

3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm

The public realm of Ringwood is a disparate network of streets and public spaces. Over time, many different treatments have been layered over the streets. This is not an unfamiliar scene for any suburban centre. The Ringwood Transit City Urban Design Framework and other strategies identify key public realm improvements and these and additional ones have been incorporated into this Section. A cohesive public realm improvement strategy is needed for Ringwood, in particular streetscapes as they form the largest component of Ringwood's public realm and character.

Two main plans are provided in this Section, with the first outlining the general strategy for improving the public realm of the Precinct (Figure 17). The second plan provides more specific details for the prioritisation of streetscape improvements and recommended pavement types by area (Figure 17).

3.4.1 Analysis

The Public Realm theme of the Commercial Precinct Plan incorporates the public open spaces, streetscapes, gateways, public art and lighting.

The public realm of Ringwood is limited in both quantity and quality. Key green public space is the Ringwood Lake to the west and the Staley Gardens just north of Seymour Street, the Clock Tower park and the to be constructed New Town Square. The remaining public realm is predominantly streets and a series of small laneways and areas of on grade car parking. These spaces lack connectivity to central Ringwood and the streetscapes have divergent treatments.

Relevant objectives from the Ringwood Transit City Urban Design Masterplan include:

- Establishing a connected web of identifiable and accessible public open spaces, parklands and landscape links and corridors around the whole of the Central Activities District that will communicate the sense of the city set in a natural landscape and an environmental embrace.
- Creating a high quality landscaped setting throughout the Study Area, that supplements the Central Activities District's existing environmental features such as Ringwood Lake, the Mullum Mullum Creek, the highly regarded Maroondah Highway street tree effect and the important Dandenongs mountain 'backdrop'.
- Using high quality public domain, landscape and environmental features to 'distinguish' the Ringwood Central Activities District from other transit based or principal activity centres in metropolitan Melbourne.
- Incorporating Environmentally Sustainable Development principles in the planning, development and construction of the precinct, especially in relation to building design and management of storm water and water reuse.
- Formation of a clear and distinguishable regime of native and exotic street tree planting that builds upon the already considerable Maroondah Highway treatments and helps to reinforce the legible grid street network.
- Redefining Ringwood Lake as an open, visible and inviting focal point for outdoor recreation and activity in the Central Activities District inherently linked to other more discreet public open spaces within the Town Centre core.
- Greening of the railway reserves to either side of Ringwood Station to improve the landscape and environmental image of Ringwood as experienced by commuters.
- Enhancing the connections between the Central Activities District and Town Centre activities and the considerable recreation and activity facilities and associated open spaces to the south along Greenwood Avenue.
- Identification of focused play and recreation spaces to the periphery of the Central Activities District.

