed in 1929 and located on the corner of Gower Street and High Street, the town hall is a central landmark for Preston Central.

The Preston Market - Drawing approximately 5.5 million visitors every year, Preston Market is an icon of the north. It is located adjacent to Preston Station.

Preston Station - Built in 2022 as part of the metro-wide suite of level crossing removal projects, the modern facility, stands out for its colourful pattern and purple pylons.

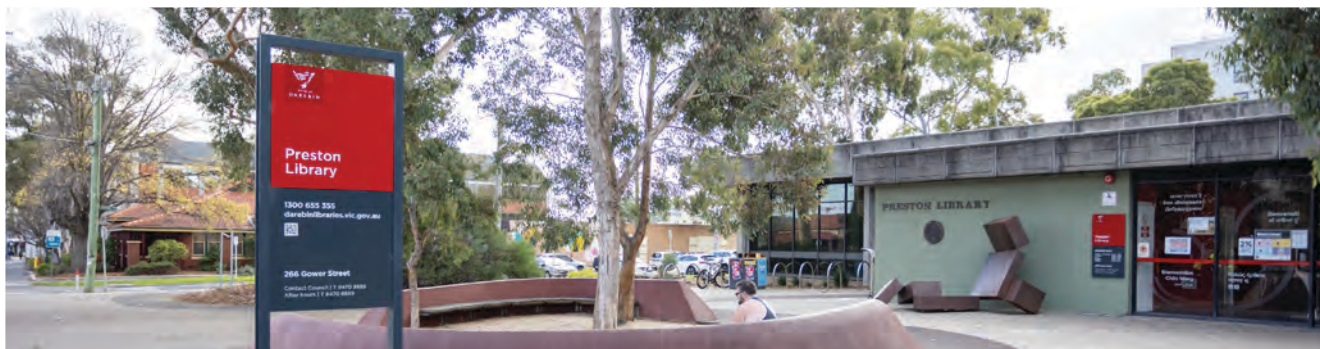
Open Space

Preston Town Hall's Public Open Space - Its positioning at the entrance of the town hall affirms the space as the Centre's primary civic open space.

Preston City Oval – A regional level facility that hosts Victorian Football League (VFL) matches in winter and sub district cricket in summer. It is home to the Northern Bullants, a football club established in 1882. The landscaped open space around the oval includes a playground and picnic facilities.

Linear Open Space – Parallel to the railway line a linear network of open space provides a great walking and cycling connection through different areas of Preston.

The Northern Pipe Trail – Located in the median strip of St. Georges Road, is a linear open space that provides great active transport connections to and from Preston Central.



Land ownership and use

- Several institutional uses within and surrounding the structure plan boundary, elevate the significance of the Centre to the region. Amongst other these include Darebin City Council offices, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, peak bodies and associations, Preston High School, Parade College, Melbourne Polytechnic and the Preston Library.
- The landownership pattern within and surrounding the Centre is highly fragmented. There are only a few consolidated landholdings which are currently occupied by Woolworths, Preston Market Developments and Toyota.

Heritage

- Preston Central is scattered with developments (both residential and commercial) which are identified as having local significance to Darebin City Council.
- The Preston Town Hall and the former Preston Police Station are two notable civic buildings of historical significance.
- The Preston Market is of historical, technical and social significance to Darebin City Council.

Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- High Street Food Precinct
- Key destinations
- Fine grain commercial
- Open space
- Education
- Key consolidated landholdings
- ➔ Key entries
- P At-grade car parks
- Rail line
- Train stations

0 100 200 300 400 500m ▲

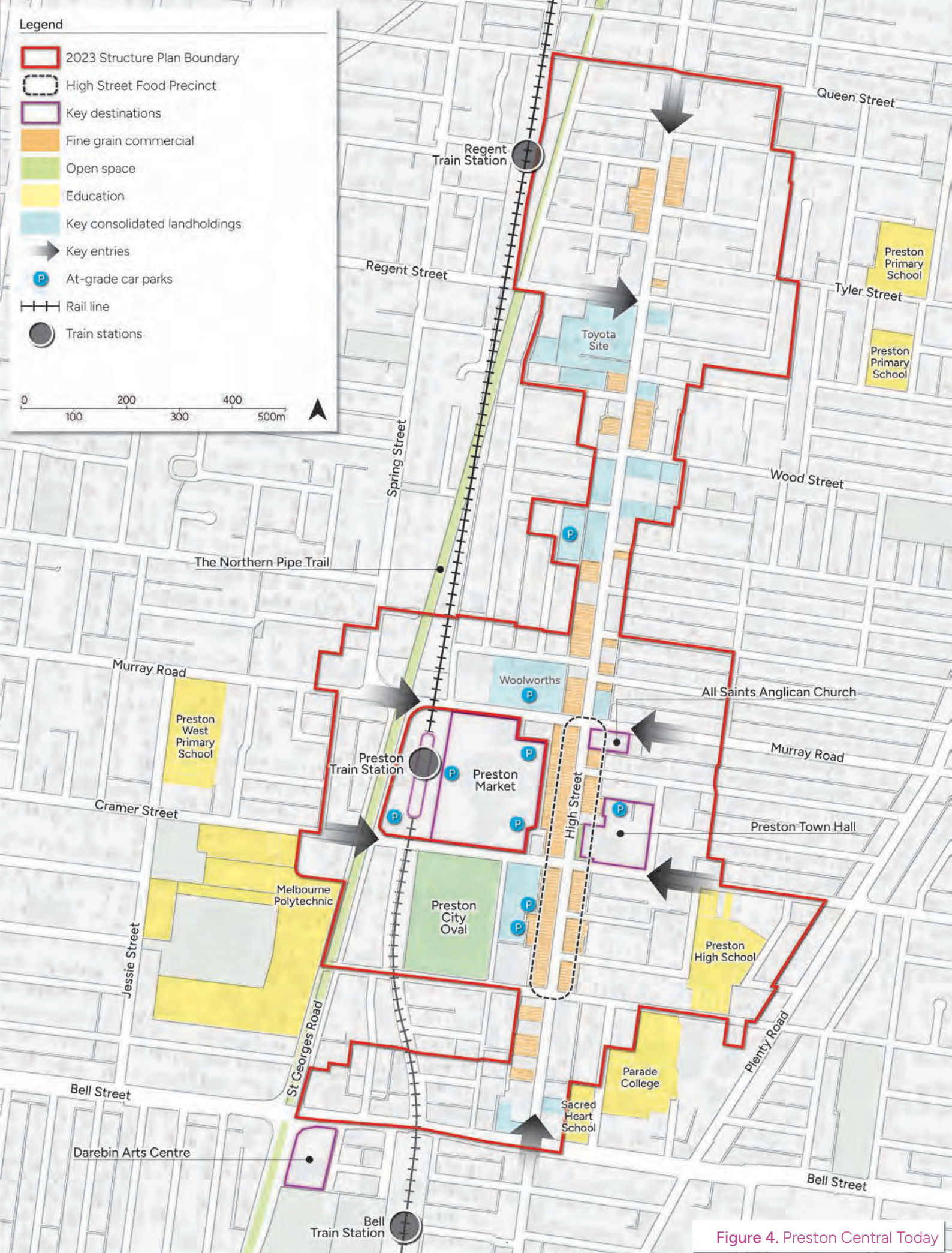


Figure 4. Preston Central Today

2.4 Preston Central's Community

Darebin City Council recognises the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and pays respect to and celebrates the long-standing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage within our community.

Preston Central's community is richly diverse, comprising people from a range of backgrounds, cultures, languages, religions, ages, and socio-economic status.

Preston Central's cultural and linguistic diversity is a unique asset. Over 42% of residents speak a language other than English at home, compared with 34% in Greater Melbourne, and 44% of residents

were born overseas, compared with 35.7% in Greater Melbourne.

The community is forecast to grow significantly with an increase in population from 4,798 in 2021 to 19,505 by 2041. It is anticipated that an additional 5,438 new dwellings will be needed to accommodate this growth.

The Centre is appealing to people who want to settle. 52.5% of people living in the Centre are either from young workforce or parents and homebuilders age cohorts, compared with 37.5% in Greater Melbourne. Current forecast indicates continued growth of the younger workforce age group to 2041.



YOUNG WORKFORCE (25 - 34) / PARENTS & HOMEBUILDERS (35 - 49)

52.5% of people living in Preston Central Major Activity Centre
42.2% of people living in the City of Darebin
37.5% of people living in Greater Melbourne



LIVE IN A LONE PERSON HOUSEHOLD

34.2% of households in Preston Central Major Activity Centre
29.4% of households in the City of Darebin
23.7% of households in Greater Melbourne



HAVE A BACHELOR DEGREE

41.5% of people living in Preston Central Major Activity Centre
39.6% of people living in the City of Darebin
32.8% of people living in Greater Melbourne



WORK PART TIME

31.8% of people living in Preston Central Major Activity Centre
32.5% of people living in the City of Darebin
31.6% of people living in Greater Melbourne



INVOLVED IN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

14.7% of people living in Preston Central Major Activity Centre
14.8% of people living in the City of Darebin
13.5% of people living in Greater Melbourne



TRAVEL TO WORK

34.4% of people living in Preston Central Major Activity Centre
38.5% of people living in the City of Darebin
49.7% of people living in Greater Melbourne

Mai Lan
Bakery
Bánh Mì Thịt - Vietnamese Pork Roll

eston

C-CULTURE
CHINESE RESTAURANT

食品 亚洲 市场 入口

MARKET ENTRY

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STORE
Hàng Sẵn Barbecue Restaurant

Vietnamese Chinese Restaurant



2.5 Preston Central's Economy

An assessment of the current and future economic outlook of Preston Central (Ethos Urban, 2023) found that it will be influenced by the same broad economic and social trends that are driving change throughout Australia. These include market shifts, such as changing demographics with the emergence of millennials, and the uptake of online retailing (a trend amplified since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns). These shifts have challenged the success of bricks and mortar retailing. The success and desirability of the Centre thus depends on paying greater attention to the customer experience,

wherein higher-order centres such as Preston Central evolve into attractive multidimensional destinations.

Currently a large proportion of visits to Preston Central originate within the municipality of Darebin signifying the Centre's role as a local shopping destination. Beyond its local popularity, the reason for many regional visitors is related to its connotation as a food hub and broad appeal of the Preston Market.



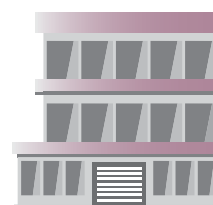
By 2041, retail spending by Darebin residents is projected to total \$4.3 billion



Retail spending will increase +\$930 million on the 2022 level



By 2041, retail shopfront floorspace demand is expected to increase between +20,100m² under the base scenario and +30,800m² under the high scenario



By 2041, office floorspace is expected to increase between +16,100m² under the base scenario and +22,600m² under the high scenario



The Centre's population is expected to increase from 4,798 in 2021 to 19,505 by 2041



By 2041, it is forecast that an additional 5,438 new dwellings will be required within Preston Central

2.6 Key drivers of change

Changes influencing the shape and character of the Centre as it continues to grow include:

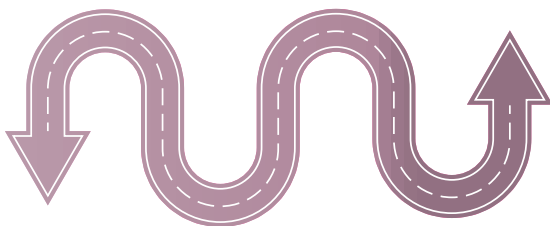


Substantial increases in population forecasts for Preston and Darebin more broadly - The Centre is expected to see a 307% increase in its population over the 20-year period from 2021 to 2041.



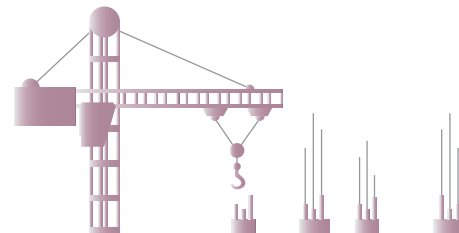
The State Government has finalised new planning controls for the Preston Market Precinct. Its future development will influence the look and feel of Preston Central as well as act as a catalyst for future development.

Transport Upgrades



The State Government has delivered the new Bell Station and Preston Station. In doing so, they have removed the railway level crossings at Bell Street, Cramer Street, Murray Road & Oakover Road. This has resulted in significantly improved walking and cycling connections, including a new shared walking and cycling path from Oakover Road through to Murray Road.

Development Pressure



Preston Central's wide provision of land uses and accessibility to inner Melbourne means that is an attractive place to work, live and therefore develop. The increased demand for retail, office and residential floorspace within Preston Central is creating new development pressure.

State Government policy changes



The State Government is seeking to accommodate greater levels of development within the established area of Melbourne and has the ambition of delivering an extra 1 million homes into Melbourne's existing suburbs by 2050.

2.7 Preston Central's - Key Opportunities and Challenges

From a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), a set of opportunities have been identified that could be fundamental in shaping the future of Preston Central. Each of these opportunities carry respective challenges to be overcome.



1

Living locally: Become a place where residents and workers can fulfill most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk.

2

Great design: The Centre has potential to attain renown by embracing diversity and excellence in new developments.

CHALLENGE

- Providing a breadth of services and destinations that support a local lifestyle.
 - Delivering enough housing to support increasing demand.
 - Encouraging housing and business diversity to support the local economy.
 - Delivering and maintaining social and physical infrastructure to support the functioning of the neighbourhood.
- Preparing planning controls which are sufficiently robust to ensure positive design outcomes are achieved, including that new development:
 - Is designed sensitively to interact with the street.
 - Integrates landscaping into design.
 - Supports a high-quality pedestrian experience in the public realm, specifically in relation to human scale, overshadowing and wind impacts.



3

Maximise convenience: The Centre could be a place which is easy to get to, and easy to get around.

