

KNOX

your city



Shine Knox

Retail Activation Strategy

*“Do not wait until the
conditions are perfect to begin.*

*Beginning makes the
conditions perfect.”*

ALAN COHEN

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Foreword

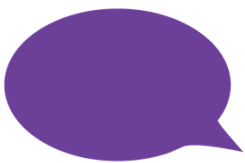
The last 2 years has not been an easy time for Knox. COVID-19 has taken its toll on our traders, retailers and independent business operators and made it clear how important the life of our villages and retail centres is to the health and happiness of our community.

To develop a clear vision and strategy for retail recovery and activation in Knox we have worked with urban strategists Hello City, economists REMPLAN, pro-bono initiative Project Re-Store as well as a broad cross section of business operators and Council departments.

This strategy includes 42 ideas which together have the power to transform retail activity in Knox. These ideas were either sparked by the community in the Shine Knox Ideas Challenge, or reflect the energy, activity and initiatives already happening.

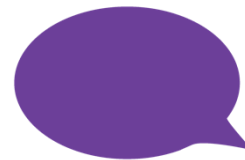
This strategy is about defining a framework to support the life and activity of retail in a way that brings the broadest possible benefits to the whole community. For some of the ideas in this document Council's role is to lead, partner or to deliver outcomes on the ground. For other ideas it's better for Council to step back and support, guide, advocate for, promote and encourage the activities of individuals, businesses or organisations.

Our ambition for the Shine Knox retail strategy is that it is used as a tool by those among you who are making things happen. To shape what you do and how you do it. To inform how and where you spend your resources and how you make your decisions. To inspire and crystallise your conversations, your passions, your work and how you tell your story.



“The sense of community with the people, the small town charm and view of the mountain”

LOCAL RESIDENT



“Where my soul feels happy”

LOCAL RESIDENT

Introduction

In 2020 Knox City Council defined a retail engagement strategy and identity study working with Hello City and REMPLAN. This strategy maps out ways to support the sector over the next 5 years, with a particular focus on independent retailers.

Given the ongoing state of emergency, we partnered with pro-bono initiative Project Re-Store to engage more deeply and creatively with the retail community, deliver recovery initiatives on the ground and to bring additional expertise to the table.

This project started with a creative conversation with the people of Knox, action research around outdoor dining, digital ethnographic research, economic analysis and the identification of Knox's strongest and truest attributes.

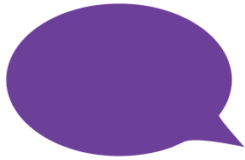
Together the 5 strengths identified form the brand identity of Knox's retail centres - the way people experience and tell the story of each location in Knox. This piece of work should be used as a touchstone decision making around further projects over the next 5 years (either planned or new) that can intensify the positive experiences of Knox, and create a stronger sense of place.

For each of the 5 strengths, we have provided a number of ideas and examples as to how it could be further enhanced, translated and/or embedded into the experience of Knox by individual traders or community members, by organisations or by Council.

We have also provided examples of relevant projects that have worked well elsewhere and which have the power to inspire.

This strategy is intended for everyone who is inspired to be part of bringing life and activity to Knox; it provides a clear roadmap of place-based initiatives along with a detailed action plan. We invite everyone who wants to create, make, activate or invest in Knox to use Shine Knox as a resource.

Research, Engagement & Analysis



“Research is seeing what everybody else has seen and thinking what nobody else has thought.”

ALBERT SZENT-GYÖRGYI

Research

The project began with local research into the issues, history, retail environment, character, icons and assets of the retail areas of Knox. We reviewed the results of previous consultation, strategic documents and studies such as the Boronia Renewal Strategy and the Upper Gully Strategy Plan¹ and online resources such as ABS, Street Advisor, .IDcommunity, Remplan data sets, local papers and local Trader’s Associations pages.

We carried out a detailed land use survey and data analysis along with in depth place audits of key retail areas in Bayswater, Boronia, Ferntree Gully, Knoxfield, Lysterfield, Rowville, Scoresby, The Basin, Upper Ferntree Gully, Wantirna and Wantirna South.

The next step was conducting an online non-participant ethnographic study where we observed communities interacting online on various platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and websites such as Google, Your Grocer, Yelp, Uber Eats, Homely.com etc and analysed the dynamics of online engagement, commerce and communication in Knox.

We tested these insights by delivering a pilot program of outdoor dining in 3 sites across the LGA in Wantirna Mall and Station Street and Mountain High Shopping centre in Bayswater. This program of pilots involved 5 different local businesses and individuals across multiple Council departments over 4 months.

¹ For more key references see summary of key complementary findings and initiatives in appendices

All of Knox Conversation

After the desktop research and targeted Action Research pilot program, we expanded our research with a broader conversation with the community and connected with over 75 individuals². Our engagement process was designed to uncover the meaning & values of Knox by connecting with the people who know and love it best.

Participants came from all over Knox and from all walks of life, including business owners, traders, Council officers, people who lived and work in Knox, new arrivals and people who grew up locally and people who visit the area for shopping or study.

The core of our engagement was the Shine Knox conversation that generated more than 100 individual ideas, representing the voices of people from each suburb in Knox.

We used an online engagement platform which was widely promoted and distributed through email networks, websites and social media. Additional surveys were circulated through local networks by Council staff to location-specific trader groups and partners including Eastern Innovation.

Participants completed a short vox pop that captured everyday experiences, memories, positive & negative associations and local icons of Knox and asked participants to sum up their local area in a word or phrase of exactly 5 words. We then challenged participants to beat the clock and to generate masses of ideas for fabulous prizes.

The analysis of the engagement and research data was designed to uncover the core strengths of Knox and the real experiences and characteristics that would encourage people to visit, live in, work in or invest here.

How can we make Knox shine?

*til August 13, 2021
ONLINE VOX POP & IDEAS CHALLENGE

Let your ideas shine & show your mainstreet some local love!

Take 3 minutes share your thoughts in the online Vox Pop, or put aside a 15-20 minutes to compete in the Shine Knox Ideas Challenge.

Point your phone camera here or visit: projectrestore.com.au/ShineKnox

Shine Knox is Project Re-Store initiative proudly supported by Knox City Council.

SHINE KNOX MAINSTREETS
PROJECT RE-STORE
Knox City Council
be kind

² This figure includes the earlier engagement carried out by Hello City as part of the outdoor dining action research program

My Knox is.....

a hidden gem

a proud community

Where country meets the city

friendly

mountain views and leafy trees

heart filled

central to beach and mountains

a work in progress

connection

great walking tracks

where I'm building a life

a wonderful place to live

possibilities

a warm space in my heart

big blocks

family

convenience

green

potential plus

a small busy village

my childhood

a stroll along Blind Creek

spacious

good schools

homey

local

the big slide



What locals would lose from Knox...

Graffiti

dog poo

rubbish

parking issues

lack of support for homelessness

major shopping chains

hoons

ugly apartments

increasing rent

scooters and motorbikes

the gentrification

rubbish on the streets

cars

ugly Xmas decorations

smoking

run down awnings

gift shops for tourists

empty shops



5 key approaches to place activation

Council's role and strategic approach

We've adopted Hello City's **5 Ps of Place Activation** to ensure a broad approach that combines grassroots and strategic, short and long-term, and low and big budget approaches.

1. **Promotion:** showcasing strengths and local assets
2. **Program:** shorter-term initiatives and soft infrastructure of events, relationships, services
3. **Pivotal:** long-term strategic initiatives, hard infrastructure, built form
4. **Practical:** maintenance, care, polish
5. **Protection:** ring fencing assets, protecting against threats

Over the longer term each of Knox's retail centres requires a balance of all 5 approaches in order to support them to be vibrant and successful. However in the shorter term it is necessary to focus on the key weaknesses and strengths of each area.

We have outlined below how we intend to focus our attention and resources in the shorter term according to the needs, opportunities and priorities of each centre:

1. Promotion ideas to showcase local assets: Find ways to celebrate, showcase and tell the story of the existing strengths of Knox.

It is important to put our best foot forward and in the short term, focus on promoting locations that offer the strongest experiences and make a positive experience to the place brand of Knox. *Centres that should focus on this category include: Alchester Village, The Basin, Ferntree Gully Village (near the station) and Upper Ferntree Gully Village (east of Rose Street).*

2. Program ideas for grassroots activity: Develop programs, pop-ups, interventions and events big and small, support the people of Knox to create wonderful experiences.

The offer and place experience in these centres can be significantly improved with relatively small-scale interventions.

Centres that should focus on this category include: Boronia Village, Bayswater (lane off Valentine's Street to behind Mountain Hwy shops), Coleman Road Shops (Boronia), Manuka Road (Boronia), Wantirna Mall, Rowville Lakes Village, Scoresby Village Shopping Centre, Mountain Gate Shopping Centre (adjacent public space), Upper Ferntree Gully Village (area west of Dawson St)

3. Pivotal ideas for long-term impacts: Create long-term strategies that ensure that built form, policies and spatial and infrastructure developments that support successful and active retail.

Changes and interventions in these areas should happen as part of larger strategic plans. Either because significant long-term changes are required within the centre itself or because its location or the impact it has on surrounding uses in particular. For example, centres like Mountain Gate and Studfield shopping centre have significant interfaces with open public space while locations like Boronia have complex issues related to built-form and layout. Smaller retail activation programs should only be delivered in these areas as part of an overarching strategic framework.

Centres that should focus on this category include: Bayswater, Boronia, Boronia Village, Wantirna Mall, Rowville Lakes Village, Scoresby Village Shopping Centre, Mountain Gate Shopping Centre (adjacent public space), Studfield Shopping Centre (interface with green open space), Knox City (interface with green open space), Upper Ferntree Gully included Ferntree Plaza, Stud Park Shopping Centre (adjacent green open space and schools), Wellington Village Shopping Centre (green links and pathways), Creative industrial precincts with destinational retail including areas around Market Fair (Ferntree Gully) and The Hatter and the Hare (Bayswater) as examples

**4. Practical ideas for good housekeeping:
Make sure that the little things are done
right and that places look loved and cared
for.**

These areas are functional and utilitarian or are controlled by private entities. Changes that might be needed are likely to be beyond the scope of this project. Focus efforts mainly on maintenance and operations.

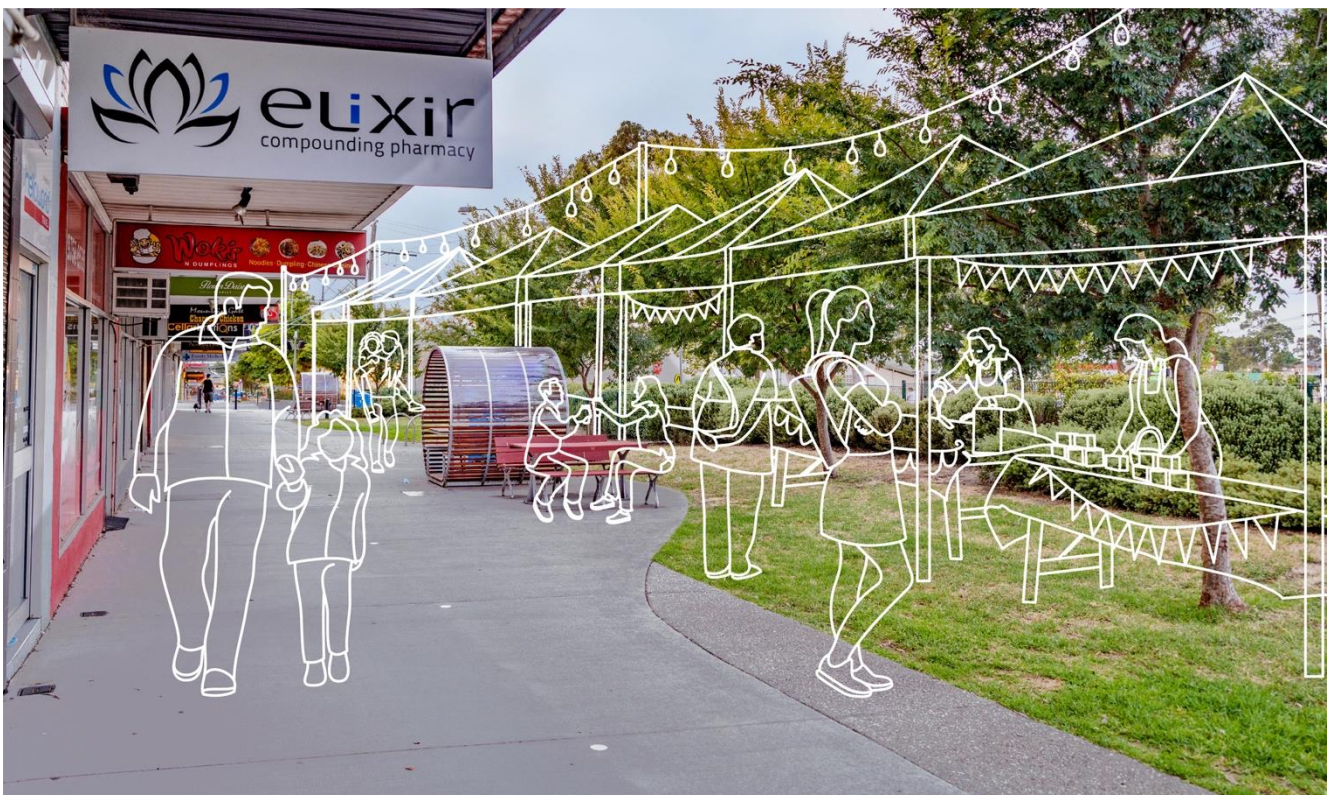
Centres that should focus on this category include: Burwood Highway Shops (Wantirna), Hillview Shopping Centre, Stud Road shops (Bayswater).

**5. Protection ideas to future-proof:
Understand the threats and act now to
protect the strengths of Knox, ring-fence
assets and invest in developing resilience.**

Most areas in Knox fall into this category, some because they are overly dependent on cars, others because of threats of bushfire.

Consider as well that some centres can pose a threat to surrounding retail areas, these include centres with few independent retailers, where the retail environment is transactional rather than relational and which are disconnected from the surrounding urban form and community.

Steps should be taken to understand how these centres affect other retail areas and strengthen other areas so that they can better compete. Knox City is the key precinct in this category although smaller precincts throughout Knox may also pose a challenge for independent retailers.



Economic Snapshot

1. Knox represents 1% of the land in Greater Melbourne (11,391 ha) and represents 3% of the population (165,000 residents)
2. Knox generates 2.5 times the amount of Gross Regional Product (GRP) per hectare than the rest of Melbourne
3. Retail and Food Services sector is the largest employment sector in Knox, supporting 32,395 people and providing almost half the jobs in Knox (48.9%)
4. The recession and impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected women. This is the first recession that has affected women more than men in Australian history, and the economic and social impacts are expected to be long-term.
5. Of the 14,280 businesses registered in Knox, around 1,473 or 10.3% are retail, accommodation and food services. The sectors with the most individual businesses are construction and professional, scientific & technical services combined with over 4,745 (33%) local businesses.
6. Knox locals spend 12.5% of our household income on retail and eating out, which is higher than much of the surrounding area.
7. The intensity, diversity and concentration of commercial, retail and industrial activity in Knox is a big part of what makes the area so productive and successful.
8. There are opportunities to grow and intensify our mix so that we create more local jobs and more diverse economic contributions.