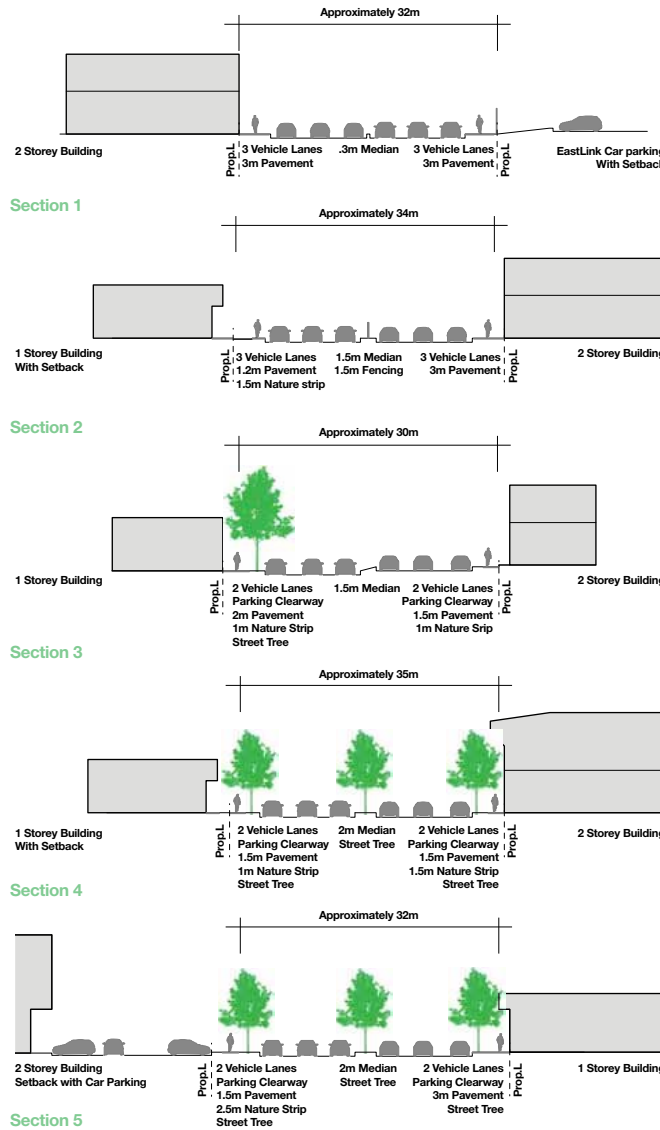
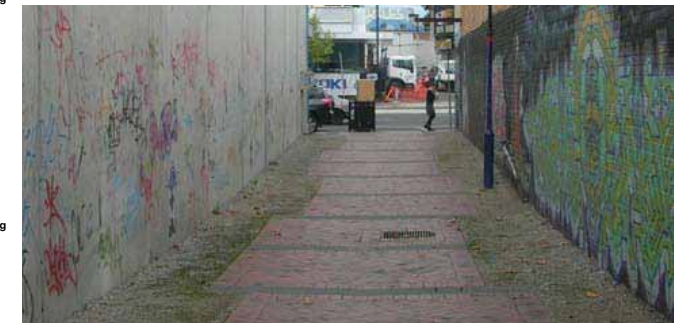


Figure 15. Existing Cross Sections of Maroondah Highway, illustrating varied road and built form character

Public Realm Opportunities



Upgrade pedestrian pavement along Maroondah Highway and other key streets



Upgrade pedestrian link between Maroondah Highway and Corporation Lane



Location of existing sections

3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm

Objectives

The key objectives that have been developed for public spaces within the precinct include:

- Ensure a high quality public and gateway experience along both Maroondah Highway and the Railway line;
- Ensure a reduction in the back of face mentality for development along infrastructure lines;
- Communicate to all stakeholders the spatial and physical opportunities of the precinct;
- Ensure pedestrian and vehicle safety through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles and appropriate design responses;
- Enhance leisure, art and public activity along the boulevard;
- Communicate the importance of connectivity between activity centres and adjoining residential areas; and
- Understand the spatial and cultural relationships between adjacent land uses or building frontages and streetscape treatments.

Challenges

A number of challenges have been identified in relation to spaces, including the main western gateway to Maroondah City Council and Ringwood, which is marked by the EastLink interchange and signage, retaining walls, high powered electricity pylons and low quality buildings.

The lack of public domain spaces or quality pedestrian footpaths (many are too narrow) is also a challenge to creating the Maroondah Highway vision. See Figure 16 and 17.

A good use of street tree planting is found in some areas, however there is a difficulty in expanding the boulevard tree planting along the entire length of the Maroondah Highway because of the narrowness of the road easement, the number of vehicular lanes and the narrow footpath widths, as shown in Figure 16

3.4.2 Opportunities

Opportunities which are present in relation to spaces relate to creating the 'boulevard' vision and livability. (See Figure 18.)

These opportunities include:

- Shifting the public domain form of Maroondah Highway from a typical highway to a livable and walkable boulevard;
- Provision of a gateway feature into Ringwood that is a welcoming entry into the city, establishing the Maroondah Highway as a liveable and attractive destination;
- The views experienced from the western gateway to the Dandenongs and Ringwood from a higher vantage point;
- Creating Maroondah Highway as a high quality public 'green boulevard' domain;
- Future investigation into the design of Maroondah Highway will need to be undertaken to create quality spaces whilst addressing road safety considerations.
- A greener environment, both in landscaping and sustainability;
- Utilisation of views and broader landscape settings;