- Efficient use of infrastructure funding to deliver the greatest value-for-money transport outcomes.
- Designing street networks and public paths to maximise their connection to nearby train stations or bus stops.
- Balancing the provision of car parking with the need to support active travel
- Managing through-traffic on High Street and Cramer Street to improve the ease of walking and riding in the Centre.
- Getting more value out of at-grade car parking areas, to maximise use throughout the day.

4

Greener and more sustainable: The Centre could be experienced as a cool green environment with easy access to local parks.

- Identifying innovative solutions to provide open space, such as ‘pocket parks’, because acquiring land for new open space within the Centre will be expensive.
- Efficient use of open space contributions to deliver the greatest value-for-money open space outcomes.
- Integrating Water Sensitive Urban Design principles into the design of streetscapes and open spaces.
- Landscaping within the Centre that provides shade, contributes to cooling, and that is resilient to a changing climate.

5

The Civic Hub: The Centre could be known as the heart of the City of Darebin.

- Improving the Civic Precinct so it is experienced as the “front door” to Preston Central.
- Efficient use of infrastructure funding to deliver new or refurbished community buildings which achieve the greatest value-for-money outcomes for the community.
- Creating better connections between existing schools in the area (Melbourne Polytechnic, Preston High School and Parade College) to create education synergies and to maximise their role as employment and activity generating anchors.
- Establishing shared-use agreements with community or school facilities that enable use outside of regular hours, to act as affordable spaces for sporting activities, emerging performing artists or other creative community members.
- Integrating busy, fun and creative uses with more sensitive residential land uses, requiring a careful balancing of planning provisions.

2.8 Community Engagement


The City of Darebin undertook community engagement on the future of Preston Central in 2018 and 2022. Eight key directions for the Centre were developed and consulted on, receiving support from the community.

A prominent theme that emerged from this engagement revolved around the nature of built form outcomes for the Centre. The main points expressed by the community were: ensuring streets are safe and engaging, that new developments are sensitive to and integrate with their surroundings through the use of landscaping, and that buildings are sustainably designed and enhance existing sunlight to streets and parks.

Importantly, community insights also pointed to the need for Aboriginal heritage to be embedded into public spaces and the ongoing need for additional social housing to be provided within the Centre.


Overall, the community wanted to see a 'future focused' sustainability led vision that ensured Preston Central becomes a hub of community life and activity, and is the focal point for jobs, culture and civic and retail activity.

Bell Street Precinct Design Objectives



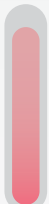
All respondents (100%) indicated they strongly agree with providing ground floor landscaping to improve Bell Street amenity.

Civic Precinct Design Objectives



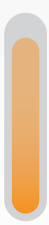
Respondents strongly agree (96%) with delivering a new east-west link to connect Preston Station, the market, and the civic precinct.

High Street (and High Street North) Precinct Design Objectives




92% of community respondents agreed with improving the quality of public spaces on High Street.

Market Precinct Design Objectives



91% agreement with providing landscaping around Preston City Oval, and that new developments should respond sensitively with the surrounding residential area.

Regent Precinct Design Objectives



The majority of respondents (65%) agreed on improving the quality of public spaces in High Street.





CHAPTER 3

THE VISION

The vision for Preston Central Major Activity Centre is to create a welcoming, vibrant, and green place that embraces its diverse heritage and transforms into a dynamic urban hub where people from all backgrounds come to live, work and play.

Preston Central will be a humming epicentre of civic life, cultural activity, shopping, and employment within Darebin and northern metropolitan Melbourne.

As a welcoming place, Preston Central will embrace its unique sense of community which is reflected through its diverse arts, creative and cultural heritage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and working-class roots.

Promoting the eclectic character of its local businesses, Preston Central will offer vibrant and diverse retail experiences with a robust economy supported by by easy and sustainable modes of travel to jobs, amenities, and services.

Preston Central will transform into a green built environment with a thriving community that embraces sustainable lifestyles in renewed housing precincts, with places for people to connect and celebrate through public art and events, and green spaces to

VISION ELEMENTS

A VIBRANT CENTRE

1. Preston Central is a focal point of cultural, civic, jobs and retail activity in Darebin and the north of Melbourne.
2. Preston Central is known and loved.
3. Preston Central's precincts and experiences are spatially and relationally connected and integrated.

A WELCOMING CENTRE

4. The Preston Central community continues to live its values of equality, sustainability, and fairness.
5. Everyone is welcome here.

A GREENER CENTRE

6. Preston Central has generous and inviting green and open spaces.
7. Preston Central has built on the core of its valued neighbourhood character and its working-class roots as it has urbanised and grown in a sustainable way.





CHAPTER 4

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The vision for the Centre describes a future scenario where Preston Central is more vibrant, more welcoming and more green. In response, the strategic framework sets out the method to achieve the vision through a clear navigable process.

The strategic framework has been structured to include Objectives, Strategies and Actions, which underpin the overarching themes of a vibrant, welcoming and green centre.





A Vibrant Centre

Objective 1 – To enhance Preston Central’s competitive advantage as a commercial and retail centre by leveraging its role as a multicultural, multifunctional place.

The key drivers of the Centre’s existing and future success are the commercial and retailing opportunities on High Street. For the Centre to maintain its competitive advantage, the offering and availability of services must evolve to meet the needs of the diverse population.

Amongst other things, a revised planning framework will enhance opportunities for small-scale creative manufacturers and independent food producers by reducing the planning burdens associated with their establishment. Encouraging small-scale enterprises such as furniture makers, clothing or jewellery designers, bakeries, breweries and other independent businesses to locate within Preston Central is seen as critical to the Centre’s future success.



STRATEGIES

Strategy 1.1 – Increase the supply of commercial and retail floorspace by facilitating the delivery of new mixed-use developments.

Strategy 1.2 - Foster a day and night-time economy by supporting a mix of businesses and industry sectors, such as food and beverage, office, local manufacturing, emerging commercial enterprises and creative industries.

Strategy 1.3 – Foster the creation of a mixed-use centre by ensuring new high amenity residential uses do not impede on the centre's operation as a service and employment node by implementing planning controls that promote a mix of uses within new developments, particularly on larger sites.

Strategy 1.4 – Facilitate diverse spaces for creative businesses by collaborating with organisations, groups and agencies to identify and promote affordable leasing opportunities.

Strategy 1.5 – Encourage a vibrant mix of uses and activities by facilitating different land uses across the precincts in accordance with the four land use designations of the Land Use Framework Plan.

ACTIONS

Action 1 – Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement a comprehensive and facilitative land use framework for Preston Central. The amendment should:

- Apply the Activity Centre Zone to land to the north of Bell Street currently affected by the Priority Development Zone, Schedule 2.

Action 2 – Continue and enhance the Active Spaces in Darebin initiative to ensure there are opportunities for creative businesses to take on short-term, affordable lease agreements within vacant commercial spaces.



LAND USE FRAMEWORK

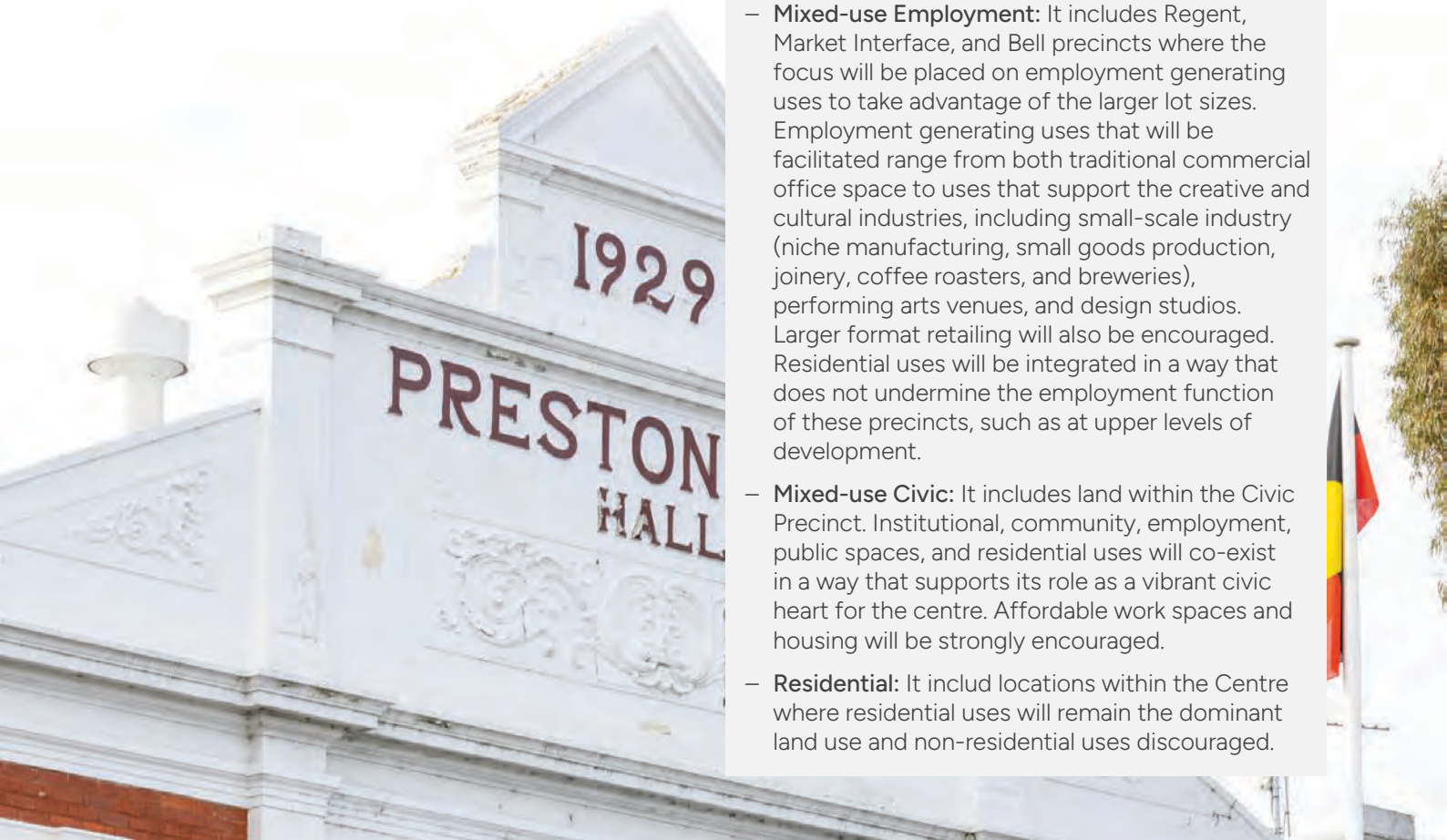
To achieve a vibrant centre, a diverse and broad range of uses will be facilitated through a tailored Land Use Framework which goes beyond what can be achieved through either a standard commercial or residential zone.

Furthermore, a revised planning framework will enhance opportunities for small-scale creative manufacturers and independent food producers by reducing the planning burdens associated with their establishment. Encouraging small-scale enterprises such as furniture makers, clothing or jewellery designers, bakeries, breweries and other independent businesses to locate within Preston Central is seen as critical to its future success.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The planning framework will be based on the following four land use designations characterised to define the different functions of the precincts:

- **Mixed-use Retail/Hospitality:** It includes land in High Street and High Street North precincts that will continue to function as the main fine-grain retail spine of the Centre. Uses will be facilitated that seek to enhance the vibrant retail, hospitality, and cultural functions of these precincts. This will include food and drink premises, small-scale retailing, art galleries, art and craft centres, places of assembly, minor indoor recreation facilities, and uses that support the night-time economy, including entertainment, live music, and dining venues. These uses will co-exist with residential uses located at upper-levels of development. Uses that would undermine the vibrant fine-grain ground floor plain of the precincts will be discouraged at this level such as dwellings and inactive office uses.
- **Mixed-use Employment:** It includes Regent, Market Interface, and Bell precincts where the focus will be placed on employment generating uses to take advantage of the larger lot sizes. Employment generating uses that will be facilitated range from both traditional commercial office space to uses that support the creative and cultural industries, including small-scale industry (niche manufacturing, small goods production, joinery, coffee roasters, and breweries), performing arts venues, and design studios. Larger format retailing will also be encouraged. Residential uses will be integrated in a way that does not undermine the employment function of these precincts, such as at upper levels of development.
- **Mixed-use Civic:** It includes land within the Civic Precinct. Institutional, community, employment, public spaces, and residential uses will co-exist in a way that supports its role as a vibrant civic heart for the centre. Affordable work spaces and housing will be strongly encouraged.
- **Residential:** It includes locations within the Centre where residential uses will remain the dominant land use and non-residential uses discouraged.





A Vibrant Centre

Objective 2 – To enhance Preston Central’s role as the civic hub through the provision of high quality, accessible and integrated community infrastructure.

Community infrastructure is fundamental in serving the needs of the community. The Centre’s role as a community hub is manifest through the provision of a wide range of existing community infrastructure services.

To meet the growing community’s needs, innovative approaches to delivering community services will be required. Including creating new partnerships between government, private, education, welfare and arts sectors to look at problems in a more joined up way.

Some of the world’s most famous celebrations and events are located in public spaces and are hosted by local municipalities. Through its streets, spaces and facilities, the Centre can provide for fun, vibrant and celebratory experiences. It is vital that the same opportunities are made available within Preston Central.

STRATEGIES

Strategy 2.1 – Optimise land use efficiency by redeveloping under-utilised strategic sites and transforming at-grade car parking areas into flexible and purposeful spaces.

Strategy 2.2 – Support the delivery of new community infrastructure services such as early years, youth, welfare, library services and sporting facilities.

Strategy 2.3 – Foster a sense of community and engagement by facilitating community events and private festivals throughout the year by activating the Centre’s streets and public spaces.

Strategy 2.4 – Enhance local identity of fun and celebration by designing and constructing multipurpose public spaces that are capable of hosting concerts, festivals and other celebratory public events.

