CITY OF BALLARAT

Draft Ballarat CBD Urban Design Framework

[SUMMARY VERSION]

November 2026



About the Urban Design Framework

The Ballarat CBD Urban Design Framework is a strategic planning tool that guides the physical and spatial evolution of Ballarat's Central Business District. It supports Council, the community, and stakeholders in shaping a shared vision, ensuring that future development and investment is coordinated, place-specific, and responsive to Ballarat's unique heritage, character, infrastructure needs, and public realm opportunities.

CBD Study Area

The Ballarat CBD study area includes approximately 157 hectares of land and generally takes in the full extent of the Commercial 1 Zone in central Ballarat, as well as some peripheral residential areas under the General Residential Zone and Residential Growth Zone. The area within the Commercial 1 Zone is considered to offer significant opportunities for urban growth in the coming years.

The study area also includes a large area of land currently under the Industrial 1 Zone, towards the north of the study area, which is considered to be a future urban renewal opportunity as the area transitions away from industrial use.



LEGEND / Ballarat CBD Study Area

- Study Area Boundary
- Ballarat Railway Station
- Open Space / Reserves

SCALE

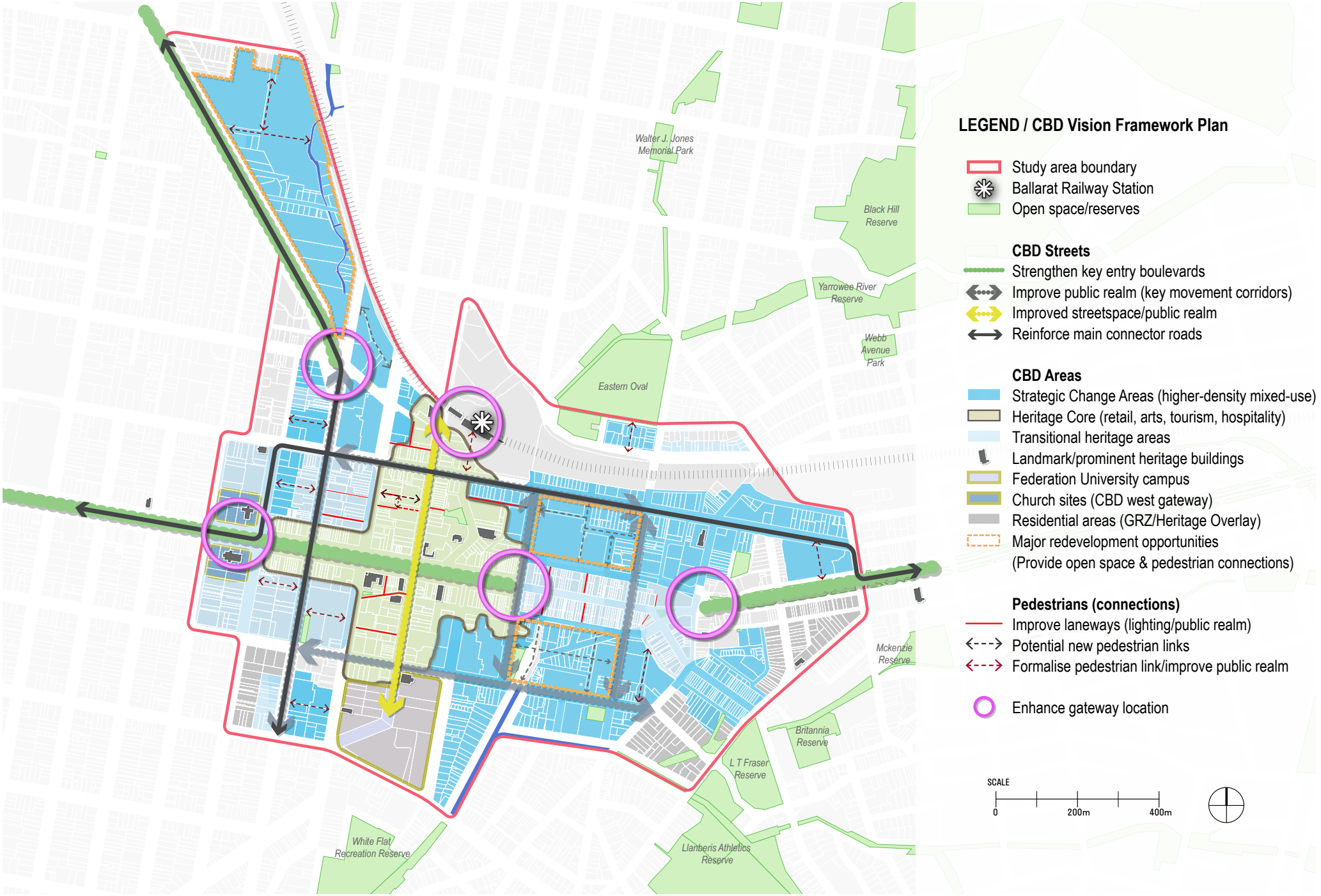
0 200m 400m

Urban Design Vision

In 2050, the Ballarat CBD is a bustling, vibrant activity centre with inclusive, safe and welcoming streets and spaces, framed by its historic buildings and complimented by respectful, exceptionally designed, sustainable and well-integrated, mixed-use buildings. Residents, workers and visitors to the CBD enjoy walking and relaxing in the city's active streets and green spaces.

As the city has evolved, its highly intact heritage core remains the centrepiece with new, contemporary buildings integrating with, and complementing, the historic character in terms of design, scale and materials. New buildings adopt a low to mid-rise character that contributes to the existing streetscapes, maintaining the human-scale street-edge, with taller buildings and upper levels visually recessive within the streetscape.

