

ISSUES PAPER

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Yarraville Port Environs Local Planning Policy 2010

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Client:

Maribyrnong City Council &
Port of Melbourne
Corporation

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INTRODUCTION

The Planning Group was engaged jointly by the Port of Melbourne Corporation (POMC) and the Maribyrnong City Council (the Council) to provide advice on the appropriate planning controls that should be applied to an area described as the Yarraville Port Environs. This area comprises the land bounded by the Maribyrnong River, Napier Street, Hyde Street and Francis Street. This area is located to the west of the Port of Melbourne, within close proximity to some intensively used areas such as Coode Island Major Hazard Facilities (MHF) and areas adjacent to Swanson Dock container terminal, which is used for the storage and handling of shipping containers.

The Study arises from extensive consultation between the POMC and Council regarding how best to manage land use and development in the precinct. The Port of Melbourne is a key freight handling facility and vital to Victoria's economic prosperity. It has extensive investment and its freight and logistics task is expected to more than double in the next decade and beyond. Traditionally areas adjacent to the Port have been used for industrial and freight logistics activities that have been compatible with the Port. More recently, the traditional industrial and freight logistics uses are being replaced by uses that are likely to have higher amenity expectations and are likely to consider that they are detrimentally impacted by the operations of the Port, at a time when the Port needs to be unconstrained. The inclusion of part of the Yarraville Precinct in a Business 2 Zone, and local policies that support a mixed use development may lead to demands that the operations of the Port be constrained.

In 2006, Council and the POMC entered a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out agreed principles for land use and development in the Yarraville precinct. The MOU provides that more detailed discussion would be undertaken of the planning framework to ensure the effective implementation of the planning principles. This Issues Paper is the first stage of this detailed review. The Issues Paper aims to identify the key issues and the modifications to the current planning framework that are required to implement the principles agreed in the MOU.

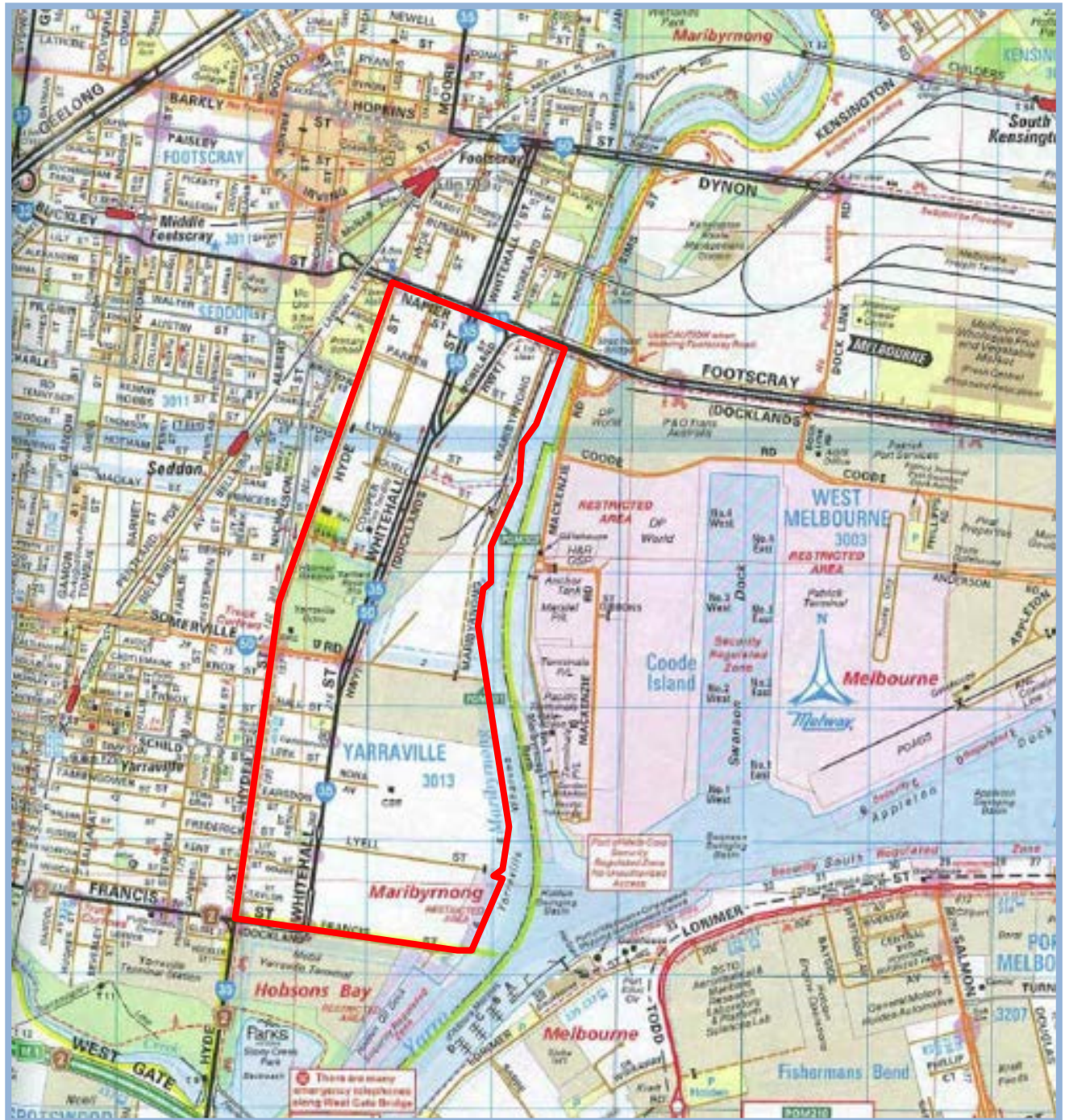
The Issues Paper provides a summary of the planning framework in the Yarraville Precinct and also briefly reviews the key strategic studies that impact on the area. The paper provides a brief assessment of the likely impacts of the operations of the Port on various land uses that are allowable in the Precinct and assesses their suitability to locate in the area. It then reviews a range of options to modify the planning framework for the area.

