

WYNDHAM URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT WYNDHAM 2040:

AN URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT FOR A 21st CENTURY FUTURE

"CONNECT, INSPIRE, CREATE, CULTIVATING PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO GROW
OUR COMMUNITY"

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

INCLUDING A STORY FROM "KATIE'S" PERSPECTIVE.....



Wyndham Urban Design Assessment

Wyndham 2040: An Urban Design Assessment for a 21st Century Future

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INTRODUCTION

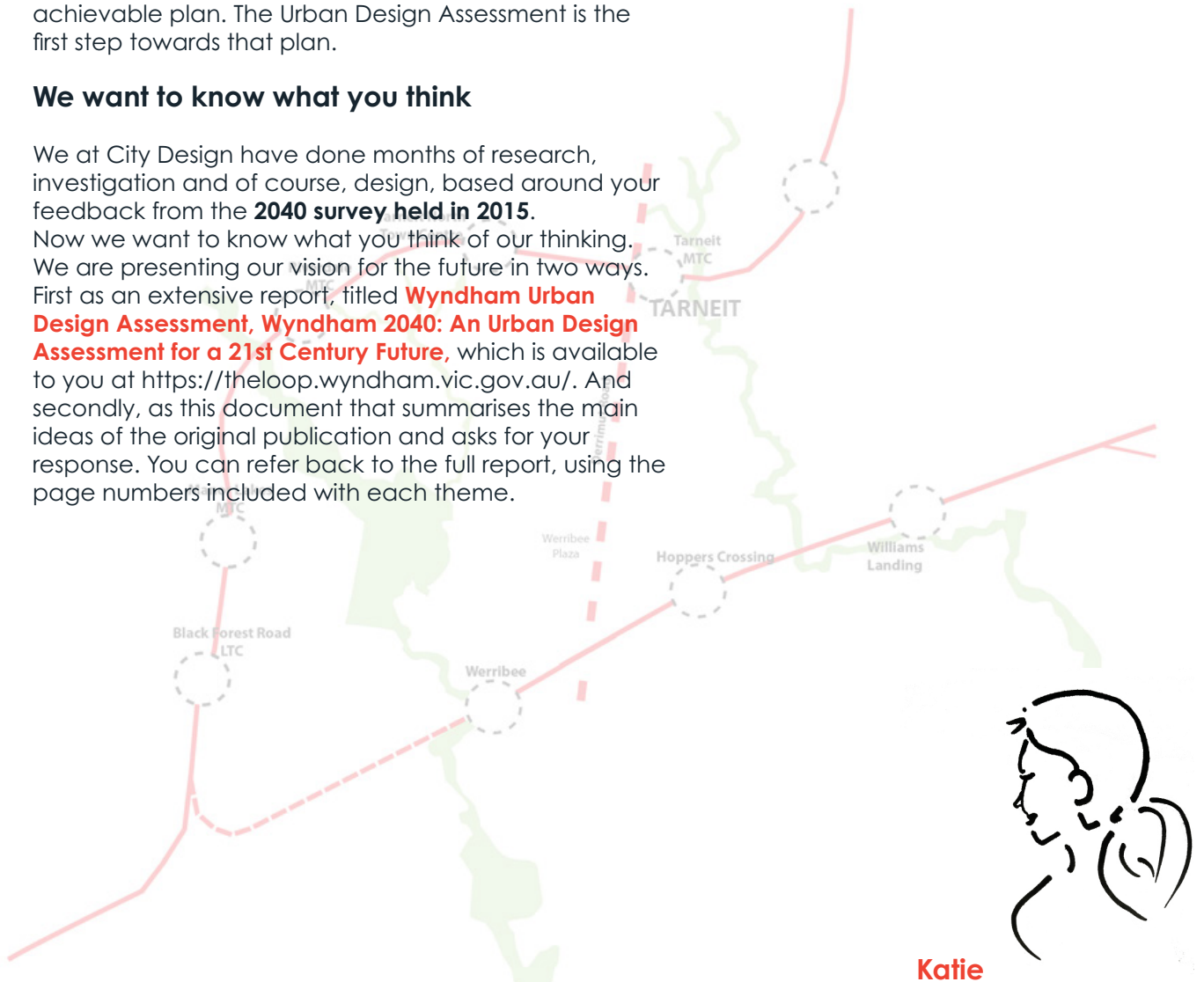
What this report is about

Wyndham City has a vivid and vibrant vision for the future of everyone who lives here; this includes Katie and you and everyone else. In this picture, there are shaded, green avenues, ease of movement from place to place, inviting courtyards and squares in which to gather, and frequent, safe public transport. We want accessible services and a high quality of life for the people of Wyndham. That means a shift from what we currently experience and the need for a robust and achievable plan. The Urban Design Assessment is the first step towards that plan.