48.4% of our economy is manufacturing and large construction (\$25,674.401 million), with a focus on technical equipment & appliance manufacturing and human pharmaceutical product manufacturing. A lot of this activity takes place in Bayswater Business Precinct and Industrial land in Scoresby

More information and sources are available in the appendix section of this document.

Key Strategic Insights

1. COVID-19 is likely to have 4 key impacts on retail in Knox

Firstly, as we saw after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), with increased levels of uncertainty and rising housing costs, people in Knox can be expected to save more, and spend less on discretionary retail and more on rents, mortgages and non-discretionary retail items. If the GFC is a good precedent, this is likely to be accompanied by a continued increase in spending on experiences and services such as food and travel.

Thirdly, we can expect to see a continued shift to online retail in Knox. At the moment 7.8 percent of what is spent in retail stores is online, this has grown dramatically during the pandemic. The extent to which the bricks-and-mortar retail sector in Knox is able to bounce back is dependent on their ability to offer rich, unique and personalised retail experiences to shoppers. The process of creating these experiences can be supported by Council in the context of longer-term strategic planning.

Finally, the impacts of COVID-19 have not been experienced evenly across Knox. Workers in Arts, hospitality and retail have been hard hit, while other professions have thrived during lockdown and left workers cash to take advantage of low interest home loans or discretionary spending.

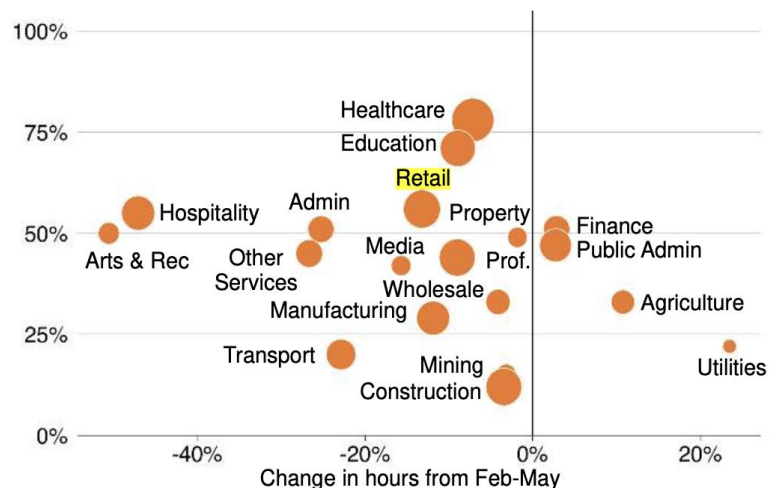
Women have been disproportionately affected by the lockdowns in multiple ways; they are more likely to be in casual or part-time employment, they carried more of the burden of childcare when schools and child-care facilities closed, and women were more likely to be exposed to domestic violence in the home.

Short-term and crisis interventions are part of the process of mitigating impacts of COVID-19, but these must be paired with effective long-term solutions that increase resilience.

Women's work: the impact of the COVID crisis on Australian women, Danielle Wood, Kate Griffiths, Tom Crowley, Grattan Institute Report No. 2021-01, March 2021

The two worst-affected industries in the first lockdown were majority employers

Percentage of women by industry



Notes: The larger the dot, the larger the industry. The ABS does not provide these data seasonally adjusted. 'Prof.' refers to Professional Services.

Source: ABS (2020d).

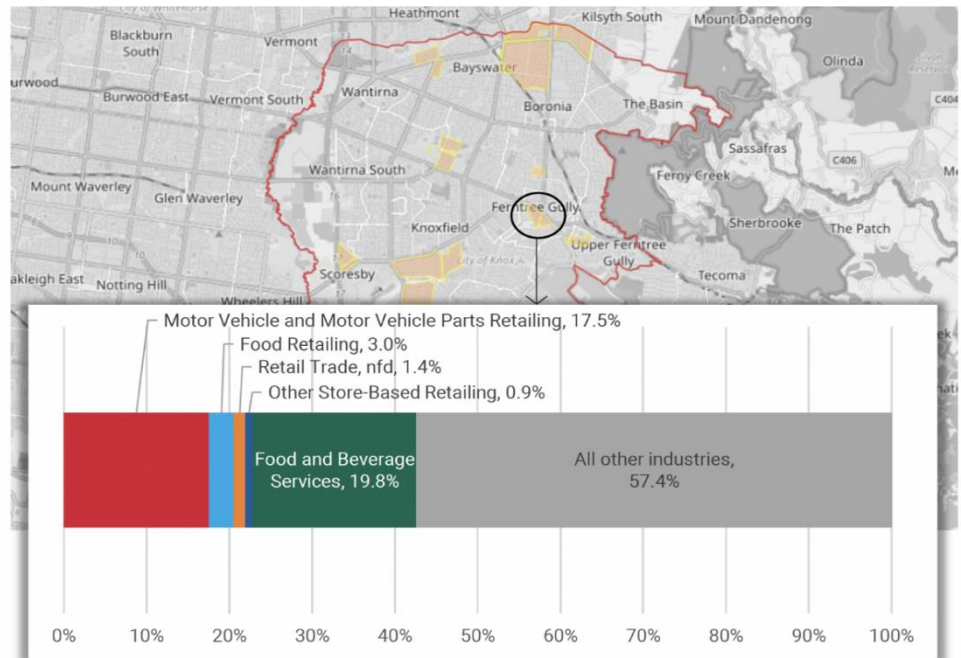
2. Industrial precincts in Knox are increasingly the centre of diverse, creative and interesting economic and cultural activity

Our research indicates that Industrial areas in Knox are much more diverse than is typical of these kinds of precincts. Our industrial areas accommodate a large range of retail services as well as creative practices, goods and services and food and beverage businesses such as large destinational cafes with outdoor seating, pottery and

ceramics, gyms, coffee roasters, breweries, catering companies, takeaway food outlets, distilleries and art galleries.

Retail accounts for 24% of employment in Ferntree Gully's industrial area. In 2016 only 7 takeaway food businesses operated in Knox's industrial precinct, these now number 28 which indicates increasing diversity and demand within industrial precincts.

Employment in the Ferntree Gully industrial precinct

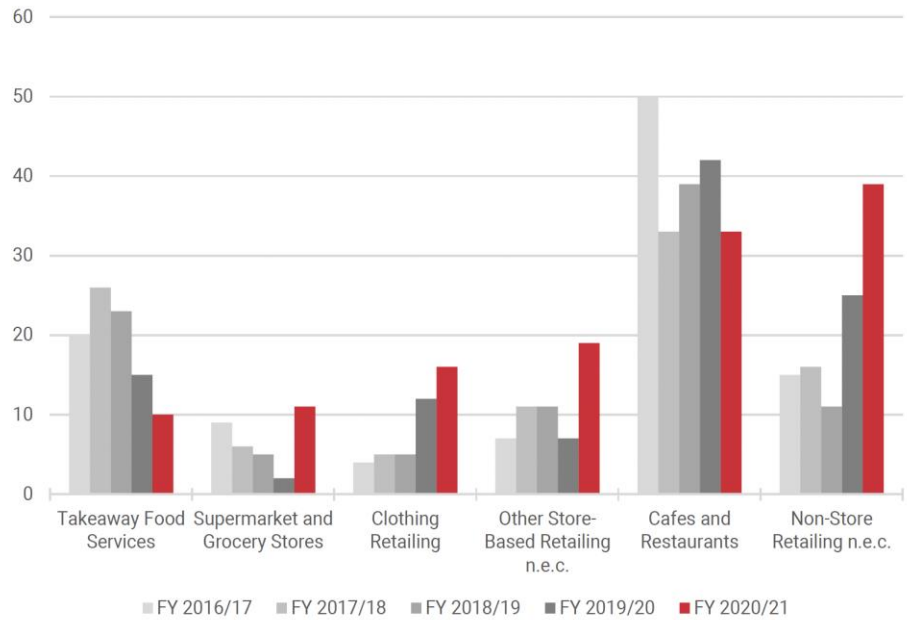


3. Home-based businesses and online retail is growing rapidly in Knox

Non-store retailing (online retailing) has seen strong growth over the last 5 years. It's no surprise that there was a sharp increase of new entries to non-store retail in the 2020-21 financial year, topping all other retail categories.

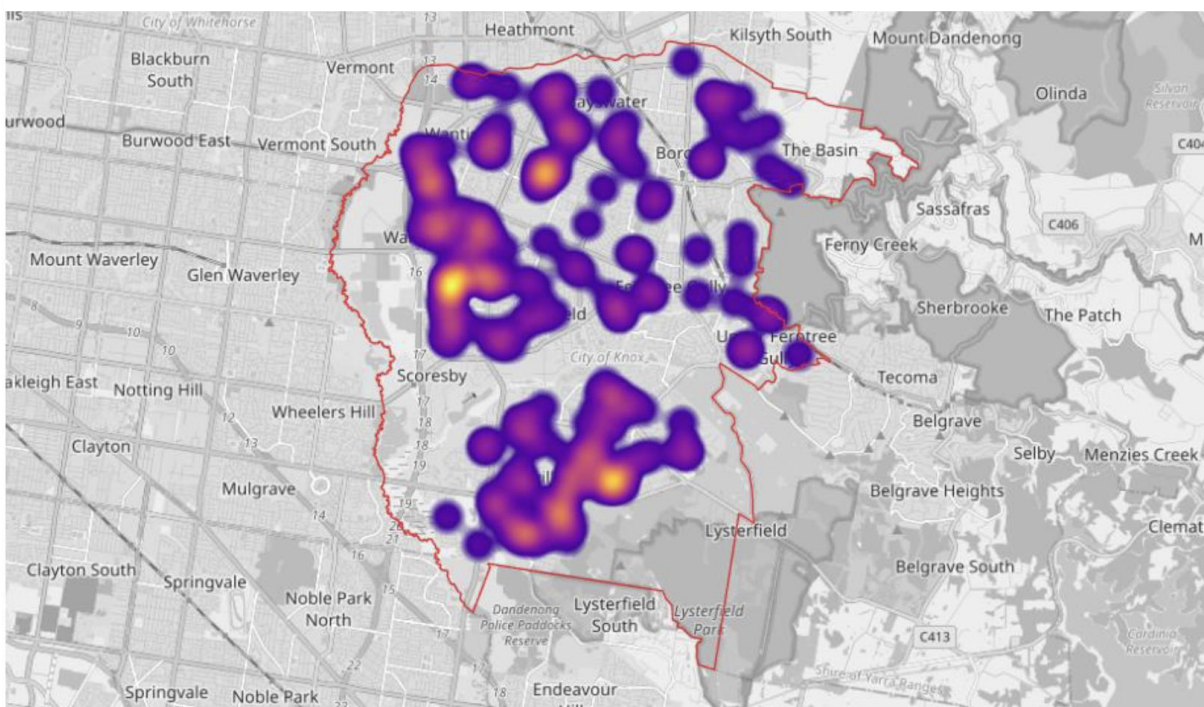
The number of home-based retail in Knox has been growing rapidly over recent years at a rate of 13%. Non-store retailing (online retail) is leading this growth with almost 100 new home-based businesses since 2016.

Top 6 retail industries by business entries in FY2020/21, Knox

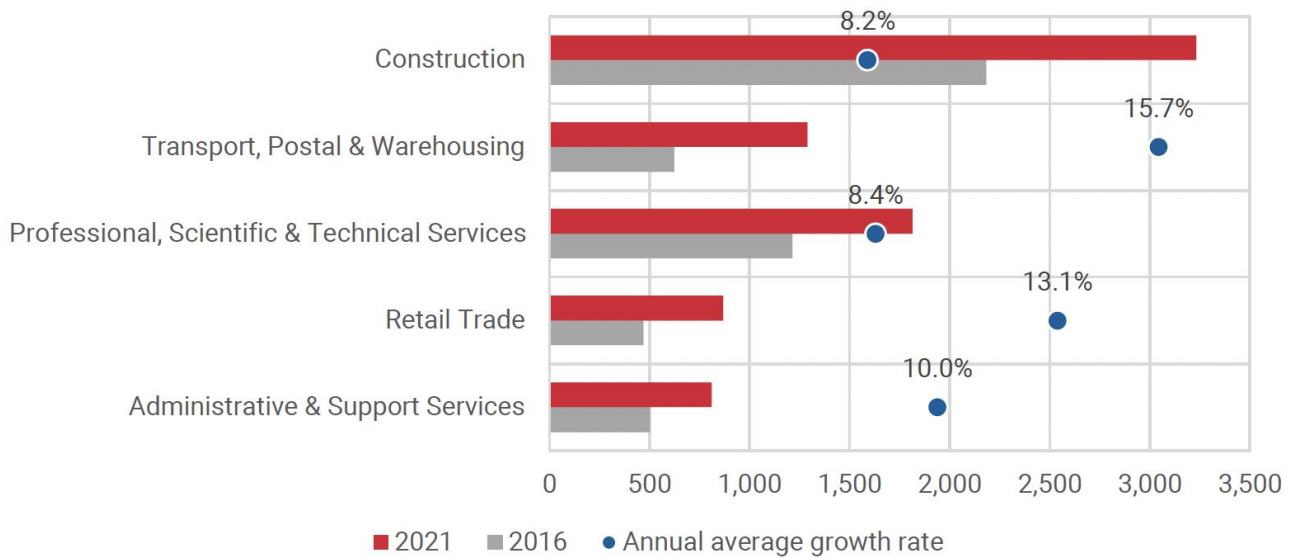


Source: Australian Business Register

Home-based non-store retailing businesses in 2021



Top 5 industries with largest increase in home-based businesses between 2016 and 2021



Source: Australian Business Register

4. Knox doesn't have many traditional main streets, much of our retail is not leafy, green or friendly to pedestrians.

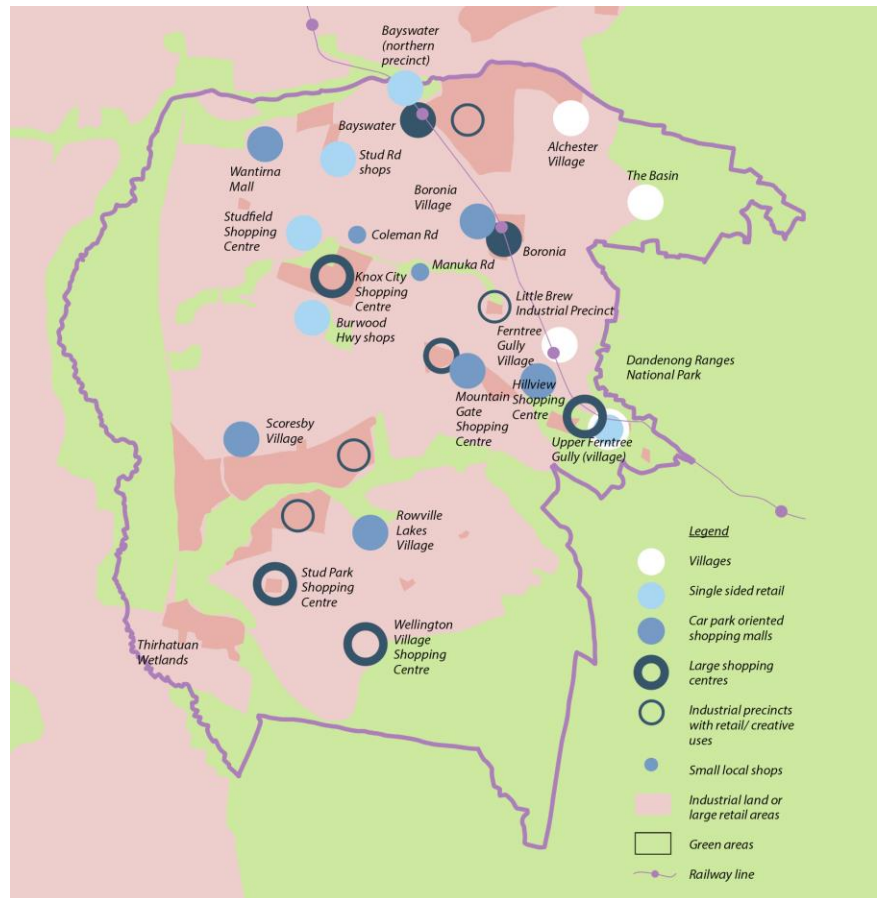
The Basin, Alchester Village, Ferntree Gully Village and Upper Ferntree Gully offer main streets or retail settings that are comfortable, leafy and inviting. Most of the other centres are car-dominated or have other economic, aesthetic or spatial challenges which impact on the quality of the retail experiences they offer.