The Issues Paper also considers the existing natural topography and features of the area and its current built form. It then considers the preferred built form that should be encouraged to be developed in the area, and the nature of streetscape and landscape improvements that should be considered to enhance the public realm to enable the area's special features to be accessed and enjoyed by the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

THE STUDY AREA

The Yarraville Port Environs that is the subject of this review abuts the western bank of the Maribyrnong River and is bounded by Footscray Road / Napier Street to the north, Hyde Street to the west and Francis Street to the south. The Study Area is shown on the plan below.



The Study Area was delineated by the City of Maribyrnong and the POMC and was derived from the historic land uses occurring in the area, the current town planning zones and the current use of the land. Hyde Street provides a change in land use from industrial uses to commercial and residential and it is also approximately 800 metres from the Coode Island MHF which is close to the required EPA buffer from the Port activities. The Study Area is also consistent with the Buffer Study Stage 1 (Maunsell 2003) and the Port Environs Stakeholder Forum Consultation meeting (2006) and is included in the Memorandum of Understanding between the POMC and Council.

The Study Area is mainly used for a range of industrial and commercial purposes that reflect the historic land uses that have located in the area. Most of the Study Area is occupied by factories, small distribution centres, industries and trade establishments. Larger heavy industrial uses historically located in the southern parts of the Study Area. In recent years, container storage and freight transport activities related to the Port have replaced some of the heavier industrial uses particularly between Whitehall Road, Lyons Street and Somerville Road. The northern part of the Study Area includes mixed office and industrial / distribution activities that have located in both converted former industrial buildings and in newer purpose built office / industrial workshop style premises. Some caretaker dwellings have also been developed in the northern part of the Study Area, particularly in the former Cotton Mills factory. These uses do not require a planning permit under the current zoning. A planning permit was refused by Council for a dwelling in the same development and the refusal was upheld by VCAT.

The pattern of land uses and the proximity to the Port activities provides a basis to delineate sub precincts and these have also been defined by Council and the POMC in the Project Brief. These sub-precincts are shown on the plan below.

Area A

This area is located at the northern end of the Study area and is bounded by Napier Street, the Maribyrnong River, Moreland Road and Lyons Street.

The precinct includes single level factories / distribution and storage buildings, the offices and printing facilities of Lonely Planet and other commercial / warehouses and several key redevelopment sites. One key site is 99 Moreland Street, for which there was interest to develop this site for a substantial multi level commercial office development. A Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit was approved by Council for commercial offices, including a restaurant and a small conference centre. The application was referred to VCAT, and was subsequently called in by the Minister for Planning given its proximity to the Coode Island MHF, the concerns of the MHF operators and its sensitivity and significance for other development sites close to the Port. The application was withdrawn before it was determined by the Minister.

Adjacent to this land and the Maribyrnong River are the Footscray Wharves. Once the home to the Port Phillip Bay scallop fleet, it is owned by the POMC. It is no longer used to moor or service boats. It is secured and no public access is available.

The Maribyrnong Rail Link runs adjacent to this precinct along Maribyrnong Street, but is not used at this time. PoMC has advised Council and the Department of Transport that it does not require the rail line north of Shepherd Bridge subject to the creation of a reservation for a future rail crossing immediately south of the bridge linking to the existing rail track on the south side of Footscray Road.

