

## Section 5.0 - STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

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A number of key locations within the Carlisle Street Activity Centre present strategic opportunities to:

- Improve Carlisle Street's activity mix and retail offer
- Enhance the quality of the public realm and provide new public spaces
- Make the centre more accessible by public transport and more walkable
- Achieve additional residential uses within the activity centre

These opportunities will be progressed against the 'backdrop' of centre-wide initiatives which enhance the function and presentation of the centre overall.

Two projects which present the greatest opportunities for redevelopment and concentrated change are:

### Opportunity 1:

The *Balaclava Walk (Station) Project* - including the station, railway reserve and Council's adjacent 'at grade car park.

### Opportunity 2:

The *Retail Renewal Project* - north of the Carlisle Street strip, incorporating the Safeway and Coles supermarket sites and associated 'at grade' car parks.



## Strategic Opportunity 1 - BALACLAVA WALK (STATION) PROJECT

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### Introduction

The Balaclava Walk Project was initiated through a 'Pride of Place' grant which funded a concept design and feasibility assessment for a renewed walkway and station upgrade. Key stakeholders were represented on a Steering Committee and through consultation with resident and local business interests.

The project reflects a clear need and opportunity to deliver a range of community benefits thorough redesign, investment and redevelopment of the Balaclava Station and environs, including the adjoining Council owned station car park. Priority deliverables include:

- An improved Station Entry and 'Modal' Interchange.
- Access to the station / trams for persons of all abilities.
- A new public space within the activity centre.
- Safe, activated walkways, connecting the station to the retail strip and surrounding residential areas.
- Additional 'well-located' Community Housing.

### Project Context

The need and the opportunities presented by the Balaclava Walk Project are reflected in the following analysis:

#### Issues

- Lack of exposure of the station entry to Carlisle Street, and a poor interchange area with Carlisle Street Trams.

- A need for revitalisation of sub-standard station infrastructure. The station offers poor commuter amenity in terms of weather protection, congestion at peak times, and steep pedestrian ramps which reduce access to the station for persons of limited mobility.
- Poor perceptions of safety and security around the station, particularly at night, as a consequence of interrupted sight lines, graffiti and litter, and inappropriate landscaping on the railway embankments.
- Under-utilisation of the Station car park, arising from limited access, poor visibility and associated security issues.
- Reduced residential amenity along Marlborough Street resulting from the 'at grade' car park.

#### Opportunities

- Government Ownership of strategic sites: State (Victrack) / Port Phillip Council.
- Increasing patronage of Balaclava Station.
- Delivery of improved sustainable transport options within an Activity Centre which offers significant capacity for housing / employment growth.
- An area experiencing rapid gentrification, with a growing need for more affordable housing.
- Established Council commitment to transfer the station car park site to Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA).
- Available State Government funding for Community Housing Projects.
- Well-established Social Support Services in the area – potential to enhance public transport access for services users and to ensure availability of support for community housing residents.

## What the Project Can Deliver

**A New Station Entry Building** which creates an address to Carlisle Street and removes the existing west side ramp to widen and provide a direct line of sight along the adjacent walkway. A replacement stairway would provide a more direct access to the station platform with the potential for lift access to be provided for persons of limited mobility.

**Improved Modal Interchange** – (tram / train) centrally located within the Balaclava ‘Major’ Activity Centre including:

- A DDA compliant ‘Raised Platform’ Tram Stop adjacent the station.
- An additional pedestrian crossing of Carlisle Street, adjacent the station, acknowledging this key desire line with a high incidence of pedestrian accidents.
- ‘Real-time’ public transport signage / directional signage.

**Creation of a New Public Space ‘Node’** within the activity centre, adjacent the station. Removal of the existing real estate building (205 Carlisle Street) will provide additional space and improve visibility of the station at its connection to Carlisle Street. The ‘heritage’ bluestone bridge abutment will be exposed as a backdrop to the space. This area will function as an entry to Balaclava Walkway and the Station, and as a waiting area for the tram stop.

**An Enhanced Pedestrian Link - ‘Balaclava Walk’** The walkway will provide a safer and more direct access from the Carlisle Street retail strip to the Station, and to residential areas south of the activity centre.

Key features include:

- Definition of the public space and connecting walkway through an integrated pavement treatment.

- Recessed development on the station car park site to provide for a landscaped edge.
- Integrated Urban Art – featuring a linear history of Balaclava– which will contribute to an enhanced ‘sense of place’.
- Opportunity for the existing café to address and establish an ‘active edge’ to the walkway.
- Additional ‘active’ uses adjacent the walkway providing interest and natural surveillance (commercial tenancies / artist studios).
- Additional planting at the southern end of the walkway to soften the interface with residential properties in Marlborough street.

**New Investment and Economic Opportunities** presented through improved use of the railway reserve land:

- Two commercial tenancies (combined 112 m<sup>2</sup>) incorporated into a new station entry building.
- Potential for affordable Artist Studios towards the southern end of Balaclava Walk.

**Provision of additional Affordable (Community) Housing** that is well serviced by public transport (rail and tram) and centrally located with the Carlisle Street retail strip. Redevelopment of the station car park offers:

- Capacity for approximately 100 residents with an emphasis on housing for families and aged persons.
- Capacity to achieve a mix of private and community housing.
- Potential for an active commercial edge to Balaclava Walk.
- Ability to re-establish a well-designed residential ‘interface’ to Marlborough Street.

## Project Partners\*

### **Major Partners**

### **Interest / Responsibility**

#### **City of Port Phillip**

Transfer of Land (station car park)  
for Community Housing  
Public Realm Improvements  
Walking / Directional Signage  
Planning Authority / Responsible  
Authority role (P&E Act)

#### **Major Projects Victoria**

Project Co-ordination and  
Facilitation

#### **Department of Infrastructure**

Balaclava Station Upgrade

#### **Vic Track**

Land assets associated with station  
/ adjoining walkways  
Ownership of Commercial  
Tenancies

#### **Yarra Trams**

DDA Tram Stop  
'Real Time' Public Transport  
Signage

#### **Vic Roads**

DDA Tram Stop  
Designated on-road bike lanes  
Pedestrian Crossing at Station

#### **Office of Housing**

Co-funding for Community Housing  
Project

#### **Port Phillip Housing Assoc.**

Co-funding / Management of  
Community Housing

\*A Project Steering Group with Council and State Government representation has been established to facilitate the delivery of the Balaclava Walk Project.

## Design Concept

The Design Concept overleaf illustrates how the key project elements can be delivered.

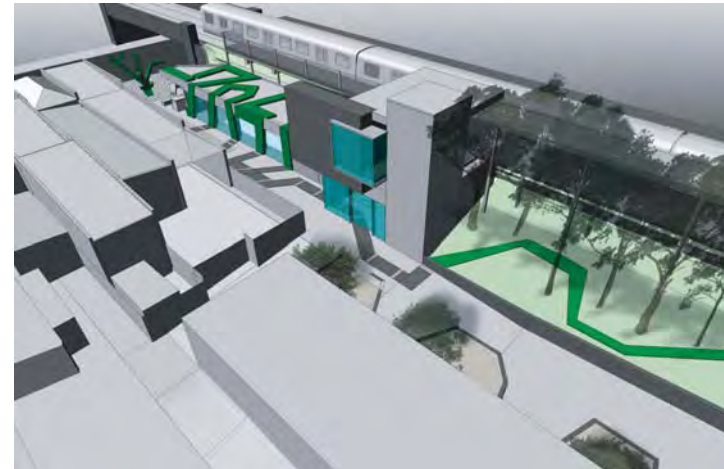
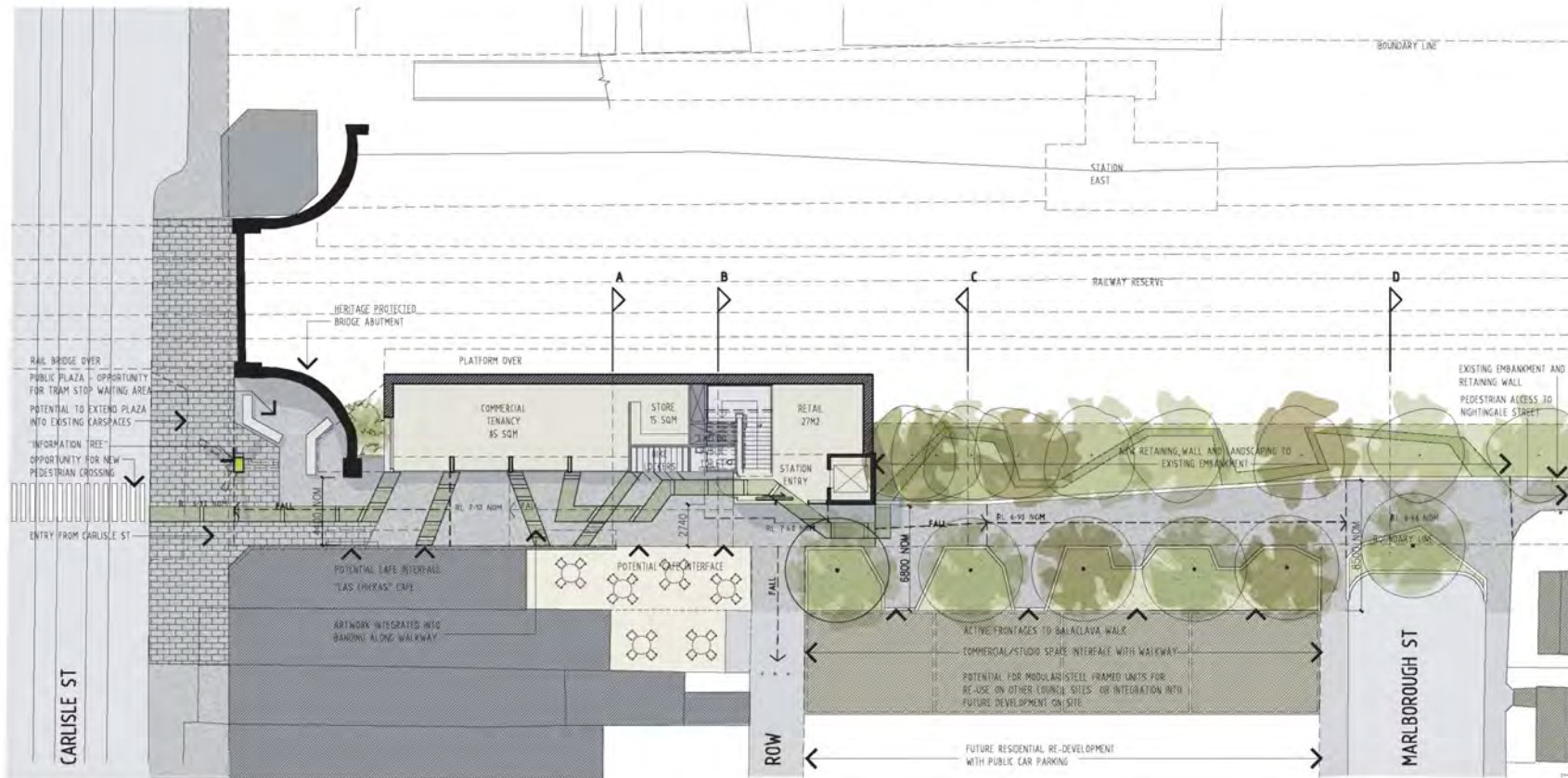


Figure 7.1 Balaclava Walk Project

BALACLAVA WALK PROJECT - CONCEPT PLAN



STREET LEVEL PLAN

**balaclava**

WALK  
0 2 4 6 8 10  
SCALE 1:200 @ A3

CLIENT  
CITY OF PORT PHILIP

DRAWING  
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

DATE  
DECEMBER 2005



## Strategic Opportunity 2 – RETAIL RENEWAL PROJECT

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### Introduction

The supermarket precinct (Camden, Alfred and Nelson Street area) presents as the major urban renewal 'project' within the Carlisle Street Activity Centre. The precinct includes the centre's two major retail stores, extensive 'at grade' car parking and, accordingly, is a focus of the activity centre.

The renewal of key public and privately owned sites within the precinct offers a strategic opportunity, not only to enhance the economic viability of the centre, but also to significantly improve the quality of the public realm (streets and spaces), and to reinforce the centre's unique 'sense of place' for the local community. Redevelopment within the precinct will act as a catalyst to improvements in the wider centre.

Council land holdings are located strategically within the precinct and hence, provide the opportunity to ensure community benefit of any redevelopment is maximised from economic, social, cultural and environment perspectives.

### Project Context

#### Issues

- Existing supermarket facilities are aging and poorly presented. There is no contemporary 'full-line' facility.
- 'At grade' car parks provide a low amenity 'interface' with the residential area to the north, especially along Alfred Street.

- There is very limited usable public space with precinct and no sense of a 'town center'.
- The existing Safeway supermarket presents as blank wall ('dead space') to Carlisle Street.
- The existing Coles supermarket building presents 'inactive edges' to Camden St, Alfred Street and the existing car park.
- There is poor integration between Carlisle Street and the Coles Supermarket facility. The 'legibility' and the quality of connections through to car parks behind shops is poor and laneway patterns have been lost.
- There is a high level of traffic and irregular traffic circulation (in the vicinity of Camden / Alfred / Nelson Streets and within car parks) – creating a poor pedestrian environment.

#### Opportunities

- Existing 'at grade' car parks are considered an under-utilised land resource and offer greatest scope for new development within the activity centre.
- Council ownership of strategic sites: Safeway car park / Coles car park (in part).
- There is potential to provide significant new investment in this prime location within the activity centre, whilst protecting the low rise, fine grain heritage character of buildings along Carlisle Street.
- Residential properties north of Alfred offer potential for redevelopment at higher densities, improving compatibility with redevelopment of the car park opposite.
- The area presents a prime opportunity for well-located affordable housing – given proximity to shops, public transport and community services.

## What the Project Can Deliver

**An Enhanced 'Retail Offer' for Carlisle Street**, consolidating the centres' primary weekly shopping role, and accommodating the projected demand for additional retail floor-space, through:

- Two modern 'full line' supermarket facilities (each 2,500 - 3,500m<sup>2</sup>).
- Additional floor-space for smaller scale retail, retail services, commercial premises and community facilities – to facilitate a rich mix of shops and services that:
  - extend hours of activity within the precinct, and
  - promote multi-purpose trips.

### Improved Integration with the Carlisle Street Retail Strip

- Opportunities existing to 'reactivate' and engage rear laneways and / or existing arcades to ensure a high level of integration between new retail development and existing shops (ensuring appropriate access / loading is maintained for retail premises fronting Carlisle Street).
- The upgrade and extension of shops fronting Carlisle Street will increase the number of 'rear' entrances, to improve pedestrian permeability and the presentation of laneways.
- Existing 'in-active edges' will be replaced with continuous retail frontages. The edges of the large supermarket stores can be 'wrapped' with smaller scale uses to maintain and extend active edges up side streets – particularly along Camden and Nelson Streets.

### A Renewed and Improved 'Interface' to Alfred Street

- Removal of the 'at grade' car park will reconnect the activity centre to the surrounding residential area.

- Provision of a 'residential edge' along the Alfred Street boundary of the Coles site, potentially as entrances to housing above street level, will significantly improve the amenity of Alfred Street. The form and articulation of new development will reflect a residential scale at this interface.
- Redevelopment of existing properties on the north (residential) side of Alfred Street will be facilitated (to three storeys) to achieve a more consistent scale with new development opposite.

### Significant Opportunities for New and Diverse Housing

- The precinct offers significant potential for higher density housing as part of mixed use developments, with the benefit of increasing night-time activity and surveillance of the commercial area at night.

New housing development should be diverse and include:

- Opportunities for affordable (private and community) housing.
- Innovative housing types: home business premises, studio offices, flexible housing (adaptable to life-stages) and universally accessible housing.

- New Housing Opportunities should be secured, either through:
  - Including housing as part of new mixed development.

OR

- Ensuring an 'inbuilt' carrying capacity of any new retail redevelopment enables future upper level residential development.

### Creation of a 'Shared Zone' in Camden Street

- The redesign of the 'road space' in Camden Street will afford priority to walking and cycling, whilst accommodating vehicle access to car parks (ie "Shared Zone" concept). This could include:
  - Reduced Traffic Speed (10km/hr).
  - Reduction in on-street parking.
  - Provision of street planting for shade, buffering and street enclosure. (This should including the potential for WSUD treatments which redirect storm-water to street plantings).
  - Quality street lighting to enhance safety and contribute to the vitality of the precinct.
  - Contextual Public / Urban Art.
  - Renewed Street Furniture - Seating etc.

### Retention and consolidation of Car parking

- New development would ensure retention of the existing supply of car parking (whilst relocated to basements). There is potential to maximise the efficiency of car parking, for example, through 'shared' parking resources.
- Additional car parking would be provided to cater for the expansion of retail floor area.
- Relocation of car parking spaces from the under-utilised Station Car Park will be considered, to centralise and create a more efficient supply of car parking where shopper demand is greatest.
- Safer, more efficient loading facilities would be incorporated into the design of new development; including the separation of service vehicle access and loading areas from pedestrian paths, and siting to obscure loading areas from public view.

## Project Partners

### Major Partners City of Port Phillip

**Interest / Responsibility**  
Key and owner (car parks)  
Public Realm Improvements  
Responsible (Planning) Authority  
Role

### **Supermarket Operators**

Coles Supermarket Interests  
Safeway Supermarket Interests

### **Private Land Interests**

Redevelopment Supermarket / Car  
Park sites  
Existing Arcades – Integration /  
renewal potential

### Potential Partners Major Projects Victoria

Project Co-ordination and  
Facilitation

### **Office of Housing**

Co-funding for Community Housing  
Projects

### **Port Phillip Housing Association**

Co-funding / Management of  
Community Housing

### Other Stakeholders Traders

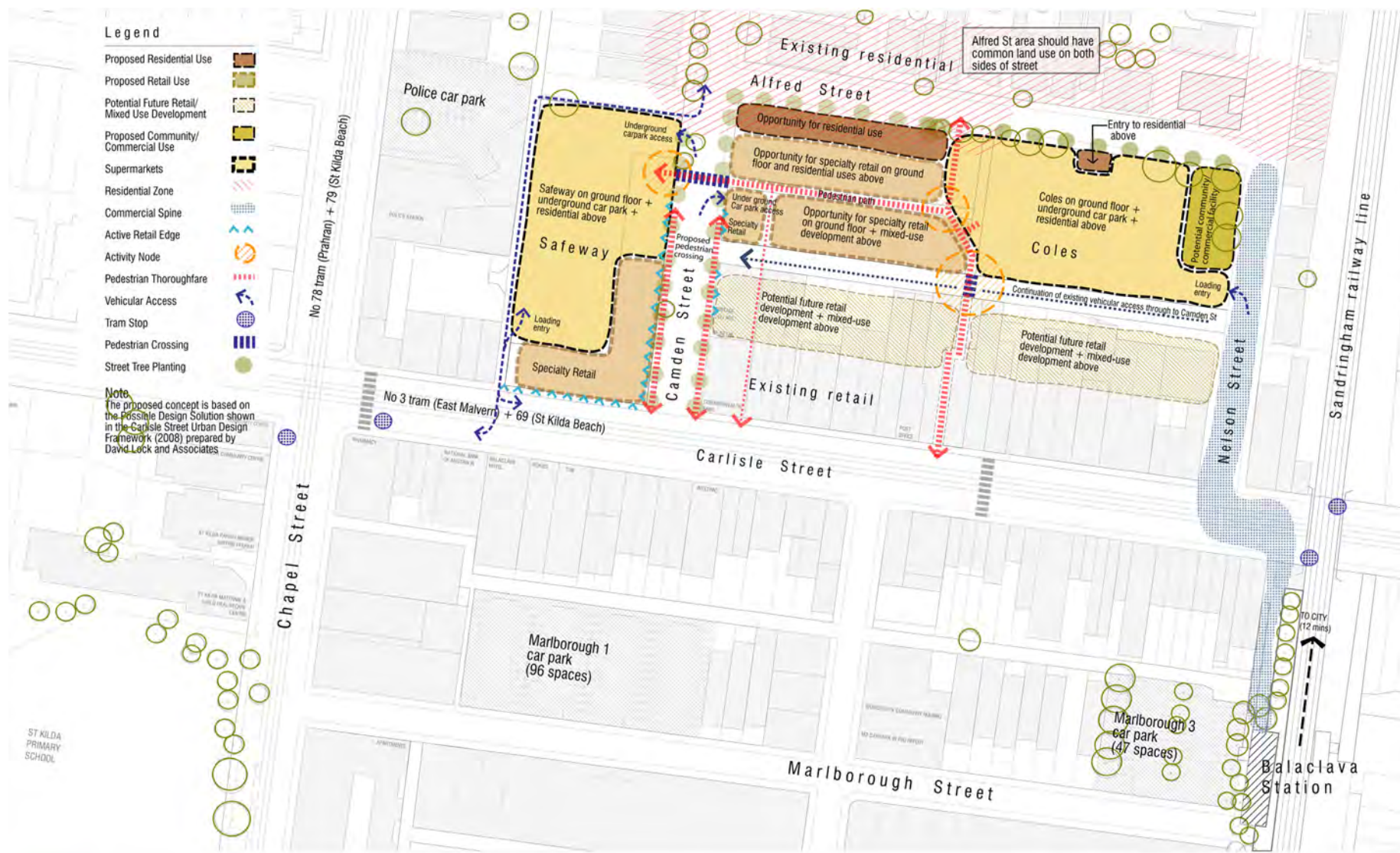
Business Mix – Viability  
Improved Streetscapes

## Design Concepts

Two 'Potential Design Concepts' have been prepared which illustrate how the above project elements could be delivered. The final design outcome is likely to incorporate elements from each of these concepts.



Figure 7.3 Retail Renewal Project – Concept 2



- Legend**
- Proposed Residential Use
  - Proposed Retail Use
  - Potential Future Retail/ Mixed Use Development
  - Proposed Community/ Commercial Use
  - Supermarkets
  - Residential Zone
  - Commercial Spine
  - Active Retail Edge
  - Activity Node
  - Pedestrian Thoroughfare
  - Vehicular Access
  - Tram Stop
  - Pedestrian Crossing
  - Street Tree Planting

**Note:**  
The proposed concept is based on the Possible Design Solution shown in the Carlisle Street Urban Design Framework (2008) prepared by David Lock and Associates



CARLISLE STREET ACTIVITY CENTRE  
CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

retail renewal project - concept 2  
proposal - plan