We want to know what you think

We at City Design have done months of research, investigation and of course, design, based around your feedback from the **2040 survey held in 2015**. Now we want to know what you think of our thinking. We are presenting our vision for the future in two ways. First as an extensive report, titled **Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040: An Urban Design Assessment for a 21st Century Future**, which is available to you at <https://theloop.wyndham.vic.gov.au/>. And secondly, as this document that summarises the main ideas of the original publication and asks for your response. You can refer back to the full report, using the page numbers included with each theme.



INTRODUCTION

How it's organised

The main report on Wyndham City and this summary, are organised around two parts. Part 1 covers the background, context and assessment. Part 2 is the What if? section that focuses on a possible 21st century Wyndham City through an examination of eight key themes.

We invite your feedback under each of these themes.

What else to consider when giving feedback

We are not asking **how** it will be done. That is a separate question.

For us, looking at the City as if it were a living body and diagnosing the issues puts us in the role of a doctor. Our prescriptions may not always taste pleasant, but will result in a healthier and happier city for all. While we want your views on how these ideas might impact your life, we ask you to consider the needs of all when providing your feedback.

Also, remember that unless you are proactive and make your wishes known, the city will grow without the needs of the community at its centre.

Context/Background

Historically, a planned grid pattern of living has been applied to the area, without regard to the environment or changes in transport and people's needs. Now, intense and sudden population increases are causing growing pains in Wyndham. Rapid, massive development means public transport and services are unable to keep up with demand. Heavy reliance on cars means overcrowded road systems, lengthy commutes and valuable land used for parking. These factors limit people's choices. There is a lack of variety, and vibrancy and resilience are missing from the landscape.



Purpose

The critical focus of excellent town planning and this report is **More Time for Life**. We believe the people of Wyndham will find their general health and happiness improved when they can get where they need to go and do what they need to do with ease and delight. A redesigned City will make a world of difference to everyday experiences.

A STORY TO TELL

"KATIE"

Katie wakes up at 7, having dozed after the alarm, and is already late. Her husband is not there. He left for work at 6 am, hoping to beat the traffic and take less than an hour and a half to make the 24-kilometre trip to Footscray. They've discussed saving money by having only one vehicle, but that would mean Katie waking the children up even earlier to bundle them into the car. To get to the station means a drive as there's no safe way of walking to it and the children are not old enough to be left alone, being 8 and 3.

Right now, they're not even dressed! Katie gets them, and their breakfast and lunches organised, and starts her driving day. The best day care centre is on the other side of the freeway and then over the level crossing. This means constant delays and whining from the children, who have nothing much to look at out the window, only a flat panorama of empty land, masses of houses or car yards. What should be a short trip takes 25 minutes leaving her stressed and fretful when she finally gets to drop Nathan off. Now she has to get Nicky back across the train line for school. Parking near the school gate is impossible and she will be late.

Finally, she is on her way to work in central Werribee, trying to take a winding route to avoid the Sneydes Rd intersection. Each holdup cascades into a small whirlpool of distress in her stomach.

After a quick coffee at work she tries to deal with her emails, but at 12.30 gets a call from the day centre saying Nathan has developed a temperature. After settling things with her manager, Katie is back on the road, feeling anxious. When she sees Nathan, it's obvious a trip to the doctor is necessary. The drop-in medical centre is inside one of the shopping malls, and the only parking spot is on the other side of the plaza. After a long and precarious walk and a wait with a fretful toddler, the diagnosis is an ear infection. Katie is about to get the prescription when she realises she has to leave now to get back to the school for Nicky.



A STORY CONTINUES....."KATIE"

As she is buckling Nathan in, she gets a call from her friend Surabhi and remembers with a jolt that they were supposed to meet for coffee. As it turns out, Surabhi is ringing to say she's stuck in Werribee traffic and isn't going to make it in the time they have before school pickup.

The drive is long and slow with no parking spaces, as usual, closer than three blocks from the gate, so Katie has to take Nathan out with her. They all get back in the car for the drive for the prescription and some food for dinner.

Katie tries to decide on the fastest way home. Hoppers Crossing is just as bad as Werribee so she tries her luck with Derrimut Rd. Both children are fretful and Katie wishes it were easy to take them to the park. There's lots of undeveloped open space around their housing development but no safe way of walking to a proper park, especially with a pusher. The distance and lack of footpaths make it another drive. She just doesn't have the energy to face getting in the car again once they are home.