As some of these challenges are baked into the built-form, subdivision and land ownership structure they require long-term strategic investment and action to address.

5. There are 3 big green links that have the potential to knit Knox's retail centres together

Knox sits in the foothills of the Dandenongs and has a green wedge to the west and south. Linking these are 3 key east-west bands that already connect to 11 centres and have the potential to do so even more.

Blind Creek Trail in particular links 4 centres and wraps around Knox City. There is an opportunity to build on these green links and edges to improve the place experience of Knox's retail centres and to increase use of sustainable forms of transport.



More information about these insights is available in the appendix section of this document.

5 Core Strengths of Knox

The heart of the brand identity of the villages, retail centres and precincts of Knox lies in its strengths.

The strengths capture the value propositions for why people would want to experience the different locations of Knox, either as a place to live, open a new business, invest in an asset or visit.

Another way of thinking about these is that they are the basis of the unique selling proposition (USP) and the point of difference (POD) of Knox.

The identification of these strengths allows us to be clear about the special characteristics of Knox that should be protected as it evolves & grows and the elements we should build on to stimulate increasing confidence & bolster a stronger sense of place.

Home loving

A place to put down roots and make a home, room to spread out, content,

comfortable, family-oriented, house-proud and pet-loving.

Village vibes

Friendly, welcome, smiling faces, Sense of belonging, super local, connected, independent, familiar, stable.

Untapped

Productive spaces, undiscovered gems, unused spaces, opportunities and untapped potential.

Easy Life

Everything you need; the best of the city and country, live close to work, affordable, safe, quiet, family oriented, and convenient.

In the Foothills

Fresh air & mountain views, walks, dogs, outdoor life, parks, wildlife, creeks, hills, footy, cricket, basketball, netball, birds and wildlife

Communications and Place Branding Roadmap

The strongest place brands are not logos or taglines. They are embedded in everything you can see, touch, smell, hear and taste. The purpose of this piece of work is to capture the unique characteristics that make Knox Knox, and work out ways to build on and expand on these to create both everyday as well as celebratory experiences. These experiences should bring pleasure, hold meaning and build pride in place - as well as telling the story of who the people of Knox are and what they value.

Where we are now

Good local government communications and positioning is about being reliable, consistent, stable, safe and impartial. These values and qualities are not always consistent with delivering effective communications in a dynamic media landscape that requires personality, voice, point-of-view, creativity, humour and high levels of responsiveness. This clash of approaches has led some local councils to seek alternative models and platforms, which allow them to separate the regulatory and operational aspects of the organisation from more targeted support of commercial or economic activity.

Local communities in Knox are comparatively disinterested in participating in conversations about Knox online and on social media when compared to surrounding LGAs, and engaging with some communities through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok is not always effective or easy. According to our preliminary research, uptake of online retail, food and grocery delivery apps and participation in online activities related to Knox appears to be relatively low.

Elements of the visual identities, brand and communication of place experience are strong in some retail areas, individual businesses and organisations, while in others these are dated or not fit-for-purpose and weaken the overall place brand of the centres.

Broad all-of-Knox or state-wide campaigns such as Be Kind and Shop Local can be a powerful way to send a cohesive message and build on strong branding assets. However care needs to be taken to ensure that these campaigns are also able to address local concerns, capitalise on local strengths, call out specific events or characteristics or speak to people's sense of loyalty or connection to place. Most importantly these campaigns need to increase awareness of the Core Strengths of Knox.

Where we want to be

Tell the story of Knox with event focused campaigns that showcase the strengths of Knox. Focus on people, be charming, friendly, warm, and humorous, use high quality professional photography of local people and places that don't feel like stock photos.

Lead with place experience not logos, allow interesting personalities and diverse voices to shine through. Be timely and responsive to recent events and include a healthy dose of good news stories and tell them with a fresh, contemporary look and feel.

Define platforms and structures that allow Council to have a more diverse range; where appropriate a more commercially oriented voice that is seen as in-touch with local business and retailers and a more neutral and stable voice where needed.

Increase visitation and footfall that sees traders report better sales and see communications as a core part of their promotion. Embrace participation with local traders and in community conversations, arguments, compliments, in jokes etc. Tell the story of what is happening in the community that is in line with the strengths of Knox, and repost content from other pages.



How Do We Get There - 5 Steps to Success!

1. Focus on the 5 key strengths of Knox and use them as a touchstone for decision making. For every event and promotion ask the question “does this reveal, promote or expand one or more of the 5 strengths of Knox?”
2. Define a separate look and feel for graphics and photography for core Council-operation oriented communications and those focused on community and business generated activity. Develop a guide for photographer procurement and briefing notes to ensure high quality promotional images and documentation is generated that engages and resonates with local traders.
3. Be authentic and local by recruiting high performing businesses with large social media followings and let them and their marketing teams produce and advise on communications.
4. Focus on creating rich and unique experiences and let these be the main focus of energy and resources rather than logos, posters, marketing collateral or social media only promotions.
5. Develop an innovative promotional platform dedicated to supporting local businesses. See the What's on Knox ideas in the activation strategy for more details.



Case studies

What's On Melbourne

What's On Melbourne is an initiative of the marketing and communications department of City Of Melbourne and is fully funded by council. It is a one stop promotional shop of the various experiences the city has to offer. It operates as a website, blog, 2 newsletters and all social media channels. It features event listings, tourism and visitor information, trails and maps, a virtual visitor hub and features articles and curated "experiences" including food, entertainment, the arts.

While it advertises itself as being part of the City Of Melbourne, with the logo displayed prominently, it performs the strategic trick of appearing to be its own entity. Because it is read as an independent arts and culture website, it avoids having to adhere to the constraints of typical Council communications and is more nimble and contemporary in its delivery.

Buy Local Sunshine Coast

Buy Local Sunshine Coast is a community business directory established to service independently run businesses in and around the Coastal region of QLD. It is a new initiative run by the Sunshine Coast Council's Economic Development team started in 2021.

The website invites local traders to register their business and any special offers. Large giveaways to spend at participating stores entices locals to support small business and the directory website works in tandem with high output social media accounts run by marketing professionals.

OnlyMelbourne

OnlyMelbourne is web-based magazine, events calendar, newsletter and social media presence that is published independently by Ripefruit Media as part of the OnlyAustralia network of event guides in major cities around Australia.

The network's income comes from paid advertising, product partners and featured promotions. It is not affiliated with any organisations or Governments and receives no grants for operations. Its longevity is proof that you can run an experience and events calendar that independently and express opinions, biases, have affiliations (The Richmond Tigers) and do the job of promotion. The compromise is the busy mix of advertising content that blurs the line between paid and unpaid listings, undermines the authority of the service.

Manchester Branding

The brand and visual identity of Manchester is a great example of combining place experience, culture and history with strong graphic elements. The Manchester City logo and branding was developed by internationally famous graphic designer, artist and Manchester local Peter Saville. His career was built working with Manchester artists and musicians such as Joy Division and his work is deeply emblematic of the culture of the city. It is applied as public art, signage, maps and programs that reinforce the city's swagger and grittiness and has been adopted broadly by local retailers and makers. More than a logo, he reflected back the experience of place in a way that connected with locals and outsiders.

Click for Vic

The Victorian Government launched Click For Vic mid 2020 in response to continued lockdowns and its impact on small and independently run businesses and creative studios. It is an arm of the Visit Victoria tourism website and offers a comprehensive list of a variety of businesses right across the state, including gifts, art and fashion as well as food and beverage offers. Its scope is limited to businesses that already have an online store set-up and does not directly sell items. It operates solely as a webpage and does not have dedicated social media pages, it's presence on social media is in the well-used promotional hashtag [#clickforvic](#)

Retail Activation Strategy Overview

Activation Ideas

The following ideas have been collected and developed to support and expand the key strengths of Knox. Each strength has one or two main ideas and a collection of other ideas which explore different approaches to activation. For each strength, an inspiring example of a successful project from around the world will be provided. Together these 42 ideas form the retail activation strategy for Knox.

Think of these ideas as a framework rather than a strict to-do list. The ideas are a good starting point, but over time new ideas and opportunities will emerge. Some of these ideas are better delivered by individual traders, by community groups or main street associations, while others are

more strategic or need bigger budgets and are more likely to be led by local and state governments in collaboration with the local community.

When thinking about retail activation, keep the **5 Ps of Place Activation** and the **5 Core Strengths of Knox** in mind for successful activation ideas.

We've taken a broad approach to retail activation in this strategy. These ideas are designed to enhance and strengthen the existing relationships that retailers in Knox have with the broader community, to build loyalty, strengthen connections and to form a firm foundation for future retail growth.



Council's role and strategic approach

We've organised the following ideas according to **Hello City's 5 Ps of Place Activation** to ensure a broad approach that combines grassroots and strategic, short and long-term, and low and big budget approaches.

To be successful this requires coordinated effort across departments in Council and state government agencies as well as the energy and creative work of community, business leaders, individual traders and community members. For each ideas we have defined one of the following possible roles for Council along with available resources and assets:

Lead: Council to take responsibility for delivering this project either directly or in collaboration with state government agencies

Partner: Delivered in partnership with industry, business or community organisations or groups

Encourage: Delivered by organisations outside Council with support, funds, resources or guidance from Council

Investigate: Exploration, research and feasibility studies will be undertaken

We invite everyone reading this document to find an idea that inspires them, add their own spin and to roll up their sleeves to make it happen.

Home-loving Ideas

Celebrate the qualities that make Knox a great place to call home and knit them into our retail areas

“It is a peaceful escape from the busy parts of life”

KNOX RESIDENT

“Older, quiet suburb, nice to live”

KNOX RESIDENT

Promotes

Open Kitchen Cooking Classes

Open the kitchens of Knox’s most loved restaurants to small group boutique cooking classes



“I would love Boronia to be an international food mecca with the most amazing Asian and African restaurants and grocers. Fresh, locally grown produce markets and State-significant cooking school”

LOCAL RESIDENT

To welcome customers back into restaurants run a program of small-group cooking classes with carefully selected restaurants. Each class should be followed by a shared meal and could showcase a popular meal from the restaurant along with the personality, culture and tastes of the head chef. Chefs should be supported by established food educators and should offer DIY ingredient and recipe packs to customers.

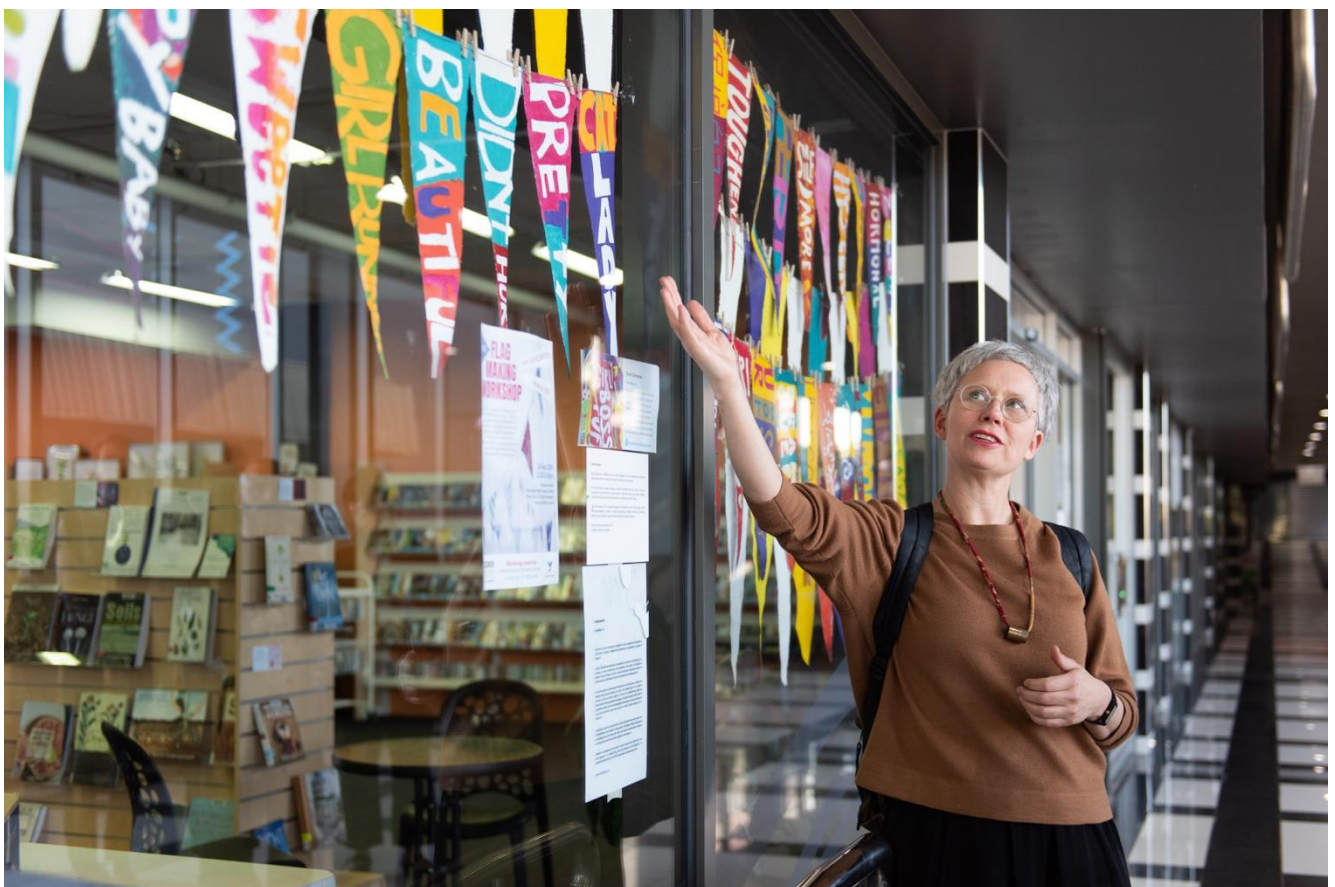
The program can be subsidised by the ticket price, which should be kept affordable, but not undervalue the experience. Explore the opportunity to pair with local education institutions e.g. Swinburne or existing websites such as Open Kitchen Melbourne and AirBnB to promote the program and tell the story of the chosen hosts. Over time this initiative could support a broader program of community kitchens and food gardens.

