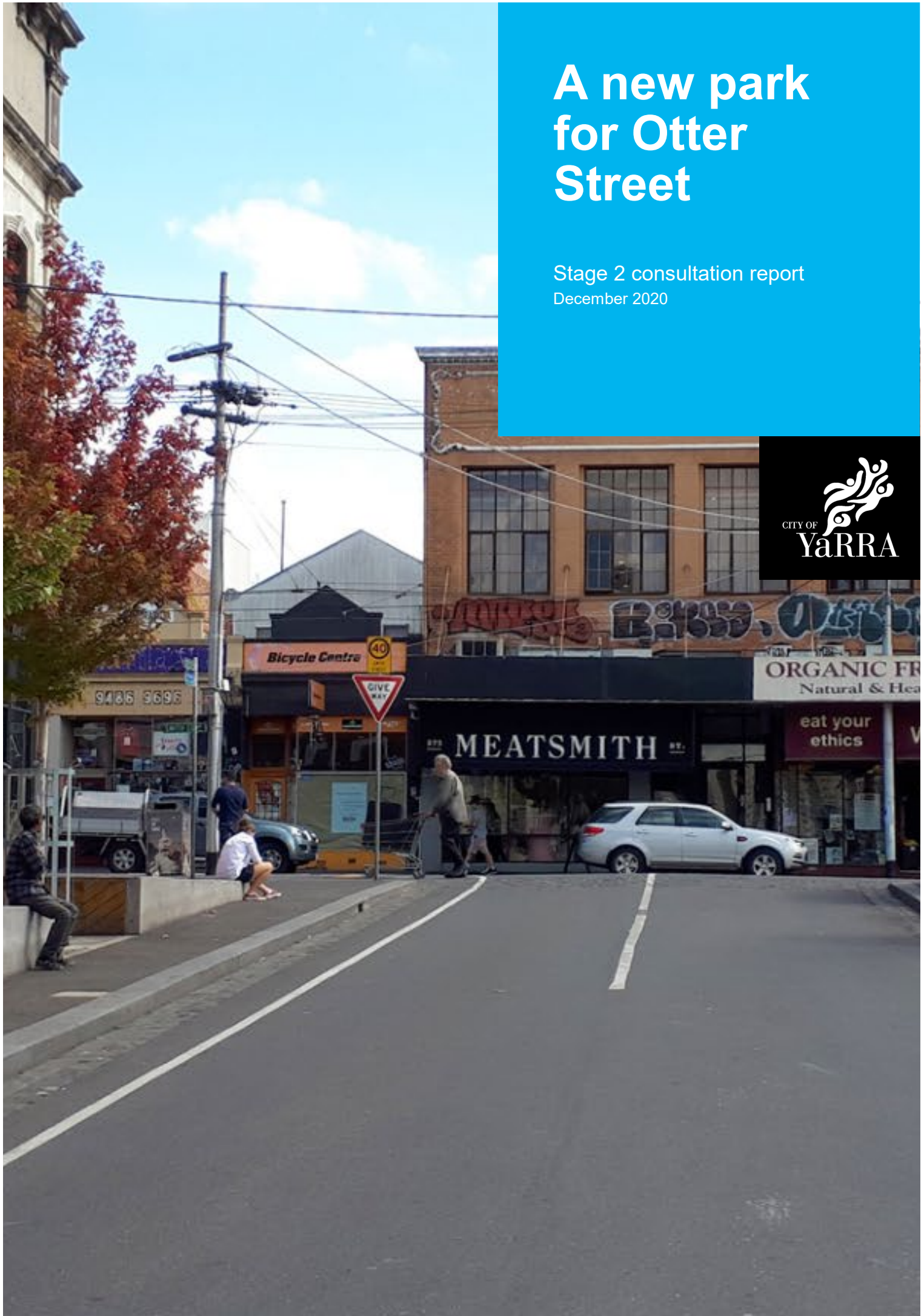
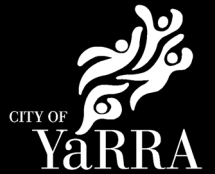


A new park for Otter Street

Stage 2 consultation report
December 2020



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

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Introduction

The Victorian Government (Local Parks Program) announced in May that the City of Yarra was successful in obtaining funding for two new pocket parks in Collingwood.

A new park on Otter Street, at the intersection of Smith Street in Collingwood is one of these projects. It would provide an increase in the amount of green space available in Collingwood and improving the solar amenity and functionality of the existing reserve.

The park aims to provide a green space for informal outdoor recreation such as sitting, resting, gathering, play, and connecting with nature.

Pocket parks are one way we can create new open space to benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone who works, visits or lives in Yarra. The improvement of this space also aligns with the recently adopted Yarra Open Space Strategy.

Community engagement overview

A key aspect of the project is consulting with local residents to obtain feedback to help shape the design of the future space.

In August 2020, Yarra's community were invited to share their views on the opportunity for a park expansion, with a thorough survey. In May, when the funding was first announced, we also invited the community to provide initial ideas and feedback.

When the funding was first announced in May 2020, we informed the community through letter-boxed flyers and fact sheets, letters to property owners, on-site corflute signage, and updates on our social media channels and through e-newsletters.

Community engagement commenced in early August 2020 and concluded on 18 September 2020. The objectives were to:

- Raise awareness, among residents, property owners and other stakeholders of the opportunity for a new pocket park on Otter Street
- Understand the level of community support for an expansion of the reserve and generate ideas on what the City of Yarra could do to improve the site for community use.
- Identify any issues/concerns that needed to be considered/addressed as part of the design.
- To build stronger relationships with local residents and ensure the design reflects their values and priorities.

Because of COVID-19, community engagement took place on the Your Say Yarra webpage, which had both an on-line online survey and discussion forum to inform the community about the project and allow broad community participation.

Approximately 2000 residents and stakeholders were informed about the online consultation by way of a flyer which outlined ways to obtain more information and provide feedback. Signs were also placed on-site informing people about the project and how to get involved.

Fifty-five people completed the online survey, over 13 people participated in the online discussion forum and we received direct feedback from 5 people via emails and phone calls.

Engagement findings

A summary of the feedback received from the community during the consultation process is provided below.

The feedback is structured around the five key questions posed to participants:

- If there was a pocket park on Otter Street, what would you like to be able to do in this small space?
- What should we consider in the design?
- What are your ideas for this space?
- What else should we consider?

We have analysed the comments to generate themes and prioritise ideas that were presented by the highest number of respondents. We will use this to shape the design, and consider the themes against the existing site conditions, opportunities and constraints.

Overall feedback

Most of you liked the idea of a pocket park in Otter Street. You told us a pocket park would provide a place for local residents to enjoy, and saw it as an opportunity to provide more trees and greenery. Most people say they want the new park to be a space to sit and relax and for people to come together; a space that would make the neighbourhood friendlier and greener.

A smaller number of people had some concerns over the potential for increased congestion in the surrounding road network if Otter Street was closed to make way for a park. Some people also raised concerns around community safety.

Q1. If there was a pocket park on Otter Street, what would you like to be able to do in this small space?

The top four activities were:

- Enjoy nature
- Rest on the grass in the sun or shade
- Small picnic or gatherings
- Enjoy casual interactions with other locals

Behind these were:

- Be by myself outside
- Do something active

Q 2. What should we consider in the design?

The top themes that emerged were:

- Create a park with a natural feel
- Provide grass, trees and seating
- Indigenous cultural history
- Local arts scene
- Opportunity for community events
- Provide for bicycle and pedestrian access

Q 3. What are your ideas for this space?

The top themes that emerged were:

- More greenery (trees, plants, grass)
- Versatile lawn area
- Reflect aboriginal history of area
- Promotion of local visual arts
- Simple, not 'overdesigned'
- Balance of shade and sun

- Possibility to hold events/small festivals
- Lighting
- Dog friendly

Q 3. What else should we consider?

The top themes that emerged were:

- Ways of deterring rough sleepers and noisy drinkers
- The food delivery drivers who prop on the corner of Otter and Smith
- The impact of traffic on surrounding streets, particularly Bedford Street
- Vandalism and ensure the design doesn't attract skaters
- Access to multiple public buildings along Otter Street

Next steps

Thank you for taking the time to share your ideas with us. We received intelligent considered responses which show an understanding of the urban fabric of Collingwood.

What are we doing with your ideas?

As an outcome of the consultation process, a number of community values have been identified to underpin the development of the concept plan for Otter Street. These include:

- The creation of a pocket park that reflects the indigenous cultural history of the area
- A variety of opportunities for natural shade, as well as solar access
- Passive, reflective and quiet space
- Opportunities for occasional social interaction/gathering
- Address any flow-on traffic effects of the road closure on surrounding streets
- Create a safe space that incorporates Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Principles
- Provide an appropriate level of amenities to support the park users
- Consider pedestrian, cycling and vehicular access

We will be using these values to shape the design, function and layout of the park.

What are the next steps?

We will come back to you with a draft Concept Plan that you can comment on in March 2021. There will be further opportunities for you to provide feedback on this plan and shape the final space.

We will also be undertaking further traffic analysis over the coming months. In February 2021 we plan on collecting traffic data and developing more detailed recommendations in relation to traffic and parking. This may depend on the extent to which traffic conditions have stabilised during the COVID recovery.

What level of influence will you have?

Your feedback will shape the space and any decisions around the final design.