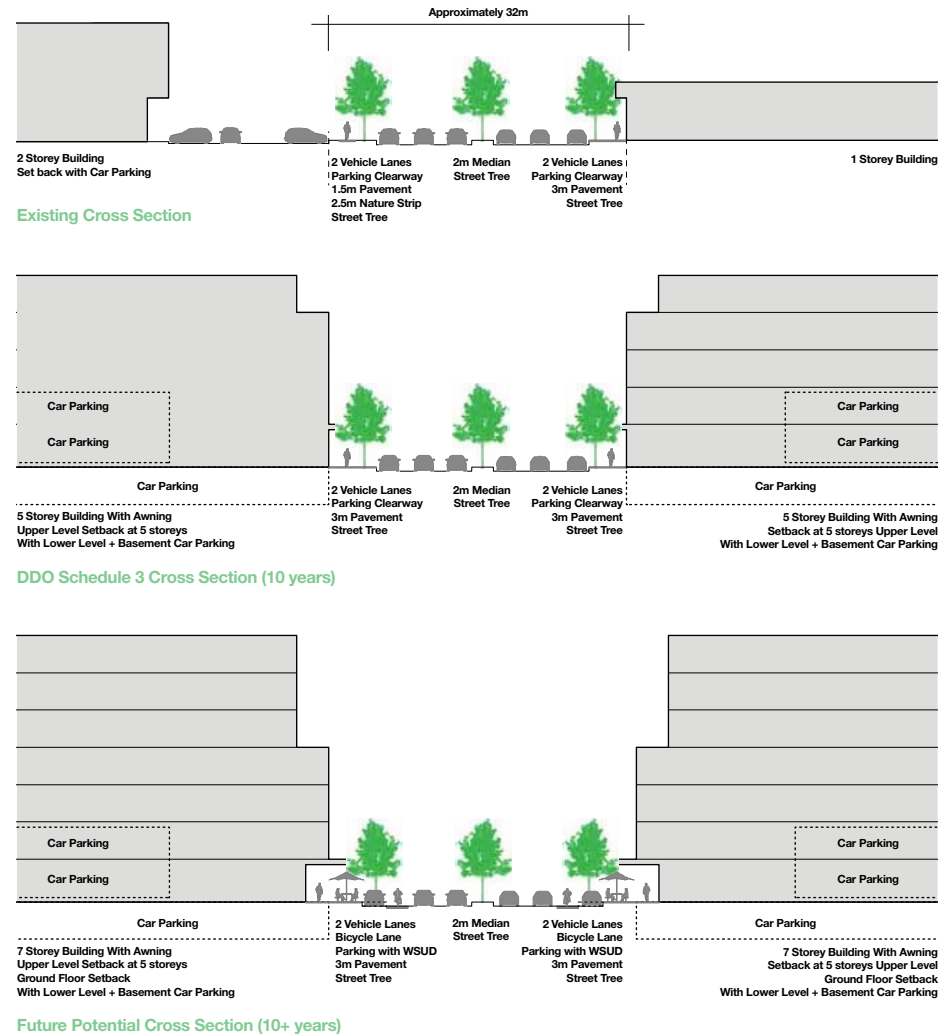


Figure 16. Future Long Term Potential of Maroondah Highway and its transformation into a higher quality road. This will need to address VicRoads road and safety concerns.




3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm






Figure 17. Public Domain Upgrade Priorities Plan

Main Public Realm Features

-  Improved Existing Gateways
-  To be Constructed Pedestrian Bridge as New Gateway
-  Improved Maroondah Highway Boulevard treatment

Proposed Pavement Types (see 3.4.3 for description)

-  Central Areas
-  Middle Areas
-  Outer Areas

Streetscape Priority Works

-  Priority Streets

3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm

- Improving railway line views with vegetation and commissioned art, including youth art (not graffiti tags);
- Wider and safer footpaths with plenty of seating; and
- Sculpture and art work, reflecting the community's talents.

Public Domain

The objectives of the public domain are to improve the public spaces in the precinct through increased quality and a feeling of safety and the creation of new public spaces. The public domain should also encourage safe walking to and around the centre.

Figure 19 – Public Domain Upgrade Priorities Plan provides an overview of the existing conditions and recommendations for the public domain within the precinct.