Council’s role: Partner and encourage

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources (project manager delivery) & community / trader led

Possible next steps: These actions are best delivered directly by local businesses and community members, with encouragement, support and possible partnership from Council:

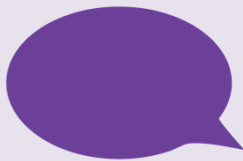
- Seek funding such as state business recovery grants to pay food educators
- Workshop a set of prerequisites/considerations for class hosts, consider language barriers, kitchen sizes, kitchen availability during daytime non-service hours
- Identify potential pilot restaurants with the capacity to offer a class and narrow it down to 4. Cover a range of cuisines in different suburbs
- Allow budget for high quality photography that captures the program in a way that is fun and engaging and invites people to take part
- Support cafe operators and restaurateurs to create packs with seasonal recipes and key ingredients
- Engage educators and set up initial meeting and planning session
- Ticketing and promotion should be organised centrally. Alert external key media, including Broadsheet, What's On Melbourne, The Age's Good Food



Program

Seasonal Planting On Show

Celebrate the seasons together with beautiful plants



“Streetscape improvements”
LOCAL RESIDENT

Each year Noos Noodles in Wantirna celebrates Vietnamese Lunar New Year by transforming the footpath outside with a colourful array of marigolds blessed by a monk. Build on this beautiful local tradition by partnering with local nurseries to pick a special seasonal flower to show off each year in each of Knox' centres.

Businesses can give away free seedlings with a minimum spend in-store. Local gardening and horticultural groups can assist in installing potted plant displays on main streets outside participating shops.

Customers should be encouraged to plant the seedlings in their front gardens at home so that overtime the floral display helps to visually define the local area and strengthen the place brand.

A simple marketing campaign which could include gardening tips. Each centre should have their own unique flower that has meaning for the local community and whose flowering season fits with the event calendar, cultural festivals or important dates. For example, Boronia should pick an event in late winter when the boronias are in bloom, Ferntree Gully will obviously choose a type of fern, another centre might decide to celebrate National Wattle Day on 1st of September each year while Scoresby might support a festival such as Steamfest by picking an autumn flowering plant such as ornamental kale or Firewood Banksia.

Seedlings could be donated by local nurseries who get acknowledged as an official sponsor or purchased by council.

Council's role: Encourage

Approach to resourcing: Community / trader led

Possible next steps: These actions are best delivered directly by local businesses and community members, with encouragement and support from Council.

- Consult with community gardens, gardening groups and nurseries on the best choice of flowers/grasses for the season and region
- Collaborate to ensure that each centre has a unique flower that highlights an event or showcases a particular aspect of the place, and that the flowering seasons are spread as evenly as possible across the year
- Select which nursery or community garden will assist in delivering the program in the different centres
- Improve business participation by providing free plants, promotional collateral and suggestions on how to promote related goods and service



Pivotal

Cosy Streets & Places

Encourage people to feel comfortable and relaxed in public space and to make themselves at home



“(We need a) fresh new outlook of shops to draw people in”

LOCAL RESIDENT

Adopt a homey aesthetic for streets and public spaces in retail centres and villages. Create third spaces that encourage people to kick back and relax, provide comforts like USB charging ports and soft lighting. Encourage traders to adopt a planting bed or seating area and improve it for their customers with dog stations out the front of shops, pram parking, gnomes, small squares of astro turf with a lawn chair,

veggie patches, chalk boards, bubbles for kids etc.

Enhance the domestic quality of existing elements such as the lounging benches in Wantirna Mall or the new round seating pods in Alchester Village by adding elements that make them feel more like sofas or kitchen tables like pavement-art rugs or table cloths.

Council’s proposed role: Investigate and encourage (explore possibility of leading)

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources & community / trader led

Possible next steps: Council should investigate the opportunities, barriers and levels of support for this idea and prioritise the following actions

- Use this document as an input into design briefs for future landscape upgrades of public space in retail centres
- Run a ‘Little Zhoosh’ campaign:
 - Invite traders to adopt a nearby planting bed, seat or area of footpath outside their shop to give it a Little Zhoosh. Council to support participating traders to work with local laws and operations teams. Provide a gardening or Zhooshing kit and decals for participating shop windows. Promote the best zhoosed areas on social media.
 - Create small-scale interventions temporary installations in contained areas where they will have significant impact

Practical housekeeping

The Big Spring Clean

Get together for a big spring clean & festive neighbourhood-wide garage sale



“Utilise volunteer groups to pick up rubbish”
LOCAL RESIDENT

Hold an LGA-wide spring cleaning week with sales and events on the weekend in early September or late August.

Shopping precincts should get into the action with community clean up events, with volunteers being fed a light lunch and gathering afterwards at local restaurants to celebrate.

Shops should offer sales and displays of cleaning products, homewares, home improvement goods, storage items, gardening goods and plants as well as cleaning, gardening and organising

tutorials, books, tips and demonstrations.

Community groups could hold fund-raising BBQs in partnership with a local restaurant to feed volunteers, create little free libraries and little free record stores (for CDs, Vinyl and cassettes) and community clothes racks outside of retail areas and invite residents to contribute unwanted items to them. Men's Sheds and Community Sheds can host a “repair cafe” to help residents reuse broken household items and build the infrastructure for little libraries, on-street retail, dining, planting and dog-drinking stations etc.

Council's role: Encourage and partner

Approach to resourcing: Council to partner with community and traders

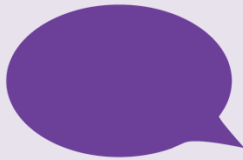
Possible next steps: These actions are best delivered directly by local businesses and community members, with encouragement, support and possible partnership from Council:

- Build on existing Council led programs that support traders to clean graffiti
- Getting by in from local traders to participate by offering incentives such as free advertising collateral and central event promotion
- Working with Men's Sheds and Community Sheds to develop a design vision and provide funding for materials
- Keep a focus on eco friendly cleaning tips and products
- Make a commemorative t-shirt

Protect and futureproof

Super Sustainable Blocks

Partner with local businesses to create opportunities to make homes sustainable and more self-sufficient



“Invest in renewable sources of energy”
KNOX LOCAL

Develop a program that provides education, resources and incentives to local residents and businesses to increase their resilience to heat waves, water restrictions, grid failures, storms, bush fire and air pollution from fires. Work with local suppliers to provide bulk purchase discounts on services and

products such as water tanks, solar, gap-sealing, grey water treatments and drought-proof and/or productive plants.

Provide guidance on design and retro-fit of passive heating and cooling measures and permaculture planting.

Council's role: Lead, partner and encourage

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources & community / trader led

Possible next steps: These actions are best delivered directly by local businesses and community members, with encouragement, support and possible partnership from Council

- Framing the project as being about short term community safety and resilience in the face of extreme weather events as much as bigger or longer-term environmental concerns
- Ensuring the project is led by a not-for-profits or community organisations that already has strong connections into the community, such as the local Lions Clubs
- Partnering with local suppliers and retailers in order to provide competitive pricing to program participants. Prioritise local procurement over lowest price.
- Funding or supporting retailers to provide free design and implementation advice to residents and business operators
- Setting up working bees where traders and residents get together to work on each other's homes and businesses
- Running classes and tutorials to provide specific skills or insights
- Link with urban ecology and sustainability initiatives in Council

More ideas

- **Welcome packs for new residents** in partnership with real estate agencies, community and cultural groups. Include vouchers, and a neighbourhood guide
- Run **art competitions for school aged children** to be displayed in local shop windows
- **Veggie Patches** and domestic planting in main streets, adopted by local traders, maintained by gardening groups/schools

Case Study

Sloan's Hardware is a multi-generational hardware store with four locations that is part of the independently owned Hardware movement in the U.S. They offer a diversified and tailored service to their local community.

Resources for Home Loving ideas:

Lillie Giang and Colin Atkinson-food educators

Urban Farms

Community Gardens in Harcrest

Knox Community Gardens

Chesterfield Farm

Knox Environment Society Indigenous Nursery

Solar Savers

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

Village Vibe Ideas

Build on Knox’s unique local character to strengthen connections and tell the story of who we are

“The casual outdoor mingling of people happy to gather and chat”

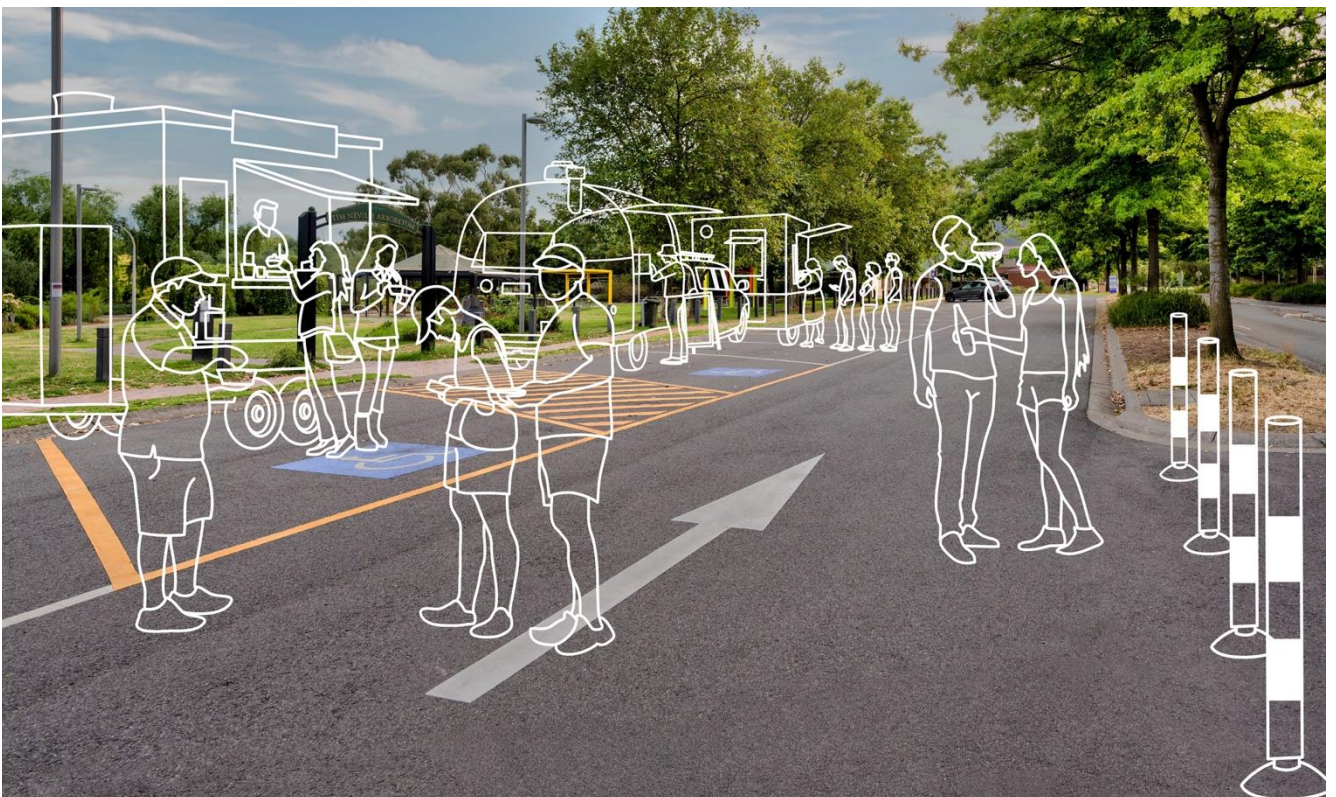
LOCAL RESIDENT

“Friendly village atmosphere, great shops”

LOCAL RESIDENT

“The connections I have with everyone here are special”

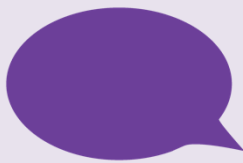
LOCAL RESIDENT



Promote

Knox Merch

Create a small line of artist-made products and merchandise that tells the story of each village and centre



“(Tell) local business stories”

KNOX LOCAL

This line could be created by a community group, a collection of traders, an individual business, individual artist or council.

It should include Village-style products including picnic kits, tote bags, reusable coffee cups and t-shirts. Include small

inexpensive options as well as giveaways such as pens or stickers to give to kids.

There could be one overall design for all Village-style shopping precincts as well as individual designs for each area featuring a recognisable visual element

Council's role: Investigate

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council should investigate the barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise further actions

- Hire a local artist or a professional branding consultant and designer to come up with a series of designs that will work on multiple products, use this document and the Key Strengths of Knox as part of the design brief
- Explore funding opportunities
- Link with other initiatives in this strategy such as producing picnic kits, homewares or children's toys
- Explore approaches to initiating the project; for example Council or a retail or community organisation could run a program to promote, run a design competition and provide seed funding
- Explore procurement and wholesaling models; for example businesses might stock the line on commission or purchase items outright, retailers may produce their own items such as melamine plates or t-shirts with provided artworks, maximise opportunities for local manufacture or for artist/artisan-made goods such as ceramics or resin-ware

- Do an initial small run of products to test interest
- Ask participating stores to display prominently near the counter
- Promote the merchandise online using the individual stores pages and community and council pages



Program

Seasonal Calendar of Events

Program a small calendar of events that highlight the individual villages of Knox and celebrate the seasons, the people and the strengths of Knox



“We need live music, busking, events”!

LOCAL RESIDENT

Council should program a small or large seasonal event in each of Knox' 11 suburbs that showcases the strengths of each area.

Work with local Aboriginal people to explore the seasons and celebrations of the Kulin nation which connect more strongly with place³. Explore ways to weave traditions more tightly into local seasons, avoid dusty tinsel and fake snow at Christmas time, and find ways to reposition Easter as an Autumn celebration and Halloween as a welcome to Spring.

Include both religious and secular events. These could include Christmas in The Basin, a New Year's Eve family dog show at Alchester Village, Tét at Wantirna Village, Lunar New Year in Bayswater, Holi in Scoresby etc. Support local cultural communities to deliver these events in partnership with local businesses.

Where possible focus significant events such as Christmas, Easter or Valentines Day in one location to avoid diluting resources and to get the best possible bang-for-buck. For example instead of evenly distributing the budget for seasonal events across Knox consider nominating one village each year to be the focus and concentrate resources to make this event truly destinational.

Events should be based on strong engagement with and participation of traders, and designed and delivered to support the retail centres. Key businesses should directly participate in these events, and a large proportion of shops, cafes and restaurants should have a clear reason to open and trade during the event.

Initially the focus should be on those areas that already offer the strongest place experiences to visitors - namely Alchester

³ Ensure use of Language, cultural assets and traditions has been approved and endorsed by the appropriate group or Aboriginal Corporation

Village, The Basin, Ferntree Gully shops
(near the station) and

Council's role: Partner

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council should seek to partner with other agencies, organisations or sectors of the community to deliver this project

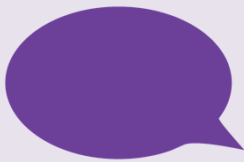
Make sure each event plays to the strengths and connects with the community in the given precinct

- Engage with Woi Wurrung and Wurundjeri Land Council early to shape the calendar. Find a budget to pay Indigenous consultants to provide advice.
- Link to other initiatives in this program including the seasonal flower for each centre
- Ensure relevant cultural groups are invested in and leading any religious or cultural celebrations, offer them resources and funding and wherever possible, let them do the rest
- Ensure traders are engaged with early in the event planning process to get them involved and determine clear roles, responsibilities and which shops will be open for trade during the event
- Allow groups to pitch for funding and resources. Support groups to find sponsorship where appropriate. Provide advice and resources around event planning and delivery.
- Fund specific events and strong concepts rather than providing blanket funding to specific groups - being a group worthy of support is not the same as having the capacity to organise successful events
- Promote the calendar far and wide, externally from Council channels, include physical print out versions of the Calendar, similar to the Astor Theatre, give them away in retailers.