As Katie gets the children through their night-time routine and sinks onto the couch, she feels exhausted. It's great to have the big house, even with its small yard, that they could afford by moving to this estate, but she hadn't counted on their total reliance on the car, and herself as the family driver.

By the time her husband, grumpy and irritable from his long commute arrives home to say goodnight to the kids and have his separate dinner, she is ready for bed. She needs her rest if she is to do it all again tomorrow.

How can City Design help Katie, and you, have a better day?

INTRODUCTION

WERRIBEE-THE SPINE OF THE DISTRICT

Werribee is the Aboriginal word for spine. This conveys the way the river chasms form the strong central nervous system of the district. We also use this phrase to express the way the nerve centres of town hubs can be developed along a curve. These are not yet connected in any meaningful way, and just like a human body, the City suffers from restricted movement and limited flexibility.

Strengthening the spine and the core of community activity through designing places and spaces for people is the driving purpose of the work of the Design Team. Their work will give Wyndham the support it needs to grow and move in any direction, with ease and enjoyment.

Theme 1 - Moving

Katie had to use the car for every trip because there are not enough trains or stops near her home or the school and the bus service is full of gaps. The regional rail bypasses Werribee so most people use their private vehicles to get about and to work. This means carparks are packed, freeways are full and traffic is congested. The M1 freeway is a block between one side of Wyndham and the other and this, combined with only a few level crossings, makes back and forward driving a slow and frustrating experience.



Possibilities

Light rail or trackless trams run smoothly and often towards the Metro and regional rail stations, designed to match up with current services. This frequent transport partnership creates a fluid arterial network between attractive transport hubs, criss-crossing the city. It is easy for Katie to hop on a tram at one of the many stops along the boulevards and get to the station quickly. Level crossings have been removed at three points to allow traffic to run without constant checks and there are safe places to walk and ride over and beside bridges and roads.

Refer to pp 36 in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 2 - Connecting

Katie feels disconnected from the rest of Wyndham because the growth goes outwards. There seems little choice beyond the main shopping malls. The vertebrae that form the spine of Werribee-Werribee City Centre: Werribee East, Hoppers Crossing and Williams Landing - have little reference to each other. Beyond catching the train and going shopping, they don't offer much to attract Katie, and there's not enough employment within them for her husband to work locally.



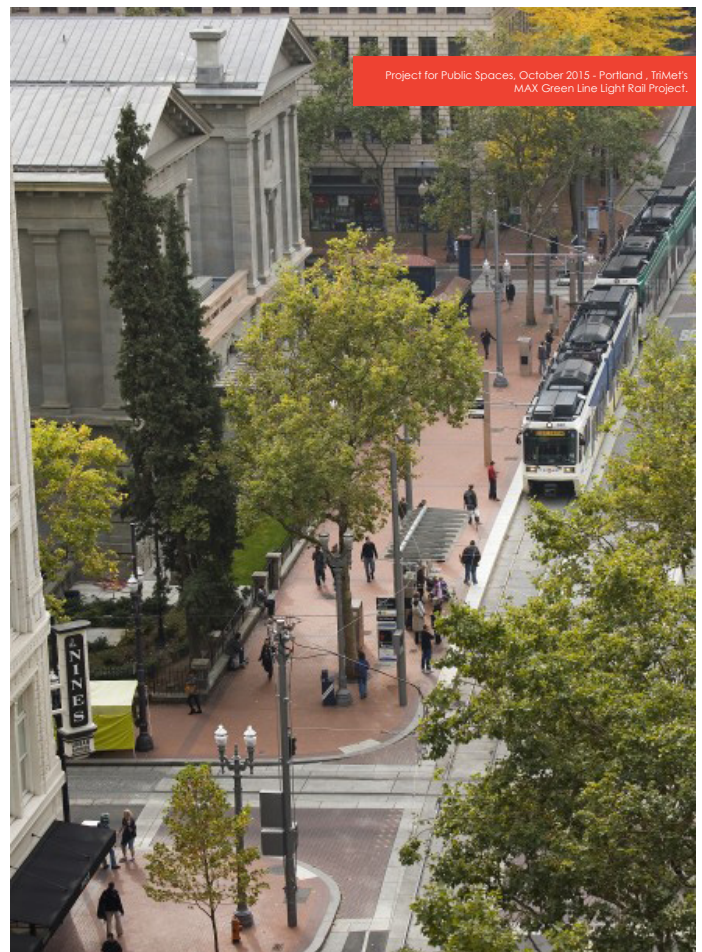
Possibilities

Each of these is now a thriving urban centre, offering education, employment entertainment and places for small businesses to thrive. Without competing with each other, the centres are linked by the design of their new stations, squares, offices and community spaces. Between and among them are botanic gardens, heritage walks and places for people to stroll and ride their bikes. Apartments and commercial buildings look towards the grassed areas, and if Katie wanted to add to her Diploma, she could get to her TAFE class at the new Hoppers Crossing Station precinct.