The commercial office development adjoining the River is two storeys (7 metres) in height and the Lonely Planet building comprises 3 industrial storeys and a penthouse floor with a total height in the order of 15 metres. The industrial / warehouse buildings in the precinct have a height in the order of 8 metres.

Area B

This precinct is bounded by Maribyrnong Street, Lyons Street, Somerville Road and Whitehall Street. Uses include factories and warehouses and Westgate Ports freight centre. The Maribyrnong Rail line diagonally traverses the Precinct and terminates close to the intersection of Somerville Road and Whitehall Street. The POMC has purchased several land parcels to the south of Lyons Street and intends using the land for port related uses. Land owned by the POMC site has been cleared of buildings.

Area C

This Precinct is bounded by Somerville Road, Whitehall Street, Francis Street and the land adjacent to the western bank of the River. Most of this precinct is used for Port related uses including:

- Albright and Wilson (Aust) Pty Ltd.
- Orica Australia Pty Ltd (2 sites).
- CSR Limited including Sugar Australia.

Two operating wharves owned by the POMC are located on the western bank of the River. 5 Yarraville (2 Somerville Road) is operated by CSR and is used to import raw sugar and gypsum. Yarraville 6 is a common user facility and handles liquid and dry bulk products. Orica Australia Pty Ltd uses the terminal for the import of sulphuric acid. Albright and Wilson also use the facility for the import of phosphorus and phosphoric acid.

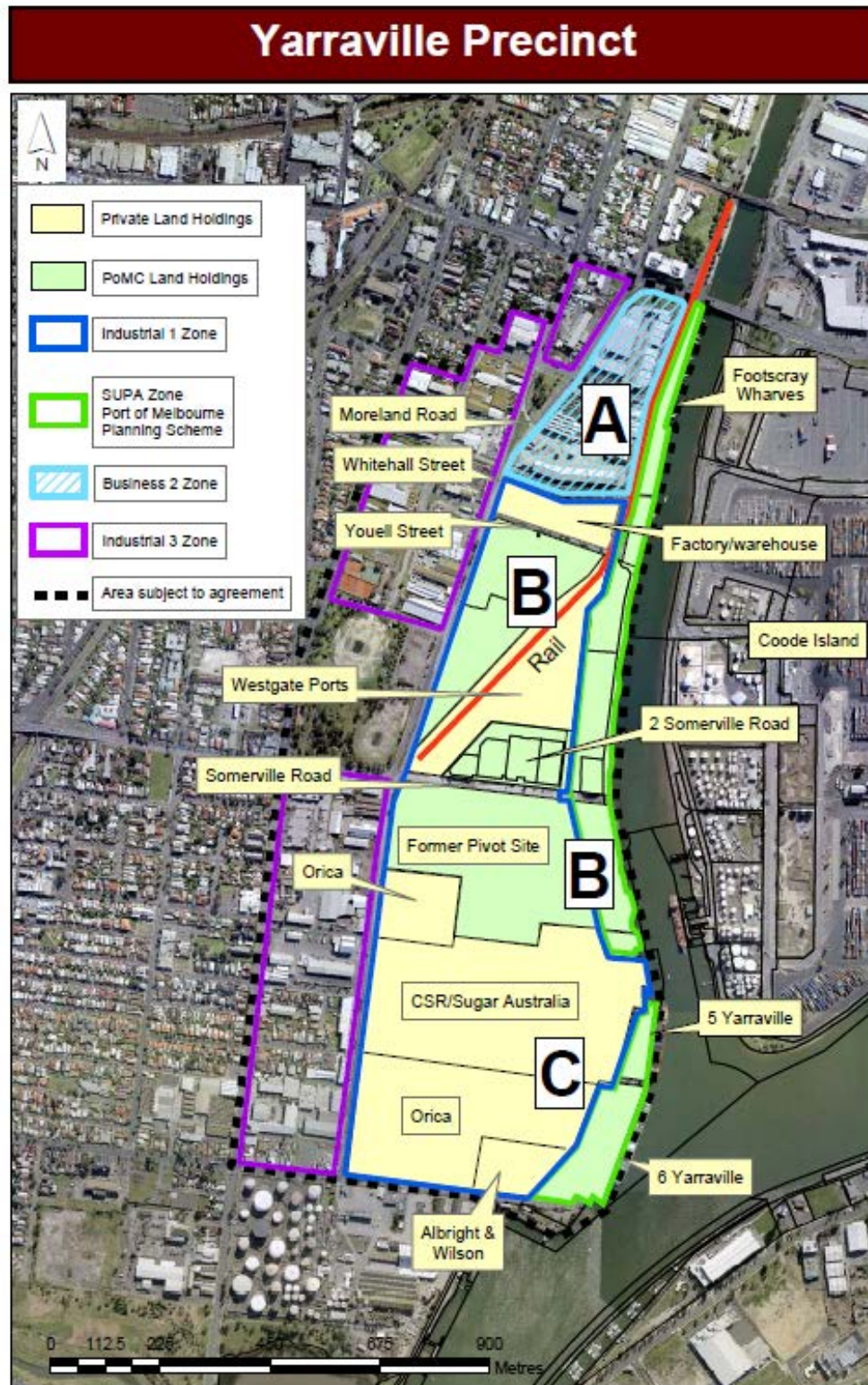
Most of the development in this precinct is single storey industrial buildings with heights in the range of 4 to 8 metres. Some structures such as storage towers have a height in the order of 15 metres.