Pivotal

Friendly Train Stations Strategy

Position train stations at the heart of our villages and ensure railway station precincts feel safe, active and loved



“Really look after the station area, keep it clean and beautify it, it is the point of first encounter for people”

LOCAL RESIDENT

Partner with Victrack to develop a strategy of placemaking initiatives that focus on the evening economy and position station precincts as gateways and hubs of activity.

Make Knox's railway precincts into places that are active, owned and loved so that they don't need security guards and CCTV to feel safe.

Develop programs that find opportunities both short and long-term for a variety of uses including tiny bars, cafes, fitness facilities, co-working spaces, commuter clubs rooms, cycling and end-of-trip

facilities. Install artworks and wayfinding elements that greet people as they arrive in each centre and guide them to key attractions.

To improve safety 24/7 look at ways to bring small scale temporary housing and accommodation onto unused land. This could be used as glamping hotels for tourism or as key worker housing. Look to high-quality temporary and social housing providers such as Melbourne's own Launch Housing, tiny House eco-villages or the Shigeru Ban designed temporary houses in Onagawa, Japan.

Council's proposed role: Lead /partner

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resourcing + potential grant funding

Possible next steps: Council should lead this project in partnership with VicTrack and deliver in collaboration with retailers and the community

- Carry out an audit of land and facilities held by Council, VicTrack and other agencies that may be available
- Investigate best practice in the relationship between a strong evening economy, residential development, CPTED and community safety outcomes
- Develop precinct placemaking strategies that include proposed retail mix and land uses and identifies potential tenants and suppliers. Focus on initiatives and tenants that support after-hours activity such as co-working spaces, art studios, late-night cafes and where noise can be managed, bars, music venues and community or maker sheds.

- Revisit existing security protocols to ensure that the perception of safety, safety of property and physical safety are appropriately addressed as circumstances change

Practical

Walking Place Audit

Come together to walk around our centres every 6 months to talk about what's working, what's not and what to do next

This report includes a place audit tool that is designed to allow traders, key locals and Council officers to make the rounds of their local shopping precinct every 6 months together.

The most important aspect of this audit is getting the right people together to have a conversation and share their perspectives. This session is not about drilling down into metrics, detailed criteria or expert advice. We all know when a place is successful,

and we will have different and valid insights into how to make them so. We see this tool as a starting place for a conversation and as a framework for reaching consensus

Along with assessing the overall quality of the place experiences and tracking the success of interventions, the audit is designed to provide the people who have the biggest influence on making a place successful a chance to get together regularly to share ideas and to dream and scheme together.

Council's proposed role: Lead

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council should lead this project and deliver it in collaboration with key stakeholders, retailers and the community

- Make sure the process is social, start with coffee and finish the audit over a nice lunch
- Don't be tempted to make the audit tool more complicated or fine grained. But do feel free to tweak it and let it evolve - so long as the overall process stays nice and simple and is based around a global assessment
- Ensure the people doing the assessment include those with the power to make decisions as well as the people who are most affected by them
- Keep a record of the audit results, at the end of each audit share comparative data with participants

- Use data and insights to measure outcomes of retail initiatives and to shape future planning
- Could be delivered by the Health and Safe Communities team at Council in collaboration with Economic Development



Protection

What's On Knox?

Create a new platform with the skills and resources to provide high-quality and targeted branding, marketing, promotional and business development services to help independent traders bounce back and thrive



"We need creative marketing - celebrate what we do have and make it an attraction"

LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER

Develop a platform or well-resourced collective with a strong relationship with the City of Knox. This initiative should employ 3-5 paid staff including journalists, social media & marketing professionals, an event coordinator and a rotating artist-in-residence and should deliver inspirational, compelling and effective promotion for businesses and community groups in Knox.

The role of this initiative is to develop events and promote businesses across all of Knox,

particularly for those who may not have the digital skills to do so themselves.

The platform could include food/shopping trails, trader profiles, recipes from restaurants, best of lists etc. It would include a presence on all appropriate social media platforms.

This organisation should also be used as a key promotional channel for all Council events and programming.

Council's role: Lead and partner

Approach to resourcing: Undefined

Possible next steps: Council should co-lead this project and deliver it in collaboration with key stakeholders retailers and the community

Short-term (0-6 months)

- Engage specialist consultants to assist in defining job descriptions and KPIs and to recruit social media and event and marketing consultants in the short to medium term while the What's on Knox organisational model and platform is being developed
- Understand where locals are already having conversations both online and off, and what gets them excited and engaged. Identify multiple potential communication channels and platforms. Hire an online engagement research firm to understand how and where people are engaging with media, information and each other in Knox

- Build audience online and through real world channels, include promotion and social-media takeovers by younger residents or local staff
- Develop branding for What's on Knox (working title) and start operating immediately as a separate platform to Council communications. The final name of this platform should be chosen in consultation with the key strength recommendations in this document and any other relevant branding studies carried out by City Of Knox
- Conduct case study analysis and research of different organisational models including membership models, not-for-profit organisations, partnerships, and Council-led promotional platforms such as What's On Melbourne (use the case studies in this document as a starting point)
- Clearly divide core Council communication from this project and operate and present the two areas quite separately. The core Council Communications team can continue to operate as before. Use this period to test the boundary between What's on Knox and core Council communications and to shape the final model
- Decide what What's on Knox can and can't do in beta form. Test boundaries around impartiality, tone of voice, look-and-feel and providing direct support for private businesses. Clearly define topics and areas that What's on Knox won't deal with - such as roads, rates and rubbish or anything to do with core Council operations. Also define what it should focus on such as events, programs, special offers, promoting and curating experiences, including those offered by private businesses and supporting the brand/ key strengths of Knox

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- Run a working session with key stakeholders including businesses, traders associations, body corporates, possible sponsors of events, government agencies and a broad cross-section of Council to identify needs, opportunities, levers and barriers
- Explore funding sources such as grants for digital literacy, small business COVID-19 recovery etc.
- Conduct a scenario planning process to explore different approaches and map out organisational models which clearly identifies pros, cons and resources needed for each model scenario including
 - Fully funded by Council, but run separately and independently from the existing Communications team. Advantages include access to adequate funding and resources and networks. Risks; a bigger budget allocation from Council, issues keeping it sufficiently independent from the main Communications team
 - A member based service established by Council and then handed over to a committee from the business community after a nominated trial period. Advantages; being community led and having had council conduct the trial

period. Risks; a messy handover period and poor community buy in and low membership take up

- Independently run organisation that has paid members and receives an annual grant from council and uses a mix of advertising, member fees and listing fees to cover running costs. Run by a committee of business owners and paid staff. Advantages; income from multiple sources, not just council. Community led may mean more buy in. Risks; low membership, unattractive advertisements, slow to get going because of less resources
- Define a shared vision, business model and organisational structure. Map out the detail of the short-term and ongoing relationship between this initiative and Council

Long-term (12-36 months or more)

- Hire any necessary staff and launch new platform
- Conduct analysis and audit of levels of engagement and trader satisfaction and tweak processes and operations accordingly
- Map out key milestones for the future of the project



More ideas

- Commission a **Children's Book** based on Knox with journey or treasure hunt built in inspired by the famous 1970s book *Masquerade* by Kit Williams which included clues to find a real bejewelled golden hare pendant. Make artworks, shareable social images and posters to local shops and libraries for free use
- **Community pantry** or fridge filled with donated food and meals for those in need
- **Pay it forward** coffee/meal wall for shopping strips
- **Pimp My Bin**- Hold a competition with main street traders to see who can decorate their wheelie bin the best. Commission artists to do a few celebrity bins, the rest should be done by business owners
- Showcase the network of villages and assets with **local maps** that show what is unique. Physical and online
- **Public art** - conduct an audit of potential sites that would benefit most and commission mural artists to put up pieces. They should tell the story of Knox in some way and be connected to the place.

Case Study

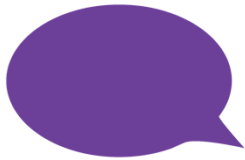
Automatic Main Street was a community vending machine on Lygon St, Carlton by Project Restore that created a new platform for main street traders during lockdown. The machine featured products, vouchers for shops who were closed, lucky dips as well as Kind Coins which could be spent at local businesses.

Resources for Village Vibes ideas:

Business Graffiti Removal program from council
8 Wurundjeri Seasons by Jim Poulter
Laneway Lightbox's upgrade pilot project from council
'Masquerade' by Kit Williams and podcast
Foothills Community Care
What's on Melbourne
Chapel Street Precinct and Still Serving campaigns

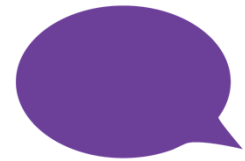
Untapped Ideas

Tap into the emerging creative power of Knox warehouse districts, polish hidden gems and highlight our strengths



“... a melting pot of cultures which brings the amazing benefit of food options from around the world”

LOCAL RESIDENT



“There are some hidden gems”

LOCAL RESIDENT

Promote

No Vacancy Program

Use vacant shops to showcase home-based businesses and makers and doers from Knox’s industrial areas

Create a program to invite local businesses that don’t currently have a main street presence to occupy vacant shops or use window displays on a short-term basis at low cost. Include potters, artisans, coffee roasters, co-working places etc.

Many programs that make use of vacant shops ask the owner to offer the space for free or at peppercorn rents. The problem with this is that for many owners it is actually

better to let shops lie empty, because allowing tenants to take possession at low rents devalues the property and creates complex flow-on impacts on insurance, loans and ongoing leasing. The no vacancy program should begin by working with an appropriate consultant to engage with property owners and prospective tenants to find win/win solutions that benefits all parties involved.

Council’s role: Investigate

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council should investigate the barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise further actions

- Hire a consultant to deliver the research, engagement and strategy development

- Identify key areas for activation and appropriate properties for occupation or for window displays
- Analyse ways to build on the success or mitigate failures of similar projects in Knox and comparable areas pre-covid, including the Renew Australia initiative in Boronia in 2015. Collect inspiring examples from around the world and learn from how current projects have addressed the specific challenges of COVID-19 restrictions
- Run a working session with property owners, body corporates, traders associations, real estate agents, key stakeholders and Council to define opportunities, barriers and levers and define a shared vision
- Organise occupancy certificates or contracts for landlords to arrange access to the empty shops
- Invite makers to do a window takeover
- A simple contract around insurance might be required
- Look to similar projects including Renew Australia and the Suburban Shopfront Activation by Brisbane City Council



Pivotal

Creative Industrial Precinct Plan

Cultivate the creative and destinational power of the industrial precincts in Knox

Precincts with warehouse buildings and big sheds are a key driver of creativity in cities. The creative life that was once nurtured in these kinds of precincts in Collingwood, Footscray, Brunswick and Coburg is increasingly being edged out by the forces of gentrification and is finding a new home in Knox.

The inner city's loss is our gain, and if Knox plays its cards right it will ensure that as land prices rise the artists, makers, performers, entrepreneurs and retailers in our creative precincts are protected.

Part of developing a successful Creative Precinct Strategy is understanding that not

all of Knox's industrial land is equal. The large industrial areas in the south including Caribbean Lake, Rowville, Knoxville and Scoresby and in the north around Bayswater contain precincts within them that have very different character and conditions. Smaller pockets of industrial land are sprinkled throughout Knox and offer different amenities, experience of place, opportunities and challenges. A study should be carried out to understand these precincts, to identify which areas can support emerging retail and creative uses and which should be preserved for heavy industry.

Council's role: Investigate and lead

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council should investigate the barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise resources to deliver

- Conduct an audit of industrial land to identify and map precincts, existing creative and retail uses, catchments, land ownership, barriers, views, adjacent land uses and edge conditions
- Analyse clusters, precincts, place experiences and wayfinding
- Define boundaries of potential creative precincts, explore landscape interventions, wayfinding, programming and changes to zoning and land-use to make these areas work better as community spaces without compromising their use by creatives and light industry

Practical

Sticking Points Street Upgrade Program

Make it easier for traders to create outdoor dining and retail experiences by installing small but important fixtures and fittings

Small interventions can make a big difference to how people use public spaces. Invite traders to occupy and activate public spaces by identifying and removing sticking points and barriers and by finding small ways to make it easier.

Council working in partnership with body corporates and private owners should install fixing points, power outlets, ground sleeves, display areas, poles, hooks and taps. All the little bits of infrastructure that make it easier to hang shade cloth, display a flag or

banner, install outdoor umbrellas or lighting, water plants, plug in speakers for an event or host buskers, pop-up BBQs, summer bars, outdoor cooking demonstrations etc.

Footpaths and public spaces in retail centres are complex and contested spaces, installing this kind of small scale infrastructure is not a simple or straightforward task. The project should start with easy wins as part of already planned streetscape work, and then progress to more complicated interventions.

Council's role: Lead

Resources: Within existing resources

Possible Next Steps: Council should lead this project and deliver it in collaboration with retailers and the community

- A working session with key stakeholders and the Economic Development, local laws and operations teams in Council to barriers and levers, opportunities, resources and to define a shared vision and indicators of success
- Piggyback on the bi-annual place audits with local traders to identify what kinds of small-scale infrastructure is needed in each location and to create a to-do list
- If necessary seek specialist advice around safety and effectiveness
- Create budget for a pilot series of installations and expand as required

Protection

Make It Fair

Open up making, production and retail opportunities to broader and more inclusive demographics

Broad participation is built into retail forms such as small independent shops and micro businesses like market stalls because of the low barriers to entry. However, activities in industrial creative precincts such as coffee roasting, cheese making, fermenting, and creative light manufacturing tend to be much more culturally homogenous and male-dominated.

Knox has the opportunity to make its precincts more diverse, inclusive and interesting by creating specific and carefully targeted opportunities for migrant women, disabled residents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, youth, long term unemployed and Women over 50 etc. Many of these groups have been disproportionately impacted by the impact of COVID-19 and without targeted support we are likely to see long-term impacts that will have negative effects on the overall economic and community development of Knox.

Initiatives might include:

- Mentorship and training programs in existing businesses such as coffee roasters and artisan food manufacturers
- Access to co-op style working spaces with subsidised/free rent for existing micro businesses
- Incubator programs and spaces of all kinds
- Makers spaces and incubators which focus on providing 30 - 120 sqm studios with access to workshops, 4m+ high ceilings, roller doors and loading bays
- Access to commercial kitchen facilities
- Professionally run workshops to upskill and skillshare with beginner makers
- Support proven health initiatives such as community sheds and Men's Sheds

Council's role: Investigate/partner

Resources: Within existing resources, potential to seek grant funding

Possible Next Steps: Investigate potential partners, barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise resources and further actions

- Carry out research and engagement to understand local opportunities, needs and barriers and identify funding opportunities
- Run an Ideas Challenge and Lab with key stakeholders, decision makers and locals with talent and ideas to define initiatives and work out delivery mechanisms

- Council consulting with key internal departments and external representative bodies on best practice in regards to specific communities needs i.e appropriate language, safety and accommodations for disabled people etc.
- Encourage shared workshop and retail spaces that are run by retailers and makers themselves or that operate as incubator spaces. Offering programs, equipment and services are often not as important as providing spaces with small footprints, cheap rent and flexibility of tenure and the opportunity for informal networking.
 - Creative producers need spaces 30 sqm increments up to 120sqm with high ceilings and roller door access that allow noisy and dirty practices that can't be done in smaller or domestic studios or garages. If possible these spaces should be available on a month-to-month basis with one-way security of tenure
 - Explore models where Council acts as the landlord or head-tenant

More ideas

- **Hold a Big Knox Scavenger Hunt** using a mobile app, which takes players in and out of shops, challenges residents to engage with traders and promote their local area while they are doing it. Prizes supplied by Council to shop with local traders.
- **Food truck parks** - build on previous festival that used to be held at Caribbean Gardens

Case Study

The Byron Bay Arts and Industry Estate has been an incubator of talented makers and artists for decades, including glass blowing, metal sculptors, ceramics, drawing studios, textile producers and is home to leading micro-brewery Stone and Wood.