3.4.3 Key Directions

General recommendations for the public domain within the commercial precinct include:

- Provide high quality pedestrian footpaths, seating, shade, shelter and street lighting on key walking routes, particularly between public transport and major activity nodes;
- Ensure a high degree of pedestrian connectivity and permeability is provided to, from and within the centre; and
- Ensure important pedestrian routes are accessible and legible to people with limited mobility.

The Ringwood Transit City Public Domain & Landscape Guidelines also provide the following general guidelines relevant to the commercial precinct:

- Landscaping and paving should be designed in accordance with the Ringwood Central Activities District Public Domain and Landscaping Guidelines;
- Landscaping and paving should be designed to reflect community identity and to unify uses and buildings;
- High quality, durable materials and details should be implemented to avoid regular reconstruction of public spaces; and
- Existing native vegetation should be retained where possible.

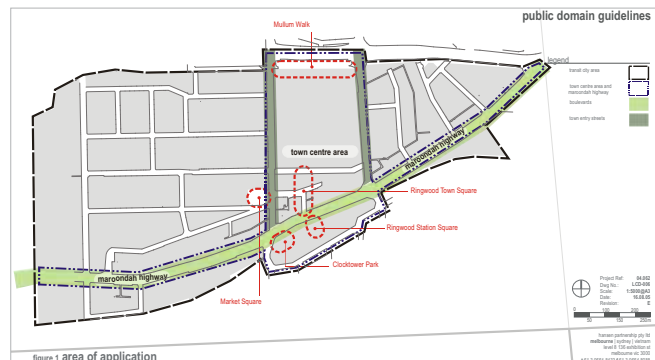


Figure 18. Ringwood Transit City Public Domain Guidelines

Maroondah Highway

The Maroondah Highway is the key public element that unites the Ringwood CAD. Over the years its public realm has received upgrades, such as pavement works and street tree plantings. A more consistent approach is required to the public realm pavement surfaces, fixtures and plantings, to ensure it becomes a memorable “green” boulevard.

Specific streetscape recommendations for the Maroondah Highway are as follows:

- Implement a consistent streetscape landscape palette for Maroondah Highway;
- Follow the Ringwood Transit City Public Domain and Landscape Guidelines, unless otherwise stated (this recommends that *Platanus x acerifolia* (Plane Tree) be the consistent tree planting along Maroondah Highway);
- Ensure that the trees have adequate space to achieve the desired canopy effect without being detrimental to the businesses situated along the highway.
- Create a hierarchy of pavement materials;
- Improve the quality of paving on existing footpaths and identify priority zones for pavement upgrade works. Ensure pavement types are consistent with identified zones, i.e. a higher quality pavement between Ringwood and New Streets and between Warrandyte and Mt Dandenong Road; and
- Create a lower height planting theme amongst all medium height plantings. Use more native and drought resistant species under the Plane Trees. An option is also to remove planting and provide gravel garden beds.
- Ensure tree planting along footpaths does not conflict with the verandahs.

Pavement Types and Hierarchy Recommendations

Specific recommendations for the type and hierarchy of pavements for Maroondah Highway include:

Central Area

The Central Area includes the Maroondah Highway immediately to the west of New Street (until Market Street) and to the east of Warrandyte Road (until Pratt Street). The material palette of Ringwood Street should be utilised for this area.

Middle Area

The Middle Area is between Market and New Street and between Pratt Street and Mt Dandenong Road (excluding Ringwood Lake). This area should use precast concrete pavers for the Maroondah Highway to complement the Ringwood Street colour and texture, or a high quality in-situ concrete finish.

Outer Areas

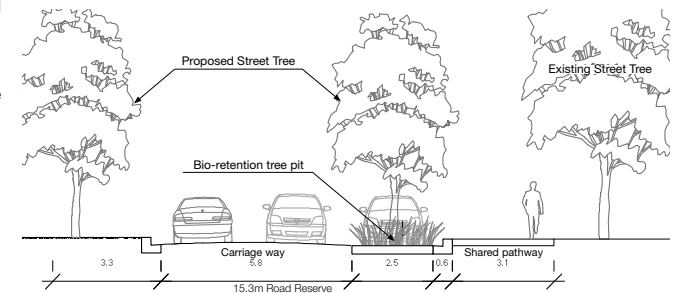
The Outer Area includes the Maroondah Highway between New Street and Heatherdale Road. This area should provide for a high quality in-situ concrete finish.



Preferred Streetscape Treatments



Indicative WSUD Streetscape Treatments



Potential Charter Street upgrade

3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm: Streetscape Recommendations and Priority

Precinct Streetscape Strategy

In addition to the Boulevard recommendations the remaining streets also require a consistent and unified approach. Specific recommendations and priorities are outlined in the table adjacent.

Implementation Priorities are:
Short Term 0-3 years
Medium Term 4-8 years
Long Term 8 + years

Type of Street	Name of Street	Function and Elements Recommended in Street				Type of Pavement	Recommendation	Priority
		On Road Bicycle Lane (as per Ringwood Bicycle Plan)	Outdoor Dining	Street Planting / WSUD	Road Extension			
Primary Arterial Roads	Maroondah Highway	Bike Lanes to be investigated				Refer to recommendations under Maroondah Highway, Page 26.	Short Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install drought-tolerant mass planting native species in median. Upgrade pavements immediately east of Warrandyte Road and east of Ringwood Street. Medium to Long Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade pavements entire length of Maroondah Highway Long term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade all landscape / built form interfaces with Maroondah Highway. Provide continuous Bicycle lane along Maroondah Highway (Stage 2 Bicycle Plan) 	Short to Long Term
Major Roads	Ringwood Street	Shared path recommended				Utilise same payment treatment as per western side	Short to Medium Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West side upgrade in new palette has been completed. East side to be completed in conjunction with shopping centre development. Investigate shared pathway on eastern side. (Stage 1 & 2 Bicycle Plan) 	Short to Medium Term
Collector Roads	New Street	Bike lane recommended		Currently no street trees		High quality in-situ concrete finish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of on street bike lane to connect to proposed Charter Street shared path and Mullum Mullum creek trail. (Stage 1 Bicycle Plan) Street tree planting. Provide footpath between Maroondah Highway and Charter Street on west side. 	Short Term
	Bond Street				Extension of road to Sherbrook Avenue	High quality in-situ concrete finish. East of Market Street pavement treatment should match Ringwood Street.	Short term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street tree planting Medium to Long Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of road to Sherbrook Avenue 	Short to Long Term
Local Streets	Charter Street	Shared path recommended			Pedestrian connection only to Sherbrook Avenue and street extensions east to Ringwood Street	High quality in-situ concrete finish.	Short term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared pathway (Stage 1 Bicycle Plan) Street tree planting Medium Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension as pedestrian pathway to Sherbrook Avenue Extension as street to Ringwood Street 	Short to Medium Term
	Market Street	Bike lane recommended				High quality in-situ concrete finish or/ precast concrete pavers (to match bluestone pavers used in Ringwood Street)	It is recommended that the street is upgraded in conjunction with the redevelopment Ringwood market site and of the redevelopment of the sites at the corner of Market Street and Maroondah Highway to provide a quality footpath with street trees.	Short to Long Term
	Murray Place					High quality in-situ concrete finish or/ precast concrete pavers (to match bluestone pavers used in Ringwood Street)	Murray Place has been upgraded with brick paving and new street trees. Over time replace the brick paving with the Ringwood public domain Palette.	Medium Term
	Ringwood Arcade					High quality in-situ concrete finish.	Small laneway entrance that requires upgrade in conjunction with car park upgrade along Railway line. Provide footpath connection.	Medium Term
	Olive Grove					High quality in-situ concrete finish.	Service and commercial street with olive tree plantings and basic footpath. Upgrade footpath in long term.	Long
Laneways	Corporation Lane South (between Maroondah Highway and Seymour Street)					High quality in-situ concrete finish or/ precast concrete pavers (to match bluestone pavers used in Ringwood Street)	Long Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small pedestrian only lane between Markets Street and Ringwood street. Long term potential to encourage adjacent built form to have active frontage to lane. Review function of lane in regards to any development proposal; however ensure pedestrian permeability is provided. Short term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short term repave and provide seating and improved lighting. 	Term
New local streets	New Street to Sherbrook Avenue Access				Extension to New Street and Sherbrook Avenue and potential realignment of Seymour Street.	High quality in-situ concrete finish.	New road to connect from New Street to Sherbrook Road as part of the redevelopment of the car yard site.	Short to Medium Term
Car Parks and Access Road	North of Railway Line				New access lane between Olive Grove and Ringwood Arcade		Upgrade car park along north side of railway line. Provide a treed edge to the railway reserve. Provide a paved access road from Olive Grove and Ringwood Arcade.	Short to Medium Term

3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm

Open Space Recommendations

Limited open space exists within the commercial precinct, as Ringwood Lake is the only significant public open space.

However, the Ringwood Transit City Urban Design Framework recommends that there be an 'eastern open space connection', which would be a major open space connection between Warrandyte Road and Ringwood Lake, along Maroondah Highway.

It is unclear what the extent of this open space connection is recommended to be however, as the current land is both under private ownership and VicTrack ownership. A long term acquisition strategy should be developed to determine the potential for this open space.

Recommendations

- Implement a significant Open Space Link, more specifically the 'eastern open space connection'. This would require the acquisition of private land and negotiations with VicTrack for the long term lease or acquisition of their property, currently leased for a car sales operator.
- Implement a widened 'Green Link' as part of the Maroondah Highway streetscape. This would require the acquisition of a few metres of the private land holding to create a continuous widened road easement, which would allow for a wider footpath, potential shared trail (as recommended by the Ringwood Bicycle Study) and tree planting.
- Implement a pedestrian connection alongside the Railway Line for the length of the commercial precinct. This would require negotiations with VicTrack and potential land acquisitions to create this corridor space.

Ringwood Lake

Ringwood Lake is the primary open space in Ringwood and provides for large scale community events and passive recreation. It is recommended that a Master Plan for the lake, including Bedford Park, be developed and a shared pathway connection be implemented to and throughout the park.

Private Open Space

It is recommended that private open space be incorporated into large site developments within the commercial precinct for local workers and visitors. These sites have been identified on the precinct plan at Figure 9.

Gateways Recommendations

The objective of the 'gateways' in the commercial precinct is to create a memorable entry experience into Ringwood along Maroondah Highway and the Railway Line. Figures 17 show potential gateway treatment from existing reports

Western Gateway

The Western Gateway is located between Heatherdale Road and Burwood Avenue, as multiple strategies recommend a gateway treatment at this western end of Maroondah Highway. One of the biggest challenges that has previously been identified for this gateway, includes the fact that it will need to compete with the current large scale road signage, powerlines and buildings. However, the gateway will have a large impact on the precinct if it extends along the Boulevard and compliments the future pedestrian bridge.

Various strategies have outlined recommendations for a gateway at this location. These

existing strategies include:

- Ringwood Transit City Lighting Strategy (lighting of future pedestrian bridge over Maroondah Highway)
- Ringwood Western Gateway Urban Design Review (entrance sign on wall and flags)
- Maroondah Pedestrian Strategy (Junction Markers next to EastLink)
- Maroondah Urban Design Framework (entrance sign on wall and central median strip planting)

The recommendations in these strategies have merit, however in consideration of the newly located large EastLink sign near Heatherdale Road it may be wise to allow the future pedestrian bridge to be the only additional element in this very cluttered landscape. The view to the Dandenongs is paramount and the pedestrian bridge will help to underscore this view.

Eastern gateway - Ringwood Lake

Ringwood Lake and Bedford Park is an existing key gateway experience into Ringwood from the east. Therefore, no additional gateway element is required. It is preferable that the Maroondah frontage of Ringwood Lake is well managed and maintained, and the potential for a long term recommendation to remove the Poplar species and replace with indigenous trees species be explored.

Railway 'Boulevard' Gateway

The objective of the railway gateway is to improve the landscape and visual amenity for train travellers and those areas adjacent to the railway easement. The rail corridor is included in the Maroondah Highway vision as a 'green boulevard'.