Interface Area

The Interface Area is bounded by Napier Street in the north, Whitehall Street, Hyde Street and Francis Street. The area includes the Yarraville Gardens and the Yarraville Tennis Club. Most of the Interface Area has been developed for factories and associated offices. W Murphy and Sons Transport are located in this precinct and have strong business connections to CSR and other port related uses.

A small area of existing residential properties exists in Earsdon Street and Frederick Street, generally between Hyde Street and Whitehall Street. The land was rezoned from residential to industrial sometime between 1959 and 1968. The residential uses are inconsistent with the industrial zoning of the land and probably reflect a time when people lived and worked in the local area, mainly in port related businesses.

Most of the built form is single storey industrial development in the order of 6 to 8 metres in height. There are several two storey hotels in the Interface Area.



SURROUNDING ENVIRONS

The Yarraville Port environs is at the interface of industrial and freight transport uses to the north and east of the precinct, and predominantly residential uses to the west.

The Port of Melbourne is located on the east side of the Maribyrnong River. The Port is one of Australia's primary freight/shipping terminals and Swanson Dock is located approximately 800 metres from the Study Area. The area between Swanson Dock and the river's edge is a container terminal used for storage and distribution of shipping containers and is also the main access road for heavy trucks. Coode Island Major Hazard Facility (MHF) is also located on the land between the River and Swanson Dock and accommodates hazardous chemicals in storage tanks.

To the north of Footscray Road, opposite the Port of Melbourne is located the national rail freight terminal and several road freight and logistics companies. The Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market is also in this area, although it will relocate from the locality in the medium term future. The area to the north of the Study area and Napier Street is a large office occupied by a State Government agency, and a mixed use area including parks, buildings used for community arts and dwellings. Several planning permits have been granted to redevelop former industrial buildings for dwellings.

Fishermans Bend located on the south side of the Maribyrnong and Yarra is also an interface area to Melbourne Ports. It shares some similar circumstances to the areas that are the subject of this review. It has traditionally accommodated industrial businesses and port related uses. In recent times, many of these activities have been relocated to larger, less constrained sites and the former industrial and freight / logistics sites have been redeveloped for a mix of small industries, small warehouses and distribution centres, including office uses. There has been considerable interest in the property market to redevelop the sites for small and medium sized offices. Such redevelopments have generated discussion amongst the POMC, DPCD and Melbourne City Council regarding the appropriate planning framework.

The area to the west of Hyde Street forms the long established residential suburbs of Yarraville and Seddon. These areas have become attractive residential locations sought for their workers cottages, tree lined streets and strong local community spirit.

The Mobil Yarraville Terminal and the Yarraville Terminal Station are located to the south of Francis Street and the Study Area.

No public access is available along the western bank of the Maribyrnong River between Napier Street to the north and the Mobil Yarraville Terminal located south of Francis Street. A bicycle path has been constructed by the POMC on the eastern side of Whitehall Street, south of Moreland Street to facilitate safe public access around the Port area.

PRECINCT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS AND KEY ISSUES

Built Form

Overview

The Precinct is located in close proximity to the CBD and has the centre of three (one primary and two secondary) designated activity centres within 500 metres of its northern and western boundaries (see Activity Centres – Proximity Plan).

The precinct forms the western edge of current port activities and the eastern edge of the main Yarraville and Seddon residential areas. Integration of these two main land uses occurs in the areas between Hyde and Whitehall Streets.

Topography

The topography of the precinct has in many ways dictated the various land uses that comprise it. The main Port and Business uses have been established on the flat low lying areas along the Maribyrnong River which traditionally would have been more prone to inundation. The land begins to rise on the west side of Whitehall Street with areas such as Yarraville Gardens sitting at up to 15 metres above the main areas along the River (see Contours Plan).

In general this rise in the topography is gradual, reading as a gentle escarpment on the north side of Yarraville Gardens and as a more noticeable escarpment north of the precinct when the escarpment moves to the river's edge. This rise in elevation and the subtle crest lines along the precincts western boundary provides views at various vantage points within the residential areas and the activity centres across the precinct to the city beyond (see Ridge Lines and View Points).