Resources for Untapped ideas:

Muddy Girl Studio-The Basin

The Social Studio - make it fair

The Basin Backyard (Bees and honey)

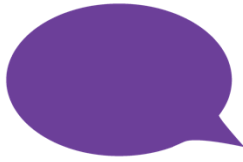
Here and There Makers - Boronia

Days for Girls - Boronia

Bayswater Business Precinct Transformation Strategy

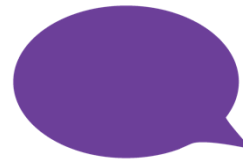
Easy Life Ideas

Strike the perfect balance between peace and quiet and vibrancy, convenience and choice



“We have everything you need in a relatively small area, no need to go anywhere else”

LOCAL RESIDENT



“We get the best of both worlds”

LOCAL RESIDENT

Promote

Unlock Knox’s Brand Story

Commission a professionally developed visual identity to promote the strengths of Knox that can be used by all and includes child brands for key centres

“Knox has potential plus”

LOCAL RESIDENT

Use the place brand positioning work in this document including the 5 strengths of Knox as a basis for a visual identity that strongly supports the experiences and place brand of Knox.

Explore the following ideas that emerged from engagement and the work in developing this strategy as a starting point:

- Best of both worlds
- Knox Life = home life, the easy life, the good life, the high life, the simple life and the quiet life
- Knox as a half moon shape, that is nestled in the foothills
- Live near your work
- Creative precincts, destinational experiences like artisan food and local artists. Knox as the next Collingwood. Knox as a place of creative production

Council's proposed role: Partner

Approach to resourcing: Combined with the 'What's on Knox' idea

Possible Next Steps: Council should seek to partner with other agencies, organisations or sectors of the community to deliver this project

- Hiring a place branding expert who understands that experiences of place are the core of the brand identity and who is able to create a visual identity that captures and strengthens key experiences of place without limiting them
- Ensuring work is informed by this document and other key studies that explore identity
- Use this place brand to promotions, events and tourism campaigns going forward



Program

Home-based Business Support Program

Support home-based businesses as part of Knox's retail landscape

The increase of online retail, micro businesses and new ways to reach markets without a shopfront presence has changed the shape of retail in Knox, this along with COVID-19 restrictions means that home-based businesses are now a significant part of the retail landscape and the local economy.

Programs that could support home-based businesses and help knit them into broader retail activity include:

- A program that creates collaborative opportunities such as displaying catalogues or products in

bricks-and-mortar stores, selling products or shared promotion. Find win/win opportunities like artisans showing homewares in locals cafes

- Street-side makers markets and stalls in retail strips
- Networking events that bring home-based and main street businesses together
- Educational or upskilling opportunities in areas such as business management and marketing and promotion

Council's role: Investigate

Approach to resourcing: Consider within the context of existing economic development service plan

Possible next steps: Investigate the barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise resources and further actions

- Finding funding from Council, a small grant program or self-funding by contributions from home-based businesses
- Engage with home business operators to understand what their needs and requirements are, and how to promote their offer
- Develop a program of support and events both in-person and on-line
- Establish collaborative relationships, this process could piggyback on the Ideas Challenge and Ideas Lab proposed in Make it Fair
- Deliver collaborative promotional events and collateral such as catalogues, specialist markets or in store promotions with complimentary bricks-and-mortar stores

Pivotal

Community-owned Retail & Creative Spaces

Ring-fence affordable rents and active streets and precincts by supporting alternative ownership and access models

Independent retailers and creative makers and producers who are being forced out of places like Collingwood, Footscray, Coburg and Brunswick are increasingly choosing to make their home in Knox. They are attracted to Knox because of the supply of suitable spaces at relatively affordable prices.

This is the beginning of a cycle. As more of these practices are attracted to Knox, they will enrich the retail activity of their local areas, this in turn will attract more independent and creative activity until Knox ends up with creative precincts filled with rewarding experiences and with a

broad appeal. Eventually these very activities will contribute to rising land prices which will force the independent and creative businesses to leave Knox to hunt for cheap rent further afield.

Knox has an opportunity that places like Collingwood and Brunswick no longer have, to break the cycle and protect its creative and boutique industries. Alternative ownership models, incubators, collaborative consumption and new ways to leverage Council-owned land and assets have the power to attract real talent to Knox, strengthen the retail offer and protect this activity long-term.

Council's role: Lead/partner/investigate

Resources: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Investigate the barriers, opportunity and scope of this project and co-lead in collaboration with retailers and the community

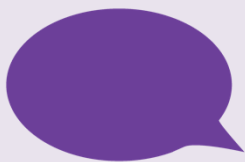
- Review existing research around alternative ownership models and Community Wealth Building principles including Retail and Makers Co-ops, community commercial kitchens, Tenants-in-common, and government-led rent-to-buy programs. Look at alternative development models like Nightingale in the content of retail, mixed use and industrial development. Assess which are most appropriate in Knox.
- Map council owned land which would be used for retail uses such as areas of the car park in Wantirna Mall. Ensure that future development of these spaces locks in affordable rents and supports long-term use by independent retailers.
- Develop an information pack and do-it-yourself kits with templates for legal agreements and how-to guides that makes it easy for people to pool resources to purchase property together. Define ways in which Council can support this process with support to secure finance, support around planning approvals etc.

- Publish a prospectus and build relationships with developers who are willing to pursue alternative models that lock-in affordable rents for retailers and creative producers and/or that give residential tenants influence over the retail mix and governance of retail in mixed use developments.
- Locate community-owned or community-focuses properties are located where they are best able to contribute to existing or future community spaces and active retail precincts
- Dovetail into other pivot strategies around communal ownership and industrial precincts
- Explore live/work typologies for both retail and creative spaces

Practical

Facade Upgrade Program

Establish a public/private partnership to upgrade building facades and shop fronts



“Renovate!”

KNOX RESIDENT

Find ways for council and individual building owners to collaborate to pool funds and resources for small repairs and upgrades such as painting, signage, lighting, windows and entrances in retail precincts.

Upgrading multiple facades at once will cut down on labour and call-out costs and

reduce the overall cost of the upgrades to landowners and body corporates. For example, Council may be able to simplify the process for land owners by providing project management services and managing funds, or this role may be taken on by larger body corporates

Council's role: Investigate

Approach to resourcing: Pending further budget

Possible next steps: Investigate the barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise resources and further actions

-
- Carry out an audit of run-down retail areas and assign each a priority according to the willingness of owners to participate, and overall bang-for-buck (complex or large scale upgrades should not be attempted)
 - Define target areas, participating business and list of proposed works for each precinct
 - Negotiate Council contributions such as matched funding or improvements works that can be timed to coordinate with facade improvements
 - Carry out a risk assessment and work who in the partnership is best places to carry out respective tasks
 - Define budgets for overall works, and proposed contribution by each landowner
 - Come to agreement and commit funds
 - Manage procurement, prioritising local trades
 - Follow up to ensure that works have been completed

Protection

Fairs, bazaars, carnavales, fêtes & markets

Open our car parks to markets and events of all kinds with a special focus on farmers' markets



"More markets"
LOCAL RESIDENT

Our engagement indicates a clear demand for markets, especially farmers markets. Shopping precincts and centres, traders associations, individual businesses should organise monthly farmers markets in their car parks.

Include existing grocers who have market connections, have a mixture of food and bric-a-brac. Invite local producers including bakeries, artisan food makers etc. to hold a stall along with home-based businesses. Include live music and family entertainment i.e petting zoo or face painting.

Council's role: Encourage

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps:

- Identify appropriate locations, good candidates would be underused parking lots with facilities such as public toilets. Consider current offer, extra parking asides from the markets
- Ensure the offer of the market is not in direct competition with the existing bricks and mortar retail onsite. Use market stalls to enhance the retail existing offer, create clusters, and close gaps
- Start market events off as small fundraiser with low stall fees to attract stall holders and let them grow organically
- Research popular farmers markets close by and see if any of those vendors operate close to or in Knox
- Ensure a good % mix of produce, ready to eat food and other wares
- Smaller and high quality is better than big and messy

More ideas

- Support shopping clusters to offer **locally based home delivery** for retail and goods. Similar to Your Grocer, but employing local delivery agents
- **Adequate Pathway Lighting** in higher foot traffic areas, particularly around train stations and shopping districts with a night economy
- **Bikes, bikes, bikes!** More cycling infrastructure, more bike parking at retail centres, specials if you present your bike helmet, bike in events-ride in movies, pop-up bike lanes



Case Study

The small Victorian town of Yackandandah started the **Yackandandah Community Development Company** to buy the town's only petrol station when it was under threat of closing down. It's now run by local shareholders who get discount fuel and operates as a community hub.

Resources for Easy Life ideas:

Support for Ferntree Gully Village weekend markets

Here and There Makers Boronia craft ideas



In The Foothills Ideas

Protect and showcase our natural environment and green spaces. Find new ways to connect these to local business

“Make the village a tourist attraction before heading up the mountain”

LOCAL RESIDENT

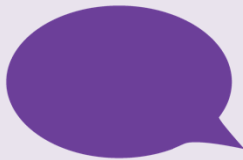
“I love being at the foothills of the mountains”

LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER

Promote

Wend Your Way

Define, promote and celebrate 100s of wonderful journeys through Knox



“Being able to use the boardwalk and inspect all the little critters living in the creek, is so meditating”

LOCAL RESIDENT

It's easy to travel around Knox on the main roads and feel like it's stretches of grey suburbia, but locals know that you only have to step off the highways to discover charming villages, hidden gems, peaceful residential streets lined with majestic gums, lush green parks or patches of bushland and creeks adjacent to our retail centres. Venture a little further afield and you can add adventures in the Dandenongs, Eastern suburbs and Woi wurrung and Bun wurrung Country to your Knox experience.

This idea is about linking the assets of Knox and the surrounding area into rewarding journeys, day trips and clusters that have real destination appeal. It's about curating and showing off existing assets,

defining anchors, stops and routes to make it easier and exciting to explore Knox.

The key steps to doing this are to carry out an audit of and then create promotional campaigns that connect Knox's walking, cycling and driving tours and our retail offer.

The trails could include walking and cycling trails, picturesque drives, picnic spots (and where to buy the hamper), op-shop trails, coffee roasters, cafes and restaurants, specific food trails i.e. the best bánh mì, pies or tandoori in Knox.

Much of this work is about identifying what already exists and then filling in gaps in the offer and the network. Networks only work well when they are unbroken, good journeys clear and appealing wayfinding and stops in the right places.

Council's role: Lead/partner

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council should co-lead this project and deliver it in collaboration with retailers and the community

- Conduct an audit of Knox to identify the best trails, links, anchors and assets with a specific focus on the retail offer
- Build on and include the existing research and initiatives including ecological walks and Tree Trails already offered by Knox and other horticultural groups and the walk and tour projects supported in the last round of arts funding
- Look into crossing over into neighbouring LGAs, for example a loop of the Dandenong Ranges
- Provide grants, support and promotion for local businesses and operators to band together to create tours and journeys
- Focus tours and paths around retail areas and neighbourhood parks, avoid initiatives that encourage increase visitation to reserves and bushland that need protection
- Create multiple ways to promote these journeys, including online maps that can be easily accessed on phones and physical maps to stock in retail stores. Ensure that the design of maps and wayfinding is high quality and support the place brand of the different villages in Knox
- Consult with businesses on the map and create social media shareables for them to use in promotion of the trails
- Connect in with any picnic based promotions as detailed in the following recommendation

Program

Picnic Capital

Make Knox the Picnic Capital of Melbourne to showcase our stunning views and green spaces with a strengthened food offer



“Picnics and catering in open space and parks”
LOCAL RESIDENT

Knox is already the perfect place for a picnic. This initiative is about inviting all retailers in Knox to get onboard, from individual businesses putting on a picnic hamper special, to a coordinated collaboration between grocers, cafes, bars, restaurants, retailers, caterers, events companies, community groups and Council.

Picnic hampers should be curated by local businesses, Knox-style, and celebrate the picnicking and alfresco food cultures from around the world. Picnicking kits and infrastructure should be provided in local shopping areas such as umbrellas, games

and rug hire. Car parking spaces can be reclaimed with plants and turf and sand to create green picnic areas.

This idea should begin by framing and positioning the existing takeaway offer of Knox, but over time it should grow into a series of unique and richly layered experiences.

Curate maps of the best local spots, including the existing Council installed picnic/dining tables. Host long-blanket lunches, community picnics and fundraiser picnics. Offer a picnic concierge service who set up and pack down a catered picnic “experiences” for special occasions.

Council's role: Encourage

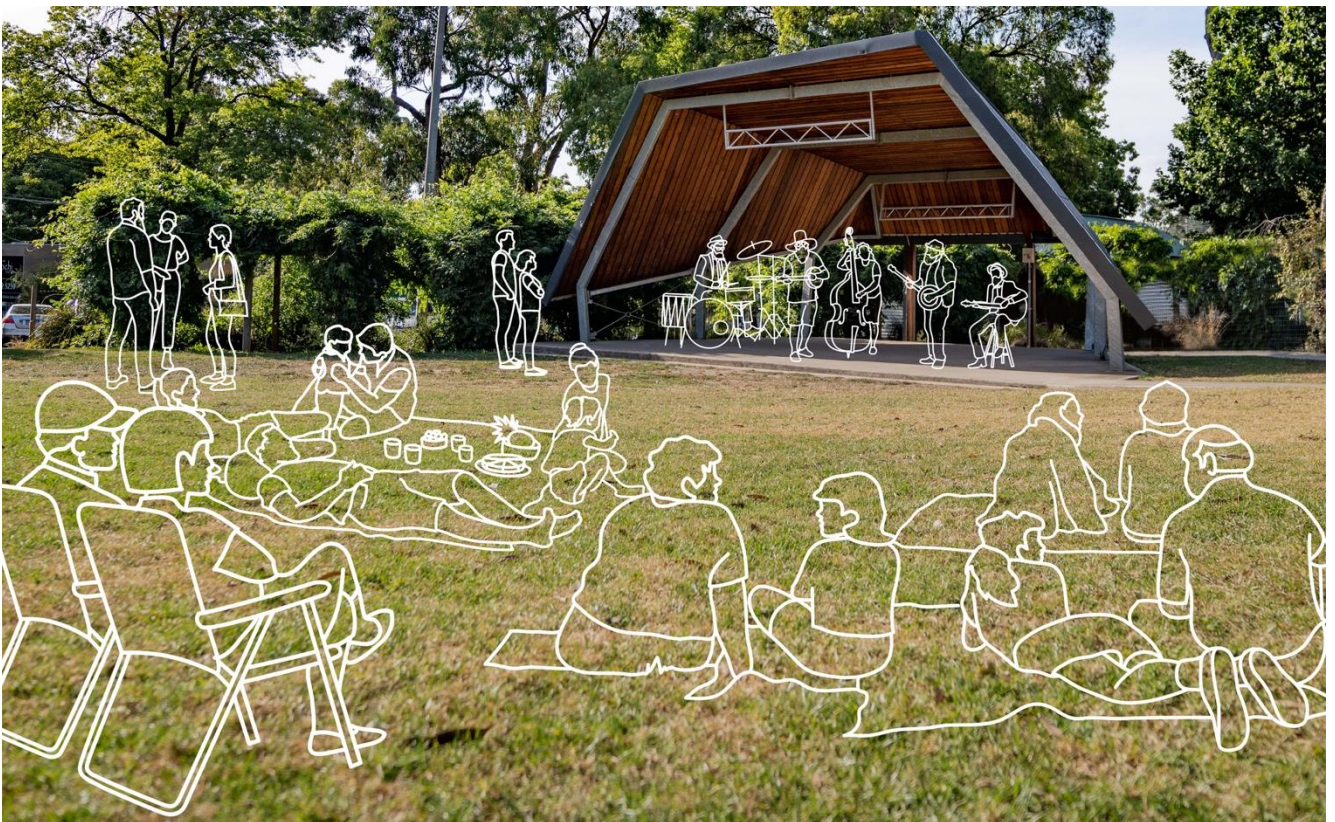
Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: These actions are best delivered directly by local businesses and community members, with encouragement and support from Council.