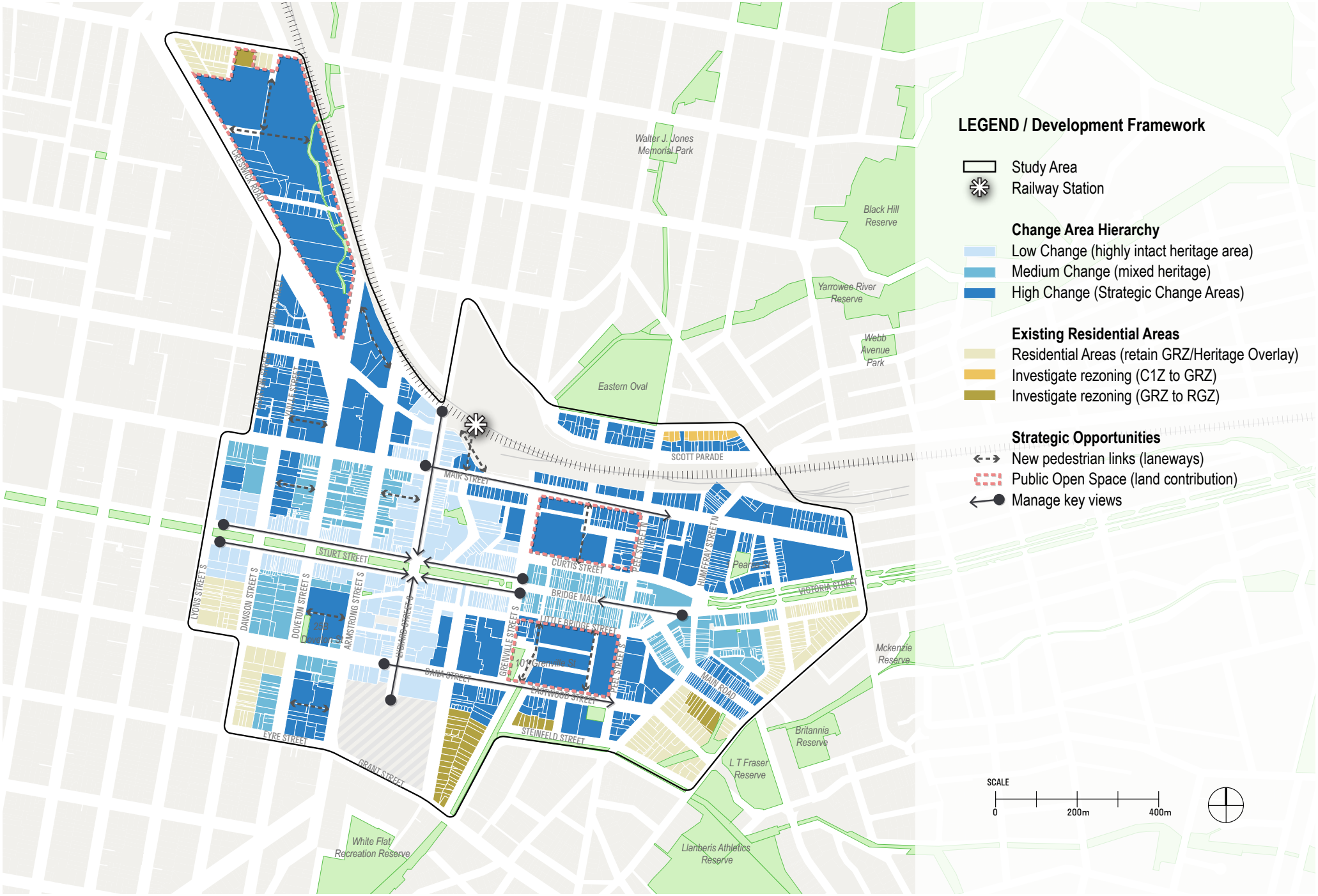
The prominent, historic landmark buildings, remain the dominant and celebrated feature of the Ballarat skyline, preserving its identity and character for generations to come.


Walter J. Jones Memorial Park
Black Hill Reserve
Yarrowee River Reserve
Webb Avenue Park
Eastern Oval
Mckenzie Reserve
Britannia Reserve
L T Fraser Reserve
White Flat Recreation Reserve
Llanberis Athletics Reserve
LEGEND / CBD Vision Framework Plan
Study area boundary
Ballarat Railway Station
Open space/reserves
CBD Streets
Strengthen key entry boulevards
Improve public realm (key movement corridors)
Improved streetspace/public realm
Reinforce main connector roads
CBD Areas
Strategic Change Areas (higher-density mixed-use)
Heritage Core (retail, arts, tourism, hospitality)
Transitional heritage areas
Landmark/prominent heritage buildings
Federation University campus
Church sites (CBD west gateway)
Residential areas (GRZ/Heritage Overlay)
Major redevelopment opportunities
(Provide open space & pedestrian connections)
Pedestrians (connections)
Improve laneways (lighting/public realm)
Potential new pedestrian links
Formalise pedestrian link/improve public realm
Enhance gateway location
SCALE
0
200m
400m

The Development Framework

The Development Framework identifies where the greatest level of change will occur and where heritage constraints serve to moderate the level of development for areas within the CBD.

Strategic Change Areas are identified in terms of the area's potential to accommodate significant, new development at a scale suitable to the location. The areas with the greatest development potential within the CBD are those not affected by the Heritage Overlay. Those areas have the greatest capacity for change, whereas areas with the highest level of intactness and heritage significance (such as around Lydiard Street) have the least potential for change, but can still accommodate well-designed, respectful development.