The railway line is an important gateway to Ringwood by public transport. However, the view from the train of the rail line easement and adjacent development is not of an appropriate standard. The railway line easement and adjacent available land provides an opportunity to create a unique train experience that provides another view of Ringwood to visitors and travellers.

VicTrack is preparing "Urban Design Guidelines for Development Interfacing Rail Corridors", this is yet to be released, however this document will become a future reference for Council for this area.

Recommendations for a Railway Gateway

Firstly, it should be determined if additional tree planting of indigenous tree species can be undertaken by Maroondah City Council on VicTrack land to create a green gateway. This is likely to cause some difficulties as there is a future potential construction of a 3rd track on the northern side of the railway, which will reduce the current easement width considerably. If land is limited, undertake tree planting along the adjacent road easements and within private property.

It is also recommended that Council work with adjacent land owners to reduce the visual impact of large blank walls and to screen service areas (as per Part B: Urban Design and Development Guidelines). Working with private land owners and public artists (or legal graffiti) will also assist in creating a unique Ringwood art wall, utilising the many existing blank walls, to be seen and experienced by train travellers.

It is proposed to investigate the formalisation of the existing ad hoc pedestrian link along the Railway line between Olive Grove and Wantirna Road. The pedestrian link to be viable would need to address the public safety/security issues =along the current "back-of-house" frontages.

Western Gateway



Existing character of Western Gateway

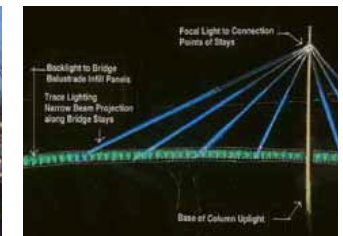


Example of Gateway Treatment proposed for the Western Gateway (Source: Western Gateway Urban Design Review)

Example of Gateway Pedestrian Bridge From Martin Butcher Lighting Design



Concept photomontage Maroondah Highway pedestrian bridge (daytime)



Opportunity for Maroondah Highway pedestrian bridge (night time)

Eastern Gateway



Existing character of Eastern Gateway



3.0 Themes

3.4 Public Realm

Lighting Recommendations

Lighting within the commercial precinct should be appropriate to its location, i.e. to assist with legibility, mood creation and not have an adverse impact on nearby residences. Refer to the Ringwood Transit City Lighting Strategy November 2007 for guidelines/recommendations.

Public Art Recommendations

The objective of public art in the commercial precinct is to incorporate public art and creative landscaping in the public domain and private development. Recommendations to achieve this are outlined below:

- Develop an arts and gateway strategy for the Maroondah Highway;
- Encourage public art and creative landscapes in new public and private developments;
- Promote public sculptures, monuments, art and creative landscapes in creating landmarks and a sense of place in the precinct; and
- Involve artists in the design of public spaces.

Recommended Themes for Public Art

- Recommended themes for public art in the commercial precinct could include:
- The history of Maroondah Highway - from dirt track to arterial road and its contribution to the development of Ringwood.
 - The history of traders and commercial life at Maroondah Highway.
 - Through public transport. For example, individually designed bus shelters along Maroondah Highway.
 - The gateway to the Yarra Valley.

See Figure 20 for public art potential theme.

Gateway and Public art potential themes, From Track, to Road, to Highway, to Boulevard

Track



1843



1855



1870

Road



1924



1928



1940

Highway



1948



1956



1974



2008

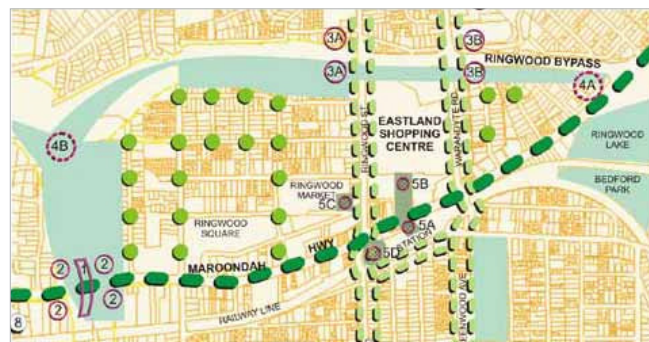


Figure 19. Proposed Public Art and Gateway Locations from the Maroondah Pedestrian Strategy