- Make Picnics the core of Council's outdoor dining response over the summer of 2021/22 and focus on:
 - Producing material quickly and effectively
 - Ensuring that wayfinding, marketing and promotion is baked into the strategy and budget from the beginning rather than being left as an afterthought
 - Supporting restaurants and cafes to sell more, reduce the cost of sales and to increase the value and POS price of their eat-out offer

- Providing programs that are easy for traders to participate in and that allow owners, managers, chefs and wait staff to remain in their comfort zone and to play their strengths as much as possible
- Creating lovely picnic experiences in ways that will improve the overall offer in the longer term, more picnic tables, pop-up picnic areas, shade clothes etc.
- Focus on making traders life less stressful, see traders smiles as the most important indicator of success
- Map the key picnic spots in Knox with a focus on areas in and immediately adjacent to existing villages and retail centres, discourage picnickers from venturing into reserves and bushland that need protection from crowds
- Fill the gaps with pop-up picnic areas in car parks or public spaces. Consider creating partnerships with local nurseries and businesses to use the picnic areas as displays for plants that are available for sale
- Identify sources of funding. COVID-19 relief funding should be appropriate for this use
- Run a **Picnic Training Program** to inspire and upskill local cafes, grocers, catering services and restaurants to create their own unique Knox Picnic offer with a range of flavours, experiences and offers e.g. for kids, for sharing, for solo picnics, for couples, vegan, kosher, halal, cultural specialties and holidays, for special occasions, vegan etc. Provide support to manage the logistics involved and to curate an overall picnic experience in each centre
- Curate specific experiences, offers and collaborations in individual retail centers such as shared hamper offers. Define collaborative models, for example one business might buy products wholesale and sell to other retailers, pre-made hampers with long shelf life items might be distributed with fresh items added, retailers might offer hampers on commission and return items that don't sell
- Deal with the problem of single use products. Develop **Picnic Hamper Kits** with reusable plates, bowls, cups and distribution systems. Make sure the hampers are easy to clean and robust
- Develop **Picnic Spot Kits** for local businesses to offer to customers including blankets, cushions, umbrellas, lighting etc. This might take the form of a guide offered to businesses, or Councils, traders associations and body corporates might play a role in direct procurement. Make sure this kit is clean and always in good condition. It is important that the overall vibe is charming and that the character of individual businesses shines through

- Run art projects, introduce charming activation elements and provide live music
- Keep in mind that this summer we can expect high demand for picnic gear, so it might be necessary to find creative solutions in the short and medium term
- Explore delivery options, including apps such as Hungry, Hungry and collective business run delivery
- Create promotional material including logos, bag stickers and window posters for businesses and maps to picnic spots for businesses. Run seasonal campaigns.
- Offer picnic event services provided by local catering, event companies and restaurants



Pivotal

Village Greens Plan

Improve the experience of our village centres by embracing adjacent green spaces, delivering upgrades and connecting villages to each other



“After my walk, I drop by the shops and get me some lunch”

LOCAL RESIDENT

We coined the term villag-a-fication to describe the process of making our retail centres more pedestrian friendly and inviting.

The quality of place experience varies significantly across Knox. While we have a handful of villages that are attractive and invite shoppers to linger - many of our shopping areas are utilitarian at best and actively hostile to pedestrians at worst.

Many of our centres turn their backs on adjacent parks or walking tracks, and our beautiful bike tracks and walking paths don't connect particularly well with our retail centres.

An important part of activating our retail centres is to find ways to improve the quality of the place experience by

reorienting villages so that they spill out onto adjacent green spaces, connecting and extend existing green links such as the Blind Creek trail so that unbroken cycle and walking tracks are provided between villages and creating greens and gathering spaces that invite people to linger.

This can be supported with a program of short-term **villag-a-fication interventions** that make our retail areas more pleasant places to walk around and spend time in. Test solutions in more provisional ways with pop-up parks, planters, outdoor dining decks, market stalls and food trucks. Where successful these can evolve into longer-term solutions such as sleeving blank facades with fine grain retail, planting large street trees and reclaiming car parks, rezoning land to create two-sided retail streets or reorienting built form to face adjacent green spaces.

Council's role: Investigate

Resources: Cross department projects

Possible next steps: Investigate the barriers, opportunities and level of support for this idea and decide how best to prioritise further actions

- Carry out an audit of green links and green spaces adjacent to retail areas with a particular focus on green areas in Council control including:
 - Retail centres that turn their back on adjacent green spaces such as the reserve on Adele Avenue adjacent to Mountain Gate or the northern edge of

Westfield Knox adjacency to Lewis Reserve and Blind Creek Trail

- Retail centres that open out directly onto car parks with poor pedestrian circulation such as Boronia Village
 - Unused areas which could provide alternative frontages in areas dominated by heavy traffic or with spatial restrictions, such as the laneway access running off Valentine Street behind the retail strip facing the northern side of Mountain Highway in Bayswater
- Define the key characteristics of the key successful villages as identified in this document
 - Build on the existing village-a-fication initiatives such as the new outdoor picnic tables and the outdoor dining areas in Wantirna Mall and Mountain High Shopping centre car parks
 - Consider industrial areas which have, or may have creative and retail uses such as the precinct on Edina Rd in Ferntree Gully beside the Blind Creek Trail

Practical

Embrace Reusables & the ban on single-use products

Support traders around implementing the ban of single use products and balloons and strengthen the appeal of Knox retail to customers who care about the environment



“Clean the streets and environment more”

KNOX LOCAL

With our beautiful trees, birdlife, waterways, wildlife and natural places it's important the City of Knox and our retail centres walk the talk and support the phase-out single use plastics and products in line with the State Government deadline of February 2023.

This should be introduced with practical measures to make it easy for traders to use sustainable alternatives along with a comprehensive communication and

promotional campaign with both traders and the public.

Implement programs to substitute single use food containers with reusables and to create reusable tote bags and wrapping papers that promote each centre.

Promotional campaigns around reusable and sustainable products should highlight Knox's natural beauty, appeal to our loyalty to our villages and traders and strengthen our sense of belonging.

Council's role: Encourage

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: These actions are best delivered directly by local businesses and community members, with encouragement and support from Council.

- Conduct a review of currently available suppliers and programs in Melbourne along with case studies of reuse schemes around the world. Look to councils in Melbourne who have already made the transition away from single use products such as Darebin. Investigate new technology such as trackers in items that track credits for each cup used and each cup washes, along with low-tech but super effective solutions such as India's thriving dabbawalla food delivery system
- Establish of role for one person at Council to work directly with traders around this issue and to manage consultation, feedback and concerns and to engage with different departments within Council
- Define a clear policy around waste and reusable packaging and clearly communicate this policy to traders. Wherever possible provide incentives rather than penalties
- Define a compelling communication and promotion campaign that includes decals, POS displays and information sheets. Appeal to locals' love of nature, eco-friendly values and loyalty to traders. Encourage all vendors to add a surcharge to their prices to cover the cost of sustainable containers, ensure this is communicated in a way that allows customers to feel good about doing their bit to help the environment and support local businesses
- Support local providers and manufacturers of reusables, washing services and collection services as well as small local initiatives like Perth's volunteer run Community Dishes who loan sets of op shop dishes to locals. Consider providing grants to encourage local initiatives
- Devise a plan that provides subsidised sustainable packaging in the short-term and moves to full reusables over the longer term. Organise bulk-purchase of sustainable materials for the initial roll out. Make sure that traders have easy alternatives readily available before the ban begins
- Commission a series of artist-designed affordable reusable packaging and tote bags for each centre. Help traders procure printing and merchandise with their own branding and designs
- Seek funding from multiple bodies concerned with waste and sustainability e.g. Keep Australia Beautiful grants

Protection

Open Season Public Space Initiative

Trial innovative ways to remove the barriers to use of public space. Invite local traders, performers and entrepreneurs to find multitude ways to activate and enliven our car parks, streets, open spaces and parks.

Run a trail program to open up the use of public space to allow private businesses to trade on council owned land when these proposed uses deliver a net public benefit.

These uses will enhance the experiences of Knox's green space while supporting local retail recovery by giving businesses more options and access to new revenue streams.

Use the program as a low-cost way to test new concepts including pop-up summer bars, BBQs, garage sales, catered outdoor cinemas, outdoor cooking classes, DJs, long lunches, food trucks, live music etc.

Council's role: Lead

Approach to resourcing: Within existing resources

Possible next steps: Council to lead this project and deliver it in collaboration with retailers and the community

- Conduct an audit to identify potential spaces and facilities, particularly spaces currently underused or under services or those that offer opportunities to improve the experience of place. Map gaps in the retail offer, possible collaborations or clusters and potential points of conflict between bricks-and-mortar stores and pops-ups, activities and events
- Identify businesses that might be interested in extending their uses into adjacent public spaces or having satellite activities and activities
- Hold a working sessions with different areas of Council including Operations and Local Laws to work through practicalities and implications of changes in policy and management of public spaces
- Define a framework for preferred activity and selection criteria for what activities are allowed. Ensure that community benefits are clearly defined and articulated
- Invite carefully selected businesses to kick-off the program before opening submissions to the general public
- Balance supporting local talent with inviting in outside operators who can act as anchors and attractors

- Ensure experimental campaigns are low-cost or free for existing local businesses, explore charging larger businesses and operators based outside Knox higher rates
- Conduct trial program over the summer months, combine with other initiatives outlined in this document including those related to picnics, food trucks, markets, sticking points etc.
- Consider providing infrastructure to allow businesses to participate in short term pop-ups with low upfront investment

More ideas

- Mini **festival of outdoor dining** that moves around the existing Council built installations and park benches. Could include acoustic musicians, magicians, circus performers etc.
- Bring the mountains and green to the main streets, install **planter beds** with mountain scenes painted on them. Let a shop adopt each bed and care for it.
- Sign up to **food ordering apps** such as Hungry, Hungry to deliver to the existing council installed dining pods and outdoor dining installations. Access a group discount if a cluster of shops, Council, or a traders association approach collectively.

Case Study

The Japanese do outdoor eating in style with **Hanabi** picnics under the cherry blossoms during Sakura season. Popular Hanami spots have pop-up food and drink stalls and you can hire/buy picnic mats and tables cheaply.

Resources for In The Foothills ideas:

[Returnr](#) - hire and washing service

[Community dishes](#) - borrow plates for party and bring them back

[Reuse schemes](#) around the world

[Green Caffein](#) - buy your coffee in a cup and then return it

[The Rouge Ginger](#) - party packs

Summary overview

Council will take responsibility for delivering these projects either directly or in collaboration with state government agencies

Idea	Description	Strength	Approach	Council's Role				Resourcing
				Lead	Partner	Encourage	Investigate	
Super Sustainable Blocks	Partner with local businesses to create opportunities to make homes sustainable and more self-sufficient	Home-loving	Protect	x	x	x		Within existing resources & community / trader led
Friendly Train Stations Strategy	Kickstart the Friendly Train Stations program and events around train stations	Village vibes	Pivotal	x	x			Within existing resourcing + potential grant funding
Walking Place Audit	First community place Audit with Shine Knox partners	Village vibes	Practical	x				Within existing resources
What's On Knox?	Kickstart What's On Knox	Village vibes	Protect	x	x			
Creative Industrial Precinct Plan	Events or scavenger hunt in industrial precincts that	Untapped	Pivotal	x			x	Within existing resources

	highlight opportunities and hidden gems							
Sticking Points Street Upgrade Program	Roll out Sticking Points Upgrade Program	Untapped	Practical	x				Within existing resources
Community-owned Retail & Creative Spaces	Ring-fence affordable rents and active streets and precincts by supporting alternative ownership and access models	Easy Life	Pivotal	x	x		x	
Wend Your Way	Define, promote and celebrate 100s of wonderful journeys through Knox.	In the Foothills	Promote	x	x			Within existing resources
Open Season Public Space Initiative	Trial innovative ways to remove the barriers to use of public space. Invite local traders, performers and entrepreneurs to find multitude ways to activate and enliven our car parks, streets, open spaces and parks	In the Foothills	Protect	x				Within existing resources

These projects are best delivered in partnership with industry, business or community organisations or groups

Idea	Description	Strength	Approach	Council's Role				Resourcing
				Lead	Partner	Encourage	Investigate	
Open Kitchen Cooking Classes	Cooking Classes in restaurant kitchens	Home-loving	Promote		x	x		Within existing resources (project manager delivery) & community / trader led
The Big Spring Clean	Big spring clean & festive neighbourhood-wide garage sale	Home-loving	Practical		x	x		Council to partner with community and traders
Seasonal Calendar of Events	Events calendar	Village vibes	Program		x			Within existing resources
Make It Fair	Open up making, production and retail opportunities to broader and more inclusive demographics	Untapped	Protect		x		x	Within existing resources, potential to seek grant funding
Unlock Knox's Brand Story	Commission a professionally developed visual identity to promote the strengths of Knox that can be used by all and includes child brands for key centres	Easy Life	Promote		x			Combined with the 'What's on Knox' idea

These ideas are very much in line with the core strengths of Knox and the community's ambitions for our retail sector. Council will provide support and encouragement for these ideas, or ideas with similar outcomes

Idea	Description	Strength	Approach	Council's Role				Resourcing
				Lead	Partner	Encourage	Investigate	
Seasonal Planting On Show	Marketing campaign around plant displays	Home-loving	Program			x		Community / trader led
Cozy Streets & Places	'Little Zooosh' campaign to create little cozy spaces	Home-loving	Pivotal			x	x	Within existing resources & community / trader led
Fairs, bazaars, carnavales, fêtes & markets	Open our car parks to markets and events of all kinds with a special focus on farmers' markets	Easy Life	Protect			x		Within existing resources
Picnic Capital	Make Knox the Picnic Capital of Melbourne to showcase our stunning views and green spaces with a strengthened food offer	In the Foothills	Program			x		Within existing resources
Embrace Reusables & the ban on single-use products	Support traders to implement the ban of single use products to strengthen the appeal of Knox retail to customers who care about the environment	In the Foothills	Practical			x		Within existing resources

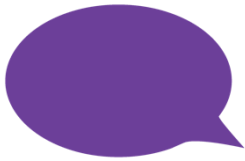
We think these ideas have serious potential.