ACTIONS

Action 3 – Complete the municipal wide Community Infrastructure Plan to identify infrastructure and facilities required for Preston Central.

Action 4 – Create and coordinate a calendar of local events that celebrate Preston Central’s diversity of people, culture, activity, shops and food.

Action 5 – Investigate opportunities to redesign or create new public spaces suitable for holding minor and major public events and activities. In priority locations (i.e., Preston City Oval, Plazas and forecourts) ensure the designs include infrastructure supply points (3 phase power, drainage, water supply).

Action 6 – Optimise public utilisation of facilities and open spaces year-round by conducting a comprehensive centre-wide assessment to identify opportunities for greater use. This could include informal outdoor recreation, like installing basketball hoops and ‘five-a-side’ caged soccer facilities.

Action 7 – Explore opportunities to develop a ‘joint user agreement’ template with non-council landowners such as private industry, schools, peak bodies, or other public agencies to assist in the negotiations of public use of private or state government assets.



A Vibrant Centre

Objective 3 – To foster a culture of design excellence by facilitating high quality developments that activate streetscapes and respond to Preston Central’s identity as a people place.

Preston Central is a great destination for people to live, learn, work, visit and invest. Therefore, it is essential that its future growth is managed in a way that does not detract from its much loved characteristics.

One of the main purposes of preparing a new Structure Plan and associated planning controls is to develop a built form approach that will guide future growth and change in a manner that is contextually appropriate and responsive to local heritage buildings.

The implementation of the new built form approach will be facilitated through new Floor Area Ratio (FAR) controls. The FAR controls will be mandatory and combined with other building envelope controls (overall heights, setbacks, solar controls) will ensure the reinforcement of Preston Central’s identity and appeal.



STRATEGIES

Strategy 3.1 – Facilitate the development of high amenity buildings by implementing built form controls in the planning scheme that respond to key design recommendations from the Built Form Framework including:

- Floor Area Ratios
- Heights
- Street wall heights
- Setbacks (street frontages)
- Setbacks (upper levels)
- Building separation
- Laneways and through block links
- Noise and vibration attenuation
- Solar protection.

Strategy 3.2 – Protect, enhance and appropriately respond to heritage places that are identified in the Darebin Planning Scheme as being of significance.

Strategy 3.3 – Protect the character and amenity of existing residential areas by ensuring new mid-rise development creates an appropriate transition at the interface with lower scale residential areas.

Strategy 3.4 – Incorporate heritage buildings sensitively into new development by ensuring the design is of a high quality and respects the heritage elements of the site and surrounds.

Strategy 3.5 – Maximise floorplate efficiencies by preparing planning controls which support lot consolidation.

Strategy 3.6 – Actively encourage design excellence by creating awareness of the Darebin Good Design Award and other initiatives within the Darebin Design Excellence Program.

Strategy 3.7 – Facilitate activation of ground floors, and the use of Crime Prevention Through Environment Design principles to maximise personal safety and security.

ACTIONS

Action 8 – Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement a comprehensive built form framework for Preston Central. The amendment should:

- Apply the Activity Centre Zone to land currently affected by the Priority Development Zone (Schedule 2) to the north of Bell Street.
- Implement the built form controls for each Precinct.

Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- Activity Centre Zone Boundary

Land use designations

Mixed-use Retail/Hospitality

- 1 High Street Precinct
- 5 High Street North Precinct

Mixed-use Employment

- 3 Market Interface Precinct
- 4 Regent Precinct
- 6 Bell Street Precinct

Mixed-use Civic

- 2 Civic Precinct

Residential

- Residential Precinct

Preston Market
(Subject to Preston Market Precinct Structure Plan)

0 100 200 300 400 500m ▲

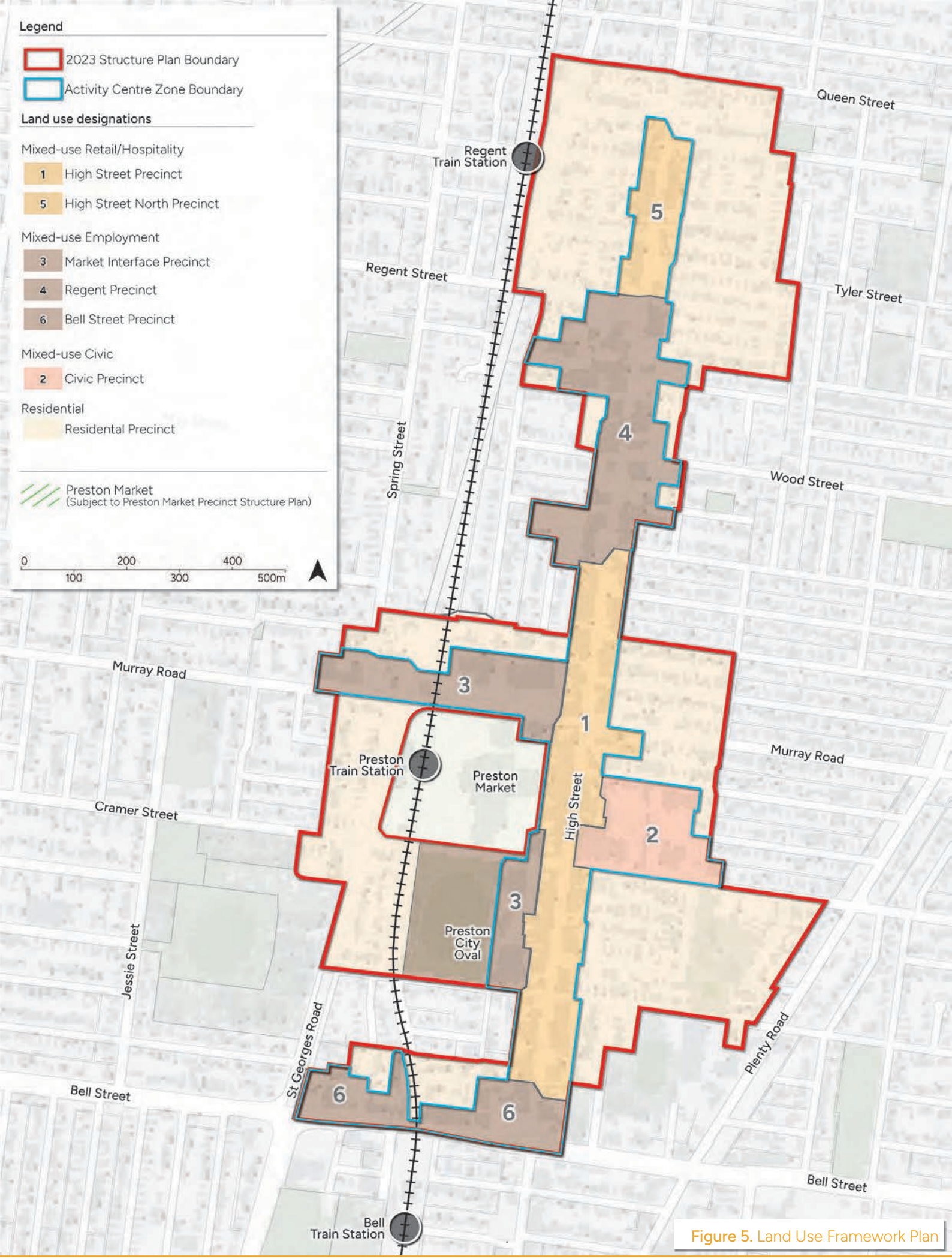


Figure 5. Land Use Framework Plan

Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- Heritage overlay
- Open space
- Key pedestrian nodes
- Key corner sites

Building Heights and Site Controls

- 10 storeys (FAR 5.5:1, Site coverage 70%
Ground floor landscape control 15%)
- 8 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 65%
Ground floor landscape control 17.5%)
- 7 storeys (FAR 3:1, Site coverage 60%
Ground floor landscape control 20%)
- 6 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 90%
Ground floor landscape control 5%)
- 5 storeys (FAR 3:1, Site coverage 60%
Ground floor landscape control 20%)
- 4 storeys (FAR, Site coverage,
Ground floor landscape control N/A)
- Residential transition areas

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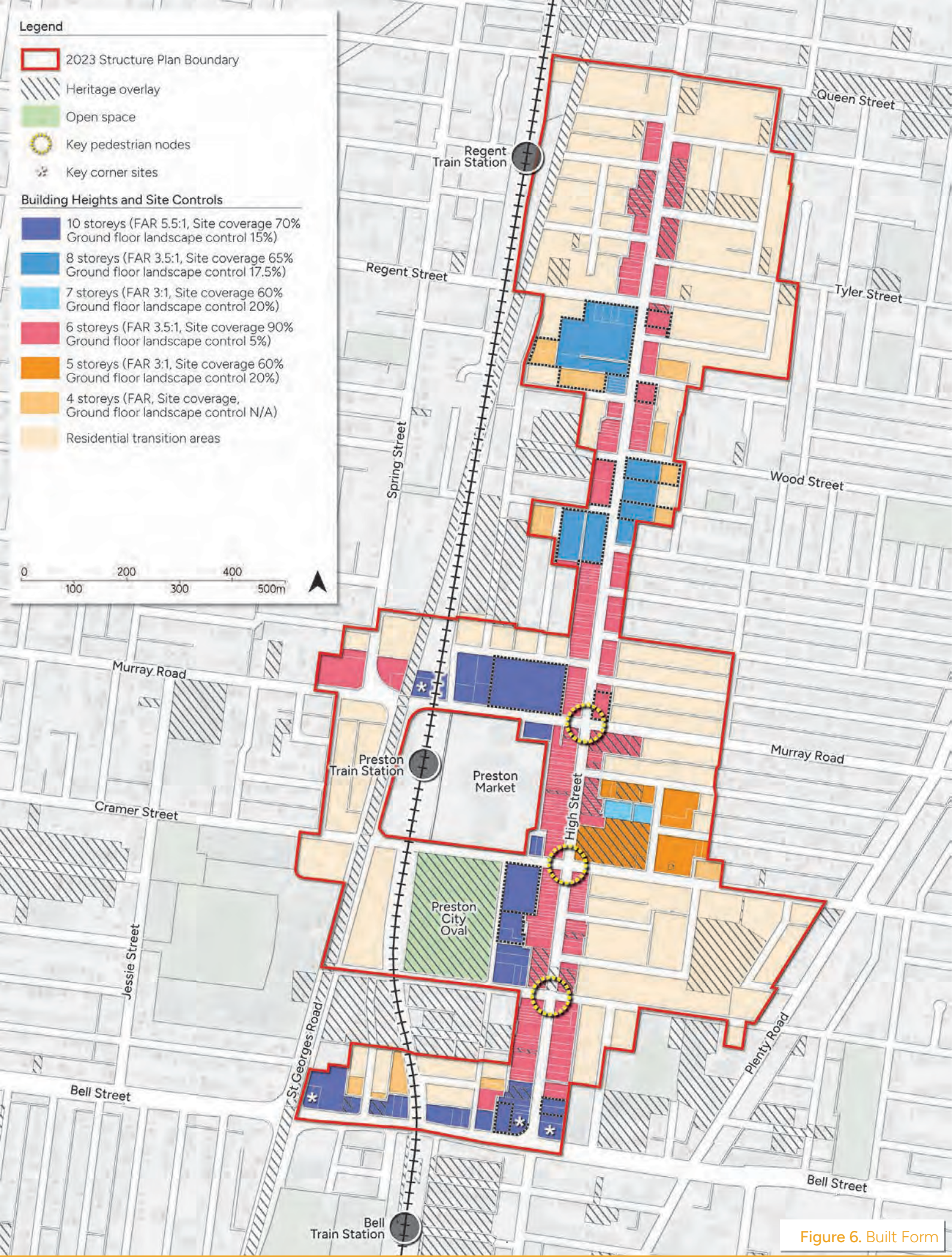


Figure 6. Built Form



A Welcoming Centre

Objective 4 – To create high quality and accessible public spaces for people of all ages and abilities.

Public spaces are important to the identity and culture of a place. They provide a framework around which a community can develop. Framed by the visual and architectural quality of buildings, the streets and open spaces adjacent to buildings will become an extension to residents' homes and workers' offices.

The substantial increase in population forecasted for the Centre, accompanied by the emergence of smaller households will place pressure on existing green spaces. Open spaces must be planned and equipped to facilitate multiple functions including community sport, recreation, fitness and play. With limited opportunity to acquire new open spaces, a proactive, innovative and economical approach is needed that utilises the open space levy and State Government grants when available. Innovative solutions include providing greening and recreational opportunities in the form of pocket parks and public plazas.



STRATEGIES

Strategy 4.1 – Ensure the planning, design, and curation of public spaces celebrates Aboriginal culture.

Strategy 4.2 – Ensure each public open space creates an interesting sense of place by incorporating public art and cultural interpretation of local stories and history into the designs.

Strategy 4.3 – Design multipurpose open spaces to be high quality by ensuring each space is designed to include accessible footpaths and a mix of other accessible features such as informal sport equipment, landscaping, seating and play areas.

Strategy 4.4 – Maximise the use of streets and laneways by delivering new landscaping, improved accessible footpath connections, and lighting.

Strategy 4.5 – Ensure open spaces are constructed to last by utilising high quality and sustainable materials.

ACTIONS

Action 9 – Prepare a landscaping strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that outlines opportunities to deliver public art, sporting equipment and other public infrastructure within the Centre's public spaces.

Action 10 – Prepare an accessibility strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that outlines opportunities to address any DDA compliant gaps in the public space network. The strategy must also include works which require advocacy with the State Government such as accessibility to public transport.

Action 11 – Prepare a materials schedule for Council owned assets and public space works within Preston Central to ensure the type of materials utilised for future projects are sustainable in the long term and require a low amount of embodied energy to produce.

Action 12 – Investigate opportunities to utilise new and emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, smart phone apps and other platforms to assist visitors, workers and residents with wayfinding and accessing key destinations.