Built Form and Land Uses

The precinct is an eclectic mix of land uses and built form varying from old single storey terrace style houses to large petro chemical silos and warehouses. Within the larger port environs covered by this study, three main sub precincts exist being,

- The Northern Precinct between Napier and Lyons which contains a mix of R1Z, MUZ, BZ, PPRZ and IN3Z. The road grid similar to surrounding residential areas and contains a number of laneways.
- The Middle Precinct between Lyons and Somerville Roads which contains a mix of PPRZ (Yarraville Gardens) and IN3Z. The road grid starts to fragment with roads being predominantly internal (not publically accessible) on the East side of Whitehall Street.
- Southern Precinct between Somerville Road and Stony Creek which contains a mixture of IN3Z (with residential developments through it), IN1Z and SU1Z. As with the Middle Precinct the road network starts to fragment with the grid systems maintained in the smaller IN13 zone on the west side of Whitehall Street and the larger east side containing few roads and a predominantly internal access system.

Each of these precincts has a number of smaller precincts which align with planning zones, however in the southern precinct a number of houses are found in an area which has been zoned IN3Z (Light Industrial). In general, the scale of the development and built form increases along the river and in the areas zoned IN1Z and SU1Z (Heavy Industrial). Stacked cargo containers are increasingly becoming a part of the dominant built form on the western side of the Maribyrnong River. This land use has historically been confined to the eastern side of the River (Refer Figure - Site Precincts / Current Zones and Built Form and Land Use Plan).

Heritage

A number of areas within the precinct are subject to a heritage overlay and a number of heritage features have also been identified throughout the precinct. In terms of streetscape or public realm the most noticeable heritage features are two of the building complex's at the north end of the site being; the site on the corner of Moreland and Parker Street currently occupied by a number of tenets including Lonely Planet and the site on Youell Street and the bluestone line drain to its north. Another key heritage site within the precinct is Yarraville Gardens which sits centrally within the precinct and provides a significant contribution to the public realm and focal point for community activities. (Refer Figure - Heritage Areas Plan)

Landscape

The precinct is dominated by buildings, car parks and roadways with landscaping being limited to small pockets around residential areas and limited street trees. Yarraville Gardens and to lesser degrees, the River foreshore in the north east corner of the precinct, the triangular park between Moreland and Whitehall Streets and the Heritage drainage channel sides provide the landscape contribution to the public realm. The current limited size, number and varying vigor / health of street trees except for parts of Cowper Street throughout the precinct provides limited if any boulevard effect to the streetscapes. New developments within the precinct provide little if any landscaping within their land. In general apart from Yarraville Gardens the precinct has no defining landscape character.

Transport

Transport in its many forms defines the study precinct in particular the increasing number of large trucks using the road network and ships using the port. The Williamstown train line sits just outside the precincts western boundary and a disused freight line runs into the centre of the precinct. Napier and Hyde Streets are designated bus routes, with Napier also having a shared use path under construction to provide a key linkage in Melbourne's bicycle network. This pathway will further increase the number of bicycles and pedestrians visiting and passing through the precinct. The Maribyrnong River, the historic focus of activities, continues to be utilised by rowers and small pleasure craft. Shared use and pedestrian pathways which run along the edge of the River are directed inland at the northern edge of the precinct, along the currently being constructed Napier Street shared use pathway. The predominant through traffic flows are North-South and this movement pattern in particular movements by trucks, cars and buses along Hyde Street presents a barrier to east west movement from the activity centres and residential areas in the west to the precinct and the river in the east. (See Bus Tram and Rail Routes Plan)

Current port development proposals and the Truck Action Plan within the Victorian Transport Plan further add to the expected numbers of vehicles in particular trucks travelling through and using the Yarraville Port Environs precinct.

Summary (Strengths, Weakness Constraints and Opportunities)

Strengths

- The precincts topography with its western escarpment provides a number of good vantage points / view-lines to the City Skyline to the East and Westgate Bridge to the South.
- Areas to the north of the precinct which are in close proximity to the Footscray Activity Centre contain heritage building stock, and some public access to the Maribyrnong River provides a good base level of public realm amenity.
- The precinct is in close proximity to a number of rail stations and has links to regional shared use pathways.
- Proximity to the Port of Melbourne
- Yarraville Gardens is centrally located and offers a recreation to both the local residents and workers.
- A number of key sites are vacant or in the process of being amalgamated for redevelopment, enabling their use and development to be revisited.