LEGEND / Development Framework
Study Area
Railway Station
Change Area Hierarchy
Low Change (highly intact heritage area)
Medium Change (mixed heritage)
High Change (Strategic Change Areas)
Existing Residential Areas
Residential Areas (retain GRZ/Heritage Overlay)
Investigate rezoning (C1Z to GRZ)
Investigate rezoning (GRZ to RGZ)
Strategic Opportunities
New pedestrian links (laneways)
Public Open Space (land contribution)
Manage key views
SCALE
0
200m
400m
Walter J. Jones Memorial Park
Black Hill Reserve
Yarrowee River Reserve
Webb Avenue Park
Eastern Oval
SCOTT PARADE
MAIR STREET
STURT STREET
CURTIS STREET
BRIDGE MALL
BRIDGE STREET
VICTORIA STREET
MAIN ROAD
EASTWOOD STREET
STEINFELD STREET
DANA STREET
EYRE STREET
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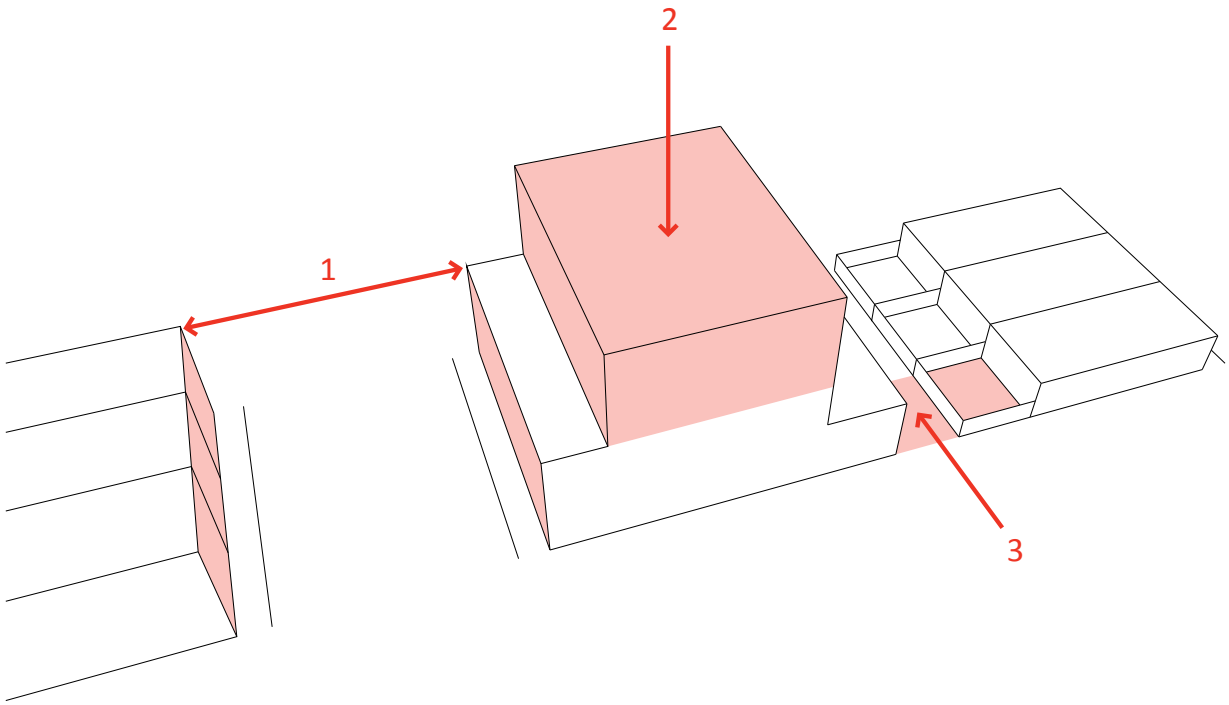
ARMSTRONG STREET S
GRENVILLE STREET S
PEEL STREET S
HUMFFRAY STREET N
Mckenzie Reserve
Britannia Reserve
L T Fraser Reserve
Llanberis Athletics Reserve
White Flat Recreation Reserve

Built Form Principles

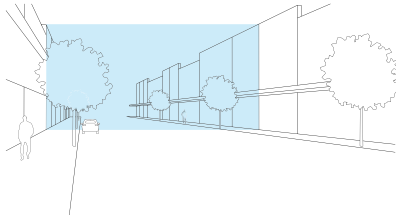
The following set of Built Form Principles are the foundation for future development within the Ballarat CBD. The principles are aimed at facilitating built form outcomes that respond to the context of each precinct (or area) within the CBD and contribute to a vibrant urban character:



1. *Street-wall height & street width*
2. *Upper levels setback and visually recessive*
3. *Residential interfaces*

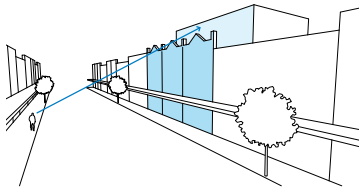
Principle 1.

Human scale streets & proportion (street-wall)



Principle 2.

Heritage character & key views



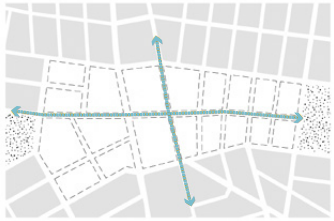
Principle 3.

Higher density development in strategic change areas



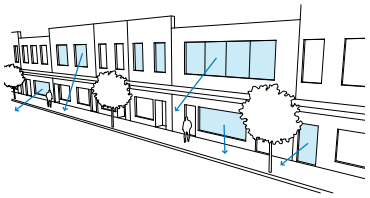
Principle 4.

Connections & urban permeability



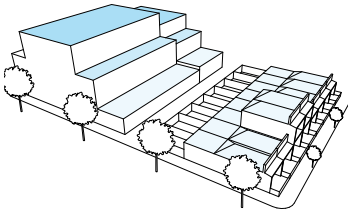
Principle 5.

Public realm activation & passive surveillance



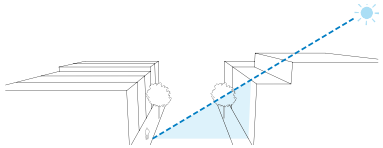
Principle 6.

Transition development at sensitive interfaces



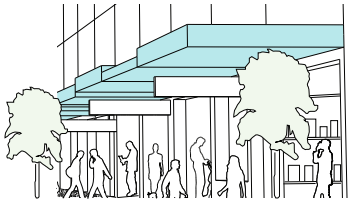
Principle 7.

Solar access to the public realm



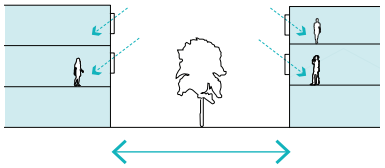
Principle 8.

Environmentally responsive design



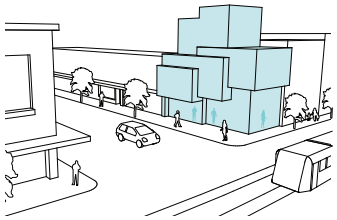
Principle 9.

Equitable development & amenity (building separation)



Principle 10.

Design excellence & materiality



Preferred Maximum Building Heights

Overall, the CBD will evolve with a low to mid-rise character that is precinct specific and responds to the level of change identified as suitable for each area. The non-heritage areas present greater opportunities for intensification, while heritage areas can also accommodate new buildings and additions that are responsive to the heritage conditions and streetscape character.

Preferred maximum building heights have been determined by applying the street proportions and street-wall height principles and allowing for additional height for upper levels, set back from the street edge.

Mandatory Maximum Building Heights

The central part of the CBD (the Heritage Core) has a higher concentration of heritage places listed on the VHR as well as individually Significant properties. There are also a number of important landmark heritage buildings that define the character and identity of the Ballarat CBD. Mandatory maximum heights for the properties fronting Sturt and Lydiard Streets are considered appropriate and necessary to ensure that taller buildings do not impact the highly intact, significant heritage character.



LEGEND / Built Form Framework Plan

- Study Area Boundary
- Railway Station

PREFERRED MAXIMUM HEIGHTS (unless specified as mandatory)

- 12m (3 storeys)
- 12m (3 storeys / mandatory)
- 15.5m (4 storeys)
- 15.5m (4 storeys / mandatory)
- 19m (5 storeys)
- 22.5m (6 storeys)
- 26m (7 storeys)
- 29.5m (8 storeys)
- 36.5m (10 storeys)
- 36.5m (subject to rezoning investigation)

Height Not Specified

- Church sites (undertake site masterplan)
- Federation University (formalise masterplan in planning scheme)
- No height specified (provisions of GRZ/HO apply)
- Investigate rezoning to Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)
- Victrack land on VHR (no requirements)
- Existing open space
- Investigate as future open space/reserve

Preferred Maximum Street-wall Height

- Retain heritage frontage/façade
- 12m (match parapet height of neighbouring property)
- 15.5m
- 20m

Preferred minimum ground level setbacks (landscape setback)

- 5m
- 3m
- 5m setback from Gnarr Creek

SCALE

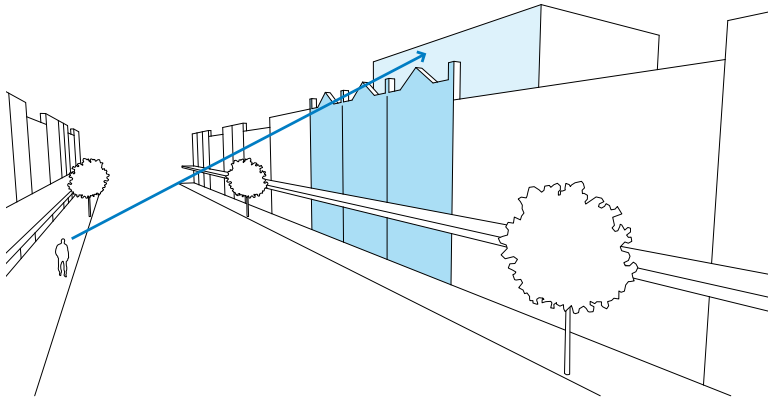
0 200m 400m

Upper Level Setbacks

Within non-heritage areas, a 5m setback is appropriate where the presence of new buildings does not threaten an existing (heritage) character. A street-wall condition that is more prominent (3-4 storeys) will frame the streetscape and create a sense of enclosure and place, reinforced and complimented by an improved public realm, including increased street trees (tree canopy cover).

Upper level visibility / concealment

Upper level development either for a Not-Contributory site or a Contributory site within a heritage precinct should be substantially concealed for the Principal Heritage Streetscapes, and partially concealed for the Supporting Heritage Steetscapes. A minimum upper level setback distance of 6m (to the new built form) is suggested from the heritage facade.




LEGEND / Minimum Upper-level Setbacks
6m (mandatory)
5m (preferred)
5m ground level setback (reinforce boulevard)
SCALE
0
200m
400m
Walter J. Jones Memorial Park
Black Hill Reserve
Yarrowee River Reserve
Webb Avenue Park
Eastern Oval
SCOTT PARADE
MAIR STREET
CURTIS STREET
STURT STREET
BRIDGE MALL
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HUMFERAY STREET N
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YUILLE STREET
DAVEY STREET
CRESWICK ROAD
Mckenzie Reserve
Britannia Reserve
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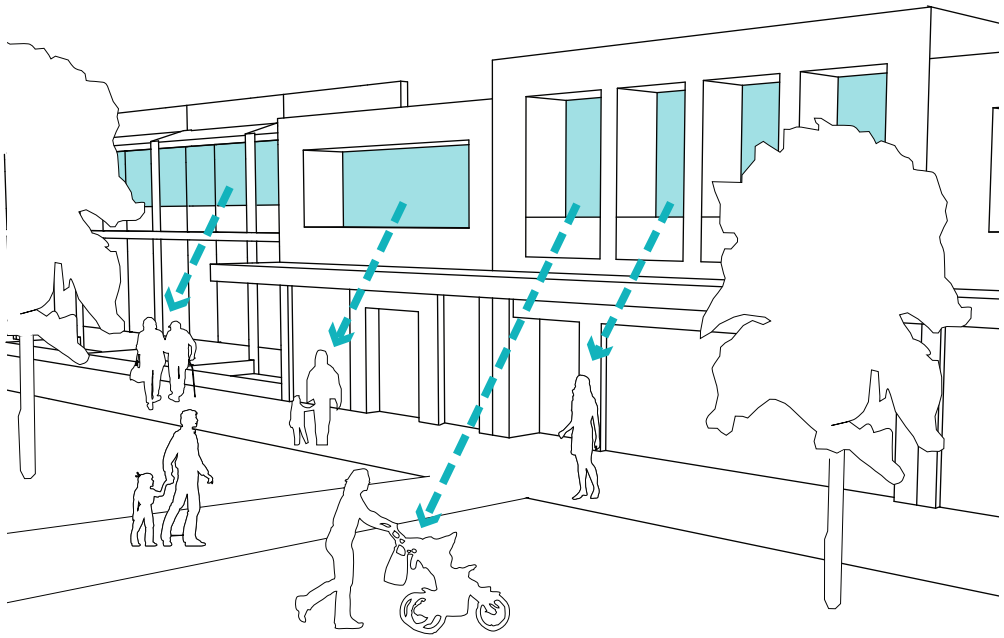
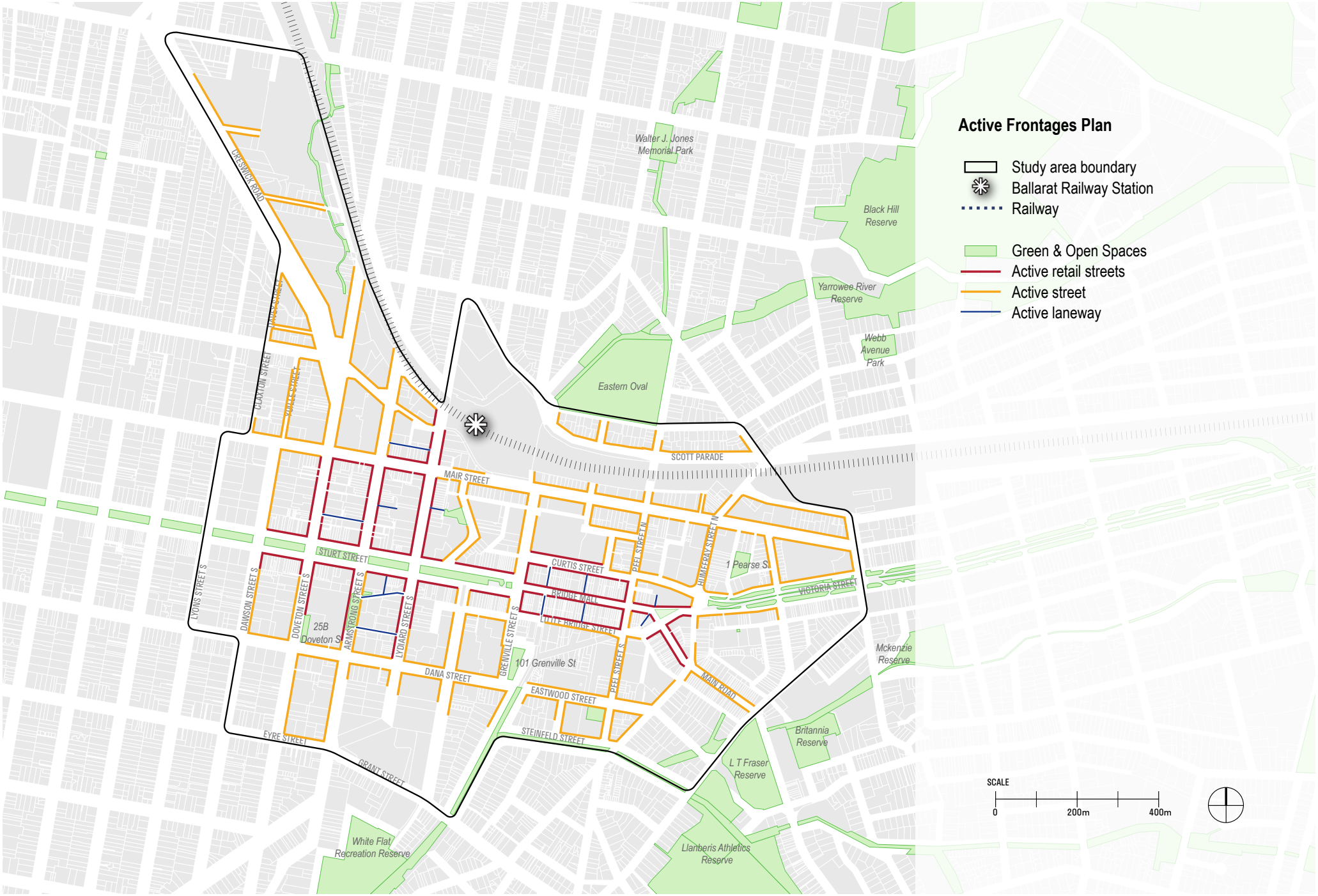
White Flat Recreation Reserve

Street activation & passive surveillance

New buildings contribute to the street environment with active, glazed frontages and passive surveillance from the upper levels providing “eyes on the street”.




Active Frontages Plan
Study area boundary
Ballarat Railway Station
Railway
Green & Open Spaces
Active retail streets
Active street
Active laneway
SCALE
0
200m
400m
Walter J. Jones Memorial Park
Black Hill Reserve
Yarrowee River Reserve
Webb Avenue Park
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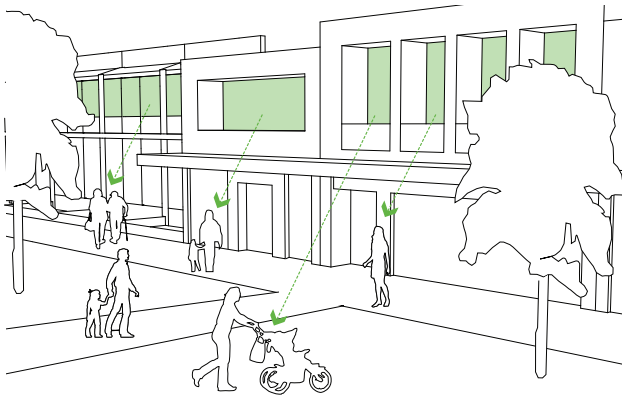
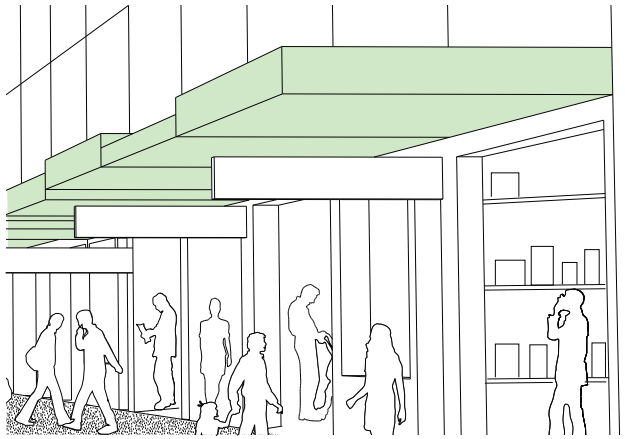
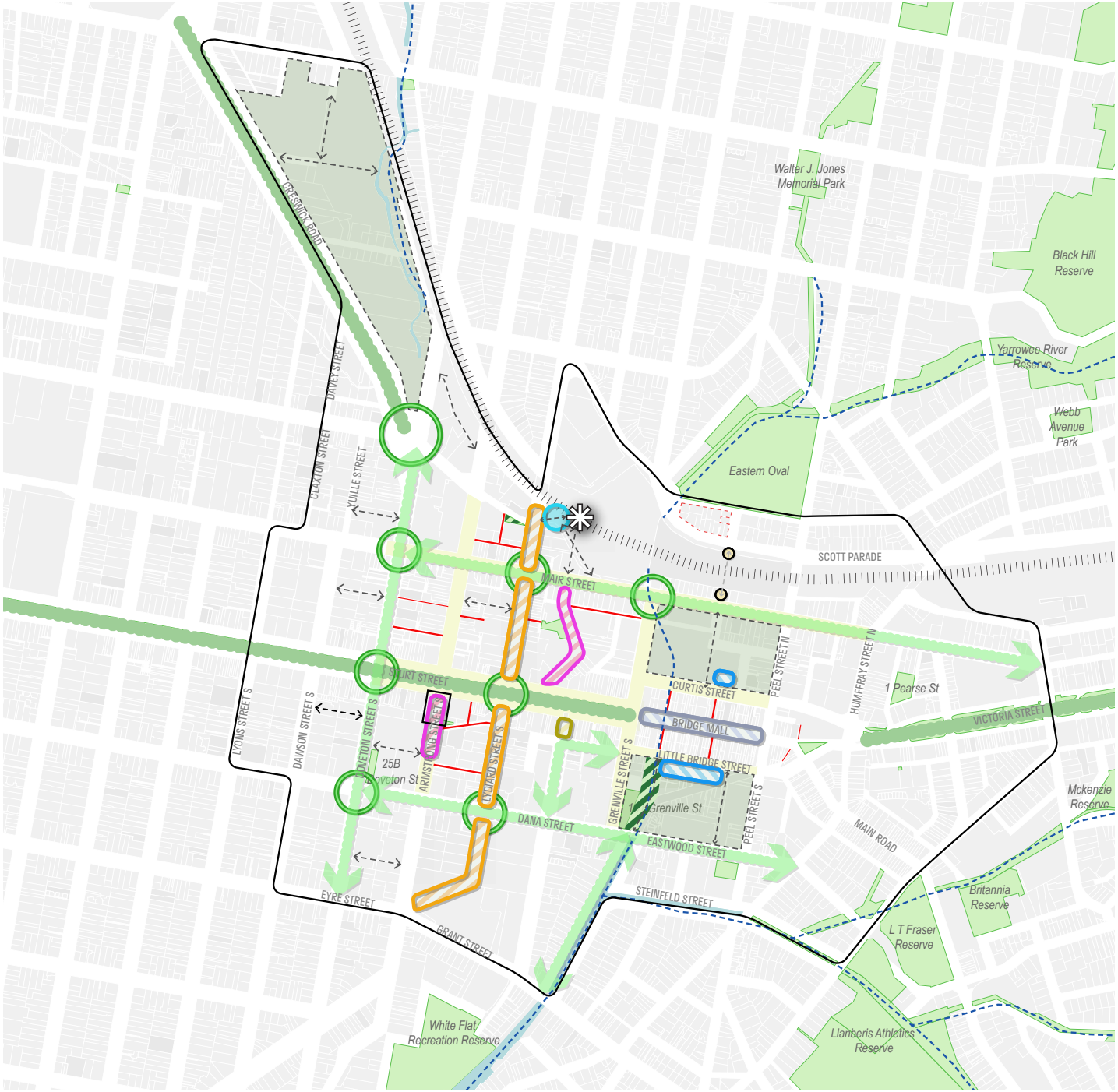
GRANT STREET
White Flat Recreation Reserve
Llanberis Athletics Reserve

Public Spaces

The public spaces framework has been developed through analysis and review of the CBD's existing and planned public spaces, and builds upon the opportunities identified in the Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan (2019), Creative City Masterplan (2019) and Making Ballarat Central (2017).







LEGEND / Future Public Spaces

- Study area boundary
- Ballarat Railway Station

Public space opportunities

- Green & open spaces (existing)
- Provide new open/public spaces (land contribution)
- Investigate options for Council owned land
- Extend Yarrowee Parkland
- Potential future public space (road closure)
- Improve public realm at key intersections
- Potential future shared zone (pedestrian priority)
- Flexible space (town square opportunity)
- Improved public realm (bus stops/interchange)
- Lydiard Street - streetscape upgrade
- Bridge Mall - shared zone (completed project)
- Ballarat Station south-side (improve public realm)
- Strengthen the existing laneway network
- Potential through links (subject to development)
- Improve the public realm at underpass entries

Tree planting and landscaping opportunities

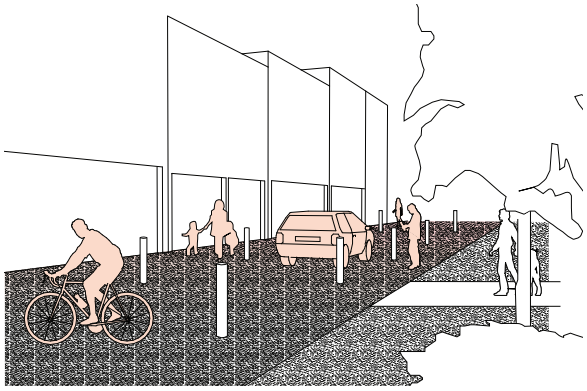
- Retain/enhance boulevard character
- Undertake urban greening to improve the amenity & appearance of the street
- Respond to current Yarrowee alignment and explore opportunities to reconnect

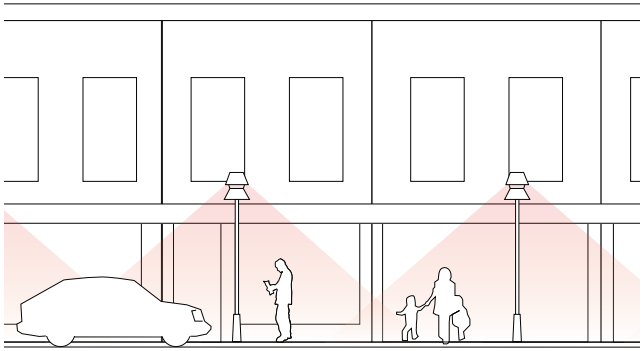
SCALE
0 200m 400m

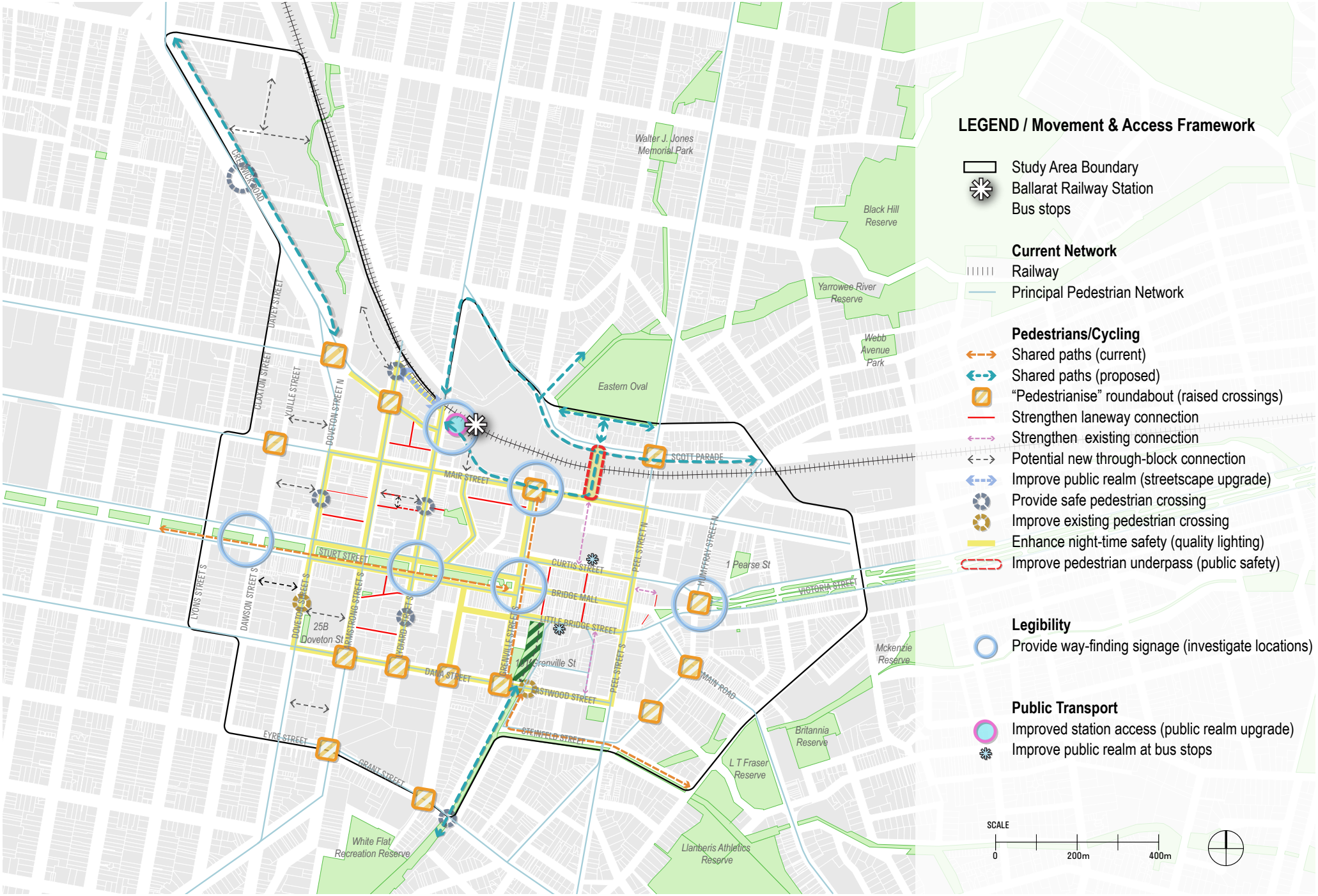
Movement Framework

The movement framework has been informed by on the ground analysis, current City of Ballarat projects, external stakeholder discussions and the background report, Ballarat CBD - Movement and Transport Analaysis (Institute for Sensible Transport).

The urban structure of the city, current movement networks and the existing pattern of land use inform the framework in terms of identifying opportunities to enhance and improve the movement network to enable safe, enjoyable, sustainable and inclusive movement throughout the CBD. Reducing car dependence and promoting walking and cycling is a key objective of this UDF and other projects that the City of Ballarat are currently undertaking in the transport space.