Action 13 – Facilitate actions that are articulated in other Council plans (such as the Open Space Strategy 'Breathing Space') including but not limited to:

- Create a Strategic Land Acquisition Plan that contains a decision-making framework to guide selection of new open spaces.
- Implement a higher open space contribution rate in the schedule to Clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme, across all land uses.



A Welcoming Centre

Objective 5 – To encourage a diversity of households across a range of ages and incomes within Preston Central.

Fundamental to our wellbeing, standard of living and quality of life is the availability of accessible housing. It is a key role of this Structure Plan to ensure there is enough development capacity to accommodate the housing needs of the Centre's growing population.

It is equally important to ensure the type of housing available is as diverse as the population it serves. Intrinsicly, a greater diversity in housing options will bring a more diverse population and therefore enhance the Centre's identity as a welcoming and inclusive neighbourhood.

As the availability of land in good locations becomes scarcer and the cost of housing becomes less affordable, it is important that wherever possible the delivery of affordable housing is encouraged and facilitated. Noting the ongoing challenges being faced with the provision of affordable housing across metropolitan Melbourne, it is important that investigations into innovative solutions continue.



STRATEGIES

Strategy 5.1 – Increase the supply of residential floorspace within the Centre by facilitating the delivery of new housing and mixed-use developments.

Strategy 5.2 – Encourage diverse dwelling types within the Centre serving a variety of household sizes such as smaller dwellings for sole and two person households and larger dwellings for families.

Strategy 5.3 – Facilitate the provision of assisted living services within the Centre by ensuring households are designed to be universally accessible.

Strategy 5.4 – Encourage the provision of affordable housing across all new residential developments by requiring a minimum 1.8% affordable housing contribution.

ACTIONS

Action 8 – Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement a comprehensive built form framework for Preston Central. The amendment should:

- Apply the Activity Centre Zone to land currently affected by the Priority Development Zone (Schedule 2) to the north of Bell Street.
- Implement the built form controls for each Precinct.

Action 14 – Include a mechanism in the Activity Centre Zone schedule to require an Affordable Housing Contribution as part of new development. The control and value of the contribution should reflect the same requirement that is outlined in Schedule 1 to the Activity Centre Zone for the Preston Market site but for the rest of the centre.

Action 15 – Investigate policy mechanisms, which could be incorporated into the Darebin Planning Scheme more broadly that would seek a greater affordable housing contribution than 1.8% of dwellings provided at nil consideration.



Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- Streetscape improvement
- Existing open spaces
- New open space opportunity
- Education
- Linear open space
- Potential through block links
- Potential pocket parks or parklets
- Improvement of nodes
- * Key destinations
- Elevated rail line
- Street Level Rail line
- Train stations

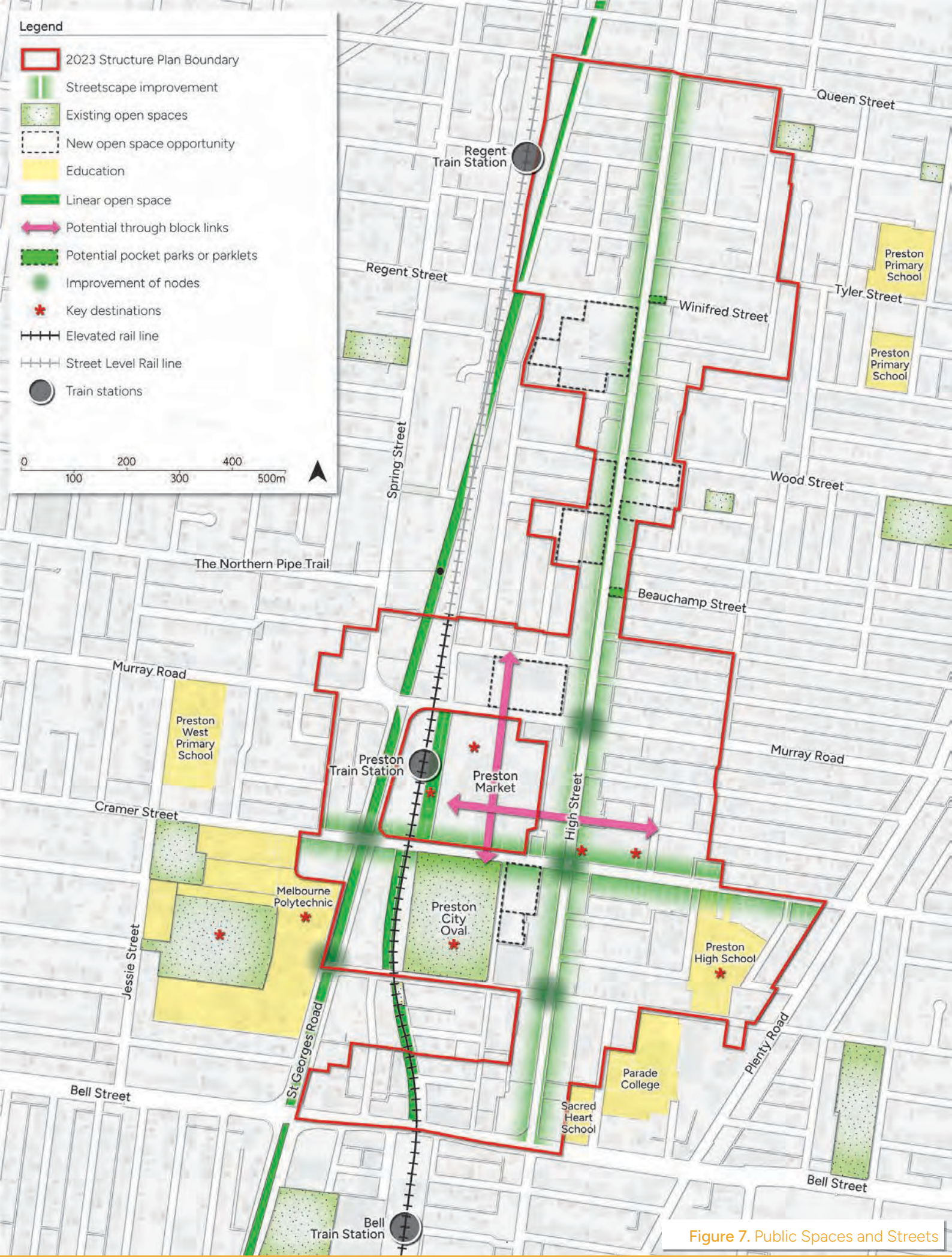
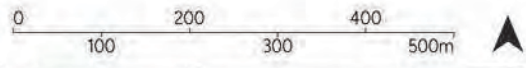


Figure 7. Public Spaces and Streets

Legend

2023 Structure Plan Boundary

Site Coverage Controls

- Site coverage controls do not apply
- 90%
- 70%
- 65%
- 60%

Ground Floor Landscape Controls

- Landscape controls do not apply
- 5%
- 15%
- 17.5%
- 20%

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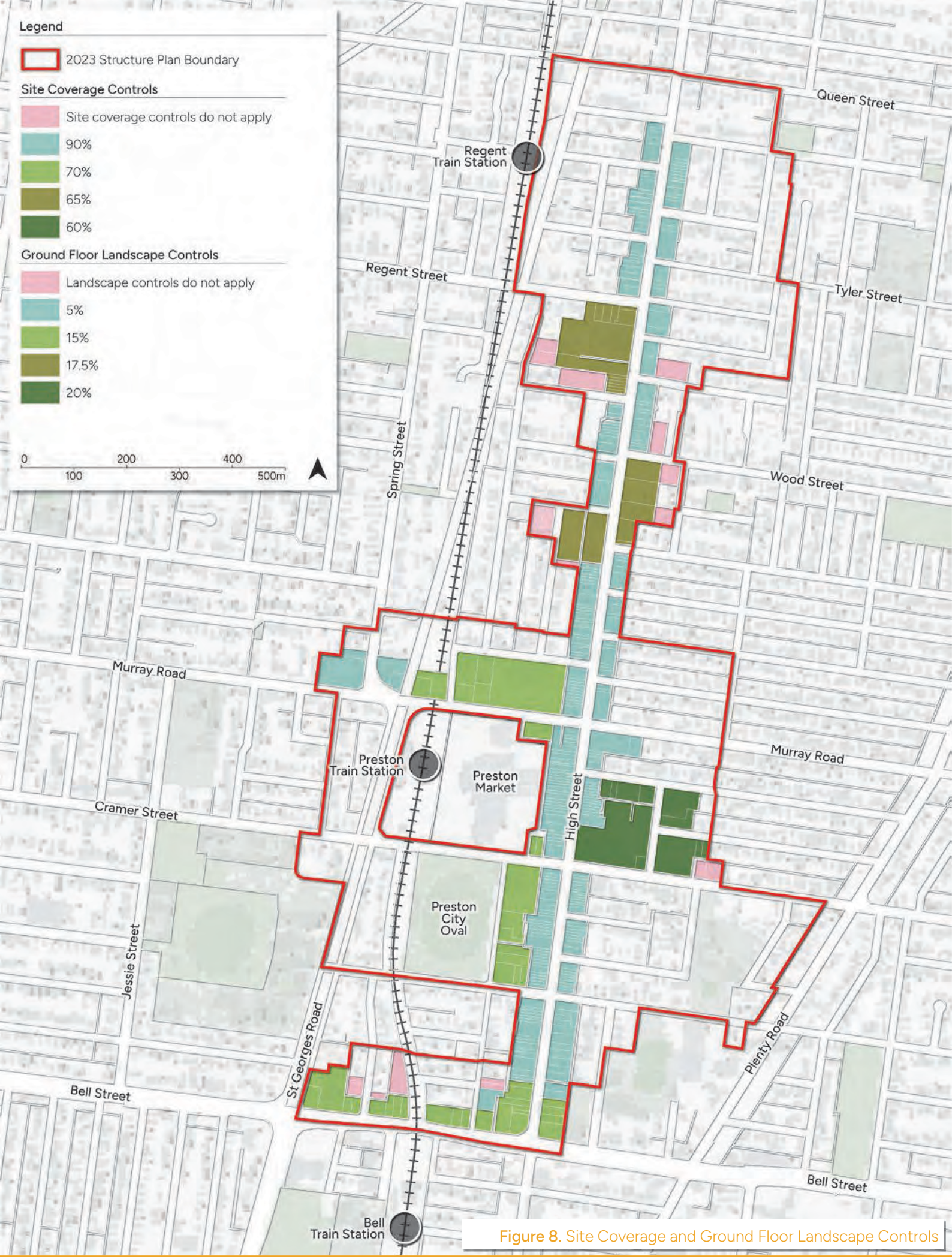


Figure 8. Site Coverage and Ground Floor Landscape Controls



A Greener Centre

Objective 6 – To create a cooler and greener future for Preston Central, which prioritises integrated water management and biodiversity outcomes.

The relationship between wellbeing and connection with the natural environment is well established. To enhance its role as a place for people, the Centre must reduce its environmental impact and improve its environmental contribution. While buildings and paving will continue to form part of the experience of the Centre, it is important that wherever possible, redundant areas of concrete and metal are transformed into permeable green spaces, utilising water sensitive urban design principles, to support native flora and fauna.

Water is a fundamental aspect to achieving a green future for the Centre. The efficient use of stormwater can ensure that sporting grounds, parks, median strips and pocket parks remain watered and healthy. Knowing that the climate is changing emphasises the importance of using water wisely.



STRATEGIES

Strategy 6.1 – Integrate water sensitive urban design principles into streets and green links to provide for a cooler and more attractive urban centre.

Strategy 6.2 – Ensure streetscape designs maximise tree canopy cover.

Strategy 6.3 – Improve the growing conditions of flora by increasing sunlight access to streets and parks.

Strategy 6.4 – Design buildings and spaces to capture rainwater to improve stormwater quality and create an alternative water resource.

ACTIONS

Action 16 – Prepare a landscaping strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that outlines opportunities to deliver water sensitive urban design principles and canopy coverage & permeability targets.





A Greener Centre

Objective 7 – To establish an integrated transport network that reduces dependency on private vehicles, maximises access to public transport and encourages walking and cycling.

Preston is a truly transit-oriented activity centre, adjacent to a well-developed public transport system. A 20-minute train journey from Preston Station lands you in the Melbourne CBD.

Walking and cycling are enjoyable and easy forms of transport that bring significant health, economic and environmental benefits. A key ambition is therefore to make walking and cycling the preferred mode of transport for short trips within the Centre.

Notwithstanding the ambition to prioritise active transport, an aging population is likely to result in many older residents and visitors in the Centre facing reduced mobility. Therefore, it will be critical to plan appropriately for the Centre's older generations.



STRATEGIES

Strategy 7.1 – Encourage improved integration and connections between the activity centre core and surrounding key destinations i.e. Preston Station, Melbourne Polytechnic, H P Zwar Reserve, Preston City Oval, Preston High School, Parade College and Darebin City Council Offices by enhancing the existing walking and cycling network.

Strategy 7.2 – Pedestrian connections should reinforce an urban block structure that is sufficiently fine grain with mid-block links to ensure pedestrian connections are direct, attractive and facilitate easy movement throughout the Centre.

Strategy 7.3 – Focus major vehicular movements onto arterial and connector roads, i.e. Bell Street, Plenty Road, St Georges Road and Murray Road by downgrading the role of High Street as a traffic route.

Strategy 7.4 – Minimise the impact of vehicle entries on the pedestrian experience by locating car parking underground with accessways positioned away from higher amenity streets such as High Street and Cramer Street.

Strategy 7.5 – Reduce the number of vehicles entering and circulating throughout the Centre by consolidating the location of parking, loading and unloading areas.

Strategy 7.6 – Ensure there is an appropriate provision of car parking for different user groups at key destinations within the Centre, including pickup/drop off spaces, disabled parking, and loading and service bays.

Strategy 7.7 – Future proof the evolving trends in transport and movement by including electric vehicle re-charge points in public spaces and public and private parking facilities.

ACTIONS

Action 17 – Prepare a centre-wide Movement and Access strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that considers all modes, including the design and location of pedestrian routes, cycling corridors, public transport accessibility and vehicle movements.

Action 18 – Investigate opportunities for direct east-west connection between Preston City Oval pavilion and HP Zwar Reserve for increased accessibility to active recreation and sports activity.

Action 19 – Investigate with the Department of Transport and Planning opportunities to deliver traffic signals which prioritise walking and cycling and public transport movements.

Action 20 – Investigate the introduction of a statutory mechanism, such as a Parking Overlay, to reduce car parking provision as part of new development within the Centre.

Action 21 – Work with car share and electric vehicle providers to create a flexible mobility network for the Centre with planned, allocated spaces in convenient locations on High Street, around Preston and Regent stations and within the Civic Precinct.

Action 22 – Prepare an audit of car parking within the Centre to understand where redesigning the existing car park may facilitate a greater number of car parking bays.

Action 23 – Investigate the implementation of technology to facilitate more efficient way-finding of car parking spaces and in turn reducing vehicle circulation within the Centre.

Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- Arterial roads
- Connector roads
- Pedestrian and cycling corridor
- Pedestrian and cycling improvement
- Education
- ↔ Potential through block links
- Key gateways
- ★ Key destinations
- P At-grade car parks
- Elevated rail line
- Street Level Rail line
- Train stations
- Bus route
- Tram route

0 100 200 300 400 500m



Figure 9. Access and Movement





CHAPTER 5 THE PRECINCTS

5.1 Overview

This section addresses how the Structure Plan vision and objectives apply to each precinct within the Centre.

Each precinct will play a unique but important role in contributing to the realisation of the Centre's overall vision.

The precincts are grouped according to their location and role.

Activity Centre Core

Precinct 1 - High Street Precinct

Precinct 2 - Civic Precinct

Precinct 3 - Market Interface Precinct

Regent and Northern Gateway

Precinct 4 - Regent Precinct

Precinct 5 - High Street North Precinct

Bell Street and Southern Gateway

Precinct 6 - Bell Street Precinct

Residential Precinct

Transition Areas

Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- Activity Centre Zone Boundary

Structure Plan Sub-precincts

Activity Centre Core

- 1 High Street Precinct
- 2 Civic Precinct
- 3 Market Interface Precinct

Regent and Northern Gateway

- 4 Regent Precinct
- 5 High Street North Precinct

Bell Street and Southern Gateway

- 6 Bell Street Precinct

Residential Precinct

- Residential transition areas

Preston Market
(Subject to Preston Market Precinct Structure Plan)

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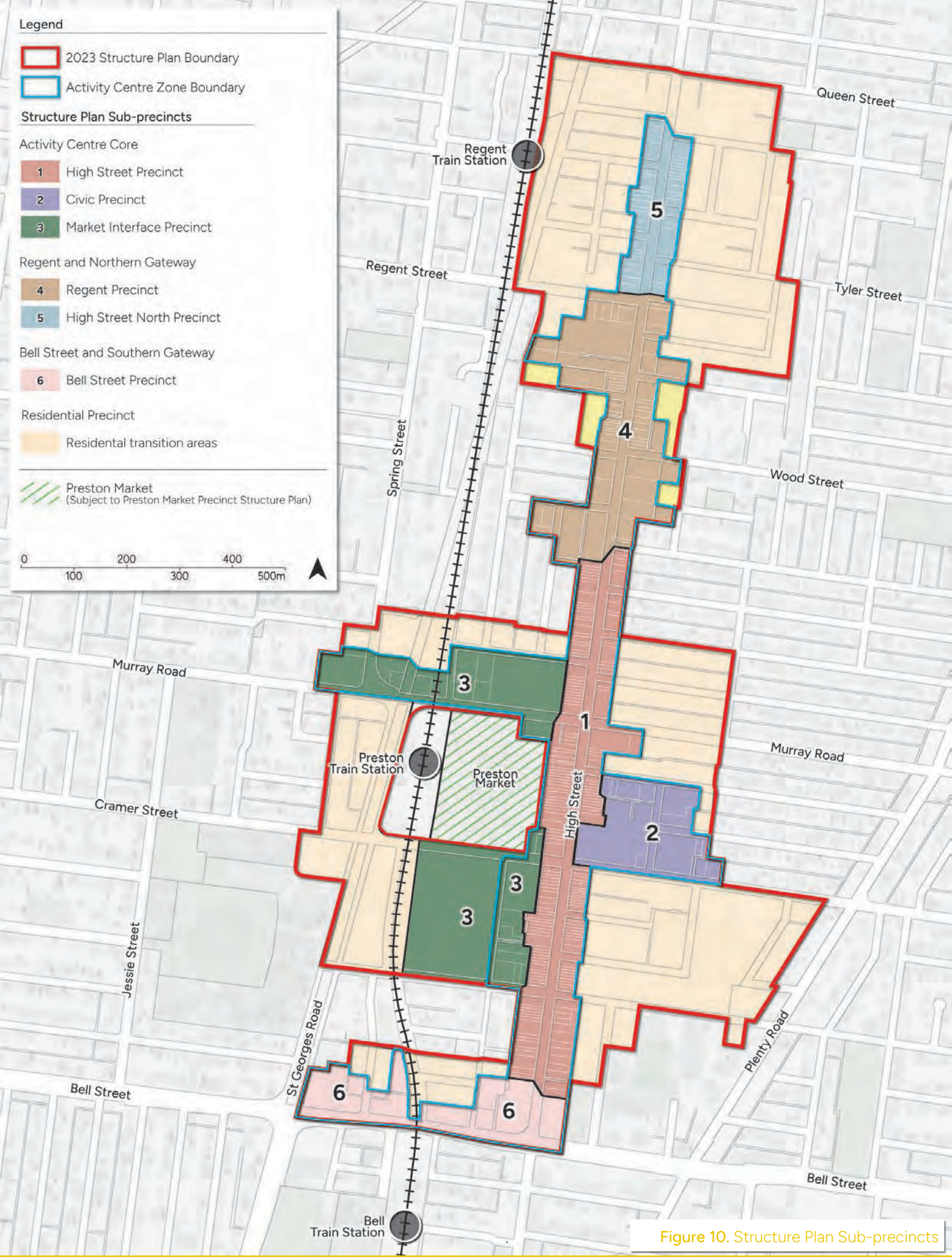


Figure 10. Structure Plan Sub-precincts

5.2 Activity Centre Core

These precincts make up the central heart of the Centre, including the main commercial spine along High Street, opportunity sites around the edges of Preston Market, and the main civic hub around the town hall. Whilst closely related and connected, these precincts have differences in character and future vision.

Precinct 1: High Street Precinct

This precinct will be the bustling central spine of Preston with a variety of local shops, bars, restaurants and galleries contributing to a vibrant and colourful high street character. This character will be enhanced by fine grain building design complemented with shop top housing and retained heritage buildings interwoven into the built form landscape.

Buildings and the private realm will connect seamlessly through a network of high-quality public spaces and streets that are activated throughout the day and night.



Precinct Strategies



A Vibrant Centre

- Facilitate a greater living and working population within the precinct by supporting building heights between 4-6 storeys.
- Maximise the diversity of uses and activities within the Centre by encouraging a wide variety of retail and commercial offerings (i.e. restaurants, bars, shops, supermarkets, beauty salons and offices) to locate within the precinct.
- Enhance the activation of the precinct by encouraging the provision of accommodation uses at the upper levels of development with designs that incorporate generous balcony spaces to assist in creating a sense of interaction between the public and private realm.
- Respond to the existing character and heritage fabric of High Street by maintaining a two-storey street wall scale along High Street. A two-storey street wall will also create a more open streetscape, receiving a greater amount of sunlight.
- Encourage site consolidation of narrow lots to maximise floorplate efficiencies (i.e. reduce vehicle crossovers) and deliver uniform built form outcomes whilst ensuring development respects the fine-grain, high street character.



A Welcoming Centre

- Maximise the accessibility of High Street by improving the amenity conditions of the streetscape through measures such as continuous weather protection (canopies/verandahs), continuous accessible paths of travel, seating and public toilets.
- Soften the interface between the public and private realm on High Street by designing buildings with high quality finishes, integrated landscaping and maximised footpath trading opportunities.
- Create a comfortable transport experience for cyclists and pedestrians by implementing design measures which reduce traffic speeds along High Street. new development does not overshadow.



A Greener Centre















- Maximise sunlight access to public spaces and parks by ensuring new development does not overshadow:
 - The opposite footpath on High Street or the southern side of Gower Street and Cramer Street between 11am and 2pm at the Spring Equinox.
 - Preston City Oval and surrounding open space between 10am and 3pm at the winter solstice.
- Increase the amount of permeable surfaces on High Street by identifying new locations for raingardens, tree pits or permeable paving.

Actions

Action 24 - Prepare a Streetscape Masterplan for High Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling paths, parking, footpaths and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.

Action 25 – Prepare an urban design concept plan for the Council owned land located at 421 High Street, to deliver a through block link between High Street and Preston Market. A community engagement and feedback process should be undertaken on the concept plan prior to its delivery.

Legend

-  Precinct Boundary
 -  Heritage overlay
 -  Streetscape, pedestrian and cycling improvement corridor
 -  Improvement of public space
 -  Cycle / pedestrian oriented corridor
-
- Building Heights and Site Controls**
-  6 storeys (FAR 3.5:1)
Site coverage 90%
Ground floor landscape control 5%
-
- Sensitive Interfaces**
-  Residential interface 01
 -  Laneway interface
 -  New laneway
-
- Ground Floor Setback, Street Wall Height and Upper Floor Setback**
-  0m (GFS) / 2 storeys (SWH) / 3m (UFS)
 -  Chamfered building corners
-
- Solar access**
-  No overshadowing of the opposite footpath between 11am and 2pm at the spring equinox
 -  No overshadowing of public open space between 10am and 3pm at the winter solstice
-
-  2023 Structure Plan Boundary

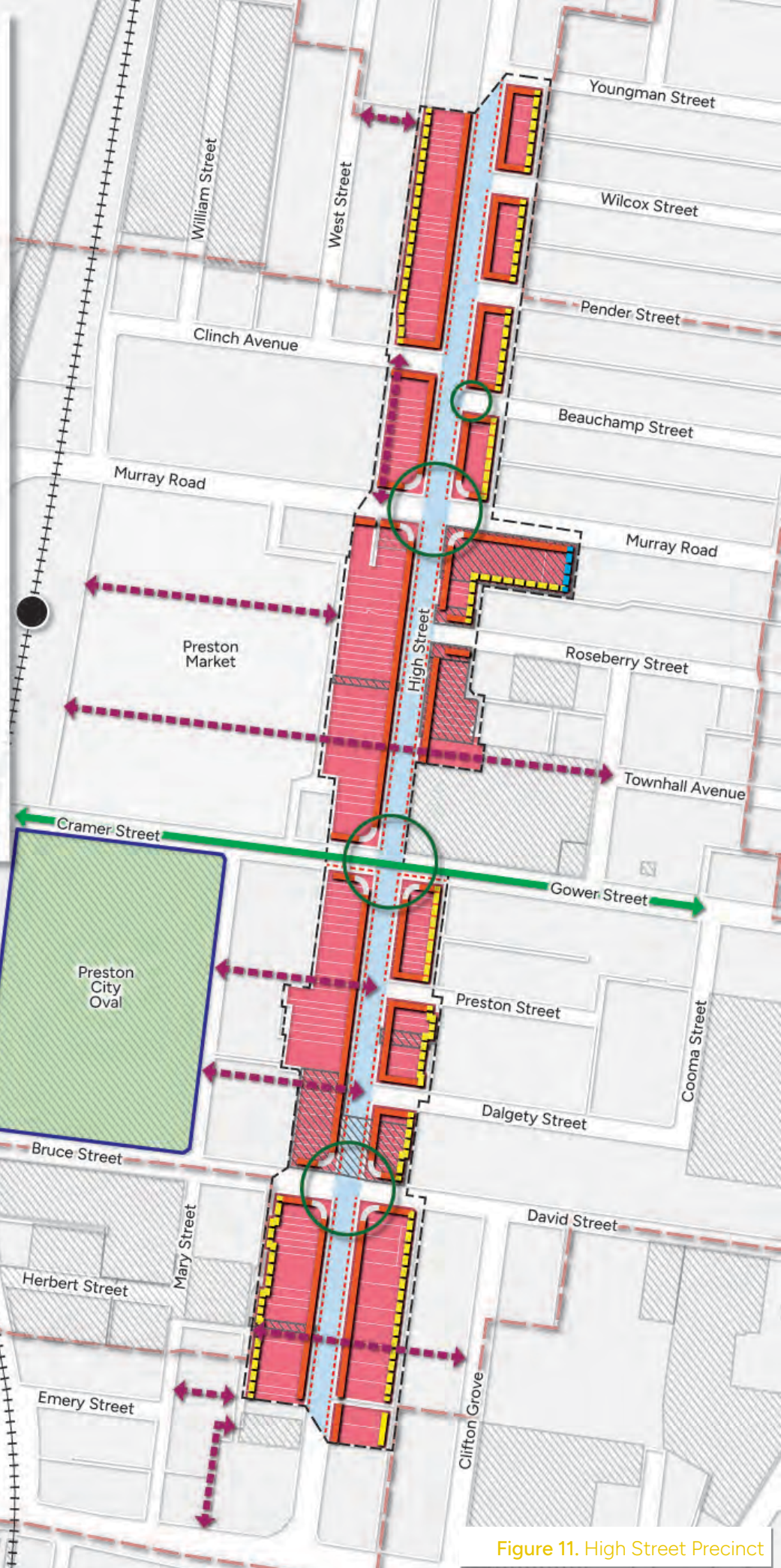
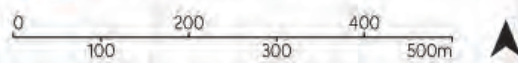


Figure 11. High Street Precinct



Illustration of High Street Precinct looking north near Town Hall (above)
prepared by Geoffrey Falk, 2022

Precinct 2: Civic Precinct

The Civic Precinct will continue to be focal point for Preston Central. The cluster of civic buildings and services, including the Preston Town Hall, Post Office, Library, Police Station and childcare centre, generate a high amount of activity and serve a broad range of community members.

The Preston Town Hall, council offices and old police station on Roseberry Avenue are heritage listed and tell the story of the early development of Preston. The town hall is an important local landmark and its forecourt provides an attractive open space and popular meeting place on High Street. A number of at-grade car parks serve the area.



Precinct Strategies



A Vibrant Centre

- Reinforce the precinct's function as the civic centre by encouraging public institutions and community services such as library uses, multipurpose community spaces and cultural centres to locate here.
- Increase the development capacity of the precinct through greater building heights of 5-7 storeys. New development must transition in scale where interfacing with low rise residential development.
- Support high-quality contemporary design outcomes that complement existing heritage buildings within the precinct such as the Preston Town Hall and former Preston Police Station.
- Adopt a three-storey street wall height along street frontages, with recessed upper levels.



A Welcoming Centre

- Enhance accessibility to and from the precinct by creating new and improved east-west connections through the precinct and longer-range connections west to the Preston Market and Preston Station.



A Greener Centre

- Maximise sunlight access to public spaces and parks by ensuring new development does not overshadow:
 - The opposite footpath on High Street or the southern side of Gower Street and Cramer Street between 11am and 2pm at the Spring Equinox.
- Reduce the dominance of parking on the higher amenity Gower and High Streets by encouraging underground and sleeved car parking facilities which are accessed from Roseberry Avenue and Kelvin Grove.

Actions

Action 26 - Prepare a master plan for the Civic Precinct which explores opportunities to optimise the land owned by Council, to achieve the following outcomes:

- A new east-west connection between Kelvin Grove and High Street
- New accessible and affordable housing and workspaces
- New public open space to integrate and revitalise Preston Library forecourt

Action 27 - Attract investment from large institutional tenants to locate within the Civic Precinct, providing opportunities for collaboration and partnership with Council services.

Action 28 – Prepare a design for a new crossing facility across Gower Street for Preston High School students.

Legend

- Precinct Boundary
- Heritage overlay
- Streetscape, pedestrian and cycling improvement corridor
- Improvement of public space

Building Heights and Site Controls

- 7 storeys (FAR 3:1, Site coverage 60% Ground floor landscape control 20%)
- 5 storeys (FAR 3:1, Site coverage 60% Ground floor landscape control 20%)
- 4 storeys (FAR, Site coverage, Ground floor landscape control N/A)

Sensitive Interfaces

- Residential interface 01
- Laneway interface
- New laneway

Ground Floor Setback, Street Wall Height and Upper Floor Setback

- 3m (GFS) / 3 storeys (SWH) / 3m (UFS)
- 0m / 2 storeys / 3m
- Chamfered building corners

Solar access

- No overshadowing of the opposite footpath between 11am and 2pm at the spring equinox
- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary

0 50 100 150 200 250m

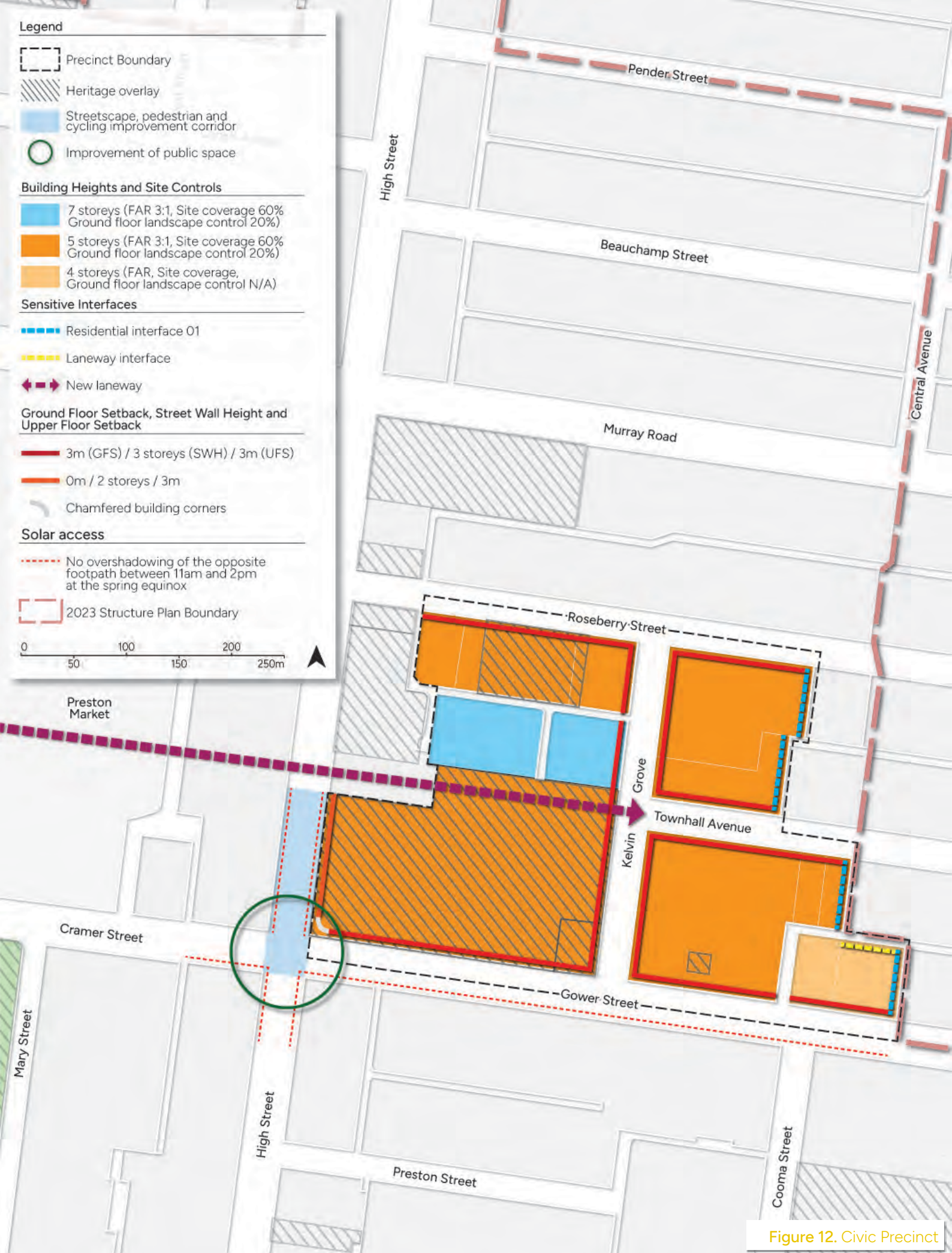


Figure 12. Civic Precinct



Illustration of High Street Precinct looking north near Town Hall (above)
prepared by Geoffrey Falk, 2022

Precinct 3: Market Interface Precinct

The Market Interface Precinct encompasses land north of Murray Road and south of Cramer Street with a close relationship to the market, a key destination, landmark and cultural hub for Preston. The precinct accommodates higher density development of 8-10 storeys, framing key public land uses, such as the Preston Market and Preston City Oval.

Land within the precinct will be a mix of commercial and residential development, including office development. The ground floor of development will be occupied by larger format uses such as supermarkets, medical centres, yoga studios and function centres.

The precinct excludes the market itself (which is subject to separate planning controls) but is informed by the emerging vision for transformational change on the market site.



Precinct Strategies



A Vibrant Centre

- Facilitate greater activity and housing diversity around the market that takes advantage of the larger lot sizes by supporting mid-rise development of 8-10 storeys. The increased living and working population will make a positive contribution to the wider renewal and more efficient use of land close to public transport, services and amenities.
- Support high amenity residential development that integrates with the mixed-use nature of the precinct.
- Adopt a four-storey street wall height along street frontages, with recessed upper levels.



A Welcoming Centre

- Streetscapes within the precinct, especially those located adjacent to Preston City Oval and the Preston Market, must be designed to provide accessible and adaptable community spaces capable of hosting small pop-up events.
- Increase the usage of Preston City Oval by improving its accessibility and availability for informal sporting, recreational and cultural events.
- Improve connections between the residential areas to the west of St. Georges Road and the Preston Market by redesigning Cramer Street to be more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists.



A Greener Centre

- Maximise sunlight access to public spaces and parks by ensuring new development does not overshadow:
 - The opposite footpath on High Street or the southern side of Gower Street and Cramer Street between 11am and 2pm at the Spring Equinox.
 - Preston City Oval between 10am and 3pm at the winter solstice.
 - Development should be designed having consideration of the future public open spaces within the Preston Market Precinct.

Precinct Actions

Action 29 – Prepare a concept layout plan of the St Georges Road and Cramer Street intersection. The concept plan should be designed to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist connections between St. Georges Road and the Preston Market.

Action 30 – Prepare a masterplan for Preston City Oval. The masterplan should seek to optimise the use of the land for a variety of facilities, with specific consideration given to the potential delivery of a skate park.

Legend

- Precinct Boundary
- Heritage overlay
- Streetscape, pedestrian and cycling improvement corridor
- Upgrade cycling link

Building Heights and Site Controls

- 10 storeys (FAR 5.5:1, Site coverage 70% Ground floor landscape control 15%)
- 6 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 90% Ground floor landscape control 5%)

Sensitive Interfaces

- Residential interface O1
- New laneway

Ground Floor Setback, Street Wall Height and Upper Floor Setback

- 2m (GFS) / 4 storeys (SWH) / 5m (UFS)
- 5m (GFS) / 4 storeys (SWH) / 5m (UFS)
- 0m (GFS) / 2 storeys (SWH) / 3m (UFS)
- Chamfered building corners

Solar access

- No overshadowing of the opposite footpath between 11am and 2pm at the spring equinox
- No overshadowing of public open space between 10am and 3pm at the winter solstice
- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary

0 100 200 300 400 500m



Figure 13. Market Interface Precinct



5.3 Regent and Northern Gateway

These precincts are located to the north of the Centre connected along the High Street spine. They form a continuation of the Activity Centre Core with a number of large sites and opportunities for renewal and improved connections to Regent Station.

Precinct 4: Regent Precinct

The Regent Precinct sits to the north of the High Street Precinct, outside of the core retail area. It has a mixed character by virtue of its varied lot sizes and mix of activities. Creative industries and local manufacturing will operate in tandem alongside office development, finer grain commercial buildings and mid-rise apartment developments.

The precinct's varied character is complemented by high-quality landscaping, bicycle lanes and wide footpaths.



Precinct Strategies



A Vibrant Centre

- Establish a new mid-rise character within the precinct by supporting building heights between 6-8 storeys.
- Support high amenity residential development that integrates with the mixed-use nature of the precinct.
- Maintain a sense of openness and sunlight access to the street by providing a two-storey street wall height with upper levels set back.
- Promote visual permeability and avoid monolithic built form outcomes on large development sites by encouraging a 'campus of buildings' approach.



Welcoming Centre

- Maximise the accessibility of High Street by improving the amenity conditions of the streetscape through measures such as continuous weather protection (canopies/verandahs), continuous accessible paths of travel, seating and public toilets.
- Soften the interface between the public and private realm on High Street by designing buildings with high quality finishes, integrated landscaping and maximised footpath trading opportunities.



A Greener Centre

- Maximise sunlight access to public spaces by ensuring new development does not overshadow the opposite footpath on High Street between 11am and 2pm at the Spring Equinox.
- Increase the amount of permeable surfaces on High Street by identifying new locations for raingardens, tree pits or permeable paving.

Precinct Actions

Action 31 – Prepare a streetscape masterplan for High Street and Regent Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling paths, parking, footpaths, crossing facilities and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.

Action 32 – Prepare a public realm masterplan for the land surrounding Regent Station. The masterplan should explore opportunities to incorporate places for informal outdoor recreation cycling path connections and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles into the existing public open space.

Legend

- Precinct Boundary
- Heritage overlay
- Streetscape, pedestrian and cycling improvement corridor
- Potential pedestrian links

Building Heights and Site Controls

- 8 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 65%, Ground floor landscape control 17.5%)
- 6 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 90%, Ground floor landscape control 5%)
- 4 storeys (FAR, Site coverage, Ground floor landscape control N/A)

Sensitive Interfaces

- Residential interface O1
- Residential interface O2
- Laneway interface O1
- New laneway

Ground Floor Setback, Street Wall Height and Upper Floor Setback

- 0m (GFS) / 2 storeys (SWH) / 5m (UFS)

Solar access

- No overshadowing of the opposite footpath between 11am and 2pm at the spring equinox
- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary

0 100 200 300 400 500m

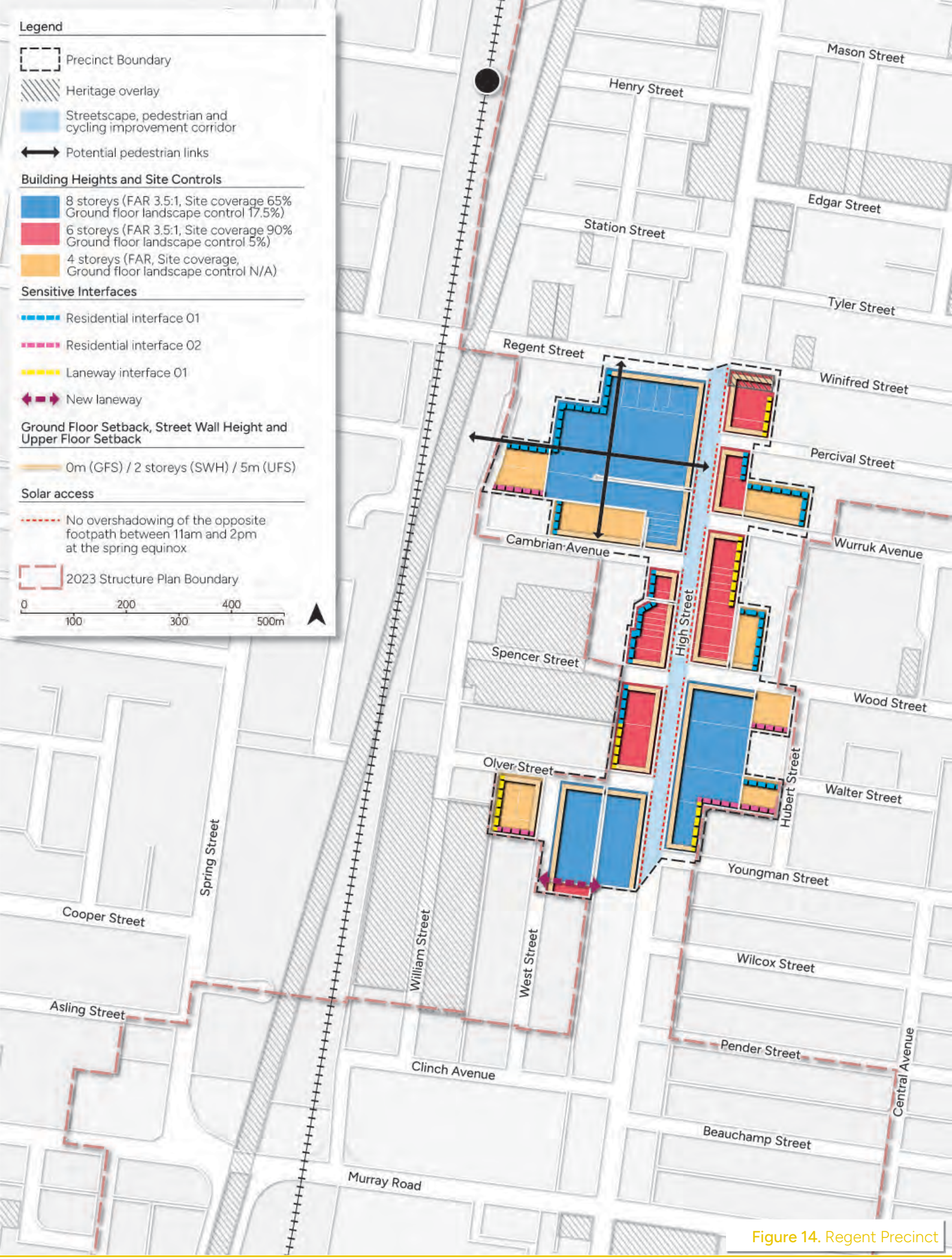


Figure 14. Regent Precinct



Illustration of Regent Precinct near High Street and Spencer Street intersection (above) prepared by Geoffrey Falk, 2022

Precinct 5: High Street North Precinct

The High Street North Precinct forms the northern gateway to the Centre. It continues north from the Regent Precinct along High Street but has a generally finer grain lot pattern and smaller lot sizes. The precinct's proximity to Regent Station allows it to be a smaller retailing and business hub which predominantly services the shop-top housing on High Street and surrounding residential catchment.



Precinct Strategies



A Vibrant Centre

- Facilitate a greater living and working population within the precinct by supporting building heights up to 6 storeys.
- Enhance the precinct's function as a local shopping destination to the adjacent residential neighbourhoods by supporting a mix of land uses to locate here such as local delis, retail spaces, small offices, restaurants and bars.
- Provide a two-storey street wall height to provide a human scale interface at the street edge with upper levels set back to maintain a sense of openness and sunlight access to the street.



A Welcoming Centre

- Maximise the accessibility of High Street by improving the amenity conditions of the streetscape through measures such as continuous weather protection (canopies/verandahs), continuous accessible paths of travel, seating and public toilets.
- Soften the interface between the public and private realm on High Street by designing buildings with high quality finishes, integrated landscaping and maximised footpath trading opportunities.



A Greener Centre

- Ensure new development does not overshadow the opposite footpath on High Street between 11am and 2pm at the Spring Equinox.
- Strengthen pedestrian connections to and from Regent Station and across High Street by providing a continuous accessible path of travel, including street crossing facilities.

Precinct Actions

Action 33 - Prepare a streetscape masterplan for High Street and Henry Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling path connections, parking, footpaths, crossing facilities and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.

Legend

- Precinct Boundary
- Heritage overlay
- Streetscape, pedestrian and cycling improvement corridor
- Potential improvement of public space

Building Heights and Site Controls

- 6 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 90% Ground floor landscape control 5%)

Sensitive Interfaces

- Residential interface 01
- Laneway interface
- New laneway

Ground Floor Setback, Street Wall Height and Upper Floor Setback

- 0m (GFS) / 2 storeys (SWH) / 3m (UFS)

Solar access

- No overshadowing of the opposite footpath between 11am and 2pm at the spring equinox
- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary

0 50 100 150 200 250m



Figure 15. High Street North Precinct



5.4 Bell Street and Southern Gateway

This area extends north of the Bell Street arterial. The southern entry to the activity centre is located at the junction of High Street and Bell Street.

Precinct 6: Bell Street Precinct

The Bell Street Precinct defines the southern gateway of the Centre and comprises a number of comparatively large sites along the north side of Bell Street and the southern end of High Street. The precinct will be characterised by high-quality commercial/office buildings and apartment developments which define key intersections and the southern entry to the High Street corridor.



Precinct Strategies



A Vibrant Centre

- Prioritise employment generating use and development such as standalone office development and mixed-use development that provides commercial spaces on lower levels and high amenity residential development on upper levels, without compromising the precinct's primary employment and economic function.
- Facilitate a greater living and working population within the precinct by supporting building heights up to 10 storeys.
- Ensure sensitive uses adjacent to Bell Street are designed with greater levels of noise and vibration attenuation.



A Welcoming Centre

- Set buildings back from Bell Street to accommodate landscape plantings that assist in softening the harsh street environment.
- Maximise the accessibility along Bell Street and High Street by improving the amenity conditions of the streetscape through measures such as continuous weather protection (canopies/verandahs), continuous accessible paths of travel, seating and public toilets.



A Greener Centre

- Improve wayfinding and pedestrian connections to key local destinations, including the Darebin Arts Centre, Bell Station and the new shared path along the rail corridor.
- Ensure new development does not overshadow the opposite footpath on High Street between 11am and 2pm at the Spring Equinox.

Precinct Actions

Action 34 - Prepare a streetscape masterplan for Bell Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling paths, parking, footpaths and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.

Legend

- Precinct Boundary
- Heritage overlay
- Streetscape, pedestrian and cycling improvement corridor

Maximum Building Heights

- 10 storeys (FAR 5.5:1, Site coverage 70%, Ground floor landscape control 15%)
- 6 storeys (FAR 3.5:1, Site coverage 90%, Ground floor landscape control 5%)
- 4 storeys (FAR, Site coverage, Ground floor landscape control N/A)

Sensitive Interfaces

- Residential interface O1
- Laneway Interface
- New laneway

Ground Floor Setback, Street Wall Height and Upper Floor Setback

- 5m (GFS) / 4-10 storeys (SWH) / 0 (UFS)
- 5m (GFS) / 4 storeys (SWH) / 5m (UFS)
- Chamfered building corners

Solar access

- No overshadowing of the opposite footpath between 11am and 2pm at the spring equinox
- No overshadowing of public open space between 10am and 3pm at the winter solstice
- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary

0 100 200 300 400 500m

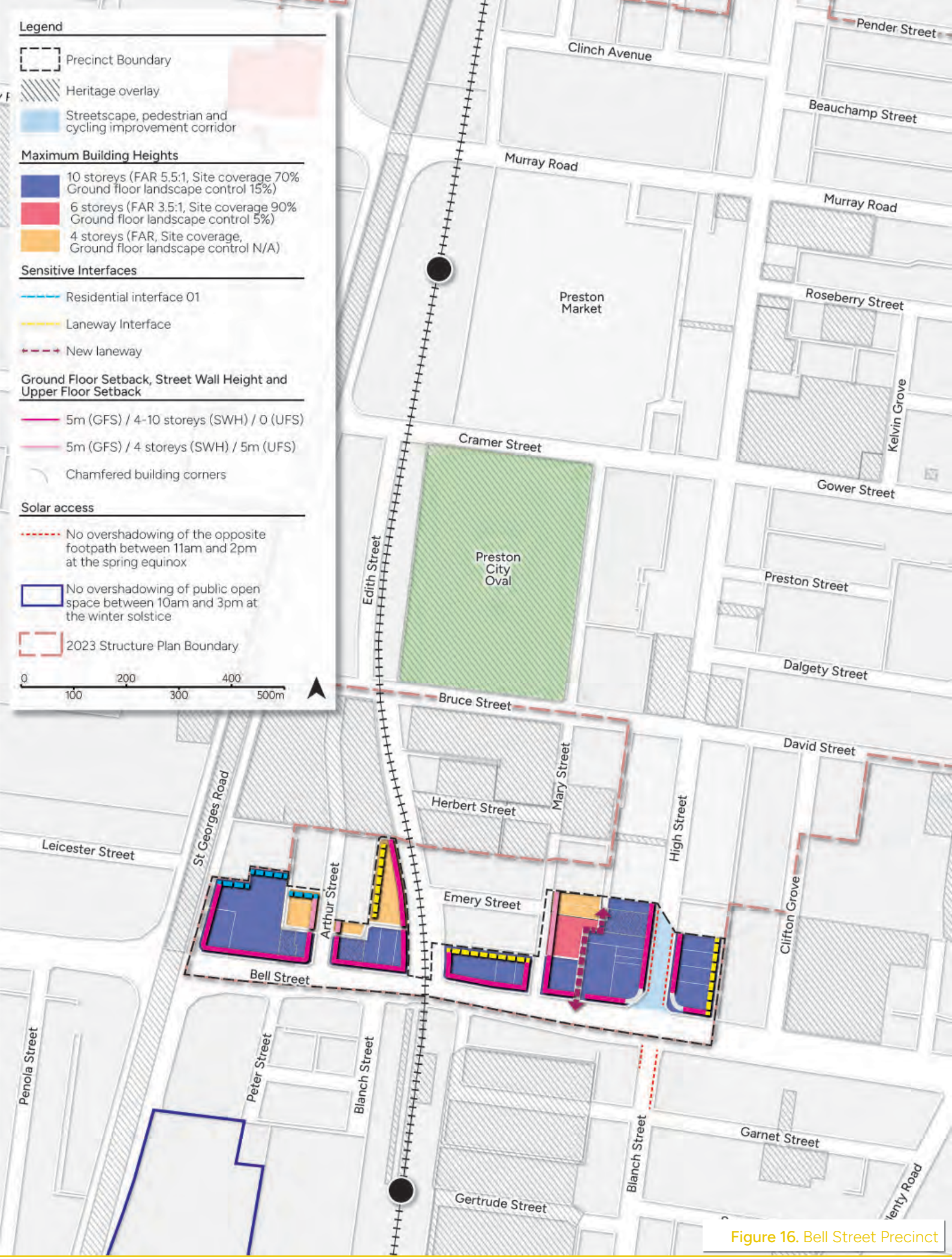


Figure 16. Bell Street Precinct



Illustration of Bell Street Precinct looking west near High Street intersection
(above) prepared by Geoffrey Falk, 2022

5.5 Residential Precinct

This Precinct's role in supporting increased residential densities has been considered in preparing this structure plan. Subject to additional feasibility assessments, these areas could accommodate further housing growth, and are referred to as 'Residential Transition Areas'.

The current planning controls in the Residential Precinct already support a range of medium density development. In particular, the section of land along St Georges Road can support development of four to six storeys.

In the near term, new medium density development in the Residential Precinct should deliver high-quality design, positively contribute to the public realm, and sensitively address existing residential development to protect neighbourhood character and amenity.

- **First stage of implementation:** The first planning scheme amendment to implement the Structure Plan will not include any changes to the Residential Precinct planning controls. The lion's share of population growth in Preston Central is planned for the main core of the activity centre, as well as within the residential precinct to the extent that it already supports some forms of medium density development.
- **Next stage of implementation and further work:** The next stage of implementation should further consider the General Residential Zone land within the precinct and its capacity to accommodate more housing. In particular, the land near Regent Station presents strategic opportunity to accommodate greater residential growth than supported under current planning controls.



Further investigations are required to ensure the proposed planning is effective in delivering intended development outcomes for the area. For instance, initial investigations have broadly identified some feasibility issues with delivering four and five storey development (for lot sizes that are approximately 500sqm) when not relying on lot consolidation. This is because individual sites may not be able to achieve higher densities (four or more storeys) while meeting current car parking requirements and also simultaneously managing internal and external amenity impacts in a sustainable way.

Further investigations should determine ways to address these feasibility issues and devise appropriate planning controls to deliver high-quality built form outcomes that incentivise lot consolidation and deliver good amenity outcomes. Opportunities for public realm improvements should also be considered.

Residential Transition Areas

These are established residential areas in close proximity to a diverse array of local services, amenities, and public transport. They can accommodate a variety of housing types, including detached and semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, and occasional apartments along key transport routes. These areas present potential for medium-density housing development on both single and consolidated lots, with landscaping.

There are opportunities for streetscape improvements including increased street-tree planting and improved pedestrian and cycling connections to local destinations, including to High Street, Preston and Regent Stations, Preston High School, and to key destinations outside the Structure Plan Area such as tram services on Plenty Road and the Melbourne Polytechnic campus. This aligns with the broader vision to transform the Centre into a vibrant, transit-oriented hub.