Weaknesses

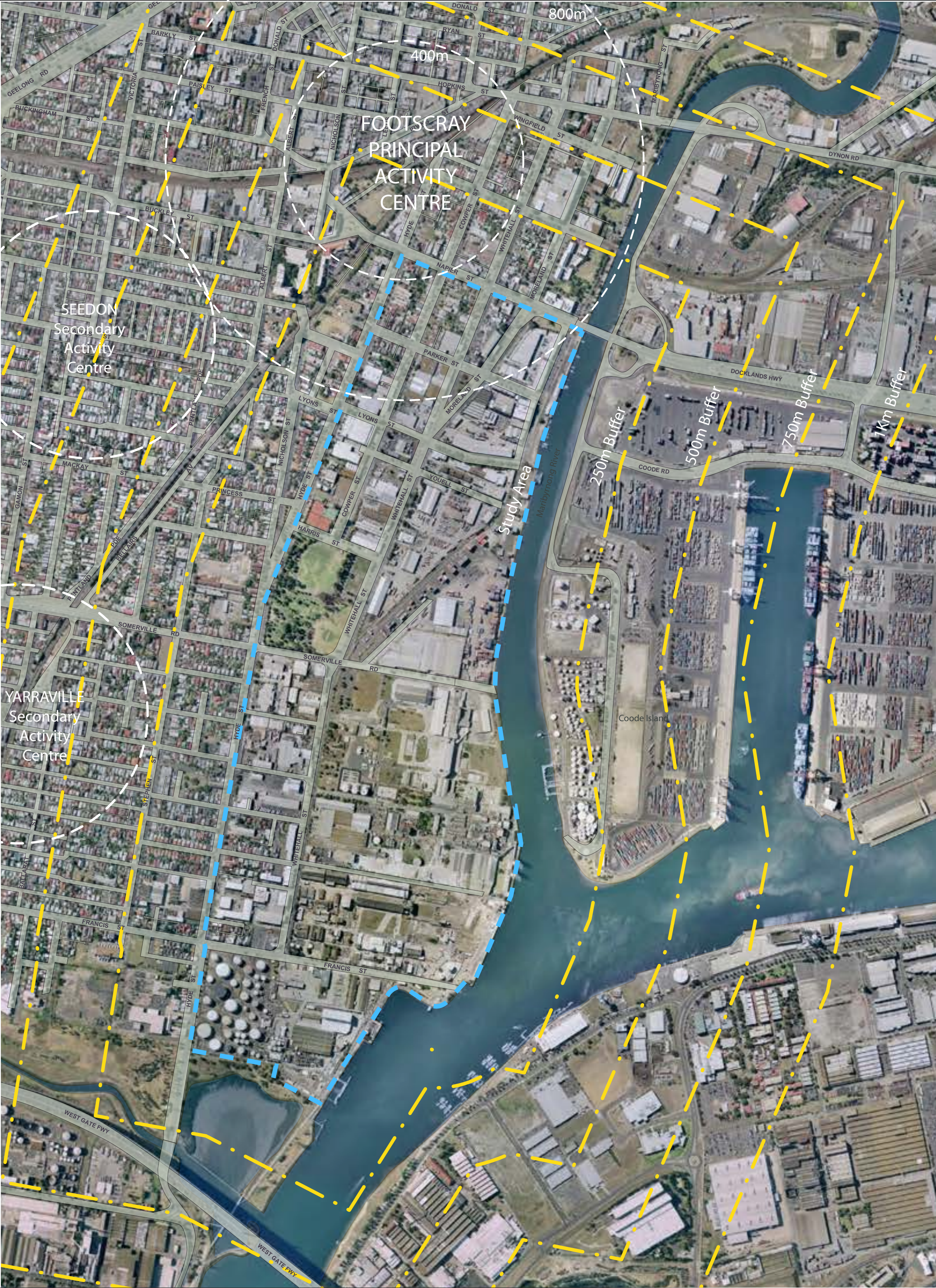
- Vehicles movements and the poor allowance for pedestrians and cyclists in road reserves, turns the roads into barriers reducing the pedestrian permeability of the precinct.
- A number of the roadway and path surfaces are in poor condition.
- Lack of vegetation and poor general amenity of buildings and streetscapes.
- Restricted / limited access to the Maribyrnong River.
- Poor way-finding, public realm lighting and general safety of the precinct.
- Compatibility of land uses e.g. proximity of residential areas to heavy industry.

Constraints

- Spatial constraints of current road reserves to allow space for trucks, buses, bicycles and pedestrian and street trees.
- Public access security issues / requirements around sensitive industries.
- Proximity to the Coode Island MHF, port operations and major transport routes
- Contamination, low lying nature of most areas and soil geotechnical issues (Coode Island Silt / Acid Sulphate soils preventing / restricting excavation to enable basement car parking etc.
- Heritage buildings/precincts.