LEGEND / Movement & Access Framework
Study Area Boundary
Ballarat Railway Station
Bus stops
Current Network
Railway
Principal Pedestrian Network
Pedestrians/Cycling
Shared paths (current)
Shared paths (proposed)
"Pedestrianise" roundabout (raised crossings)
Strengthen laneway connection
Strengthen existing connection
Potential new through-block connection
Improve public realm (streetscape upgrade)
Provide safe pedestrian crossing
Improve existing pedestrian crossing
Enhance night-time safety (quality lighting)
Improve pedestrian underpass (public safety)
Legibility
Provide way-finding signage (investigate locations)
Public Transport
Improved station access (public realm upgrade)
Improve public realm at bus stops
SCALE
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200m
400m
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Black Hill Reserve
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DANA STREET
EASTWOOD STREET
PEEL STREET S
MAIN ROAD
STEINFELD STREET
EYRE STREET
GRANT STREET

CBD Precincts

The Ballarat CBD contains distinct areas of activity and character that define the different parts of the CBD. These areas (precincts) can be categorised as:

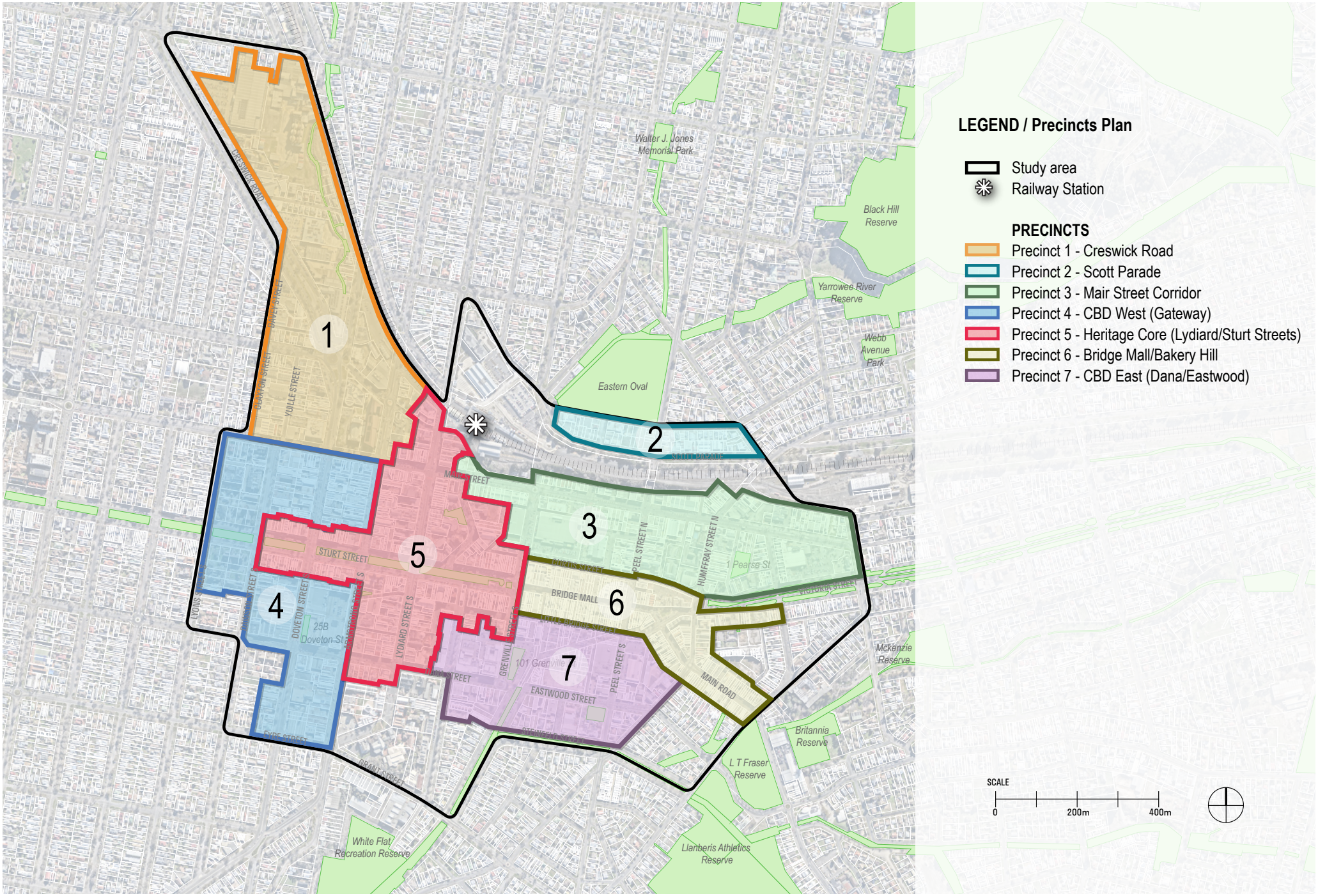
- Areas of commercial activity with significant potential for change and without heritage constraints, generally east and north-west of the central CBD.

- Areas of diverse activity and a mix of built form character types (including a mix of heritage buildings and also non-heritage sites that present opportunities for development in a mixed heritage context).

- Areas of strong (highly significant) heritage character that create and reinforce the cultural identity and history that is embedded in the city through its buildings and streets.

The precincts and precinct boundaries were informed by existing building stock, heritage areas, non-heritage areas, the public realm, urban block structure (street layout), zoning and current land uses.

1. ***Creswick Road***
2. ***Scott Parade***
3. ***Mair Street Corridor***
4. ***CBD West (Sturt Street Gateway)***
5. ***Heritage Core: Lydiard & Sturt Street***
6. ***Bridge Mall & Bakery Hill***
7. ***CBD East (Dana & Eastwood)***


LEGEND / Precincts Plan
Study area
Railway Station
PRECINCTS
Precinct 1 - Creswick Road
Precinct 2 - Scott Parade
Precinct 3 - Mair Street Corridor
Precinct 4 - CBD West (Gateway)
Precinct 5 - Heritage Core (Lydiard/Sturt Streets)
Precinct 6 - Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill
Precinct 7 - CBD East (Dana/Eastwood)
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7
Walter J. Jones Memorial Park
Black Hill Reserve
Yarrowee River Reserve
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LYDIARD STREET S
PEEL STREET S
HUMFFRAY STREET N
YUILLE STREET
SCALE
0
200m
400m

CITY OF BALLARAT

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