Refer to pp 40 in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 3- Balancing

Katie uses the main thoroughfares frequently but only as ways to drive as quickly as possible from one end of Wyndham to the other. There is little there to please the eye, and it seems that growing so big so fast and so widely has weakened the City. Its muscles are overstretched and struggle to support its population. This shows up in a disjointed landscape, weakened connections and pedestrian unfriendly localities.



Possibilities

Roads such as Derrimut Rd are now classic boulevards and avenues, leafy and shaded in summer, structural and dignified in winter. The trackless tram runs along them, between the road and the wide footpaths. Small stops and a mix of shops, cafes and places to meet occur naturally at intersections. Now the major roads are an asset to the City and pleasant way to access the new main town centres. Katie catches the tram to catch up for coffee with Surabhi at their favourite cafe near the library. Refer to pp 44 in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 4 - Centring or Consolidating

There seems little focus on the human scale of life in the vast spread of Katie's municipality. Everything she needs to do and get to in her day is far enough away that it means she has to drive to get there. Travelling through this landscape, there is a sameness about it - common signs, colours and building types reoccur monotonously. The car parks stretch on. Outside the main town centres there is not much to compel your attention or draw you in. What is there to nurture the heart in the suburbs?



Possibilities

The suburbs each have their sub-urban town centres, designed to be alive and even spectacular, offering glitz, variety, choice and entertainment. These sub-urban centres change as the community changes, providing something for everyone. Central spaces, pedestrian-friendly paths and streets, outdoor dining, safe areas to stroll, chat and watch what's going on by day and at night all make a dramatic difference to the quality of living in one of these areas. There are places for the people to gather, to celebrate. There are markets, meeting rooms, and Katie takes the children to watch the Primary School puppet show in the rotunda. There is a pulse at the centre of each district.

Refer to pp 48 in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 5 - Gathering

Katie and Surabhi planned to meet in the mall, even though they would rather sit outside on a sunny day. There is a shortage of public spaces that are welcoming and restful. In other cities, town squares, plazas and public outdoor spaces are designed to be inviting, sun-filled spaces where you can meet friends and family, relax and converse. They are often known as neighbourhood living rooms because of their attention to the way people like to work and play.



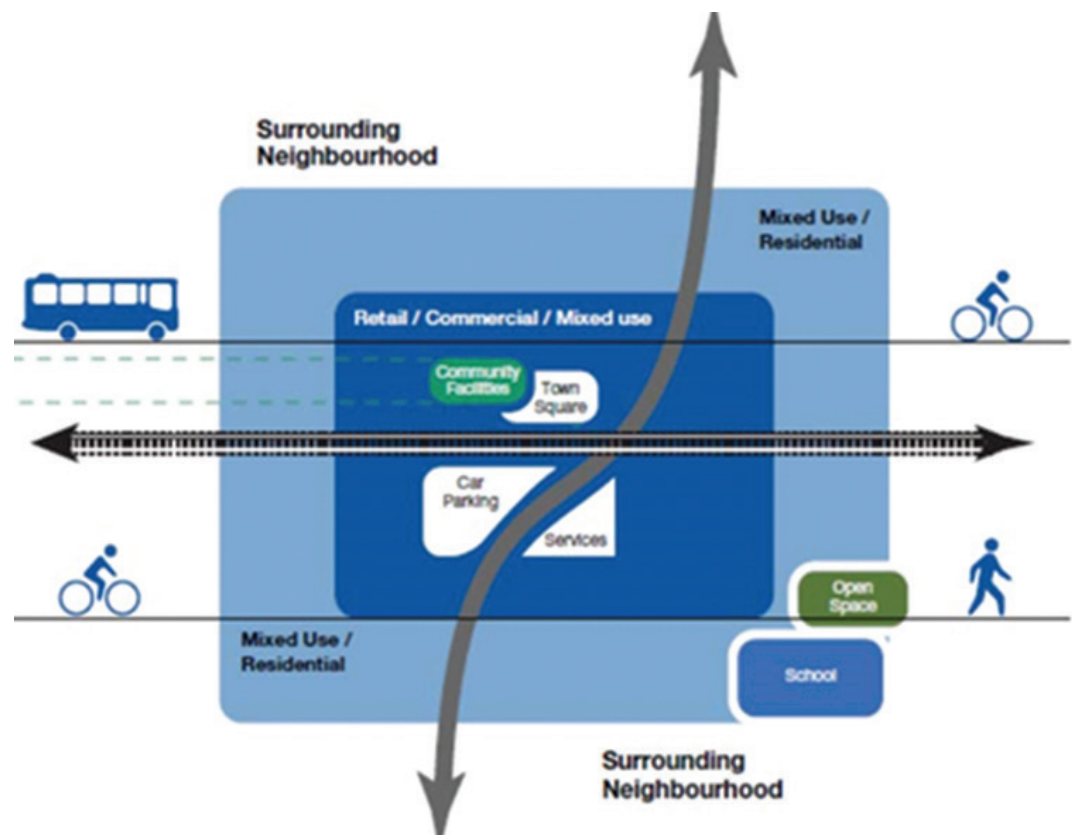
Possibilities

Learning from examples from elsewhere, Wyndham has created plazas and town squares in town centres that are thriving and inviting. People linger there, to connect and rest before heading off to their next destination. Some of the squares have outdoor cafés, fountains, sculpture or a band-shell for performances. Others have many small attractions such as a vendor cart, playground greenery, public art and shade that draws people throughout the day. The squares are edged with shops or attractive apartment blocks that define and enliven them. Katie often sits in the one nearest her home, gathering her thoughts and having a break in her day.

Refer to pp 52 in in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 6 - Integrating

Housing is built rapidly, but the services for the people who live in them take a bit longer. Older suburbs have more facilities, like libraries, theatres, community meeting rooms and health centres and Katie has to drive there to access them. The same goes for sports fields and indoor recreation centres. Even though there is loads of space, finding a place to join a football team or walk the dog can be hard to do.



Possibilities

Centrally located civic spaces house libraries, theatres and meeting rooms create a genuine community buzz. Cleverly, some education centres and gardens are on the rooftops of office blocks. These services are integrated with neighbourhoods as they are built, so they are on the spot and within reach. Katie can walk from the Day care Centre to the Medical Centre in just two minutes.

Open spaces such as sports grounds, adventure playgrounds and places to go for a nature walk along a waterway or just kick about a ball on an even patch of fresh mown grass, make new estates liveable and friendly.

On a larger scale, national sports and training facilities attract major sports teams to the district. Refer to pp 60 in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 7 - Greening

People are attracted to Wyndham by its position and its environment. Waterways, low-lying bird-filled marshes and open spaces beside roads and railways could give it life and liveliness but instead are only empty. Buildings are designed to turn their backs on these green spaces, and paths become dead ends. Landscaping is limited and access to parks is restricted. Flow is interrupted and the movement and energy of the City drained. Katie cannot walk easily or safely to a park.



Possibilities

Swathes of wildlife corridors, tree-lined boulevards and roads softened with flowering trees and shrubs make a patchwork quilt of green vistas across the City. The graceful gardens beside freeways and central roads add texture and shape and contribute to a feeling of wellbeing for the many people who use them daily. Buildings face towards these attractive and elegant natural features. Looking out across the landscaped areas increases safety by inviting the casual observation of neighbours. The walk to the park is a pleasure for Katie and the children along one of the networks of continuous regional paths linking open spaces between the Federation and Bay trails. Recycled stormwater runoff is coordinated to use as irrigation for these spaces and reduce wildfire risks. People flow through the space, as the river does through the landscape.

Refer to pp 64 in in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Theme 8 - Activating

Hand in hand with creating a buzzing, vibrant city is the idea of the 20-minute neighbourhood. This means that everything people need for comfortable everyday living is no more than 20 minutes away. Medical services, stations, bus stops, shops and parks are all much further than this, and the only way to get to them is by car. It is neither easy, safe nor feasible to walk due to lack of footpaths, lighting and distance. In turn, this makes Wyndham a place to drive through rather than somewhere to stop.



Possibilities

Stations and intersections are places to sit and have a coffee with wide flat footpaths, ample lighting and shelter and seats at regular intervals. New train stations at Werribee, Derrimut Road and Hoppers Crossing offered pedestrian paths on both sides of the rail and welcoming signage and greenery. Frequent trackless tram and bus services added to the trains make interchanges only 500 metres apart. You can walk, cycle or use public transport to get all around the City and to medical centres, schools or wherever you need to be. For Katie and her family, Wyndham is a walkable city, easy to live in; a Place for People.

Refer to pp 68 in the Wyndham Urban Design Assessment, Wyndham 2040.

Thank you.