Precinct Strategies

- Support increased residential densities and well-designed developments that contribute to housing diversity, amenity and neighbourhood character.
- Support a range of dwelling types, including townhouses and apartments of 3-4 storeys where zoning and the size of sites are suitable.
- Encourage development that positively address streets with landscaped frontages that provide a green interface with the public realm.
- Encourage contemporary design responses that complement the character of neighbourhoods.
- Provide visual interest through articulation of walls visible from the public realm.
- Avoid underdevelopment of sites within the precinct.
- Deliver streetscape improvements by incorporating greater canopy cover while prioritising pedestrian and cyclists movement.
- Consider the implementation of time restrictions for non-permit car parking.

Precinct Actions

Action 35 – Undertake further investigations into the residential precinct to determine suitable locations for increased residential densities and identify planning mechanisms to help overcome feasibility issues with four or more storeys development in residential areas in consultation with the community. These investigations should determine planning controls to deliver high-quality built form outcomes and help incentivise lot consolidation.



Legend

- 2023 Structure Plan Boundary
- Activity Centre Zone Boundary
- Residential precinct

0 100 200 300 400 500m ▲

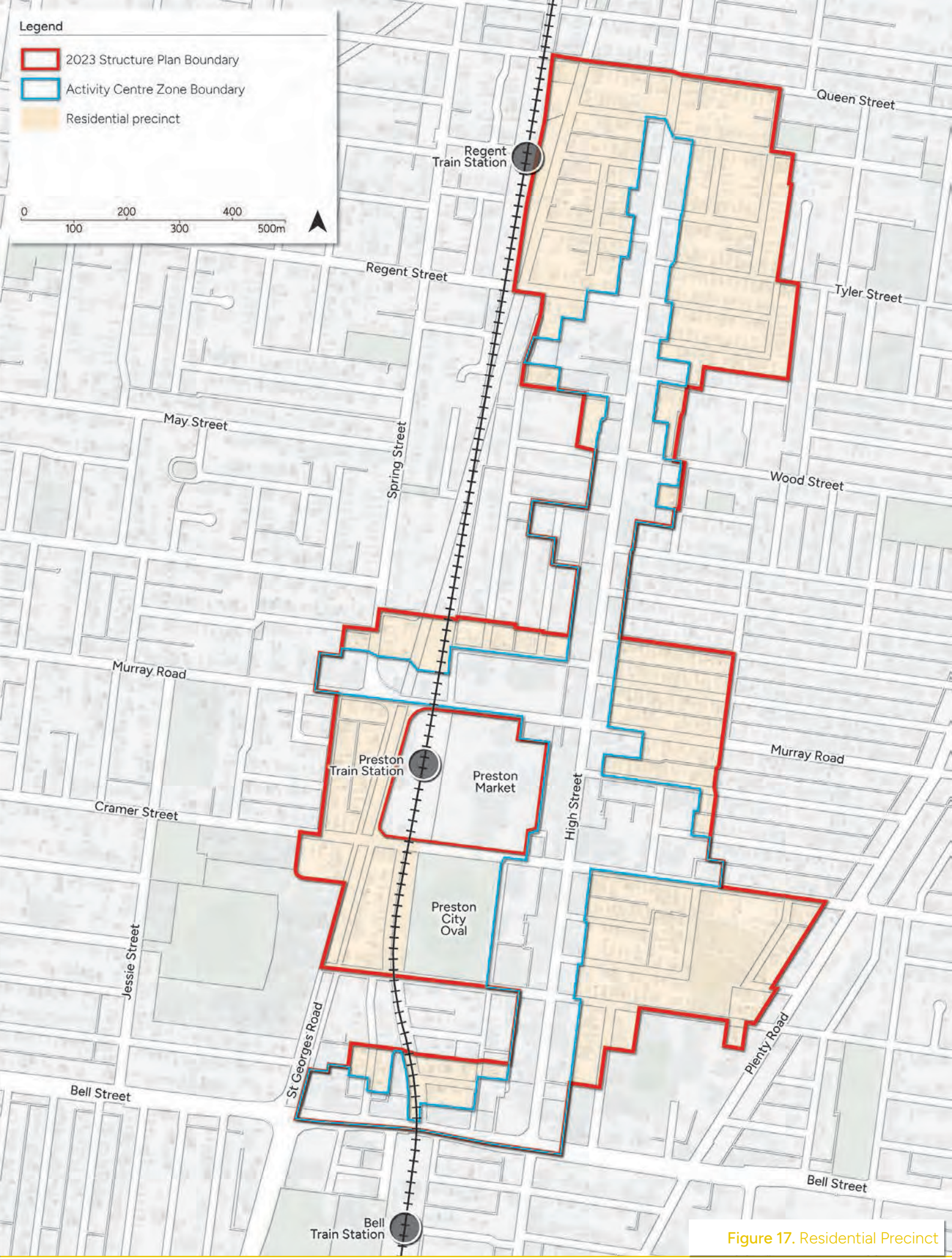


Figure 17. Residential Precinct

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 When will the Structure Plan be implemented?

The proposed changes to the building and land use controls on all affected land will be implemented through a Planning Scheme Amendment which will commence in late 2023 or early 2024. An amendment changes the town planning controls which determine how land can be used or developed. For privately owned land, new planning controls will facilitate new development opportunities. In terms of the major projects proposed on Council-owned land, such as new public spaces, a more detailed implementation plan has been prepared which includes non-statutory implementation and advocacy strategies.

6.2 How will the plan be funded?

The implementation program is a tool which helps coordinate key stakeholders to work towards achieving the vision of the Structure Plan. Each action contained in the implementation plan has an associated estimated timeframe for delivery to assist in prioritising the scheduling of works to support the growth and development of the Centre. The priorities will be reviewed as required and only the short-term priorities will be submitted for capital funding consideration. All actions will be subject to Council's budgetary processes and considered against broader priorities of Council.

The following timings are utilised:

- Short term – one to five years,
- Medium term – five to ten years,
- Long term – More than ten years,
- Ongoing.

6.3 Implementation Table

The Preston Central Structure Plan includes actions which are implemented through the following:

Prepare planning controls P Implement through planning controls within the Preston Central planning scheme amendment.

Deliver	D	Deliver through a commitment made by Council funding strategies.
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Advocate A Work with key stakeholders to advocate for and curate the delivery of actions.

NO	ACTION	P	D	A	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Action 1	Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement a comprehensive and facilitative land use framework for Preston Central. The amendment should apply the Activity Centre Zone to land to the north of Bell Street currently affected by the Priority Development Zone, Schedule 2.	√			City Futures, Darebin City Council (DCC)	Short term
Action 2	Continue and enhance the Active Spaces in Darebin initiative to ensure there are opportunities for creative businesses to take on short-term, affordable lease agreements within vacant commercial spaces.		√	√	Economic Development, Creative Culture & Events, DCC and Creative Victoria	Short term
Action 3	Complete the municipal wide Community Infrastructure Plan to identify infrastructure and facilities required for Preston Central.		√	√	City Projects, DCC	Short term
Action 4	Create and coordinate a calendar of local events that celebrate Preston Central's diversity of people, culture, activity, shops and food.		√	√	Creative Culture & Events, DCC	Short term
Action 5	Investigate opportunities to redesign or create new public spaces suitable for holding minor and major public events and activities. In priority locations (i.e., Preston City Oval, Plazas and forecourts) ensure the designs include infrastructure supply points (3 phase power, drainage, water supply).		√	√	City Design, DCC	Medium term

NO	ACTION	P	D	A	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Action 6	Optimise public utilisation of facilities and open spaces year-round by conducting a comprehensive centre-wide assessment to identify opportunities for greater use. This could include informal outdoor recreation, like installing basketball hoops and 'five-a-side' caged soccer facilities.			√	City Design, DCC	Medium term
Action 7	Explore opportunities to develop a 'joint user agreement' template with non-Council landowners such as private industry, schools, peak bodies, or other public agencies to assist in the negotiations of public use of private or state government assets.			√	Economic Development, DCC and Department of Education and Training	Medium term
Action 8	Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement a comprehensive built form framework for Preston Central. The amendment should apply the Activity Centre Zone to land currently affected by the Priority Development Zone (Schedule 2) to the north of Bell Street and implement the built form controls for each Precinct (together with Action 1).	√			City Futures, DCC	Short term
Action 9	Prepare a landscaping strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that outlines opportunities to deliver public art, sporting equipment and other public infrastructure within the Centre's public spaces.		√	√	City Design, DCC	Short term
Action 10	Prepare an accessibility strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that outlines opportunities to address any DDA compliant gaps in the public space network. The strategy must also include works which require advocacy with the State Government such as accessibility to public transport.		√	√	Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, Ageing Well Unit, DCC and Department of Transport and Planning	Medium term
Action 11	Prepare a materials schedule for Council owned assets and public space works within Preston Central to ensure the type of materials utilised for future projects are sustainable in the long term and require a low amount of embodied energy to produce.		√	√	Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC and Department of Transport and Planning	Short term
Action 12	Investigate opportunities to utilise new and emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, smart phone apps and other platforms to assist visitors, workers and residents with wayfinding and accessing key destinations.			√	Communications, Engagement & Customer Experience, Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Medium term

NO	ACTION	P	D	A	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Action 13	Facilitate actions that are articulated in other Council plans (such as the Open Space Strategy 'Breathing Space') including but not limited to: creating a Strategic Land Acquisition Plan that contains a decision-making framework to guide selection of new open spaces; and implementing a higher open space contribution rate in the schedule to Clause 53.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme, across all land uses.	√		√	Parks and Open Space, Property Services, DCC	Short term
Action 14	Include a mechanism in the Activity Centre Zone schedule to require an Affordable Housing Contribution as part of new development. The control and value of the contribution should reflect the same requirement that is outlined in Schedule 1 to the Activity Centre Zone for the Preston Market site but for the rest of the centre.	√			City Futures, DCC	Short term
Action 15	Investigate policy mechanisms, which could be incorporated into the Darebin Planning Scheme more broadly that would seek a greater affordable housing contribution than 1.8% of dwellings provided at nil consideration.		√	√	City Futures, DCC	Medium term
Action 16	Prepare a landscaping strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that outlines opportunities to deliver water sensitive urban design principles and canopy coverage & permeability targets.		√	√	Parks and Open Space, Integrated Water Management & Urban Works, DCC	Long term
Action 17	Prepare a centre-wide Movement and Access strategy and associated delivery and funding framework that considers all modes, including the design and location of pedestrian routes, cycling corridors, public transport accessibility and vehicle movements.		√	√	Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Medium term
Action 18	Investigate opportunities for direct east-west connection between Preston City Oval pavilion and HP Zwar Reserve for increased accessibility to active recreation and sports activity.		√	√	Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Medium term
Action 19	Investigate with the Department of Transport and Planning opportunities to deliver traffic signals which prioritise walking and cycling and public transport movements.		√	√	Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Long term

NO	ACTION	P	D	A	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Action 20	Investigate the introduction of a statutory mechanism, such as a Parking Overlay, to reduce car parking provision as part of new development within the Centre.	√			Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Short term
Action 21	Work with car share and electric vehicle providers to create a flexible mobility network for the Centre with planned, allocated spaces in convenient locations on High Street, around Preston and Regent stations and within the Civic Precinct.			√	Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Medium term
Action 22	Prepare an audit of car parking within the Centre to understand where redesigning the existing car park could facilitate a greater number of car parking bays.		√		Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Medium term
Action 23	Investigate the implementation of technology to facilitate more efficient wayfinding of car parking spaces and in turn reducing vehicle circulation within the Centre.		√		Transport Planning and Sustainable Transport, DCC	Medium term
Action 24	Prepare a streetscape masterplan for High Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling paths, parking, footpaths and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.		√		City Design, Integrated Water Management & Urban Works, DCC	Short term
Action 25	Prepare an urban design concept plan for the Council owned land located at 421 High Street, to deliver a through block link between High Street and Preston Market. A community engagement and feedback process should be undertaken on the concept plan prior to its delivery.		√	√	City Design, DCC	Medium term
Action 26	Prepare a master plan for the Civic Precinct which explores opportunities to optimise the land owned by Council, to achieve the following outcomes: a new east-west connection between Kelvin Grove and High Street; new accessible and affordable housing and workspaces; and new public open space to integrate and revitalise Preston Library forecourt		√	√	Economic Development, Property Services, Transport Planning and Sustainable Development, Parks and Open Spaces, City Design, DCC	Medium term
Action 27	Attract investment from large institutional tenants to locate within the Civic Precinct, providing opportunities for collaboration and partnership with Council services.			√	Economic Development, DCC	Long term

NO	ACTION	P	D	A	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Action 28	Prepare a design for a new crossing facility across Gower Street for Preston High School students.		√	√	City Design, Transport Planning and Sustainable Development, DCC	Short term
Action 29	Prepare a concept layout plan of the St Georges Road and Cramer Street intersection. The concept plan should be designed to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist connections between St. Georges Road and the Preston Market.		√	√	City Design, DCC	Medium term
Action 30	Prepare a masterplan for Preston City Oval. The masterplan should seek to optimise the use of the land for a variety of facilities, with specific consideration given to the potential delivery of a skate park.		√	√	City Design, Parks and Open Spaces, DCC	Medium term
Action 31	Prepare a streetscape masterplan for High Street and Regent Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling paths, parking, footpaths, crossing facilities and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.		√	√	City Design, Integrated Water Management & Urban Works, DCC	Medium term
Action 32	Prepare a public realm masterplan for the land surrounding Regent Station. The masterplan should explore opportunities to incorporate places for informal outdoor recreation cycling path connections and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles into the existing public open space.		√	√	City Design, DCC	Medium term
Action 33	Prepare a streetscape masterplan for High Street and Henry Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling path connections, parking, footpaths, crossing facilities and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles.		√	√	City Design, Integrated Water Management & Urban Works, DCC	Long term
Action 34	Prepare a streetscape masterplan for Bell Street. The masterplan should guide the design and delivery of green spaces, street furniture, cycling paths, parking, footpaths and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles		√	√	City Design, Integrated Water Management & Urban Works, DCC	Short term



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