We commit to undertaking additional investigation to understand how they might play out in Knox, and how they should be prioritised in Council's plans.

Idea	Description	Strength	Approach	Council's Role				Resourcing
				Lead	Partner	Encourage	Investigate	
Knox Merch	Knox Merch Christmas Market with local artists and makers	Village vibes	Promote				x	Within existing resources
No Vacancy Program	Use vacant shops and displays	Untapped	Promote				x	Within existing resources
Home-based Business Support Program	Support home-based businesses	Easy Life	Program				x	Consider within the context of economic development service plan
Facade Upgrade Program	Public/private partnership to upgrade building facades and shop fronts.	Easy Life	Practical				x	Pending further budget
Village Greens Plan	Improve the experience of our village centres by embracing adjacent green spaces, delivering upgrades and connecting villages to each other	In the Foothills	Pivotal				x	Cross department projects

Appendices

Additional research and analysis



“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world”

ANNE FRANK

Complementary existing recommendations

Our work builds on previous engagement, in depth analysis and recommendations of other Council projects including the Outdoor Dining Initiatives of late 2020. A number of the recommendations of these studies and reports, including the Knox Community Plan, the Upper Gully Implementation Plan, Boronia Renewal Strategy, The Knox Open Space Plan and The Rowville Plan, complement our findings and support the 5 strengths. These have been summarised here.

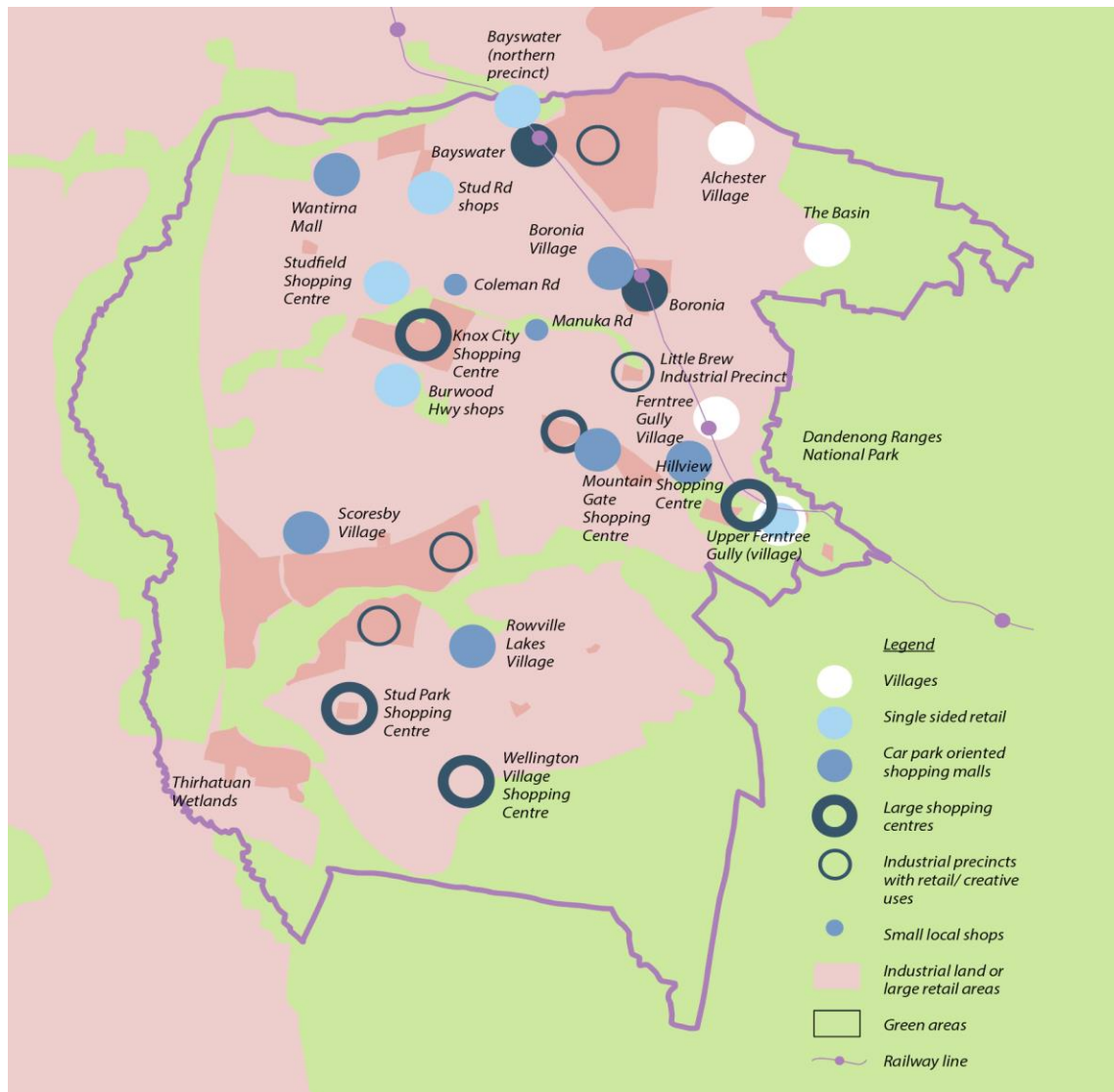
- Improve the community perception of safety
- Promote Knox as the gateway to the Dandenongs
- Increase opportunities for start-up businesses
- Maintain and clean up shop fronts on main streets
- More markets
- Help businesses with event planning, promotion and tech literacy
- Find creative ways to combat built form and spatial issues - not pedestrian friendly, poor design of retail areas
- Transition to be less reliant on cars
- Improve connections between walking and cycling paths
- Strategies and interventions that promote business clustering
- Prioritise protecting Knox's green spaces
- Implement strategies are needed to address the high vacancy rates in main street shops

Place analysis

Key retail typology

We've conducted place audits of the key retail centres in Knox which includes a spatial, built form, economic, semantic and experiential analysis and assessment of the retail mix and offer.

Much of the retail typology of Knox reflects new forms emerging from the late 1960s which are designed around car-based transportation.



Villages

There are only 3 significant retail centres with traditional main street form in Knox, these are clustered in the north of Knox in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.

These retail areas have two-sided main streets lined with shops, parks and civic services that act as community gathering spaces and thoroughfares. The footpaths are wide enough to encourage footpath displays and outdoor dining. Traffic doesn't negatively impact the footpath areas and public spaces and street trees and parks provide green spaces.

Parking is often limited in the centre of the village, encouraging shoppers to walk around the precinct.

These places offer the strongest place experiences of all the retail centres in Knox.

Note: As Upper Ferntree Gully grows along Rose Street it will also function spatially as a village.

Single sided retail strips

There are 5 key single-sided retail strips in Knox, mainly located between Bayswater and Boronia.

These shops are positioned on busy roads that act as a barrier to part of the catchment and impact the quality of the experience of adjacent footpaths and open spaces.

Shoppers are often able to park right outside the shop they want to visit, cutting down on footfall benefits across the precinct.

Note: Even though the retail area along Mountain Highway in Bayswater is double-sided, the area to the north should be treated as a single-sided retail strip as the heavy traffic cuts this area off from the precinct around the railway station.

Car-park oriented shopping areas and malls

There are 6 key shopping areas that are arranged around a central car park in Knox.

Apart from the layout these retail areas are often very similar to single-sided strips in terms of retail mix and sometimes even governance and land-ownership. Like single-sided shopping strips, precinct footfall is reduced by parking designed to allow shoppers to pull up right outside each shop.

Sometimes these centres have central ownership or are managed by a body-corporate. Some centres are a combination of flat-topped shopping centres with interior walkways, and shops that face outwards towards parking areas and external walkways.

There is often very little public space or places to gather in these developments, some have narrow walkways in front of the shops which are not wide enough to accommodate footpath tables or signs.

Although these centres are not always designed or laid out for pleasant pedestrian experiences, the fact that they are set back from heavy traffic can sometimes improve the experience of walking around.

Shopping centres and centralised malls

Knox has 4 large shopping centres with the largest being Knox City/ Westfield Knox. These generally follow the standard template for urban shopping centres; disconnected from surrounding urban form with few windows or entrances to surrounding areas, blank facades against public spaces with poor overlooking, internal walkways and large parking areas.

These centres are centrally managed and are in private control.

Industrial precincts with emerging retail and creative uses

Knox has 5 key precincts where emerging retail, creative or cultural uses are reshaping industrial precincts or compounds. These areas are sometimes designed as courts with a central driveway or loop and body corporate management. Parking is often limited to 1 or 2 private spaces outside each business.

Small local shops

Small shopping precincts of 3-7 shops located on quiet roads in residential neighbourhoods.

Walking Place Audit toolkit

The online version of this tool can be found [here](#) (google form)

Welcome to the Knox Place Audit tool.

Every 6 months we get a group of people who care about their local retail centre together to carry out a Walking Place Audit to evaluate what works, what doesn't, talk about ideas and dream up ways to build on what's working and fix what doesn't.

The audit has 4 parts:

Part 1 SETTING THE SCENE: We'll start with a coffee and a chat, we'll hand out the kit and show you how to do the audit.

Part 2 WALK: Next you'll partner up with one other person in the group and walk around the centre together, taking photos and making notes of locations as you go on the map provided.

Part 3 ASSESSMENT: Then we will sit down together, over lunch if possible, and complete the assessments and score different aspects of the centre.

Part 4 MODERATION: Finally we'll moderate our scores. If you would like to you can also define a set of shared ambitions for the centre and a to-do list.

Part 1. Setting the scene

WORK OUT YOUR ROUTE

What are most people who use the centre likely to be doing here? What are 2 most typical destinations or experiences?

You can choose anything from commuting, borrowing a library book or buying a carton of milk to going for a run, celebrating a birthday or going to school.

On the map provided, work out a typical journey a visitor to the centre might make that includes these two destinations or experiences - make sure the journey is no more than 10 minutes long.

When you do the place audit you and your buddy are going to walk each of your journeys together and take note of what the experience is like. Pay attention to how easy, comfortable, enjoyable it is to move around. Is there plenty to look at? Are you bored, tired, distracted, frustrated by anything? Or are you excited, intrigued, amused or comforted by anything?

WALKING TASK A: MAP 10 REAL ASSETS and 10 PROBLEMS

As you walk around make a note on your map of the assets & problems of the centre, both big and small.

An asset could be an inviting display of ripe tomatoes or a patch of gorgeous vintage tiles on a shop front or a well-connected bike path. A problem might be unattractive signage or a busy road that prevents people from getting to the shops.

WALKING TASK B: EXPLORE AN IDEA

While you're walking around the centre share the most exciting ideas you've seen elsewhere that just might work here. Pick the most extreme idea & talk about ways it might work well & the ways it might not

WALKING TASK C: PHOTO CHALLENGE

Use the word THRIVING as a theme.

As you walk around today take photos that respond to this word and that you think also capture the spirit of the place. Use the photos to tell the story of your personal experience of the place and what is important to you.

You can take as many photos as you like, then select your favourite 3 photos and email it to the Economic Development team - business@knox.vic.gov.au

1. What precinct are you auditing today? *

2. WALKING TASK A: What are the 2 key destinations or experiences you've nominated?

Write each below with a description if necessary.

Part 2. Walk

With your maps walk your journey and your partner's journey. Take photos, plot key locations on your map or take notes to help jog your memory later.

You will be doing a detailed assessment next, so don't worry about taking super detailed notes while you're walking.

This process should take about 30 minutes. When you're finished head back to the meeting spot for Part 3.

1. Share your notes about the idea/s you explored

What was the idea or ideas? How might it work here? In what ways might it not work?

2. Sum up the experience of being here by completing the phrase.

This place is _____

3. Pick your favourite photo and email to Jayde Hayes jayde.hayes@knox.vic.gov.au

Part 3. Assessment

Now it's time to make some assessments of what's good and bad, and what works and what doesn't.

Don't discuss your opinions or findings with anyone else in the group yet, your scores should be entirely your opinion at this stage.

1. **Give the centre an overall score out of 100.**

Don't worry about criteria. Think about a place you think is pretty amazing and why? Then compare it with the centre and give a single global score out of 100.

Notes about your journey

Tell us anything else you think is important about your journey

10 Real Assets and Problems

List the assets of the centre.

Try and find at least 10. Finish annotating your map to show locations.

List the problems of the centre.

Include minor problems. Finish annotating your map to show locations.

Now we are going to drill down into different elements of the centre.

For each aspect we'll ask you to start with a global score out of 100 and then we'll ask you some more detailed questions. Remember, at this stage we just want your opinion - don't discuss your scores with anyone.

Global assessment

What do you think of the overall retail offer of the centre? Give the retail offer a score out of 100.

What do you think of the overall shopping environment? Give it a score out of 100.

What do you think of the streetscape in the centre? Give the overall streetscape a score out of 100.

What do you think about how easy or pleasant it is to get around the centre? Give this a score out of 100.

What do you think about the overall quality of the place brand or experience of place? Give this a score out of 100.

Retail offer

How would you rate the retail offer?

	totally awful, depressing, shockingly bad	pretty bad	meh	pretty good	fantastic, awesome, amazing
The quality and quantity of community buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The diversity of people present in the street and shops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well the shops appear to mirror the local population in terms of culturally specific goods, services and references	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quantity and quality of facilities for children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Share any additional thoughts you might have about the retail offer.

Are there any specific gaps? Any elements that don't fit well? etc.

Shopping environment

How would you rate the shopping environment?

	totally awful, depressing, shockingly bad	pretty bad	meh	pretty good	fantastic, awesome, amazing
The balance between day and night time uses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The sense of the personality of the shopkeepers being expressed through their shop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the attractiveness of shop windows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The balance between convenience and destination traders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the range of goods and services on offer on the main street	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the quality of signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Share any additional thoughts you might have about the shopping environment

Streetscape

How would you rate the streetscape?

	totally awful, depressing, shockingly bad	pretty bad	meh	pretty good	fantastic, awesome, amazing
The quality and quantity of public art	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The condition of public buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how safe you feel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The condition of the commercial or other private buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How cared for the streetscape feels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the condition of the pavements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	totally awful, depressing, shockingly bad	pretty bad	meh	pretty good	fantastic, awesome, amazing
The quality and quantity of public amenities such as seating, light, bins etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The diversity of housing types	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The condition of houses and front yards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Share any additional thoughts you might have about the streetscape.

Getting Around

How would you rate getting around?

	totally awful, depressing, shockingly bad	pretty bad	meh	pretty good	fantastic, awesome, amazing
How well laid out the key local amenities are	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How easy it is to get around on foot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how easy it would be to get around if you had a stroller or were in a wheelchair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the quality and placement of parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How long it takes to cross the road	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Share any additional thoughts you might have about getting around.

How would you rate the brand/experience of place?

	totally awful, depressing, shockingly bad	pretty bad	meh	pretty good	fantastic, awesome, amazing
The sense of place/identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Share any additional thoughts you might have about the experiences of place.

Part 4. Moderation

This is where we get down to brass tacks.

The facilitator will show a spreadsheet on a computer (or projector) with each of our scores and the average for the overall score and the place aspect scores (i.e place experience, retail offer etc).

Sometimes we'll find that different auditors have provided very different scores. When we see a significant gap in scores we'll ask the auditor/s who scored differently to tell us why they've given that score. After discussion all auditors will be given an opportunity to change their score if they want to.

Brilliant!

Thank you for being part of our place audit team.