Opportunities

- Utilise undeveloped or redevelopment sites to introduce landscaping and built form which contributes to improving the areas amenity.
- Increase street tree plantings to improve the areas landscape amenity.
- Redevelop former Scallop Boat mooring area to create some public access to the Precinct and the Maribyrnong River.
- Extend the road grid system from the northern precinct and west side of Whitehall street into development as either roadways or clear zones on the west side of Whitehall street in the middle and southern precincts to continue the traditional urban fabric through the larger precinct, open to up sightlines and improve the perception of pedestrian permeability.
- Celebrate the eclectic mix of buildings and allow new building to explore new built form or reinterpretations of traditional elements.
- Build upon the precincts location advantages and proximity to public transport to attract employment generating new industries and developments.
- Set guidelines for new development to implement environmentally sustainable design e.g. Use large roof areas for solar panels and to capture the runoff for use in the facilities and to irrigate landscape areas, particularly those abutting the public realm.
- Improve connectivity to the three Activity Centres.



YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Activity Centres (Proximity)

Scale: 1:10,000 (A3)
Date: July 2008

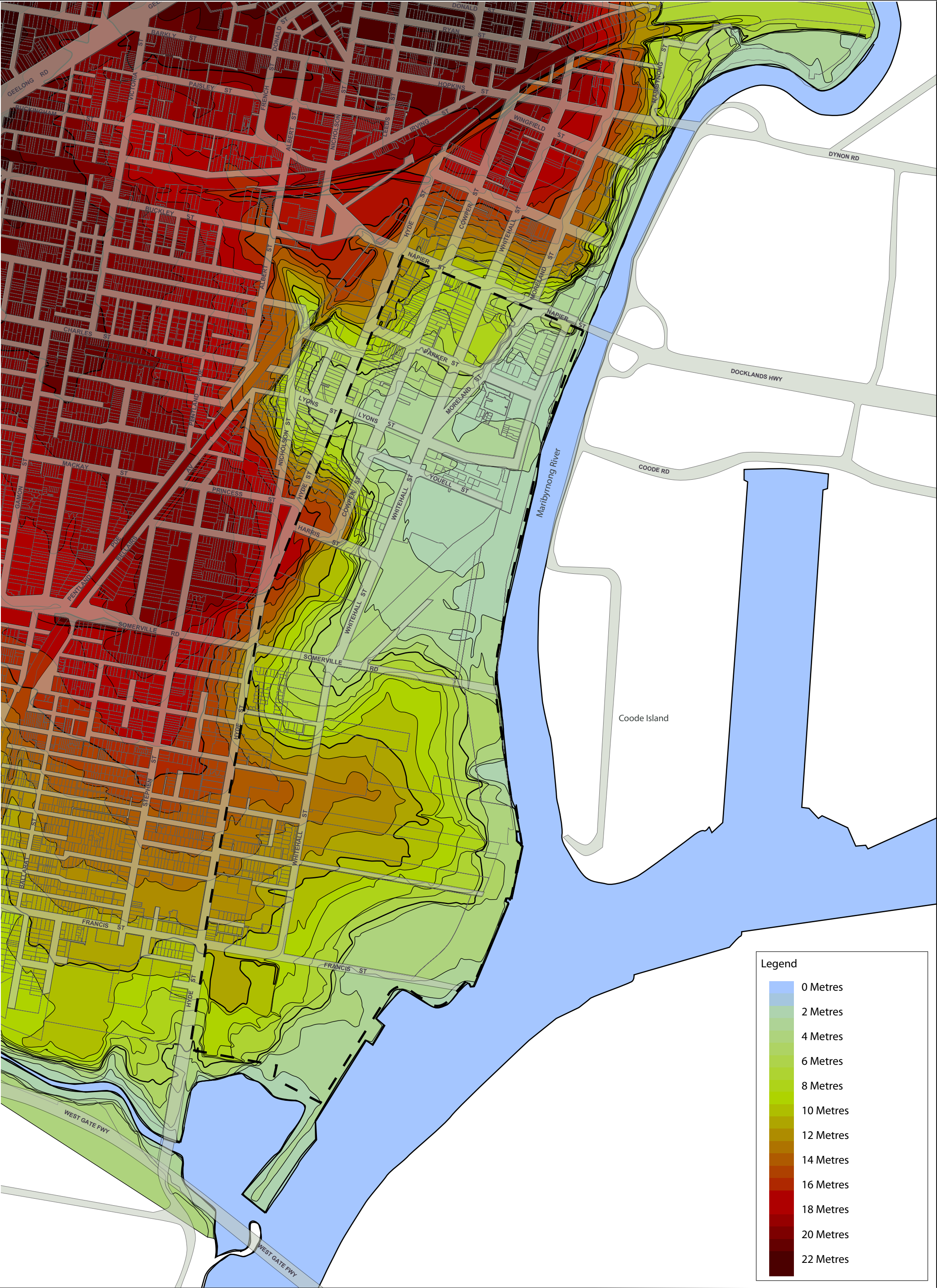


Clients:



Mapping:





YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Site Contours

Scale: 1:10,000 (A3)
Date: July 2008

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Clients:



Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL



Mapping:





YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Ridge Lines and View Points

Scale: 1:10,000 (A3)
Date: July 2008

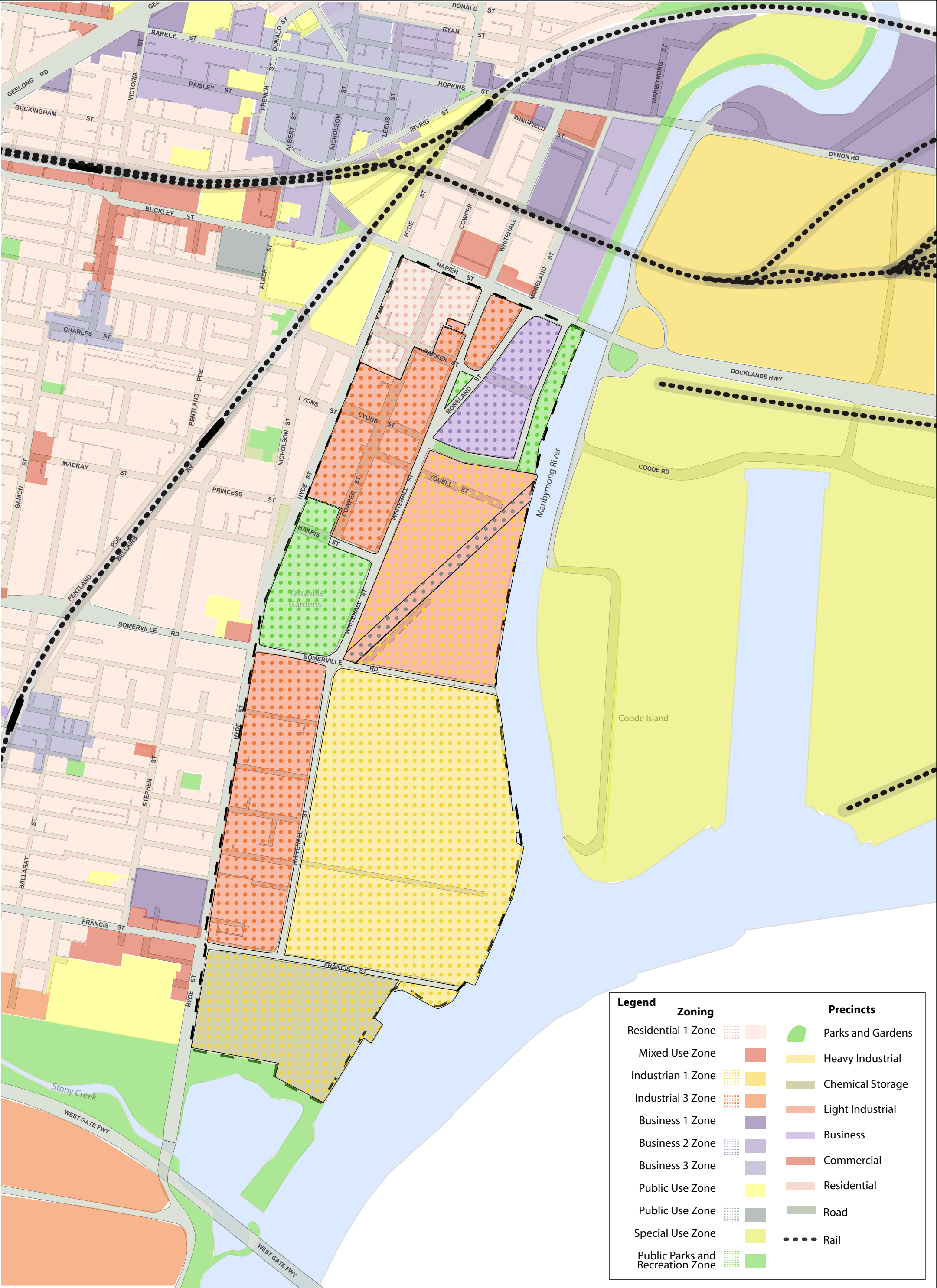


Clients:



Mapping:





YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Site Precincts / Current Zones

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m



YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Built Form & Land Use Plan

Scale: 1:10,000 (A3)
Date: July 2008

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Clients:



Mapping:





YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Heritage Areas

Scale: 1:10,000 (A3)
Date: July 2008

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Clients:



Mapping:





YARRAVILLE PORT STRUCTURE PLAN
Bus, Tram and Rail Routes

Scale: 1:10,000 (A3)
Date: July 2008

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Clients:



Mapping:

